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DESIGNING AND DELIVERING
A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

LAND USE STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Strategic Environmental Assessment
Environmental Report

Prepared for:

Coillte

COILLTE
GROW · TRANSFORM · SUSTAIN

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STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT FOR THE LAND USE STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Introduction

This is the Non-Technical Summary of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report prepared for Coillte's Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan (herein referred to as 'LUSIP' or 'the Plan'). The purpose of this report is to identify and evaluate the likely, significant environmental effects of implementation of the LUSIP.

Approach to SEA

The SEA process can be defined by four stages, all of which include some level of consultation with stakeholders and the public. These stages are defined as:

- Stage 1 – Screening: deciding whether an SEA is required, or not.
- Stage 2 – Scoping: establishing the spatial and temporal scope of the SEA and a decision-making framework that can be used to evaluate impacts.
- Stage 3 – Identification, Prediction, Considerations of Alternatives, Evaluation and Mitigation of Potential Impacts.
- Stage 4 – Consultation, Revision and Post-Adoption. This includes the implementation of statutory SEA monitoring.

Coillte have completed Stage 1 - Screening and Stage 2 - Scoping, of the SEA process. This SEA Environmental Report documents Stage 3 of the SEA process.

The SEA process ran in parallel with the Appropriate Assessment (AA) process, which is an assessment process focusing on the potential effects of a plan or project on sites designated for nature protection known as ‘European Sites.’

The Plan

Coillte published a strategic vision for the organisation in 2022 titled *Strategic Vision for Our Future Forest Estate*. This vision outlines the organisations ambitions and commitment to the sustainable management of Coillte's estate to 2050 and beyond, based on delivering the multiple benefits of forests to society; including climate mitigation, biodiversity enhancement, sustainable timber production, and public recreation, while ensuring Coillte remains financially sustainable and socially responsible. Coillte's approach to develop a balanced strategic vision for forestry and land-use is underpinned by four key pillars and their associated ambitions, including: Forests for Climate, Forests for Nature, Forests for Wood, and Forests for People.

Striving to realise their vision, Coillte developed the *Forest Estate Strategic Land Use Plan (FESLUP) 2023 - 2050*, which provided the framework that outlines the strategic objectives to balance the delivery of the organisation's ambitions until 2050.The FESLUP outlines a roadmap, focusing on creating a resilient forest estate that delivers environmental, social, and economic benefits. The FESLUP has already been subject to a full SEA.

The LUSIP is the next step within Coillte's strategic planning hierarchy, translating the high-level ambitions and objectives outlined in the FESLUP into implementable and measurable actions over the period of 2026-2035.

The primary purpose of this LUSIP is to bridge the gap between strategy and implementation, making sure Coillte's long-term vision is realised based on a structured and collaborative approach that includes Coillte Forest and Land Solutions.

The Environmental Baseline

An evaluation and characterisation of the current state of the environment likely to be affected by the Plan has been undertaken to inform the SEA process.

The proposed SEA study area or zone of influence has been identified and include the entire area of the Republic of Ireland and surrounding areas that may theoretically be affected from implementation of the Plan, which has been conservatively assumed to be 12 nautical miles for the Republic of Ireland's coastline (i.e. Ireland's territorial waters), 25 km from Ireland's border with Northern Ireland (NI), and inclusive of all environmental features in Northern Ireland which are hydrologically connected to the Plan area.

The following Environmental Components were considered during this evaluation:

- Population, Human Health and the Economy
- Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna
- Landscape, Seascape and Visual Amenity
- Cultural Heritage - Archaeological and Architectural
- Soils and Geology
- Land Use
- Air Quality and Noise
- Water
- Material Assets
- Tourism and Recreation
- Climate Change

A non-technical summary of the baseline environment for each environmental component and Northern Ireland is provided in the table below.

Environmental Component	Summary of the Baseline Environmental Characteristics
Population, Human Health and the Economy	• In the 2022 Census, the total population of Ireland was ca. 5.15 million people. This shows an increasing population trend since the previous census with an 8.1% increase. At a local authority level, the growth rate varies but all show increased population growth. The population of Ireland is predicted to reach 7.005 million people by 2057 under a high net migration scenario. • The percentage of people reporting their general health status as either 'very good' or 'good' decreased by 4% between census periods and was 83% in 2022. The ageing population in Ireland poses a threat to future healthcare demand and associated public health expenditure. • There has been a decreasing trend of unemployment in Ireland since the high levels experienced during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Environmental Component	Summary of the Baseline Environmental Characteristics
	Ireland is experiencing an economic recovery since the pandemic; this recovery is however being impacted by the war in Ukraine that is causing high inflation levels globally. It is predicted that the future economic outlook of Ireland is positive.
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	• There are six National Parks within Ireland and 78 Nature reserves. • There are currently 441 designated SACs, and 167 SPAs within Ireland. • There are presently 45 designated RAMSAR sites in Ireland. • There are 171 designated NHAs, and 623 pNHAs in Ireland. • There are an estimated 178 Tree Preservation Orders, 65 Flora Protection Order Sites, 68 Wildfowl Sanctuaries, and 19 proposed OSPAR Marine Protected Areas within the State. • The total forested area in Ireland is ca. 808,848 ha. It is estimated that 21% of this area (ca. 169,858 ha) can be categorised as native forest (>80% of native species present) and 12% of this area (ca. 97,061 ha) can be categorised as mixed forest (20 - 80% native tree species present). Native forests cover 2.5% of the national land area of Ireland. • Ireland has 54 bird species on the Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (BoCCI) red list. There are 80 bird species on the amber list.
Landscape, Seascape and Visual Amenity	• There are six areas designated and recognised as nationally important landscapes within the Republic of Ireland. All of these are National Parks. Ireland has no Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). • There are 13 different Irish seascape character types, within 17 regional seascape character areas.
Cultural Heritage - Archaeological and Architectural	• There are 150,800 Recorded Monuments within Ireland. There are over 50,000 heritage listings on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH). • Ireland has two UNESCO World Heritage sites: Brú na Bóinne and Sceilg Mhichíl. There are currently four sites on the tentative list. The island of Ireland has five UNESCO Geoparks: The Copper Coast, the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geoparks, and the recently added Joyce Country and Western Lakes Geopark, the Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark (formerly Marbles Arch Caves) and Mourne Gullion Strangford UNESCO Geopark .
Soils and Geology	• The geology of Ireland varies greatly, comprising of a low-lying central limestone plain that is surrounded by coastal mountains. The mountains to the north-west (Galway, Mayo and Donegal) and east (Wicklow Mountains) are comprised of granite. The north-east of Ireland is covered in a basalt plateau and to the south, the mountains run in an east-west direction and is largely composed of a red sandstone rock. • Subsoils in Ireland are made up of glacial and post-glacial sediments, with glacial till making up the majority of subsoil. • The quality of Irish soils is considered generally 'good' in terms of its physical, chemical and biological parameters. There are, however, pressures that impact on its long-term health, such as population growth and land-use changes including agriculture, afforestation/reforestation. Soil contamination can also occur from leakages, spillages from industry, old mining sites and landfills. Diffuse pollution will usually arise from primary activities such as agriculture, forestry and horticulture.

Environmental Component	Summary of the Baseline Environmental Characteristics
Land Use	• Improved Grassland is the single most dominant land cover type in Ireland, covering 41.53% of the total national area. This is followed by Wet Grassland (9.47%) then Cultivated Land (6.05%). • It is estimated that 11.6% of Ireland's land area is Forestry. There is a commitment by the government to increase this to 18% by 2050. • 49.1% of forests within Ireland are publicly owned.
Air Quality and Noise	• The Air Quality in Ireland 2023 report prepared by the EPA identified that there is national compliance with current EU standards, with no pollutant exceeding the EU legal limit values. However, there are localised areas of pollution which are a concern. • Fine particulate matter (PM2.5) from solid fuel combustion and nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) from vehicle emissions are the main pollutants of concern in Ireland, as well as Ammonia (NH3) emissions from agriculture. • Ireland's ambition in the Clean Air Strategy is to move to alignment the WHO Air Quality guideline limits. At present, Ireland is not on track to achieve the interim targets in the guidelines that they aimed to achieve by 2026. Moving forward, the achievement of future targets will be very challenging. • The fourth round of Noise mapping in Ireland was undertaken and the results can be seen in Figure 4-18 within the main body of the report.
Water	• There are over 4,810 surface and groundwater bodies in Ireland. The latest water quality assessment by the EPA for the period 2016-2021 shows that over half (54%) of Ireland's surface waters are in good or better ecological status which means that nearly half (46%) are in unsatisfactory condition. There has been a 1% decline in the ecological health of monitored river water bodies since the 2013-2018 period. Of Ireland's surface waters the coastal waters have the highest percentage of waters at high or good ecological status (81%) while estuarine waters have the worst (36%). • The majority of Ireland's population live on or near the coast and this creates pressure for transitional waters. Pollution from agricultural runoff (nitrates, phosphates etc.) and urban wastewater pose the biggest threat to transitional and coastal waters. • The EPA's 2023 Water Quality Indicators Report found total phosphorus concentration to be a concern for rivers and lakes, and elevated nitrogen levels to be of concern for estuaries. • Forestry has been identified by the EPA as the third most prevalent significant pressure on waterbodies. • As of 2025, there are 153 monitored bathing water quality sites. In 2024 96% of the 151 monitored sites met or exceeded the minimum requirement of 'sufficient'. • Flooding, particularly from fluvial and coastal sources, is an increasing problem in Ireland. The OPW is the lead agency tasked with the management of flood risk in Ireland.

Environmental Component	Summary of the Baseline Environmental Characteristics
Material Assets	• Coillte own and manage ca. 440,000 ha of land in Ireland. 84% of this is forested land, with non-forested land consisting of a range of land-cover types unsuitable for afforestation. These include upland heaths and bogs, lakes, ponds and swamps. • In 2020 Coillte planted 22 million trees and reforested over 9,000 ha of new forest across Ireland. 2.31 million m3 of Roundwood for consumer purposes was produced. • According to COFORD's All Ireland Roundwood Production Forecast 2021-2040, the potential wood mass available for energy and other uses in Ireland is 34.78 million m3 over the forecast period. Biomass energy is considered a renewable energy source, on the condition that the forests are sustainably managed and harvested trees are replaced. • For the energy sector to meet the 75% reductions in emissions (based on 2018 levels) by 2030, the share of renewable energy will need to be increased by 80%. • As of 2024, that there are over 300 wind farms in the Republic of Ireland, with a total installed capacity of 4,332.5 megawatts (MW). In 2023, 40.7% of Ireland's electricity supply was sourced from renewable energy (up from 38.6% in 2022), with over a third of total electricity sourced from wind energy.
Tourism and Recreation	• Tourism and recreation are influenced by a range of factors in Ireland. International tourism has increased in recent years. The greatest concerns for the tourism sector in 2024 were the rising costs of energy and payroll. • Failte Ireland has recently published their four brand strategies which will define the spatial scope and spread of future tourism developments within Ireland. • Failte Ireland recently launched the Climate Action Programme which will provide support and investment advice for tourism businesses to accelerate the decarbonisation of the tourism sector in line with national carbon emissions reduction targets. • Each Local Authority has a Tourism Strategy Statement and Workplan. These are aligned with local, regional and national strategies and plans.
Climate Change	• The Government's Climate Action Plan 2025 includes a targeted 51% reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030; setting Ireland on a path to reach net-zero emissions by no later than 2050. • The Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) sector in Ireland is the fourth largest national source of GHG emissions. This is due to the large areas of drained organic soils and the exploitation of wetlands for peat extraction. Additionally, there has been a long-term decline in the area of land afforested annually. Current afforestation is well below the annual rate of 8,000 ha/year suggested in the 2024 Climate Action Plan (1,650 ha in 2023). There has also been an increased level of harvesting, which is only expected to further increase as forest planted during years where high afforestation previously occurred continue to mature. • The generation of renewable energy has been increasing over the past ten years, with a growth in the number of wind farms. Wind energy generation in Ireland has increased from 4,542 GWh in 2013 to 11,589 GWh in 2023.

Environmental Component	Summary of the Baseline Environmental Characteristics
Overview of Northern Irish Environmental Baseline	• The 2021 census found Northern Ireland to have a population of 1.9 million. This is predicted to increase to 2.003 million by 2046. The Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland have similar economic and health trends. • The Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland have similar baseline environments as they share a common biogeographic unit. Both countries share many environmental features such as waters, landscapes, flora, and fauna, due to this overlapping geographical connection. Both countries also face the similar environmental pressures. • The State of Nature 2023 report for Northern Ireland shows that NI is now one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world with 12% of species assessed, threatened with extinction. 54% of NI Nature Conservation Designation Areas are in favourable condition. Increasing pressures on the natural environment are contributing to unfavourable conditions for habitats and species. • There are several features of geological, natural and cultural heritage within Ireland which have transboundary connections to Northern Ireland that should be considered in relations to the Plan, such as UNESCO Geoparks (Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark, Mourne Gullion Strangford Geopark) and the Royal Sites of Ireland. • Agriculture accounts for 75% of the land area in NI. • There is continued improvement in air quality, but problems do remain for nitrogen dioxide emissions due to transport and ammonia emissions from agriculture. Continued effort is required to reduce air pollution from key sources. • There has been a long-standing concern for water quality in Northern Ireland, with diffuse pollution from agriculture listed as the most significant pressure on water, particularly the release of phosphorus and nitrogen from agricultural sources. One noteworthy example of this issue is the impact diffuse pollution is having on Lough Neagh which is currently affected by recurrent algal blooms. • In 2024, 29% of river waterbodies, 24% of lake water bodies, and 40% of transitional and coastal waterbodies were classified as good or high ecological status. The target for 100% of surface water bodies in Northern Ireland to attain 'Good' or 'High' ecological status by 2027 will not be met. • There are 37 no. transboundary groundwater bodies shared between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. • There are numerous waterbodies which cross the Irish border that have the potential to cause transboundary impacts on aquatic environments within Northern Ireland. • Forestry is an important asset in NI due to the significant role it plays in tourism and recreation and regulation of the ecosystem. The tree-cover rates in NI (ca. 8%) are however, the lowest in the UK and lower than those in the EU. • The installed capacity of renewable energy in Northern Ireland is currently 1,276 MW. The NI Climate Change Act has set a target of 80% renewable energy by 2030, therefore requiring more than double the current renewable electricity generate to meet this demand. • Tourism Ireland aim to increase overseas tourism revenue across the island of Ireland by +5.6%1 growth per year on average over the period 2024 to 2030, growing revenue in NI by an average +6.5% per year over that period.

Environmental Component	Summary of the Baseline Environmental Characteristics
	• In 2022, Northern Ireland's total greenhouse gas emissions accounted for 5.3% of the UK total, whilst accounting for 2.8% of the UK's population. Agriculture plays a large role in high emissions due to the importance of agriculture in the country's economy. Buildings and product uses followed by domestic transport, and electricity supply are the next biggest emitters.

Section 4 of this SEA Environmental Report contains further detail on baseline environmental characteristics, including a variety of detailed baseline environment maps, for those who wish to develop a more in-depth understanding of the environmental baseline. Section 7 of the SEA Environmental Report contains a summary of the evaluation of the environmental effects of the implementation of the Plan, including a summary of the various positive impacts, (potential) negative impacts, and cumulative impacts associated with Plan implementation.

Evolution of the Baseline Environment

A non-technical summary of how the baseline environment is likely to evolve in absence of the LUSIP is provided below:

- The predicted future population of Ireland is highly influenced by future net migration per annum. It is predicted that under high net migration, the population will reach 7.005 million people by 2057. Under medium and low net migration this number drops to 6.446 million, and 5.734 million persons respectively.
- The ageing population in Ireland will cause a demographic shift in the country in future years that will increase demand for healthcare facilities and associated public healthcare expenditure.
- ESRI (Economic & Social Research Institute) has predicted a positive outlook for the Irish economy in the medium-term with a predicted increase in GDP and MDD (Modified Domestic Demand) in Ireland in the years ahead.
- Increasing land-use change such as urbanisation, afforestation and its associated management and changing agricultural practices are likely to continue to pose risks to the quality and distribution of aquatic and terrestrial habitats and species, both within and outside protected sites. However, the continued implementation of measures required in achieving the objectives of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the requirements of the Habitats Directive are likely to benefit protected sites and the wider aquatic environment in the future. The Water Action Plan and National Biodiversity Action Plan will also contribute to biodiversity protection and improvements.
- The conservation objectives developed by the NPWS for European sites, as well as other management plans for declining species (e.g., Threat Response Plans) will contribute to the critical changes needed to reverse biodiversity declines nationally and internationally.
- Increased impact to forests through windfall and storm damage as a results of increased extreme weather events due to Climate Change will be a key pressure on forest habitats going forward.
- Renewable energy development will influence and alter existing landscape and seascape throughout the country and in marine areas.

- The archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage within Ireland is a finite resource and protection of this resource is a continuous requirement set down in national legislation. Therefore, the existing cultural heritage environment is not expected to change significantly in the immediate future. New heritage related features may become known or be designated in the future. There are also sites on the UNESCO tentative list that may be designated in the near future.
- It is therefore envisaged geology of importance in the country will be provided further protection into the future.
- It is envisaged that measures will be implemented into the future to ensure the protection and enhancement of soil health.
- The future of Irish agriculture will evolve in line with societal, economic and environmental protection requirements. It is envisaged agricultural sustainability will improve in line with the legislative and plan/programme framework objectives (e.g., Food Vision, the Common Agriculture Policy Strategic Plan)
- It is envisaged national Climate Action Plan requirements will drive increasing levels of afforestation nationally into the long-term future.
- It is envisaged peatlands will be provided a greater level of protection and peatlands across the country will be restored in accordance with national ambitions.
- Although air quality in Ireland is good, there is potential for pollutants to rise above emerging limits/targets in the future. Residential and transport sector impacts on ambient air quality are expected to reduce in the long-term due society's transition to low or zero carbon housing and vehicles.
- Ireland currently has a good understanding of the causes of water pollution, due to the implementation of the WFD. Proposed future development must meet the requirements of the WFD and aim to drive improvements and maintenance of water quality in the short term and provide a basis for the continued maintenance of good status in the future. It is envisaged water quality in Ireland broadly will gradually improve in line with the objectives of the WFD, however pressures on and risks to water quality will need be addressed to ensure continued improvement.
- The high-level coordination and comprehensive set of tourism policies which are now clearly entrenched in the working processes of Failte Ireland and the local authorities lends itself to tourism having a more environmentally aware future. Additionally, Failte Ireland has developed a national tourism monitoring programme to further the current understanding of environmental impacts from tourism and have committed to providing the learning outcomes from this monitoring programme in the form of guidelines.
- Future changes in climate and associated impacts on sea level, rainfall patterns/intensity and river flow will influence flooding frequency and extent in the future.
- Climate change is also expected to cause an increase extreme weather events and wildfire that may impact the forestry sector.

Strategic Environmental Objectives

The SEA Directive states that an SEA should also look at *'the environmental protection objectives, established at International, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.'* The identification of environmental protection objectives relevant to a plan provides the basis for evaluating the significance of impacts during the SEA process. All environmental protection objectives relevant to the Plan have been identified.

Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) are methodological measures which facilitate the development of targets against which the environmental effects of the LUSIP can be tested. SEOs are based on wider environmental protection objectives on local, regional, national, European and international level that are relevant to the LUSIP. They are high-level in nature and set strategic goals for environmental protection and improvement.

The development of SEOs for the LUSIP was appropriately informed by the SEA Scoping stage of the SEA process, including consultation with statutory Environmental Authorities.

All SEOs applicable to the LUSIP are presented in the table below.

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
Overall	O1	Ensure, where appropriate, that lower-level plans and projects contribute to overall environmental monitoring processes within the LUSIP.
Population, Human Health & the Economy	PHH1	Minimise adverse impacts from development and operations on population and human health.
	PHH2	Minimise impacts from development and operations on economic activity and growth.
	PHH3	Engage with local communities and provide areas for amenity and recreational uses to promote wellbeing and human health.
	PHH4	Contribute positively to the well-being of workers and local populations.
	PHH5	Promote economic growth within the forestry sector and contribute to job creation and business development in rural areas.
	PHH6	Provide sustainable, high-quality timber products to the Irish market to meet demand and in support of housing development.
Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	B1	Avoid significant adverse effects on European Sites and protected habitats and species, and support compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives through Appropriate Assessment and implementation of mitigation measures.
	B2	Maintain and, where practicable, support ecological connectivity within the programme area through appropriate site design and management.
	B3	To minimise adverse impacts on semi-natural habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated national sites, non-designated locally important sites, and sites proposed for designation; in compliance with wildlife and invasive species legislation.
	B4	Achieve biodiversity protection and enhance (where feasible) and deliver forest management for nature - in response to the biodiversity emergency and in line with the National Biodiversity Plan and its targets.
	B5	Manage old and ancient woodlands to enhance their biodiversity value.
Landscape, Seascape & Visual Amenity	L1	Contribute to the conservation, protection, enhancement and management of the character and quality of Ireland's distinctive landscape and seascape.
	L2	Minimise development impacts on sensitive and/or important landscapes/seascapes, including those designated under the land use planning framework.
	L3	Minimise adverse visual effects, including effects on sensitive visual receptors and views and prospects designated under the land use planning framework.
Cultural Heritage	CH1	Protect and conserve archaeological heritage features, and the settings surrounding these features that are part of or contribute to the character and value of these features, including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), the prospective Register of Monuments and the Northern Ireland Sites and Monuments Record (NISMR).
	CH2	Protect and conserve architectural heritage features, and the settings surrounding these features that are part of or contribute to the character and

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
		value of these features, including entries to the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH), industrial heritage, Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) and features/conservation areas designated in Norther Ireland.
	CH3	Promote opportunities to enhance or conserve places, features, buildings and landscapes of cultural, historical archaeological or architectural heritage through the LUSIP, where feasible.
Geology and Soils	GS1	Minimise adverse effects on soil functions and deliver soil enhancement.
	GS2	Minimise adverse effects on the physico-chemical properties of soil.
	GS3	Increase uptake of sustainable soil management practices that contribute to the preservation of soil and peatlands, aiding in achieving good soil quality and stability.
Land use	LU1	Minimize effects on other land use activities/objectives and promote sustainable land use.
Air Quality and Noise	AQN1	Minimise effects on local air quality.
	AQN2	Minimise adverse noise impacts on sensitive receptors.
Water	W1	Maintain and/or improve, the quality and status of surface water bodies, in line with Water Framework Directive requirements.
	W2	Avoid deterioration and, where feasible, protect and improve groundwater quality within LUSIP-managed areas, applying best practice water protection measures.
	W3	Comply as appropriate with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines.
	W4	Promote sustainable drainage practices in development projects to improve water quality and flow.
	W5	Avoid significant adverse effects on drinking water quality arising from LUSIP implementation.
	W6	Avoid significant adverse effects on the status of transitional, coastal and marine waters arising from LUSIP implementation.
	W7	Avoid significant adverse effects on bathing water quality arising from LUSIP implementation.
Material Assets & Infrastructure	MA1	Minimise effects on or conflicts with local, regional and national material assets and infrastructure, including future, planned infrastructure.
	MA2	Promote sustainable travel and transport.
	MA3	Promote the effective and sustainable use of forest products.
	MA4	Enable the delivery of renewable energy projects for the benefit of national energy demands - through its joint venture FuturEnergy Ireland and via land agreements with other renewable energy developers.
	MA5	Promote sustainable waste/material management and the circular economy.
Tourism & Recreation	TR1	Minimise adverse effects upon tourism and recreation amenities, and enhance tourism and recreation, where possible.

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
Climate Change	CC1	Contribute towards the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the delivery of renewable energy projects in line with national objectives and targets.
	CC2	Promote carbon sequestration in line with national objectives and targets.
	CC3	Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from forestry related transport operations.
	CC4	Integrate sustainable and low/zero carbon design solutions into Coillte development projects, where possible.
	CC5	Contribute to sectoral adaptation to minimise the effects of climate change.
	CC7	Consider and appropriately manage the effects of climate change during development and forest planning processes.

Description and Evaluation of Plan Alternatives

The SEA Directive requires that reasonable alternative means of achieving the strategic goals of the Plan (considering the ambitions, strategic objectives and the geographical scope of the Plan) are identified, described and evaluated for their likely, significant effects on the environment. Such reasonable alternatives must be realistic and capable of implementation. Reasonable alternatives were assessed against the SEOs established for the aspects of the baseline environment which are likely to be significantly affected by the Plan.

The underpinning goal of the reasonable alternative evaluation process was to ensure that the selection of preferred alternatives by Coillte is informed by environmental considerations.

Reasonable alternatives to the Plan were identified as the Plan-making process evolved. Details on all Reasonable Alternatives considered during Plan-making and a summary of reasoning for selecting preferred alternatives are presented below.

Theme	Description of Reasonable Alternatives	Prefered Alternative	Main Reasons for Selecting Preferred Alternative
Scale of the Plan.	Alternative 1: Developing a nationally scaled Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan. Alternative 2: Developing a Land Use Strategic Implementation which is geographically scaled to Business Area Units.	Alternative 1: Developing a nationally scaled Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan.	Development of a nationally scaled LUSIP that informs lower-order operational-level forestry planning would allow for better strategic planning and assessment, and the integration of environmental considerations into land use planning processes at an early and more appropriate stage of decision-making. This would allow for flexibility and adaptability when implementing the Plan.
Plan Duration.	Alternative 1: Implement the Plan over the duration of the Forest Estate Strategic Land Use Plan (2023 - 2050). Alternative 2: Implement the Plan over a 10 year timeframe.	Alternative 2: Implement the Plan over a 10 year timeframe.	Adopting a 10 year Plan duration would allow Coillte to define more specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and targeted Actions. This level of Plan focus was considered optimal in the context of the FESLUP and lower-order forest planning processes at Coillte. It would allow for better monitoring of environmental effects and optimal environmental outcomes.
Focus of Plan Actions.	Alternative 1: Development of operationally focused Plan actions. Alternative 2: Development of strategically focused Plan actions.	Alternative 2: Development of strategically focused Plan actions.	Defining strategically focused Plan Actions would better facilitate effective and focused SEA; allow for earlier consideration of environmental impacts in decision-making processes, in line with the principles of SEA; would support effective Plan implementation; and would be more likely to lead to the realization of strategic objectives, including objectives relating to climate mitigation, nature restoration and environmental protection.

Theme	Description of Reasonable Alternatives	Prefered Alternative	Main Reasons for Selecting Preferred Alternative
Measuring and Reporting of Plan Actions.	Alternative 1: Measuring/reporting at national level.	Alternative 3: Measuring/reporting at both national and Business Area Unit level.	This mixed approach allows Coillte to balance local and national priorities, ensuring that reporting remains both practical and meaningful. Overall, the approach chosen is more likely to lead to effective delivery of the Plan, including Coillte's ambitions to deliver climate mitigation, nature restoration and appropriate environmental protection.
	Alternative 2: Measuring/reporting at Business Area Unit level.		
	Alternative 3: Measuring/reporting at both national and Business Area Unit level.		

Evaluation of the Environmental Effects of the Plan Implementation

A detailed evaluation of the potential effects of the Plan on the baseline environment was carried out in accordance with the SEA Directive and best practice guidelines. A concise and non-technical summary of the key environmental effects associated with Plan implementation is presented below. The potential negative effects presented assume the absence of the appropriate mitigation defined in this Non-technical Summary and in Section 8 of this SEA Environmental Report.

Potential Positive Environmental Effects

- The plan defines a range of actions under the 'Forests for Climate' pillar that have the potential to generate positive effects for the climate environment. Several actions support the realisation of national afforestation ambitions. These actions have the potential to increase carbon sequestration levels nationally and decrease overall Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions associated with the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry sector, in line with the objectives of climate legislation and policy. Several actions will support, promote and drive peatland restoration/re-design projects,[1] which have the potential to contribute to increased GHG sequestration and reduced GHG emissions. These afforestation and peatland restoration/re-design actions have the potential to generate long-term, significant to profound positive effects on climate and inter-related environmental components (e.g., biodiversity, population and human health etc.).
- Plan actions promote climate adaptation through Coillte forestry/land use planning processes. This will support the prevention and reduction of the effects of climate change on forestry operations occurring on the Coillte estate (e.g., associated with extreme weather/storms, wildfire, flooding etc). This has the potential to generate long-term, significant to profound positive effects on population and human health and material assets (through ensuring the forest estate is protected and a reliable supply of wood product to the market), cultural heritage, biodiversity, soils, water quality and hydrology.
- Plan actions support the carrying out of renewable energy, grid infrastructure and energy storage development by FuturEnergy Ireland and other renewable energy developers on the Coillte estate. The development of this infrastructure has the potential to contribute substantially to Ireland's climate and renewable energy targets and may generate long-term, very significant to profound positive effects for climate and inter-related environmental components (e.g., biodiversity, population and human health etc.).
- Plan actions defined under the 'Forests for Wood' pillar promote, support and drive sustainable and indigenous forestry activity, afforestation and timber demand/production nationally. This has the potential to have a range of long-term, significant to profound positive environmental effects, including positive effects on climate (through increased afforestation and associated carbon sequestration), biodiversity, the water environment (through water regulation and filtration improving water quality), air quality, soils, material assets (through provision of wood product to the market for use in construction) and population and human health (through the creation of employment and increased economic activity).
- Various plan actions support the protection of commercial forestry assets on the Coillte estate (e.g., from storm damage, wildfire, disease etc.). The implementation of these actions has the potential to generate long-term, significant to profound positive effects on population and human and material assets (through the protection of commercial forestry, employment, livelihoods, timber production and supply).

[1] Subject to carbon-related financing.

- The plan defines a range of actions under the 'Forests for Nature' pillar that have the potential to generate long-term, significant to profound positive effects on biodiversity and inter-related environmental components (population and human health, water, soils etc.), including actions that support substantial nature restoration, effective and optimal biodiversity management/protection, sustainable forest management approaches, the protection of old and ancient woodland, water quality protection and improvement, enhancing the nitrogen cycle and invasive species management.
- The plan defines a range of actions under the 'Forests for People' pillar that support and drive the carrying out of tourism and recreation related development and activities on the Coillte estate, including strategic development. Tourism and recreation related development have the potential to generate long-term, positive environmental effects, including positive effects on population and human health (through increased economic activity, increased recreation/engagement with nature), cultural heritage (e.g. by creating synergies between the development and cultural heritage features) and tourism and recreation.
- Plan actions supporting the building of expertise and capacity in sustainable forest management, which has the potential to generate positive effects for population and human health (through the building expertise or mastery, the creation of livelihoods etc.) and materials assets (through the enhancement of the labour force that underpins and delivery sustainable forest and timber production and supply nationally).

Potential Negative Environmental Effects (in the absence of environmental mitigation)

- A range of plan actions across various Plan pillars support the expansion of forestry in Ireland. The range of activities associated with forestry, including road construction, afforestation, harvesting and reforestation may have temporary to long-term, slight to very significant, negative effects on population and human health (through visual impacts, nuisance etc.), biodiversity (habitat loss/fragmentation, species disturbance etc.), landscape/seascape (if forestry is not sited and designed appropriately), cultural heritage (potential interference with heritage features and their surrounding setting, or previously uncovered or unrecorded features of archaeological significance), soils (through compaction, sealing, erosion, loss of organic matter etc.), the air and noise environments, water quality and hydrology (through increase eutrophication, sedimentation, changes in hydrology etc.), material assets (e.g. impacts on or conflicts with existing or planned infrastructure), or tourism and recreation (through visual effects on scenic routes, for example).
- A range of actions defined in the Plan support and promote the carrying out of peatland restoration/re-design projects. Such projects, if improperly designed, implemented or maintained, have the potential to generate various negative effects on the environment, such as temporary to long-term, slight to very significant, negative effects on climate (through poor design negatively affecting greenhouse gas emission fluxes), biodiversity (e.g., habitat and species impacts associated with restoration works, aquatic species that may be affected by changes in hydrology), heritage features (including the physical integrity of existing and unrecorded features), soils, and water quality and hydrology (e.g., downstream alterations in water quality or hydrological conditions - if projects are not support by appropriate hydrological assessment, for example).

- Plan actions support the carrying out of renewable energy, grid infrastructure and energy storage development by FuturEnergy Ireland and other renewable energy developers on the Coillte estate. The development of this infrastructure, which will include impactful projects such as wind farms or linear grid connection projects, has the potential to generate a wide range of negative environmental effects in the absence of appropriate site selection, design, planning or maintenance, including temporary to long-term, slight to very significant, negative effects on population and human health (through visual impacts, shadow flicker or noise, for example), biodiversity (e.g., through habitat loss, bird strikes etc.), landscape/seascape, visual amenity, heritage (including the physical integrity of heritage features and the settings surrounding such features), soils (through excavations to accommodate built development e.g., wind farm foundations), the noise environment, water quality and hydrology, material assets (through impacts on or conflicts with other existing or planned infrastructure) and tourism and recreation (via impacts on scenic routes or landscape/seascape, for example).There is also the potential for negative effects on land-use through competing objectives for sustainable management practices to promote biodiversity enhancement and objectives for renewable energy production.
- Plans actions support the carrying out a range of nature restoration and biodiversity management relates projects and activities. These projects/activities, if mis-designed or mismanaged, may result in inadvertent, temporary to long-term, slight to very significant, negative effects on biodiversity.
- The plan defines a range of actions under the 'Forests for People' pillar that support and drive the carrying out of tourism and recreation related development and activities on the Coillte estate, including strategic development. Tourism and recreation related development have the potential to generate temporary to long-term, slight to very significant, negative effects on biodiversity (through increased human interaction with sensitive ecological receptors, noise, land-take, lighting etc.), population and human health (due to construction dust, noise, changes in traffic and transport dynamics), landscape, seascape and visual amenity (through the construction of sizeable built development at visually sensitive locations), cultural heritage (due to interactions between the development and the physical integrity and/or setting of unknown or recorded heritage features), soils, the air and noise environment, the water environment (due to construction phase run-off, changes in hydrology or additional wastewater loading in an wastewater catchment/agglomeration), material assets or climate (e.g., from construction embodied carbon, or due to the creation of unsustainable transport/travel patterns).

Transboundary Environmental Effects

Transboundary environmental effects were a fundamental consideration during the carrying out of the environmental assessment and form an intrinsic part of the detailed environmental assessment undertaken under this SEA. In the absence of any mitigation, the identified effects, as presented in the preceding section have the potential to also impact Northern Irish receptors within the defined study area, which includes all areas within 25 km of the Plan area (i.e. the national boundary of Ireland) in addition to environmental features in Northern Ireland which are hydrologically connected to the Plan area.

Mitigation Measures

Potential negative environmental effects that may occur as a result of the implementation of the Plan, in the absence of any mitigation, were identified.

The SEA Directive requires that mitigation measures to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any potential significant negative environmental effects due to the implementation of a plan are defined.

Following the evaluation of the environmental effects of Plan implementation, the following forms of mitigation were adopted to mitigate the negative environments of the Plan:

- Mitigation through consideration of alternatives.
- Mitigation through integration of environmental considerations into the Plan.

The Plan-making process was carried out in parallel with the SEA and AA processes. Regular communication and interaction took place between the Environmental Assessment Team and the Plan-making Team. Environmental considerations that came to light during the SEA and AA processes, including consultation processes, were regularly communicated to the Plan-making Team during the Plan-making process.

A strong level of embedded environmental mitigation was found to be present in early drafts of the Plan. As necessary, additional environmental mitigation measures to mitigate the potential negative environmental effects of implementing the Plan were identified and then integrated into the Plan. The environmental assessment process was carried out in an iterative manner to ensure optimal Plan-making and environmental outcomes. Environmental considerations were also integrated into the Plan so as to facilitate maximising identified positive environmental effects of the Plan. Overall, three forms of environmental mitigation were integrated into the Plan, as follows:

1. Additional Actions relating to environmental protection were defined and integrated into the Plan.
2. Pre-existing Plan Actions were amended. Various initial Plan Actions have been amended to clarify environmental protection related obligations and environmental enhancement opportunities associated with the actions. The Actions have been better shaped to ensure that environmental considerations are appropriately taken into account during Plan implementation.
3. An Environmental Governance Framework (EGF) for the Plan was developed and integrated into the Plan. The environmental mitigation presented in this EGF is specific to the implementable actions defined in the LUSIP. The EGF has been developed cognisant of higher-order environmental mitigation defined in the FESLUP and inter-related plans and programmes, to ensure appropriate alignment between plans and programmes and avoid duplication of environmental mitigation requirements.

All embedded environmental mitigation and additional environmental defined is presented in Section 8 of this report.

Conclusions

The reasonable alternatives evaluation undertaken has resulted in the development of a Plan that achieves the best environmental outcomes in comparison to other reasonable alternatives considered.

The adoption of the environmental mitigation measures integrated into the Plan will appropriately prevent and reduce potential significant negative effects of the Plan on the environment.

No further mitigation measures are required for the Plan.

These environmental mitigation measures will also serve to appropriately prevent and reduce potential significant negative transboundary effects that may be transmitted to the Northern Irish environment.

Monitoring Measures

The SEA Directive requires that the environmental effects of the implementation of a plan are monitored in order 'to identify at an early-stage unforeseen effects, and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action.'

A series of indicators and targets were established for identified SEOs to enable ongoing monitoring and measurement of Plan implementation performance, the environmental effects of the implementation of the Plan and the efficacy of environmental mitigation measures. Such monitoring will be carried out periodically to support Plan implementation.

SEO indicators are simple and effective quantifiable indicators used to measure the environmental effects of implementing the Plan and the progress of SEOs and related targets. SEO targets set focused, measurable aims and thresholds that the Plan can support the achievement of.

Coillte are responsible for the implementation of the SEA monitoring programme. The environmental effects (including positive, negative and cumulative effects) of Plan implementation will be monitored continuously utilising Coillte monitoring processes over the course of the Plan's lifetime. This monitoring will be carried out by Coillte's Forest Planning Team. Monitoring reports distilling Coillte's continuous monitoring will be produced periodically to document monitoring outcomes nationally at and BAU level. Comprehensive reporting of Plan performance will be undertaken every 5 years.

Where monitoring identifies that the implementation of the Plan is having significant negative environmental effects, an in-depth review of the Plan should take place and the Plan should be updated in a manner that satisfactorily mitigates these environmental effects (i.e., through the adoption of additional environmental mitigation measures).[2]

Similarly, where monitoring indicates that potential positive environmental effects associated with Plan implementation are not being adequately realised, the Plan should be reviewed and updated in a manner that supports the realisation of all potential positive environmental effects, having regard to the overall vision, ambitions and strategic objectives of the Plan.

The SEA Monitoring Programme established for the Plan is contained in Table 9-1. This monitoring programme has been developed in accordance with EPA guidelines entitled 'Guidance on SEA Statements and Monitoring' (2023). The monitoring programme includes detail on the indicators, targets and data sources used to monitor and measure progress. It has been developed to align with the higher-order FESLUP, augment/focus environmental monitoring processes, and to avoid duplication of monitoring processes.

Coillte is responsible for the ongoing review of indicators and targets, collating relevant monitoring data, the preparation of monitoring evaluation reports, the publication of these reports and, if necessary, the carrying out of remedial action.

[2] The threshold for 'significant' environmental effects shall be based on the definition of 'significant' environmental effects in EPA Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (2022) i.e. Plan-level effects that by their character, magnitude, duration or intensity, alter a sensitive aspect of the environment. The occurrence of a significant negative environmental effects due to Plan implementation will be the threshold for taking remedial action and updating the LUSIP accordingly.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Coillte published a strategic vision for the organisation in 2022 titled *Strategic Vision for Our Future Forest Estate*. This vision outlines the organisations ambitions and commitment to the sustainable management of Coillte's estate to 2050 and beyond, based on delivering the multiple benefits of forests to society; including climate mitigation, biodiversity enhancement, sustainable timber production, and public recreation, while ensuring Coillte remains financially sustainable and socially responsible. Coillte's approach to develop a balanced strategic vision for forestry and land-use is underpinned by four key pillars and their associated ambitions, including: Forests for Climate, Forests for Nature, Forests for Wood, and Forests for People.

Striving to realise their vision, Coillte developed the *Forest Estate Strategic Land Use Plan* (FESLUP) 2023 - 2050, which provided the framework that outlines the strategic objectives to balance the delivery of the organisation's ambitions until 2050.The FESLUP outlines a roadmap, focusing on creating a resilient forest estate that delivers environmental, social, and economic benefits. The FESLUP has already been subject to a full Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

The *Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan* (LUSIP) is the next step within Coillte's strategic planning hierarchy, translating the high-level ambitions and objectives outlined in the FESLUP into implementable and measurable actions over the period of 2026-2035.

1.2 Plan Amendments

This document is the consolidated version of the SEA Environmental Report which has been updated in response to consultation submissions received during SEA Consultations and considers amendments to the Plan made during the Plan-making process.

The Plan amendments arising from the consultation process and post-consultation Plan-making process have been subject to further environmental assessment. These assessments are presented in Appendix 4 of this report. It was concluded that the amendments to the Plan will not introduce any new likely, significant effects not previously considered and mitigated against in the SEA. Therefore, further SEA of the amendments was not required.

1.3 SEA Environmental Report

This is the consolidated, final version of the SEA Environmental Report produced for the LUSIP (herein referred to as 'LUSIP' or 'the Plan'). The purpose of this report is to identify and evaluate the likely, significant environmental effects of implementation of the LUSIP. It forms the main written output of the SEA process and as such presents information on the environmental assessment and likely environmental issues related to the implementation of the Plan.

The broad purpose of this SEA Environmental Report is as follows:

1. Identify, evaluate and describe the likely, significant effects on the environment of the Plan and reasonable alternatives.
2. Inform the preparation of the Plan.
3. Provide environmental authorities and the public with an early opportunity to make submissions on a version of the Plan and its potential environmental effects - and incorporate changes where necessary to the Plan and SEA processes.

Coillte had undertaken SEA Consultation for the Draft LUSIP and associated environmental assessment document, namely the Draft SEA Environmental Report and Draft Natura Impact Report (NIR) for the Draft LUSIP.

1.4 Background to SEA and Legislative Context

SEA is required under the EU Council Directive 2001/42/EC on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment (the SEA Directive[3]). The SEA Directive requires that an environmental assessment is carried out on certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

The overarching objective of the SEA Directive is *'to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans….with a view to promoting sustainable development.'*[4]

SEA is a process for evaluating, at the earliest appropriate stage, the environmental consequences of implementing Plan or Programme (P/P) initiatives prepared by authorities at a national, regional or local level or which have been prepared for adoption through legislative means.

SEA is described within the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government's (2004) Guidelines for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities on the Implementation of SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) as the *'formal systematic evaluation of the likely, significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt the plan or programme'.*

SEA is intended to provide the framework for influencing decision-making at an earlier stage when P/Ps – which give rise to individual projects – are being developed. SEA should result in more sustainable development through the systematic appraisal of plan and policy options.

[3] Transposing Irish Regulations: S.I. No. 436 of 2004 (Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011 (Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011).
[4] Implementation of SEA Directive (2001/42/EC): Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment – Guidelines for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2004)

1.5 Purpose of this SEA

The purpose of SEA in this case was to enable Coillte to integrate environmental considerations into the Plan-making process at an early stage and in a structured and integrated way, and to:

1. Identify, evaluate and describe the likely, significant effects on the environment of implementing the Plan.
2. Ensure that identified significant negative effects are communicated and mitigated, and that the effectiveness of mitigation is appropriately monitored during Plan implementation.
3. Identify positive (and neutral) effects associated with the Plan, and to ensure that these are communicated.
4. Provide an opportunity for SEA Environmental Authorities, interested stakeholders and members of the public to make submissions on the Plan, participate in the Plan-making and contribute to the Plan.

1.6 Appropriate Assessment

Appropriate Assessment (AA) is a process, conducted under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), to evaluate the implications of a plan or project, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, on the Natura 2000 network (or the National Site Network in Northern Ireland), considering their conservation objectives. These are sites that have been designated for conservation due to their ecological importance and include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

A Plan must be evaluated for its implications on European sites before it is adopted, made or approved. Plans can only be adopted, made or approved after it has been determined that it will not result in adverse effects on European sites, considering their conservation objectives.

Article 6 of the Habitats Directive envisages a two-stage process relating to Appropriate Assessment.

Stage 1 Screening for AA must be carried out for Plans to determine whether a Plan, individually or in-combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have a significant effect on SACs/SPAs, considering their conservation objectives. The competent authority responsible for making the Plan is required to complete the Screening for Appropriate Assessment.

Stage 2 AA must be carried out for a Plan where a Plan-maker determines that a Plan, individually or in-combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have a significant effect on SACs/SPAs, considering their conservation objectives. The purpose of the Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is to determine whether the development will have adverse effects on the integrity of European sites. This assessment is documented in a an NIR.

The LUSIP was subject to Stage 1 Screening for AA, and it was determined that the Plan is likely to have a significant effect on SACs/SPAs, considering their conservation objectives, and in absence of appropriate mitigation. An NIR was therefore prepared alongside this SEA Environmental Report. This NIR has informed the carrying out of the SEA in accordance with Integrated Biodiversity Assessment principles.

2. THE PLAN

2.1 Overview

Coillte published a strategic vision for the organisation in 2022 titled *Strategic Vision for Our Future Forest Estate*. This vision outlines the organisations ambitions and commitment to the sustainable management of Coillte's estate to 2050 and beyond, based on delivering the multiple benefits of forests to society; including climate mitigation, biodiversity enhancement, sustainable timber production, and public recreation, while ensuring Coillte remains financially sustainable and socially responsible. Coillte's approach to develop a balanced strategic vision for forestry and land-use is underpinned by four key pillars and their associated ambitions, including: Forests for Climate, Forests for Nature, Forests for Wood, and Forests for People.

The ambitions set out under Coillte's Strategic Vision are as follows:

Table 2-1: Coillte's Ambitions for their forest estate under each Key Pillar, as set out in their Strategic Vision.

Key Pillar	Ambitions
Forests for Climate	**Ambition 1:** Enable the creation of 100,000 hectares of new forests, half of which will be native woodlands, which will sink 18m tonnes CO_2 by 2050.
	Ambition 2: Redesign 30,000 hectares of Peatland Forests for climate and ecological benefits by 2050.
	Ambition3: Manage the existing Forest Estate to increase the carbon store by 10m tonnes of CO_2 by 2050.
	Ambition 4: Generate an additional 1 Gigawatt of renewable wind energy to power 500,000 homes by 2030.
Forests for Nature	**Ambition 5:** Enhance and restore biodiversity by increasing the area of our estate managed primarily for nature from 20% to 30% by 2025.
	Ambition 6: Transform areas of our forests so that 50% of our estate is managed primarily for nature in the long-term.
Forests for Wood	**Ambition 7:** Produce 25m cubic meters of certified Irish timber, to support the construction of 300,000 homes by 2030.
	Ambition 8: Promote the use and benefits of wood products to increase the level of timber homes from 20% to 80% by 2050.
Forests for People	**Ambition 9:** Enable the investment of €100 million in world-class Visitor Destinations to support growth in tourism and recreation by 2030.
	Ambition 10: Double the number of Recreation Areas to 500, to benefit local communities and people's wellbeing.
	Ambition 11: Create 1,200 new jobs in rural communities to support the just transition to a low carbon economy.

Striving to realise their vision, Coillte developed the *Forest Estate Strategic Land Use Plan (FESLUP) 2023 - 2050*, which provided the framework that outlines the strategic objectives to balance the delivery of the organisation's ambitions until 2050.The FESLUP outlines a roadmap, focusing on creating a resilient forest estate that delivers environmental, social, and economic benefits. The FESLUP has already been subject to a full SEA.

The LUSIP is the next step within Coillte's strategic planning hierarchy, translating the high-level ambitions and objectives outlined in the FESLUP into implementable and measurable actions over the period of 2026-2035.

2.2 Content of the Plan

The primary purpose of this LUSIP is to bridge the gap between strategy and implementation, making sure Coillte's long-term vision is realised based on a structured and collaborative approach that includes all areas of the organisation. In this regard, the LUSIP integrates spatial data, scenario planning, and best practices in forestry management. It establishes indicators to monitor progress and carries out SEA and AA to ensure environmental considerations are integrated into the Plan and the Plan aligns with all relevant environmental legislation and the environmental policy framework in Ireland. Mitigation measures have been developed and integrated into the plan under the SEA and AA to prevent and reduce potential significant negative effects that may occur due to the implementation of the Plan

The LUSIP has been developed through a phased approach. The initial stage focused on creating an outline plan that details the high-level actions for each FESLUP objective, while the second stage refines these actions through extensive consultation and environmental assessments. This structured, participative process ensures the LUSIP remains adaptable and relevant, enabling Coillte to deliver a resilient forest estate that supports Ireland’s climate, biodiversity, and societal goals while safeguarding its natural resources for future generations.

Under the LUSIP Coillte has set out a series of actions for each of the four strategic pillars (Forests for Climate, Forests for Nature, Forests for Wood, and Forests for People). Each action has been specifically identified to help deliver on FESLUP objectives and corresponding Strategic Vision ambitions. The actions under Climate, Nature, and People Pillars apply solely to Coillte’s land, while those under the Wood Pillar apply to the entire estate managed by Coillte. For financial partners holding timber rights on Coillte land, consideration of alternative Climate, Nature, and People objectives and associated actions will only occur once these rights have expired.

Indicative timeframes were assigned to actions to monitor progress effectively and guide their timely implementation, while recognizing that execution and ongoing efforts may continue beyond the indicated periods. Some ambitions were established before the LUSIP was developed have different original timeframes. However, the actions outlined in the Plan align with and support their delivery within the 2026-2035 period.

The list of actions includes both ongoing work and new opportunities to enhance delivery. Where it was possible specific targets were identified.

Some of the actions require input and collaboration from various stakeholders, and some of the outcomes and/or deliverables detailed are not under the direct control of Coillte. Coillte will actively engage with external stakeholders to ensure alignment, gather insights, and advocate for necessary policy or regulatory changes to support the plan delivery.

Although this plan has a national scope, actions will be reported by Business Area Unit (BAU) where applicable. This will ensure implementation is adapted to local context, enhancing effectiveness of the plan.

2.3 Plan Inter-relationships

An examination of how the LUSIP interrelates with other legislation and plans/programmes is presented in Appendix 1. This examination was undertaken to develop an understanding of Plan inter-relationships and to assist in the process of assessing the environmental effects of the Plan relative to wider environmental protection objectives, with a view to ensuring the Plan is harmonious and integrated with these wider objectives.

3. SEA METHODOLOGY

3.1 The SEA Process

The SEA process can be defined by four stages, all of which include some level of consultation with stakeholders and the public (Figure 3-1). These stages are defined as:

- Stage 1 – Screening: deciding whether an SEA is required, or not.
- Stage 2 – Scoping: establishing the spatial and temporal scope of the SEA and a decision-making framework that can be used to evaluate impacts.
- Stage 3 – Identification, Prediction, Considerations of Alternatives, Evaluation and Mitigation of Potential Impacts.
- Stage 4 – Consultation, Revision and Post-Adoption. This includes the implementation of statutory SEA monitoring.

This SEA Environmental Report documents the outcomes of Stage 3.

The SEA process generally runs in parallel with the Appropriate Assessment (AA), which is briefly discussed in Section 1.5. The key stages of the integrated SEA and AA processes for Plan-making generally are defined in Figure 3-1.

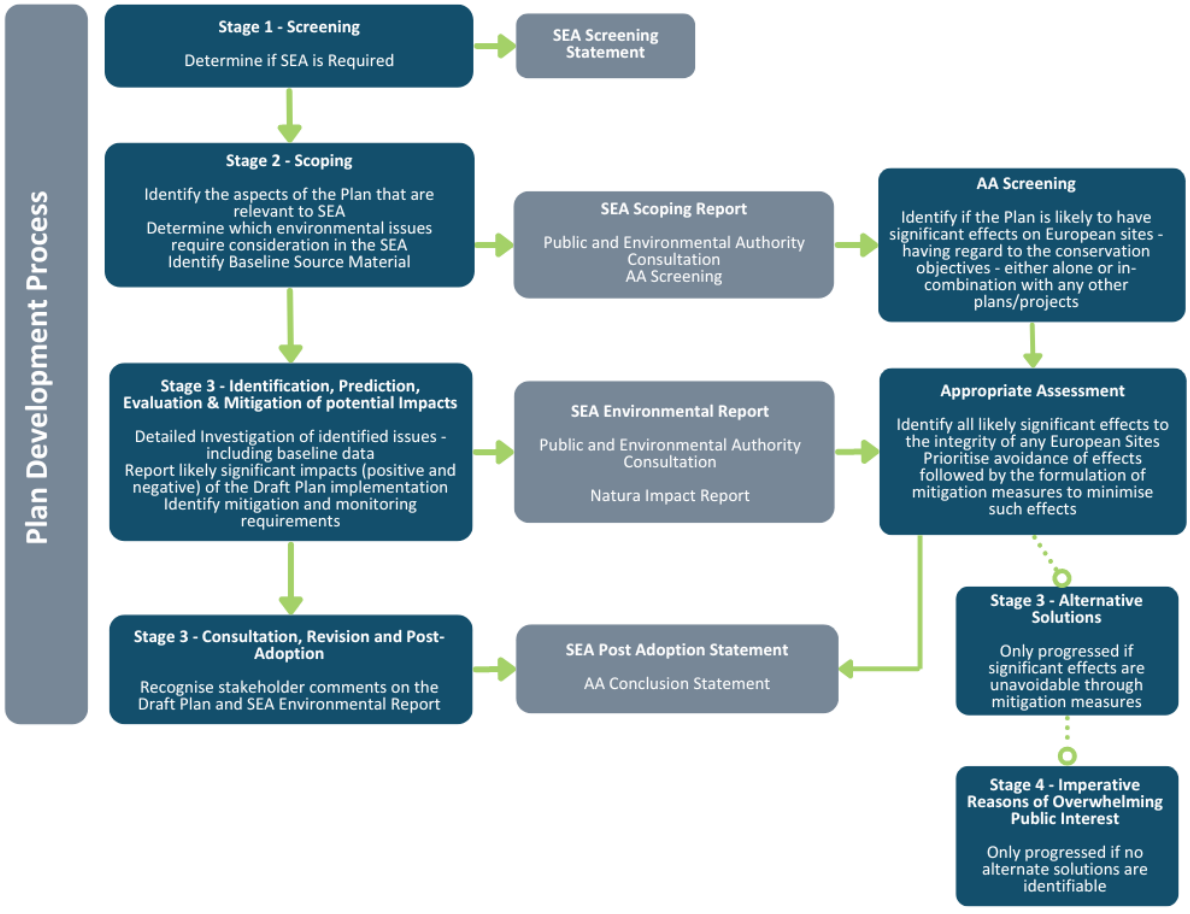


Figure 3-1: SEA and AA Stages and Key Deliverables

3.2 Overview of the Plan, SEA and AA Processes

Following the assessment of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of S.I. 435/2004, as amended, and having regard to the nature of the Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan and the potential for likely, significant environmental effects from implementation of the Plan, Coillte has determined that the Plan has the potential to give rise to likely, significant effects on the environment, and an SEA is therefore required.

An SEA Scoping Report was produced for an initial draft version of the Plan. This SEA Scoping Report was shared with SEA Environmental Authorities during the SEA Scoping stage. Various Environmental Authorities made submissions relating to the environmental considerations relevant to the Plan. The SEA Scoping report and the submissions received from the Environmental Authorities helped clarify and define the environmental issues that needed to be addressed in the SEA (and AA) of the Plan.

Plan-making and SEA and AA processes have taken place concurrently and the findings of the SEA and AA process have been integrated and have suitably informed the Plan-making process.

Taking into account the scope of environmental topics and issues detailed in the SEA Scoping Report, which was produced for an earlier outline iteration of the Plan; the environmental effects associated with the implementation of the Plan have been identified, evaluated and described in this SEA Environmental Report. This report also defines mitigation measures to prevent and reduce significant negative effects due to the implementation of the Plan.

This document is the final, consolidated version of the SEA Environmental Report, which has been updated in response to consultation submissions received during the SEA consultations, and considers the amendments made to the Plan.

The findings of the AA were integrated into this SEA Environmental Report. A final, consolidated version of the NIR (which documents the AA process) has now been also produced. The SEA and AA processes followed elements of Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment.

Proposed amendments to the Plan arising subsequent to the carrying out of the statutory consultation were subject to Screening for SEA or AA. This assessment is included in the appendices of both the SEA ER and the NIR.

An SEA Statement, which includes comprehensive information on how environmental considerations were integrated into the Plan, is published alongside the final Plan. The final Plan, upon implementation, will be monitored for environmental effects as defined under the SEA.

3.3 SEA Processes Undertaken

3.3.1 SEA Screening

The first stage of the SEA process was to carry out Screening for SEA to determine the requirement for SEA of the LUSIP.

Following the assessment of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of S.I. 435/2004, as amended, and having regard to the nature of the Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan and the potential for likely, significant environmental effects from implementation of the Plan, Coillte has determined that the Plan has the potential to give rise to likely, significant effects on the environment, and SEA is therefore required.

The principal reasons the Plan requires SEA are as follows:

- The Plan supports intensive forestry operations and infrastructural development that may give rise to likely, significant effects on the environment, such as effects on biodiversity, flora and fauna; hydrology and surface water quality; soils, geology and hydrogeology; and landscape character and visual amenity.
- The Plan will provide a framework for land use and has the potential to drive significant land use change.
- The Plan is national in scale, covering approximately 7% of land use in Ireland and ca. 50% of national forestry. Given the geographic scope and scale of the Plan, environmental effects have the potential to be long-term and cumulative in nature along with other national and regional Plans/Programmes.
- The Plan relates to the forestry sector and may influence and support the future development of projects listed in Annex II to the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive.[5]
- The Plan, individually and/or in combination with other plans and projects, has the potential to have likely, significant effects on European sites within the zone of influence of the Plan, in view of site conservation objectives and best scientific knowledge (in the absence of mitigation measures).
- The Plan has the potential to influence other plans/programmes, including those in a hierarchy, to a significant degree.
- The Plan has the potential to generate transboundary environmental impacts and result in likely, significant effects on the environment in Northern Ireland. The Plan may give rise to impacts on environmental components which can be transmitted across boundaries (such as water quality, air quality, landscape character and visual amenity, climate, biodiversity etc.).

3.3.2 SEA Scoping

SEA Scoping is the second stage of the SEA process. The purpose of SEA Scoping is to establish the spatial and temporal scope of the SEA and a decision-making framework that can be used to evaluate impacts. An SEA Scoping Report is produced to document the scoping process.

Coillte carried out SEA Scoping for an initial draft of the Plan which was informed by consultation responses from the environmental authorities. The SEA Scoping Report outlined information on the Plan, including the need for the Plan, its temporal and geographical area and overall objectives. It facilitated scoping the Environmental Components and understanding the environmental issues to be considered under the SEA process. The Scoping Report was also required to facilitate statutory consultation to ensure the approach proposed for the SEA is appropriate. A copy of this report was made available to the statutory Environmental Authorities.

The SEA Scoping Report, along with SEA scoping submissions and consideration of these submissions by the SEA process, helped communicate and define the scope of the environmental issues which are dealt with by the SEA, the methods which are used to address these issues, and the level of detail required to address these issues, as per the SEA Guidelines.[6]

[5] Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU.
[6] Implementation of SEA Directive (2001/42/EC): Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment Guidelines for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2004), Page 18: *'It is recommended that at the end of the scoping procedure, the plan-making authority should prepare a brief scoping report of its conclusions as to what information is to be included in the environmental report, taking account of any recommendations from the environmental authorities.'*

The following statutory Environmental Authorities and interested stakeholders were consulted on the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the SEA Environmental Report:

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Development Applications Unit
- Minister for Climate, Energy and the Environment
- Minister for Agriculture, Food, & the Marine
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Northern Ireland (DAERA)

All SEA Scoping submissions received from the Environmental Authorities during SEA Scoping are presented in Appendix 2.

The Environmental Components in the SEA Directive that were 'scoped in' following the SEA Scoping process are as follows:

- Population, Human Health and the Economy
- Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna
- Landscape, Seascape and Visual Amenity
- Cultural Heritage - Archaeological and Architectural
- Soils and Geology
- Land Use
- Air Quality and Noise
- Water
- Material Assets
- Tourism and Recreation
- Climate Change

3.3.3 SEA Consultation

The above statutory Environmental Authorities were consulted again following completion of a draft version of the Plan and associated SEA Environmental Report and NIR. Members of the public and stakeholders were also provided with an opportunity to make submissions on the draft version of the Plan. Consultation submissions received from the Environmental Authorities, members of the public and stakeholder were considered as appropriate during the Plan Development, SEA, and AA processes. These consultation submissions informed and influenced the amendments to the Draft Plan.

3.4 SEA Environmental Report

3.4.1 Environmental Assessment Approach and Methodology

Stage 3 of the SEA process involves the strategic level identification, prediction, evaluation and mitigation of potential environmental impacts associated with a Plan/Programme (P/P). An SEA Environmental Report is produced to document this process. The SEA Environmental Report is integral to the SEA process and is compiled during a Plan-making process to allow for adequate consideration of the likely, significant environmental effects of the plan and the integration of appropriate environmental mitigation measures into a P/P. It should serve to guide a Plan-making process and ensure optimal environmental outcomes.

The SEA Environmental Report forms the main written output of the SEA process. It serves to document the evaluation of the likely, significant environmental effects of implementing a Plan on the relevant Environmental Components defined in the SEA Directive. It defines Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) and associated targets and indicators relating to each Environmental Component area. It defines environmental mitigation measures to prevent, reduce and offset the likely, significant environmental effects of implementing a P/P and monitoring measures to measure the environmental effects of a P/P. It aims to provide a Plan-maker, statutory Environmental Authorities, interested stakeholders and the general public with a clear understanding of likely, significant environmental effects associated with implementing a P/P.

A summary of the information contained in an SEA Environmental Report is presented below:

- A non-technical summary of the environmental assessment carried out to inform the SEA Environmental Report.
- A description of the P/P under consideration, including detail on the main objectives of the P/P, the contents of the P/P, anticipated P/P outcomes, and how the P/P relates to other P/Ps.
- A description and characterisation of the baseline environment that has the potential to be affected by the implementation of the P/P, including the evolution of the baseline environment without the implementation of the P/P (I.e., under a ‘do-nothing’ or ‘do-minimum’ scenario).
- A description of any existing environmental problems relevant to the P/P.
- Environmental protection objectives (including indicators and targets) relevant to the P/P and the way these objectives and environmental considerations have been taken into during the Plan-making process.
- A description of reasonable alternatives identified, the reasons for considering these alternatives within the scope of the environmental assessment, and an evaluation of their likely, significant effect on the environment.
- An evaluation of the likely, significant effects of the implementation of the P/P (including reasonable alternatives) on the environment, and in particular on the following environmental components: biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors.
- A description of environmental mitigation measures proposed to prevent, reduce and offset likely, significant environmental effects that may occur dur the implementation of the P/P.
- A description of the monitoring measures to be implemented to monitor the likely, significant effects of implementing a P/P.

This SEA Environmental Report has been produced for Coillte's LUSIP and was made available to members of the public and the statutory Environmental Authorities to allow them to make submissions on the environmental assessment undertaken, and the environmental mitigation and monitoring measures proposed for the LUSIP.

3.4.2 SEA Environmental Report Authors

FT is a consultancy based in Cork, Dublin and Carlow, specialising in civil and environmental engineering, planning and environmental assessment. The company has established an experienced, professional team specialising in all forms of statutory environmental assessment, including EIA, AA and SEA. This team has the support of many in-house engineers, scientists, planners and subject specialists.

FT was retained by Coillte to undertake SEA of the Plan and are responsible for the completion of this SEA Environmental Report. The competent experts involved in the preparation of this SEA Environmental Report are outlined in Table 3-1:

Table 3-1: SEA Environmental Report Authors

Name and Qualifications	Project Role	Relevant Experience
Bernie Guinan MSc, BSc. (Envi. Sci & Tech) Dip. Pollution Assessment Control Dip. Business Development	Project Director	Bernie is Director with Fehily Timoney and Company (FT). She is responsible for managing the Circular Economy and Environment group in FT. She has 25 years' experience in delivering and managing projects in the environmental sector. Bernie has extensive experience coordinating EIA, SEA and AA projects, including large-scale and complex projects. She has in-depth knowledge of all environmental and planning policy, legislation and guidance.
Richard Deeney Advanced Diploma in Planning and Environmental Law, Kings Inns, Ireland 2017 B.Sc. First Class Honours Degree, Environmental Management, Dublin Institute of Technology, 2012 Chartered Environmentalist, The Society for the Environment	Project Manager & SEA Team Lead	Richard is Principal Environmental Scientist at FT. Richard holds a B.Sc. First-Class Honours degree in Environmental Management from Dublin Institute of Technology. He has 13 years' experience providing environmental assessment consultancy services. Richard works in the Circular Economy and Environment group at FT and is highly experienced in project managing, coordinating and delivering EIA, AA and SEA. He has excellent experience in planning and environmental assessment for various types of plans and projects. He has been responsible for project managing and coordinating the completion of the suite of SEA and AA deliverables for 25 Local Authority Climate Action Plans, and multiple land use and non-land use plans.

Name and Qualifications	Project Role	Relevant Experience
Donna O' Halloran National Diploma in Horticulture (National Botanic Gardens/ITB, Dublin). B.Sc. (Agr.) Landscape Horticulture (Hons) (University College Dublin) M.Sc. (Agr.) Environmental Resource Management (1:1) (University College Dublin) M.Sc. Ecological Assessment (1:1) (University College Cork)	AA & Biodiversity Team Lead	Donna is a Senior Ecologist and Environmental Scientist with FT within the Circular Economy & Environment group. Donna has worked at FT for over 10 years as an Ecologist/Environmental Scientist. Donna has a wealth of experience in general ecology, forest ecology, invasive species, air and climate and landscape design (including semi-natural woodland habitat creation). Donna has worked on forestry, infrastructure, energy, waste and urban development projects, and has vast experience in ecological surveying, Ecological Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment.
Sanghamitra Dutta MSc. Global Change: Ecosystem Science and Policy, University College Dublin, 2020 BSc. Environmental Science, St. Edmund's College, Shillong, India, 2017	Project Support	Sanghamitra is a Senior Project Environmental Scientist who is in the Circular Economy and Environment groupat FT. She has ca. 5 years postgraduate experience, holding a MSc. in Global Change: Ecosystem Science and Policy from University College Dublin and a BSc. Environmental Science from St. Edmund's College, Shillong, India. Sanghamitra is adept at delivering exceptional results, with expertise in SEA and EIA, Project Management, Stakeholder Engagement, and Environmental Research. She has been responsible for supporting the delivery of SEA documentation since joining FT, such as Scoping reports and Environmental Reports for various land use plans.
Emma De Klerk B.Sc. First Class Honours, Environmental Science, University College Cork, 2024	Project Support	Emma is a Graduate Environmental Scientist in the Circular Economy and Environment group at FT. She holds a B.Sc. (Hons) in Environmental Science from University College Cork where she achieved First Class Honours. Emma has been involved in a variety of diverse and challenging projects since joining FT, covering key aspects of environmental assessment, amenity development, and monitoring. She has been responsible for the research, data collation, validation, and analysis for a multitude of projects, including desk-based studies, research, as well as the development of associated reports.

3.4.3 Difficulties Encountered

No significant difficulties were encountered during the undertaking of the assessment.

3.4.4 SEA Environmental Report Checklist

A checklist of information has been included in this SEA Environmental Report under the SEA Directive and transposing national legislation[7] is provided in Table 3-2. This checklist cross-references the sections in the report where information can be found.

Table 3-2: SEA Environmental Report Checklist

Information Required	Relevant Section of the SEA Environmental Report
An outline of the contents and main objectives of the Plan and relationship with other relevant plans.	Section 2 and Appendix 1.
The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the Plan.	Section 4.
The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.	Section 4.
Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the Plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to the Birds Directive or Habitats Directive.	Section 4.
The environmental protection objectives, established at international, European Union or national level, which are relevant to the Plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.	Section 5.
An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information.	Section 6.
The likely, significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors.	Section 7 and Appendix 3.
Interrelationships between each Environmental Component.	Section 7 and Appendix 3.
The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the Plan.	Section 8.

[7] The Environmental Report is required to contain the information specified in Annex 1 of the SEA Directive and Schedule 2 of S.I. 435 S.I. No. 435/2004 - European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (as amended)

Information Required	Relevant Section of the SEA Environmental Report
A description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring of the significant environmental effects of implementation of the Plan.	Section 10.
A non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.	Front section of this document.

3.5 SEA Statement

Once the Plan is adopted, Coillte must publish a post-adoption SEA Statement alongside the final Plan. The post-adoption SEA Statement is another integral component of the SEA process.

The SEA Statement provides detail on how the environmental assessment and considerations detailed in the SEA Environmental Report and SEA-related consultation responses throughout the process have influenced the Plan development process. It summarises the reasoning for choosing the preferred alternatives associated with the final Plan instead other reasonable alternatives. The SEA Statement also presents detail on environmental mitigation and monitoring measures to be implemented over the lifetime of the Plan.

The main purpose of the SEA Statement is to provide interested parties with a good and clear understanding of how the SEA process was carried out during the Plan development process and how SEA informed and supported the process.

3.6 Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment

The environmental assessment undertaken was carried out in accordance with an Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment based methodology in accordance with the following EPA guidance documents:

- EPA (2012), Final Report: Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment, Streamlining AA, SEA and EIA Processes. Best Practice Guidance.
- EPA (2013) Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment - Streamlining AA, SEA and EIA Processes - Practitioner's Manual.

The methodology employed facilitated the integration of SEA and AA processes relating to biodiversity impact assessment to ensure the effective, aligned and streamlined assessment of biodiversity impacts. The Plan development, SEA and AA processes - including scoping, baseline evaluation, impact assessment and mitigation/monitoring measure development processes - were carried out concurrently to facilitate holistic and complete assessment of biodiversity impacts. The effective communication and integration of scientific knowledge and analysis between assessments took place. The SEA was suitably informed by the analysis and conclusions in AA and vice versa.

3.7 Outcomes of the Plan, SEA and AA Processes

The SEA and AA processes have facilitated the integration of environmental considerations into the Plan-making process. Reasonable alternatives to the Plan have been assessed, and preferred alternatives identified, considering environmental factors. Environmental mitigation measures contributing towards environmental protection and management and sustainable development - in line with the wider legislative and plan/policy framework - have been integrated into the Plan.

4. THE ENVIRONMENTAL BASELINE

4.1 Introduction

An evaluation and a characterisation of the current state of the environment likely to be affected by the Plan was undertaken to inform the SEA process. This section of the SEA Environmental Report documents this evaluation. The following Environmental Components were considered during this evaluation:

- Population, Human Health and the Economy
- Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna
- Landscape, Seascape and Visual Amenity
- Cultural Heritage - Archaeological and Architectural
- Soils and Geology
- Land Use
- Air Quality and Noise
- Water
- Material Assets
- Tourism and Recreation
- Climate Change

Baseline environmental information for the study area was gathered using available environmental datasets. The evaluation of the baseline environment was informed by the SEA Scoping Report produced and the consultation responses received during the SEA Scoping process. It was also guided and informed by the in-depth experience and expert judgement of the SEA Environmental Report Authors.

This section of the SEA Environmental Report includes information on the state of the environment within the defined Plan area, including maps of individual environmental components and a description of the baseline environment under the Environmental Components identified by the SEA Directive and transposing regulations (i.e. population and human health, biodiversity and flora and fauna, soil, water, air and climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between these factors). The Plan area and the extent of Coillte lands within the Plan area are shown in Figure 4-1. Existing environmental problems which are relevant to the Plan area were identified and examined under each Environmental Component heading.

The SEA study area or zone of influence has been identified and includes the entire area of Ireland and the surrounding areas that may be affected from implementation of the Plan, which has been conservatively assumed to be 12 nautical miles from the Ireland's coastline (i.e. Ireland's territorial waters), 25 km from Ireland's border with Northern Ireland and inclusive of all environmental features in Northern Ireland which are physically, hydrologically, ecologically or visually connected to the Plan area. The SEA study area is shown in Figure 4-2.

Information provided in this section is based on available baseline data from web-based searches and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) information. A key resource that has been used throughout the SEA process is the EPA's SEA Spatial Information Sources Inventory[8]. The data presented in this section of the SEA Environmental Report is as up-to-date and as accurate as possible and is presented in a readily accessible format, where possible.

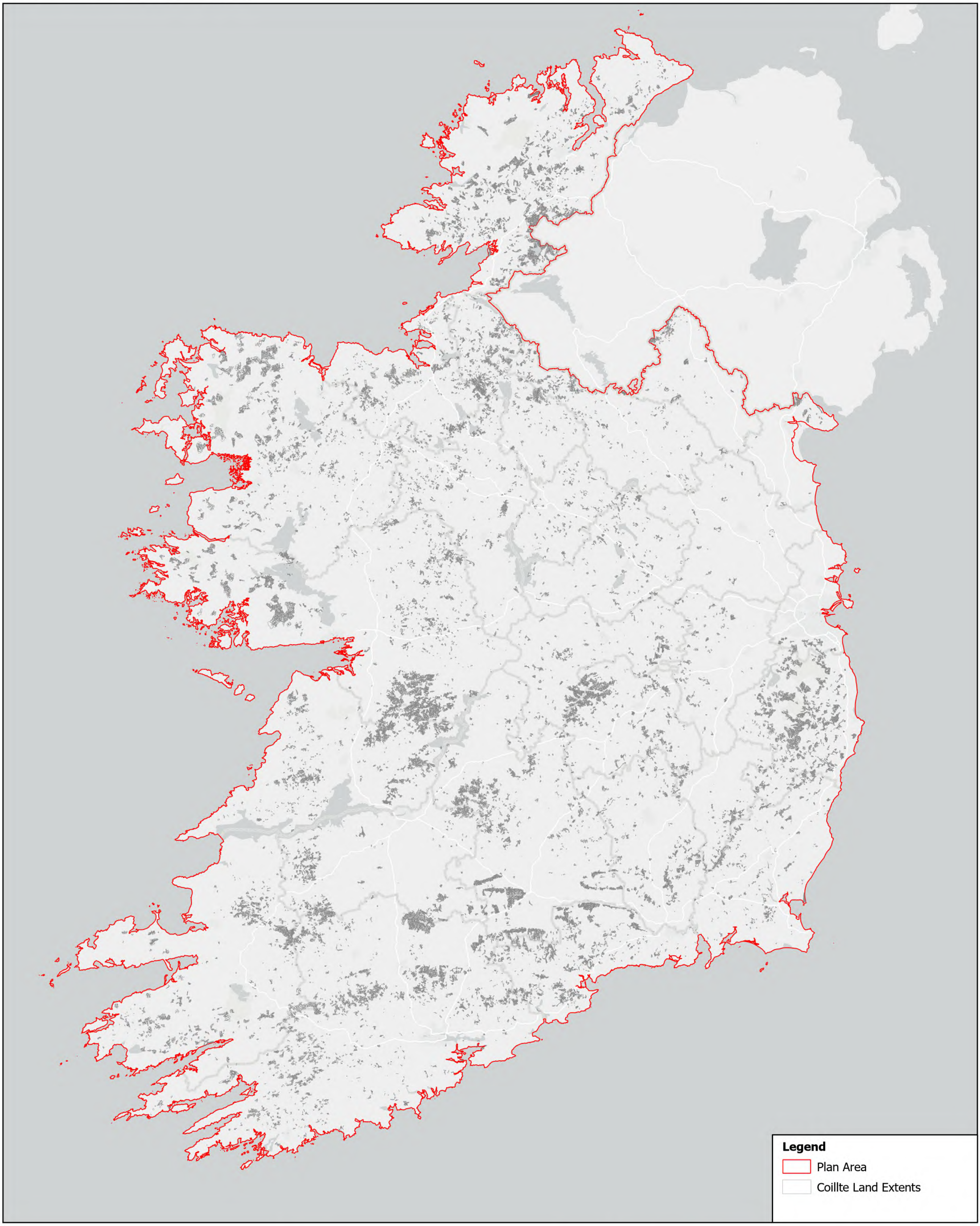
The interrelationships between Environmental Components are addressed throughout this section, as appropriate, under each Environmental Component heading.

This section of the SEA Environmental Report also examines the likely evolution of the baseline environment in the absence of the Plan being implemented (i.e., in the 'do nothing' or 'do minimum' scenario).

[8] Environmental Protection Agency. 2025. SEA Spatial Information Sources Inventory. Available at: SEA Spatial Information Sources Inventory | Environmental Protection Agency

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TITLE: Plan Area	**FIGURE NO:** 4-1		
	CLIENT: COILLTE		
PROJECT: Coillte Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan SEA	**SCALE:** 1:1,300,000	**REVISION:**	0
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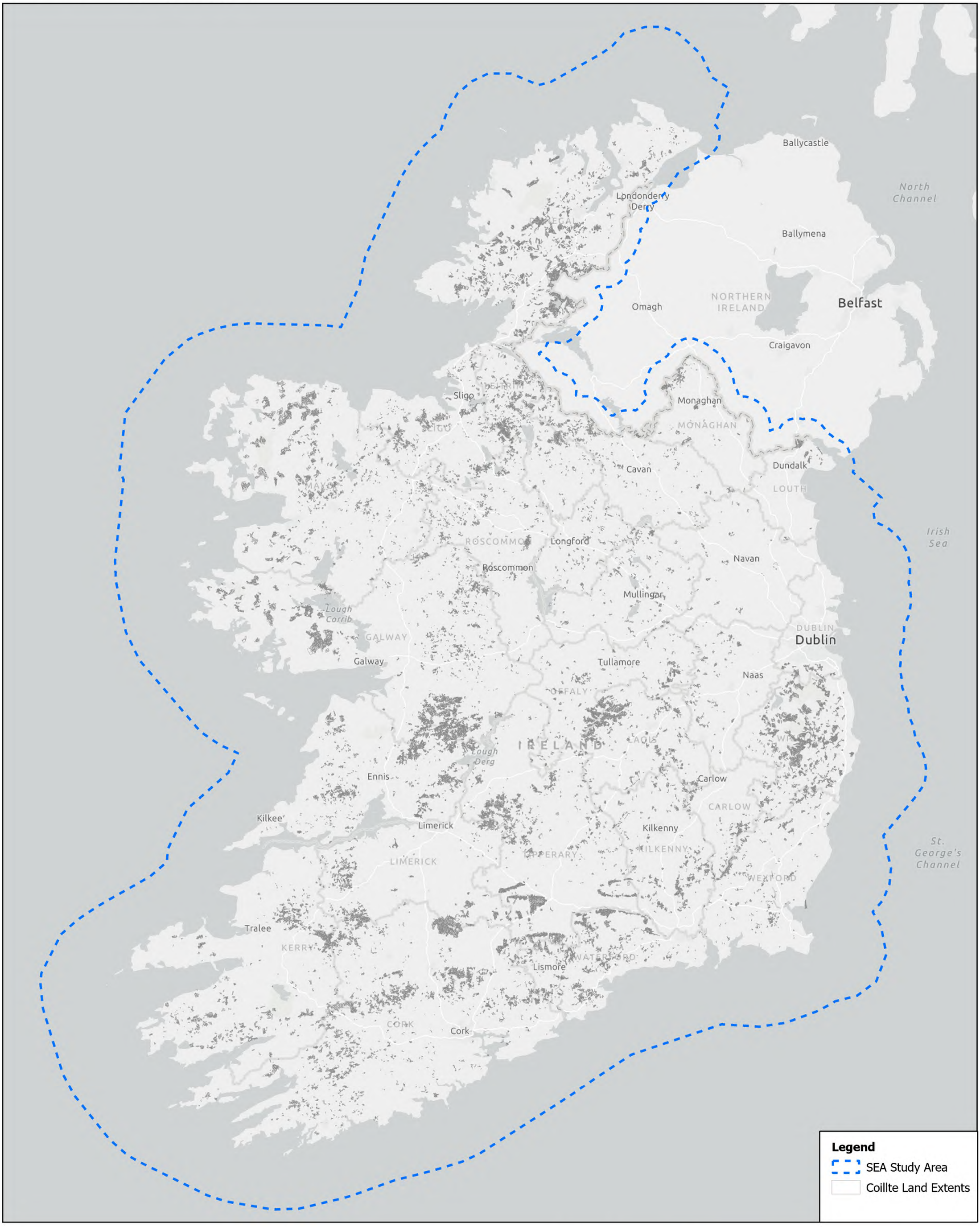
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TITLE: SEA Study Area	**FIGURE NO:** 4-2
PROJECT: Coillte Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan SEA	**CLIENT:** COILLTE
	SCALE: 1:1,400,000 — **REVISION:** 0
	DATE: 06/10/2025 — **PAGE SIZE:** A3

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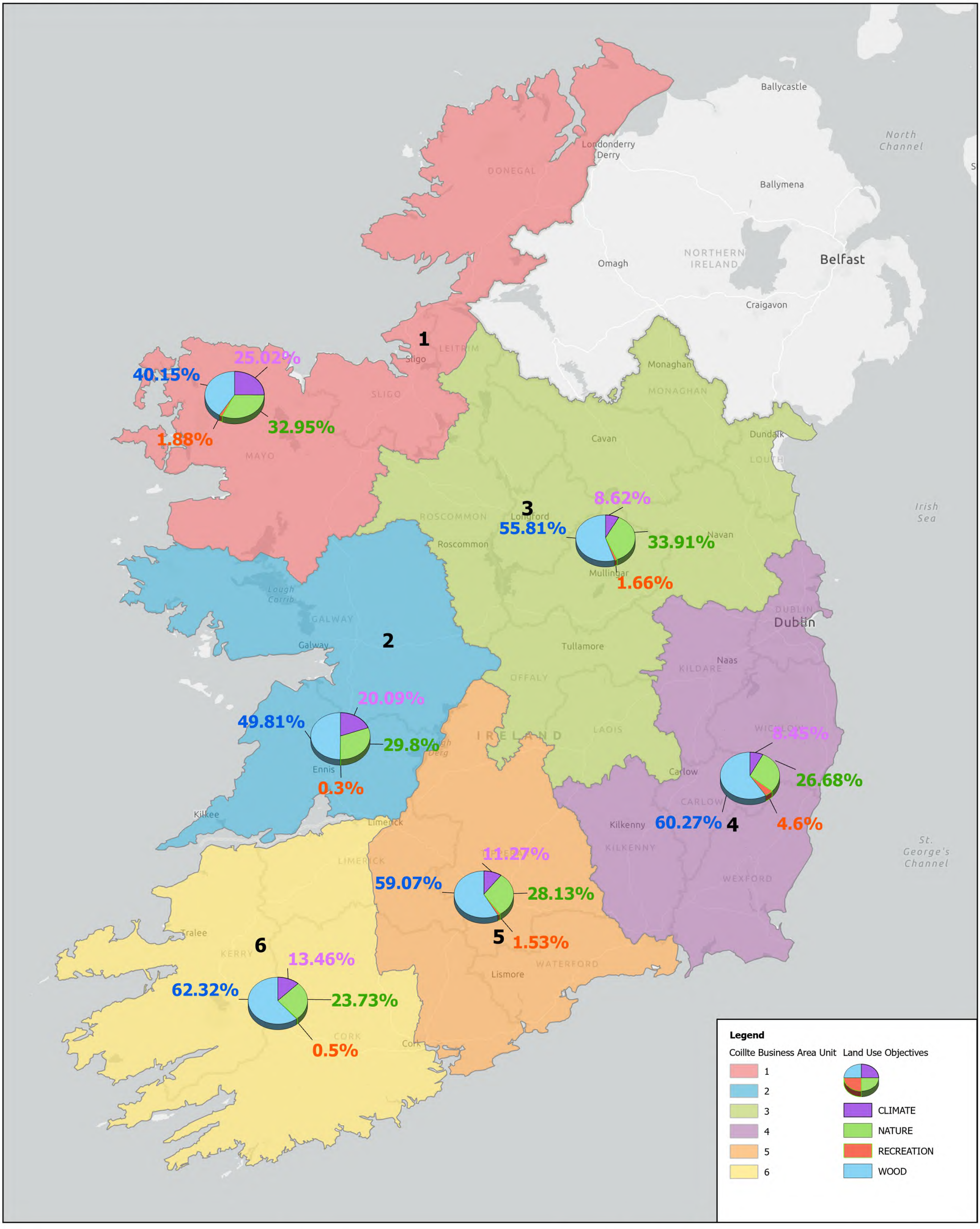
4.2 Coillte Land Use Objectives

Coillte's land use objectives, outlined in their Strategic Vision for the Future Forest Estate, aim to sustainably balance, and deliver the multiple benefits of Ireland's state forests across four pillars: Climate, Nature, Wood, and People. Figure 4-3 provides an estimated and indicative breakdown of primary land use objectives across each of Coillte's Business Area Units. This map provides insight into potential interactions between the LUSIP, which will define implementable actions to achieve these land use objectives, and the baseline environment nationally. It is important to note that, while primary land use objectives have been identified for all sites in within Coillte's remit, many areas also have secondary and tertiary objectives, reflecting the multifunctional nature of forest management. Consequently, actions within the Wood Pillar may also contribute to deliver Climate objectives. It is also important to note that that these are indicative land use objectives will evolve and may be amended over the course of Plan implementation, depending on BAU level management approaches.

Coillte also recognises that objectives within specific sites may change and evolve as new information and scientific understanding emerges. For instance, the current Nature objective figures include areas of potential ecological value that are currently being assessed. While not all of them will ultimately be primarily designated for biodiversity management, they indicate the current management focus.

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Legend

Coillte Business Area Unit
1
2
3
4
5
6

Land Use Objectives
CLIMATE
NATURE
RECREATION
WOOD

TITLE: Land Use and Objectives	**FIGURE NO:**	4-3	
	CLIENT:	COILLTE	
PROJECT: Coillte Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan SEA	**SCALE:**	1:1,300,000	**REVISION:** 0
	DATE:	06/10/2025	**PAGE SIZE:** A3

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4.3 Coillte Business Area Units

The Coillte estate is managed in six Business Area Units (BAU) across the country. Each BAU has specific characteristics and contributes differently to social, economic, and environmental demands of local communities. There are 320 Forests across all BAUs. Each Forest consists of several Properties. A Property refers to a defined portion of the Coillte estate and usually comprises both forested and unforested land. There are approximately 2,000 Properties across the entire Coillte estate.

The six BAUs across Coillte's estate are as follows:

- Northwest BAU (BAU1)
- Mid-West BAU (BAU2)
- Midlands BAU (BAU3)
- South-East BAU (BAU4)
- Central-Munster BAU (BAU5)
- South-West Munster BAU (BAU6)

The summary key characteristics of each of the above BAUs has been outlined below. This information was used to inform the environmental assessment of the Plan. The wood production targets for each BAU are provided in Table 4-1. It is not possible to set definitive targets by BAU for afforestation, peatland restoration/re-design, carbon storage, renewable energy, or nature restoration, as all of these actions are fundamentally dependent on the availability, suitability, and allocation of land.

While national ambitions have been set—for example, double the number of recreation sites, 100,000 hectares of new forest and 30,000 hectares of restored peatland by 2050, along with a 10 million tonnes increase in carbon storage and an increase in areas being managed primarily for nature from 20% to 50% long term — translating these into BAU-specific targets requires further analysis and partnerships.

The actions set out in the LUSIP are expected to support the identification of potential sites and the strategic alignment of land use with national climate and biodiversity objectives, enabling the development of realistic targets for these activities. Currently, the land use objectives defined in Figure 4-3 offer the most reliable and accurate indication of where these targets are most likely to be implemented.

Consideration was given to presenting operational and environmental mapping for each BAU, however it was determined, given the environmental datasets currently available, BAU level mapping, would not add any extra degree of granularity or clarity in terms of environmental information, beyond national level mapping which is presented for each environmental component in this section.

Table 4-1: Proposed Wood Pillar Targets for each BAU

BAU	Clearfell ('000 Ha)	Thinning ('000 Ha)	CCF ('000 Ha)	Total ('000 Ha)	Reforestation ('000 Ha)	Roads (Km)
1	8.3 - 9.2	6.0 - 6.6	0.2 - 0.3	14.6 - 16.1	8.3 - 9.2	80.1 - 88.5
2	9.7 - 10.7	10.7 - 11.8	0.9 - 0.9	21.2 - 23.5	9.7 - 10.7	116.9 - 129.2
3	9.8 - 10.8	11.6 - 12.9	1.3 - 1.4	22.7 - 25.1	9.8 - 10.8	125.0 - 138.1
4	7.5 - 8.3	15.8 - 17.5	2.1 - 2.3	25.4 - 28.1	7.5 - 8.3	139.9 - 154.6
5	9.8 - 10.8	24.4 - 26.9	2.1 - 2.3	36.2 - 40	9.8 - 10.8	199.2 - 220.2
6	9.8 - 10.9	7.7 - 8.5	0.4 - 0.5	18.0 - 19.9	9.8 - 10.9	99.0 - 109.4
Total	**54.9 - 60.7**	**76.3 - 84.3**	**7.0 - 7.7**	**138.1 - 152.7**	**54.9 - 60.7**	**760.0 – 840.0**

4.3.1 Northwest BAU (BAU1)

Environmental Features & Biodiversity:

The Northwest BAU covers Donegal, parts of Leitrim, Sligo, and Mayo, and is known for its wild, rugged landscapes, moorlands, and coastal environments. It is a large BAU with over 1.25 million hectares, with Coillte managing approximately 98,000 hectares. 89% of the forests in BAU1 is composed of conifers and 11%, broadleaves.

The climate in the Northwest is dominated by the Atlantic weather patterns, with high rainfall and frequent strong winds. The soils in the region are diverse, including brown soils, peaty podzols, gleys, and blanket peats. Peats and gleys, which are typical of wetland ecosystems, are important for carbon storage and biodiversity conservation. These conditions create a challenging environment for forestry due to poor drainage and high-water retention.

The Northwest BAU is rich in biodiversity, hosting a range of habitats from coastal wetlands to mountainous heathlands. It is home to protected species such as the hen harrier, red squirrel, and Atlantic salmon. Coillte manages c. 22,500 hectares of biodiversity in the BAU ensuring that the rich biodiversity of the region is protected. These areas are critical for the conservation of native flora and fauna, and efforts are made to limit forestry activities in sensitive regions to minimize environmental impact.

The Northwest BAU includes several significant water resources, including the River Erne and River Finn. These rivers, along with numerous lakes such as Lough Melvin and Lough Macnean, provide essential water resources for local communities and wildlife. Coillte actively implements riparian buffer zones to protect water quality during forestry operations, particularly near sensitive catchment areas.

Social & Cultural Aspects:

The population in the Northwest BAU is mainly concentrated in towns like Letterkenny, Ballyshannon, and Sligo, but much of the area remains rural. The local economy traditionally relies on agriculture, fisheries, and tourism, with forestry playing an increasingly important role. Coillte's forests support local employment and contribute to community well-being by providing recreational spaces and maintaining cultural heritage sites. There are 267 archaeological features in the BAU, including megalithic tombs, ringforts, and ruins. Coillte collaborates with the National Monuments Service to ensure these cultural treasures are preserved and accessible to the public.

Recreation Facilities:

Ireland's Northwest region is a hotspot for outdoor recreation. With 54 designed recreational sites, the BAU offers great opportunities for hiking, mountain biking, fishing, and birdwatching. Key recreational sites include Ards Forest Park and Coolaney Mountain Bike Centre. The BAU has also a high recreational usage within a number of National Way-marked Ways traversing Coillte property. These include sections of The Sligo Way, Bealach na Gaeltachta, SliDun na nGall, The Bluestacks Way, The Pilgrim Path, The Bangor Way, Foxford Way, The Western Way, and The Miners Way.

Several recreational facilities are the result of joint initiatives between Coillte, local authorities, and local communities. This ensures that the maintenance, expansion, and creation of recreational sites support the needs of local communities.

4.3.2 Mid-West BAU (BAU2)

Environmental Features & Biodiversity:

The Mid-West BAU includes counties Clare, Galway, and Limerick, covering approximately 938,500 hectares, with Coillte managing about 70,500 hectares. The area features a diverse mix of landscapes, including forests, raised and blanket bog, lakes, and open space. 88% of the forests in BAU2 is composed of conifers and 12%, broadleaves.

The climate in the Mid-West is dominated by the Atlantic Ocean and the gulf stream, with very high rainfall and moderate wind speeds. The soil types of our forests are mainly comprised of brown earth soils, podzols, peats, and gleys, with small areas of marl. The Shannon River system and Lough Derg are key water bodies within this BAU, supporting both biodiversity and human activities.

There is c. 14,500 hectares of biodiversity sites managed in the Mid-West BAU. Biodiversity efforts in this area are strongly focused on raised bog management and restoration. Raised bogs are habitats with high value in the region and act as carbon sinks which help to reduce the impact of climate change.

Social & Cultural Aspects:

The Mid-West BAU has a mix of rural and urban communities, with Galway and Limerick serving as major urban centres. The area is rich in cultural heritage, with many forests containing archaeological sites such as ringforts, burial mounds, and historic settlements. There are 275 archaeological features within Coillte land that are managed with care, ensuring they are preserved and accessible to the public.

Recreation Facilities:

The Mid-West BAU is home to 22 designated recreational areas, including Portumna Forest Park and Derroura Mountain Bike Trail. Portumna Forest Park offers extensive walking and cycling trails along the shores of Lough Derg, picnic areas, and the remains of a Cistercian Abbey dating to 15th Century. Derroura is a popular destination for mountain bikers, offering challenging terrain with stunning views of Connemara's landscape. There are also a number of Way-marked ways passing through Coillte property, including The Western Way, Sli Connemara, The East Clare Way, The Mid Clare Way, and The Suck Valley Way.

Several recreational facilities are the result of joint initiatives between Coillte, local authorities, and local communities. Examples of this are the Walled Garden in Mountbellew, Playground in Cratloe, and the recreational facilities at Cong/Clonbur Woods.

4.3.3 Midlands BAU (BAU3)

Environmental Features & Biodiversity:

The Midlands BAU covers 1.675 million hectares across counties Cavan, Laois, Longford, Louth, Meath, Monaghan, Offaly, Roscommon, Westmeath, along with a large area of County Leitrim. Coillte manages approximately 71,500 hectares of land in this BAU. 73% of the forests in BAU3 is composed of conifers and 27%, broadleaves.

The climate in the Midlands is cooler and more temperate than other regions, with moderate rainfall. Given the geographical spread of the BAU, geology and landform vary. This includes well-drained mineral soils on the Drumlin to the north, varied soil types in the slopes of the Slieve Bloom to the South, raised and blanket peats in other regions. There is a high proportion of lakes dispersed throughout the BAU, all of which are mapped and recognised within our management actions.

The Midlands BAU is home to important ecosystems, such as old woodlands and raised bogs which support species like the Hen harrier, freshwater pearl mussel, curlew, red grouse, and the Irish hare. There is c. 14,700 hectares of areas primarily managed for biodiversity in the Midlands BAU, with several SPAs and NHAs located in the region, highlighting its importance for biodiversity conservation.

Social & Cultural Aspects:

The Midlands BAU is predominantly rural, with small towns and farming communities making up much of the population. The local economy traditionally relies on agriculture, with forestry playing an increasingly important role. Coillte's forests contain significant cultural heritage sites, including historic farmsteads, ringforts, and ancient burial grounds. To date, there are 406 archaeological features in the Midlands BAU. Coillte collaborates with the National Monuments Service to ensure these cultural treasures are preserved and accessible to the public.

Recreation Facilities:

The Midlands BAU has 55 designated recreational areas. Several recreational facilities are the result of joint initiatives between Coillte, local authorities, and local communities. Key facilities include the Rossmore Forest Park, the Slieve Bloom Mountain Bike Trail, and The Burren Geopark. Rossmore Forest Park offers historical and scenic walks, cycling paths, and fishing spots. Slieve Bloom is a popular destination for mountain bikers, offering challenging terrain with stunning views, and Cavan Burren Forest Park is a fascinating geological and archaeological forest landscape with trails and interpretative centres. There are also a number of Waymarked Ways passing through Coillte property in the BAU. These include The Slieve Bloom Way, The Cavan Way, The Westmeath Way, The Monaghan Way and the Tain Trail, Offaly Way.

4.3.4 South-East BAU (BAU4)

Environmental Features & Biodiversity:

The South-East BAU embraces the counties Dublin, Carlow, Kilkenny, Wexford, and Wicklow and covers about 1 million hectares, with Coillte managing c. 60,000hectares. This region is characterized by fertile soils and mild climate, which makes it one of the most productive areas for forestry in Ireland. 78% of the forests in BAU4 is composed of conifers and 22%, broadleaves.

The climate in this region is influenced by the Irish Sea, leading to moderate temperatures year-round and relatively high rainfall during the winter months. The soils in this BAU are primarily well-drained mineral soils, including brown earths and gleys. These conditions are favourable for forestry, allowing for a diverse range of tree species to thrive, including native oak, ash, and beech, alongside commercial species like Sitka spruce.

Water resources in the South-East BAU include major river systems such as the Barrow, Nore, and Slaney, which are vital for both biodiversity and local water supply. Efforts to prevent sedimentation and nutrient runoff are critical to maintain the health of these water bodies in the BAU.

The South-East BAU is rich in biodiversity, with significant areas of native woodland and fens. There are approximately 10,600 hectares of biodiversity managed in the BAU. Our biodiversity projects in the South-East focus on the protection and restoration of these unique habitats, as well as managing forests to support wildlife. The region is home to species such as the pine marten, and otter, with conservation efforts aimed at preserving these species through habitat management and the protection of ecological corridors.

Social & Cultural Aspects:

The South-East BAU has large populations centres, including the suburbs of South Dublin (Tallaght, Rathfarnham, and Dalkey) and the coastal areas of Bray, Greystones, Wicklow, Arklow, and Wexford. The towns of Newbridge, Naas, Blessington, Carlow, and Baltinglass dominate the western area of the BAU with finally Kilkenny, New Ross, Gorey, and Enniscorthy to the south. Due to its large population, there is a higher demand for forests products and services in the BAU4 comparing to other BAUs.

The BAU is home to a rich cultural and archaeological heritage, with numerous ancient monuments, including ringforts, standing stones, and medieval ruins scattered throughout the landscape. 308 of these archaeological features are located within Coillte's forests, and efforts are made to preserve them for future generations.

Recreation Facilities:

The South-East BAU offers some of Ireland's most popular outdoor recreational facilities, with 79 designated areas for recreational activity. Several of these facilities are developed through joint initiatives between Coillte and local communities, including the Dublin Mountains Partnership (DMP), the Wicklow Way Partnership (WWP), and the Wicklow Outdoor Recreation Committee (WORC). These partnerships focus on improving recreation, managing environmentally sensitive sites, and improving awareness on forestry through environmental education, and tourism and entrepreneurship incentive.

Avondale Forest Park is a key recreational site in the BAU, offering family-friendly walking trails, picnic areas, an incredible Treetop Walk & Viewing Tower, and an interactive centre focused on the history of forestry in Ireland. The South-East BAU also has several smaller recreational forests that cater to local communities, providing spaces for exercise, relaxation, and wildlife observation.

4.3.5 Central-Munster BAU (BAU5)

Environmental Features & Biodiversity:

The Central Munster BAU covers counties Tipperary and Waterford, and parts of counties Cork and Limerick, summing up a total of 917,796 hectares, with Coillte managing c. 74,000 hectares. This BAU features a varied landscape that includes mountain ranges such as the Galtees and Ballyhouras, as well as fertile plains. 84% of the forests in BAU5 is composed of conifers and 16%, broadleaves.

The climate in Central Munster is relatively mild, with moderate rainfall throughout the year. The soils in this BAU are diverse, ranging from fertile brown earths in lowland areas to shallow, stony soils in upland regions, which support both commercial forestry and native woodlands. There are numerous rivers in the area, including the Suir, Lee, and Blackwater, which are essential in supporting biodiversity and local agriculture.

The Central Munster BAU is home to a range of biodiversity-rich areas, particularly in the Galtee and Ballyhoura Mountains. There is c.14,000 hectares of areas primarily managed for biodiversity in the BAU, with several SPAs, NHAs, and SACs are located in the region, highlighting its importance for biodiversity conservation. These forests provide important habitats for wildlife, including protected species like the red squirrel, and otter. Coillte's biodiversity projects in this region focus on restoring and managing these habitats to ensure they continue to support diverse ecosystems.

Social & Cultural Aspects:

The Central Munster BAU serves a primarily rural population. Main population centres in the area include Waterford, Dungarvan, Clonmel, Cahir, Cashel, Nenagh, Thurles and Roscrea. Other main towns within the surroundings are Fermoy, Midleton, Templemore, Borrisokane, and Newport. Agriculture is a traditional economic activity in the region, with forestry increasingly growing over the last decades.

Coillte is aware of 303 archaeological features of cultural significance in its landholdings in the Central Munster BAU, including ancient farmsteads, megalithic tombs, and medieval structures. These sites are carefully managed to protect their historical significance while ensuring they are accessible for the public.

Recreation Facilities:

Central Munster is renowned for its outdoor recreation opportunities, particularly in the Ballyhoura and Galtee mountain ranges. The Ballyhoura Mountain Bike Trails are among the most popular in Ireland, offering over 90 kilometers of tracks that cater to cyclists of all levels. In the Galtee Mountains, the Aherlow Nature Park provide numerous hiking and walking routes, with stunning views and opportunities to explore native woodlands and wildlife.

Coillte manages a total of 46 designated recreational forests in this BAU, offering facilities such as picnic areas, interpretive signage, and family-friendly walking trails. There are also a number of marked Ways passing through Coillte property in the BAU. Amongst others, these include the East Munster Way and Slieve Felim Way along with more recent multi-days walks the Ormonde Way and St. Declan's Way.

4.3.6 South-West Munster BAU (BAU6)

Environmental Features & Biodiversity:

The South-West Munster BAU covers 1.192 million hectares across counties Claire and Kerry, and parts of counties Cork and Limerick, with Coillte managing approximately 65,500 hectares. The BAU is dominated by forested land with the remainder mostly moorland, mountains, marsh, and lakes. This BAU has the greatest concentration of mountains in any of the six BAUs, including Carrantuohill, Ireland's highest mountain in the MacGillycuddy's Reeks, Stacks Mountains Range, Mullaghareirks, Nagles Mountains, Caha Mountains. 88% of the forests in BAU6 is composed of conifers and 12%, broadleaves.

The climate in this region is influenced by the Atlantic Ocean, with mild temperatures, windy conditions, and high rainfall throughout the year. The soils in this BAU vary widely, with fertile brown earths in the lowlands and peaty soils in the upland areas. This creates ideal conditions for forestry, however some areas are prone to windblow. The region is also home to numerous rivers, including the Lee and Blackwater, which are vital for both biodiversity and human use.

The South-West Munster BAU has a very rich biodiversity. There are approximately 13,400 hectares of areas primarily managed for biodiversity in the BAU, with several SPAs and SACs located in the region. Coillte's biodiversity projects in this BAU focus on protecting high conservation value forests, restoring degraded habitats, and managing forests to support wildlife. Key species in this region include the lesser horseshoe bat, freshwater pearl mussel, and various bird species that rely on forested areas for nesting and feeding.

Social & Cultural Aspects:

The South-West Munster BAU has large populations centres, including Abbeyfeale, Bandon, Bantry, Charleville, Cork, Kenmare, Killarney, Limerick, Listowel, Macroom, Mallow, Newcastle West, Tralee, and Skibbereen. There are two Gaeltacht areas within the BAU, Gaeltacht Muscraí and Gaeltacht Uíbh Ráthach. The economy is largely rural with agriculture-based industries. The BAU has a rich cultural heritage with forests that contain important archaeological sites such as ancient ringforts, medieval monasteries, and historic farmsteads. To date, there are 333 archaeological features in the South-West Munster BAU. These sites are carefully managed by Coillte in collaboration with local heritage groups to ensure their preservation while allowing public access.

Recreation Facilities:

The South-West Munster BAU offers 33 designated recreational areas, some of which are the most scenic and popular recreation sites in Ireland. Key recreation sites include the Curragh Chase Forest Park with over 300 hectares of rolling parkland, trails, mixed woodland, lakes and an arboretum, and the Gougane Barra Forest Park, known for beautiful walks tucked in a lush valley at the edge of the Sheehy mountains.

There are also several Waymarked Ways passing through Coillte property in the BAU. These include: The Dingle Way, The Kerry Way, The Beara Breifne Way, Sheep's Head Way, and The Duhallow Way.

Coillte manages these recreation sites in partnership with local tourism authorities, ensuring that they are accessible and well-maintained. Additional recreational forests in the region offer facilities such as picnic areas, nature trails, and interpretive signage, encouraging outdoor activities and nature-based tourism.

4.4 Population, Human Health and the Economy

4.4.1 Current Conditions

4.4.1.1 Population

A review of the current population trends in Ireland shows that the population has grown from approximately 4.76 million in 2016 to approximately 5.15 million people in 2022 - this is an increase of 8.1% - as per the Central Statistics Office (CSO) census data 2022[9]; population growth rates vary at each local authority level but show overall increases (refer to Table 4-2 below).

Figure 4-4 shows the settlement patterns within Ireland. The existing Coillte land extents are in predominantly rural areas, avoiding the majority of major settlements and urban areas. Population density is shown in Figure 4-5.

Table 4-2: Population of Administrative Counties - between 2016 and 2022 (Source: CSO, 2023)[10]

Council Area	Change 2016 - 2022
Carlow	+8.8%
Cavan	+7.3%
Clare	+7.7%
Cork City and County	+7.6%
Donegal	+5.0%
Dublin City	+6.9%
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown	+7.3%
Fingal	+11.6%
Galway City	+7.3%
Galway County	+7.8%
Kerry	+5.9%
Kildare	+11.4%
Kilkenny	+5.0%
Laois	+8.5%
Leitrim	+9.8%
Limerick City and County	+7.5%
Longford	+14.4%
Louth	+8.4%
Mayo	+5.7%

[9] Central Statistics Office (2023) *Census of Population 2022 - Summary Results*, available: Population Changes Census of Population 2022 - Summary Results - Central Statistics Office [accessed 25 November 2024].
[10] Central Statistics Office (2023) *Population and Actual and Percentage Change 2006 to 2022*, available: FY003B - Population and Actual and Percentage Change 2006 to 2022 [accessed 25 November 2024].

Council Area	Change 2016 - 2022
Meath	+13.2%
Monaghan	+6.4%
Offaly	+6.7%
Roscommon	+8.9%
Sligo	+7.1%
South Dublin	+8.0%
State	+8.1%
Tipperary	+5.2%
Waterford City and County	+9.6%
Westmeath	+8.4%
Wexford	+9.5%
Wicklow	+9.4%

4.4.1.2 Health

Overall, the health of the population is found to be 'Good' (29.7%) or 'Very Good' (53.2%) according to the CSO 2022 Census Data. The percentage of people reporting their general health status as either very good or good decreased from 87% in 2016 to 83% in 2022 (CSO,2023). CSO statistics from 2021 – particularly for In-patient day cases with principal - respiratory diseases (14%) were the most prevalent conditions for all ages followed by circulatory diseases (12%), Injury and poisonings (12%), external causes (12%) and neoplasms (9%). According to the Healthy Ireland Survey 2023 the proportion of people with a probable mental health problem in 2023 (12%) has declined since 2021 (15%) but remains higher than in 2016 (10%).[11] Green spaces have been shown to be vital in the improved physical and mental well-being of society. Forests are key areas for the provision of access to these green spaces through increased access and recreational opportunities. Visits to Coillte's forests increased by nearly 40% during the Covid-19 pandemic, with 2.2 million people visiting their top fifty forests between March and December 2020.

Table 4-3: Self Perceived Health Survey (CSO, 2023)

Age range (Years)	Good or Very good	Fair	Bad or Very Bad
15-19	90.8%	2.6%	0.4%
20-24	88.1%	4.1%	0.6%
25-29	87.6%	4.5%	0.6%
30-34	86.2%	5%	0.7%
35-39	85.2%	6%	0.8%
40-44	84.2%	7.2%	1.2%

[11] Department of Health (2024) *Healthy Ireland Survey 2023 – Summary Report*, Government Publications: Dublin, available:www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/283794/3ef96218-68fb-4fa3-a0d2-ec687071db38.pdf#page=null [accessed 26 November 2024].

Age range (Years)	Good or Very good	Fair	Bad or Very Bad
45-49	83.1%	8.8%	1.7%
50-54	81.1%	10.7%	2.2%
55-59	79%	12.7%	3.0%
60-64	75.8%	15.3%	3.6%
65-69	73.8%	17.4%	3.7%
70-74	70.5%	20.1%	4.0%
75-79	65.2%	24.4%	5.2%
80-84	58.2%	29.1%	6.8%
85 and older	46.4%	36.2%	9.4%
Average	82.9%	8.6%	1.7%

4.4.1.3 Economy

The COVID pandemic affected 96% of businesses to some degree. Employment rate increased significantly from 2017 to 2019, before dropping sharply due to the pandemic. The highest levels of unemployment in the last five years were seen in 2020 and 2021 because of this and peaked at an unemployment rate of 7.7% in March 2021. The unemployment rate has decreased since then and as of June 2025 is 4.0%[12].

Irish economy experienced recovery in 2021 following easing of health restrictions. Russia's invasion of Ukraine is having significant impacts on the global economy causing the economy to perform weakly. In 2023 Irelands GDP declined by 5.5% and continued to decline in the first half of 2024. However, the second half of the year showed economic growth.[13] Compared to Q3 in 2023, Q4 in 2024 increased in GDP by 2.9%. The Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing sector decreased by 3.7% in Q3 2024 compared with Q3 2023.[14]

[12] Central Statistics Office (2024) *Key Economic Indicators*, available: Key Economic Indicators Dashboard | CSO Ireland [accessed 03 July 2025].
[13] European Commission (2024) Economic Forecast for Ireland, available: Economic forecast for Ireland - European Commission [accessed 13 January 2025].
[14] Central Statistics Office (2024) Quarterly National Accounts Quarter 3 2024, available: GDP by Sector Quarterly National Accounts Quarter 3 2024 - Central Statistics Office [accessed 02 January 2025].

Forestry is an essential sector in the Irish economy. The Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing sector contributed €1.6 billion to the Q2 2024 GDP.[15] It is estimated the forestry industry contributes about €2.3 billion directly and indirectly to the Irish economy yearly. Forestry has been identified as an important sector under Project Ireland 2040 to help facilitate the development of the rural economy and to increase Ireland's bioeconomy through the provision of more sustainable raw materials for infrastructure[16]. As Ireland continues to grow, there will be an increased demand for housing. The forestry sector is in a key position to provide timber products for this, which is more sustainable than steel and concrete. It is estimated total employment generated by activities in the forest and timber/wood products sector is 9,423 (direct and indirect) full-time equivalents.[17]

4.4.2 Future Trends (Evolution of Baseline)

The predicted future population of Ireland is highly influenced by future net migration per annum. It is predicted that under high net migration, the population will reach 7.005 million people by 2057. Under medium and low net migration this number drops to 6.446 million, and 5.734 million persons respectively.[18]

The ageing population in Ireland will cause a demographic shift in the country in future years that will increase demand for healthcare facilities and associated public healthcare expenditure. Currently there are 4 persons of working age to support each person aged 65 and over; by 2050, the equivalent figure will be just over 2. By 2050, the annual cost of age-related expenditure is set to be €17 billion higher than in 2019.[19]

ESRI (Economic & Social Research Institute) has predicted a positive outlook for the Irish economy in the medium-term with a predicted increase in GDP and MDD (Modified domestic demand) in Ireland in the years ahead.[20] Forecasting into the future, unemployment in Ireland is projected to stay low owing to the tight labour market within the country (European Commission, 2024).

4.4.3 Key Considerations Relating to the LUSIP

The key considerations in relation to Population, Human Health and the Economy are as follows:

- Population and development growth will grow the raw material requirement within Ireland.
- Settlement patterns could influence the location and acceptability of different Coillte development projects.
- The construction or maintenance of new or existing infrastructure on forest estate lands may cause temporary disruption the local communities, through noise, dust, disruption to services/utilities and traffic etc.

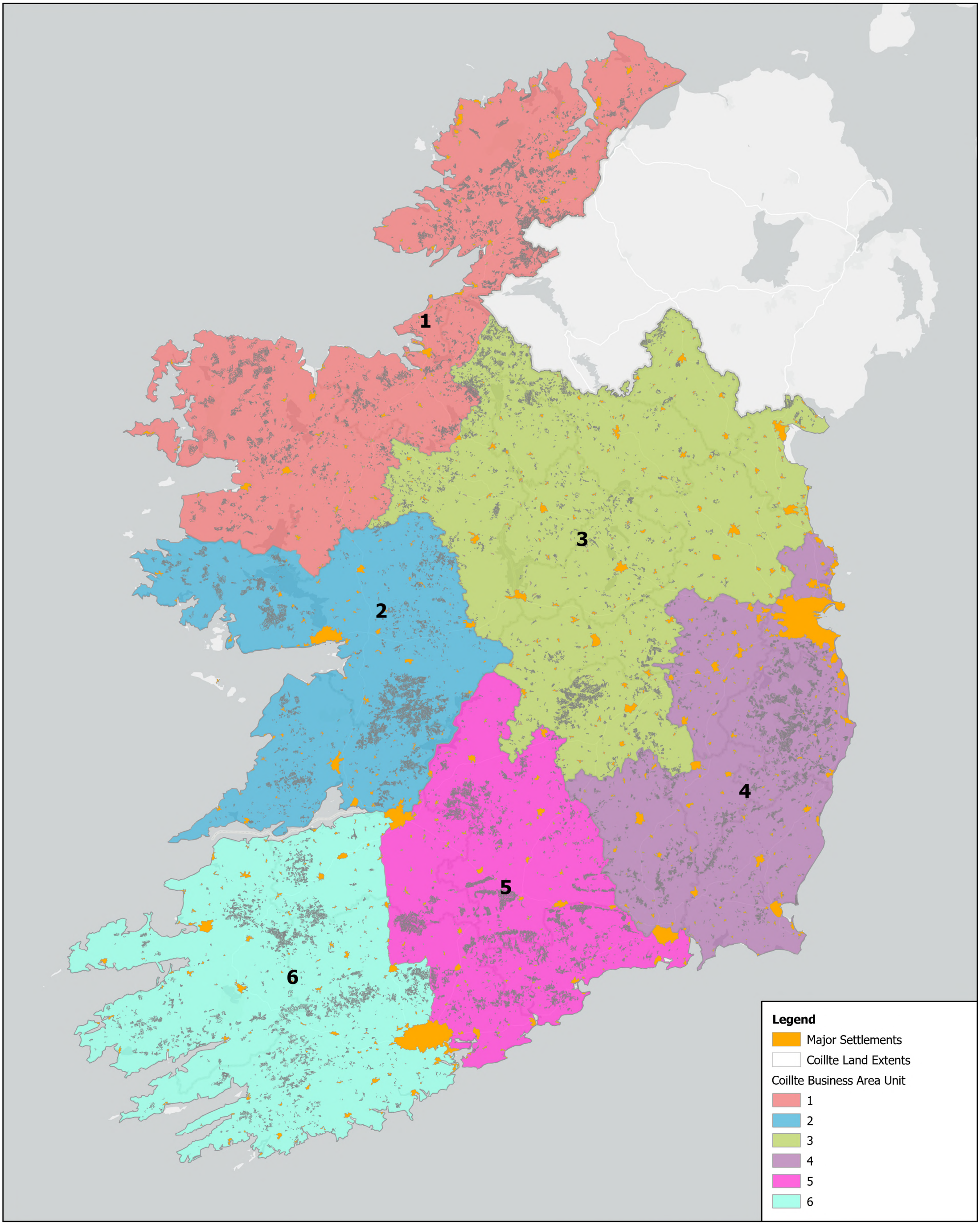
[15] Central Statistics Office (2024) Quarterly National Accounts Quarter 2 2024, available: GDP by Sector Quarterly National Accounts Quarter 2 2024 - Central Statistics Office [accessed 26 November 2024].
[16] Government of Ireland (2018) *Project Ireland 2024 – National Planning Framework*, Government of Ireland, available: Project-Ireland-2040-NPF.pdf [accessed 26 November 2024].
[17] Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (2023) *Ireland's Forest Strategy 2023-2030*, Government of Ireland, available: www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/269571/90a5e49b-0481-4c58-b296-7c27ac9a7ad6.pdf#page=null [accessed 26 November 2024].
[18] Central Statistics Office (2024) Population and Labour Force Projections 2023-2057, available: Population and Labour Force Projections 2023-2057 - Central Statistics Office [accessed 13 January 2025].
[19] Department of Finance (2021) Population Ageing and the Public Finances in Ireland, Department of Ireland, available: SPU 2016 [accessed 13 January 2025].
[20]Economic & Social Research Institute(2024) Positive outlook for Ireland's economy in 2024 and 2025, with robust labour market and declining inflation, available: Positive outlook for Ireland's economy in 2024 and 2025, with robust labour market and declining inflation | ESRI [accessed 02 January 2025].

- The construction or maintenance of new or existing infrastructure on the forest estate may temporarily impede public access to forests.
- Infrastructure development may influence the human environment and land use in Ireland.
- Development construction activities may generate air emissions, vibration or noise that may temporarily impact human health and well-being.
- A spatially concentrated deterioration in human health, if effects arising from environmental vectors such as water and air are not mitigated.
- Recreational and development pressures on habitats and landscapes.
- Renewable energy development supported by the Plan could influence residential amenity within the zone of influence and may have a visual/noise impact, see also Section 4.6 Landscape, Seascape and Visual Amenity and Section 4.10 Air Quality and Noise.
- The Plan will support the carrying out of commercial forestry and the delivery of wood product to the market. These economic and material assets have the potential to underpin and support economic and infrastructural development, including housing development, resulting in positive effects for people.
- Afforestation has the potential to drive carbon sequestration resulting in positive climate impacts and the achievement of Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emission reduction targets defined under the EU LULUCF Regulation.[21]
- Renewable energy development supported by the Plan has the potential to result in positive climate impacts and support the achievement of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emission reduction targets defined in Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended by the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021. This climate mitigation has the potential to have positive effects on people through reducing the effects of climate change.
- The Plan will support the utilisation of Coillte lands for tourism and recreation development. This form of the development can generate significant amenity value and has the potential to create positive effects for people and visitors to these sites.
- Nature conservation and restoration will be an intrinsic component of the Plan. The creation of nature space can have positive effects on people who visit and experience this space, fostering an awareness and connection with nature, generating a sense of ownership and responsibility for nature, and inspiring pro-environmental behaviour, which is defined as behaviour that protects the environment.[22]

[21] This regulation sets an EU-wide net target of 310 million tonnes of CO_2 equivalent carbon removals in the LULUCF (Land Use, Land Change and Forestry) sector by 2030. Each member state has a specific target under this regulation which they must meet to contribute towards the EU-wide net target. Ireland's binding target is to achieve a reduction of 0.6 Mt CO_2 equivalent LULUCF emissions by 2030, relative to average levels in 2016-2018.

[22] Steg, L., and Vlek, C. (2009). Encouraging pro-environmental behaviour: an integrative review and research agenda. J. Environ. Psychol. 29, 309–317. doi: 10.1016/j.jenvp.2008.10.004

Coillte Land Extents:
Major Settlements: © Tailte Éireann
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PROJECT: Coillte Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan SEA	**CLIENT:** COILLTE
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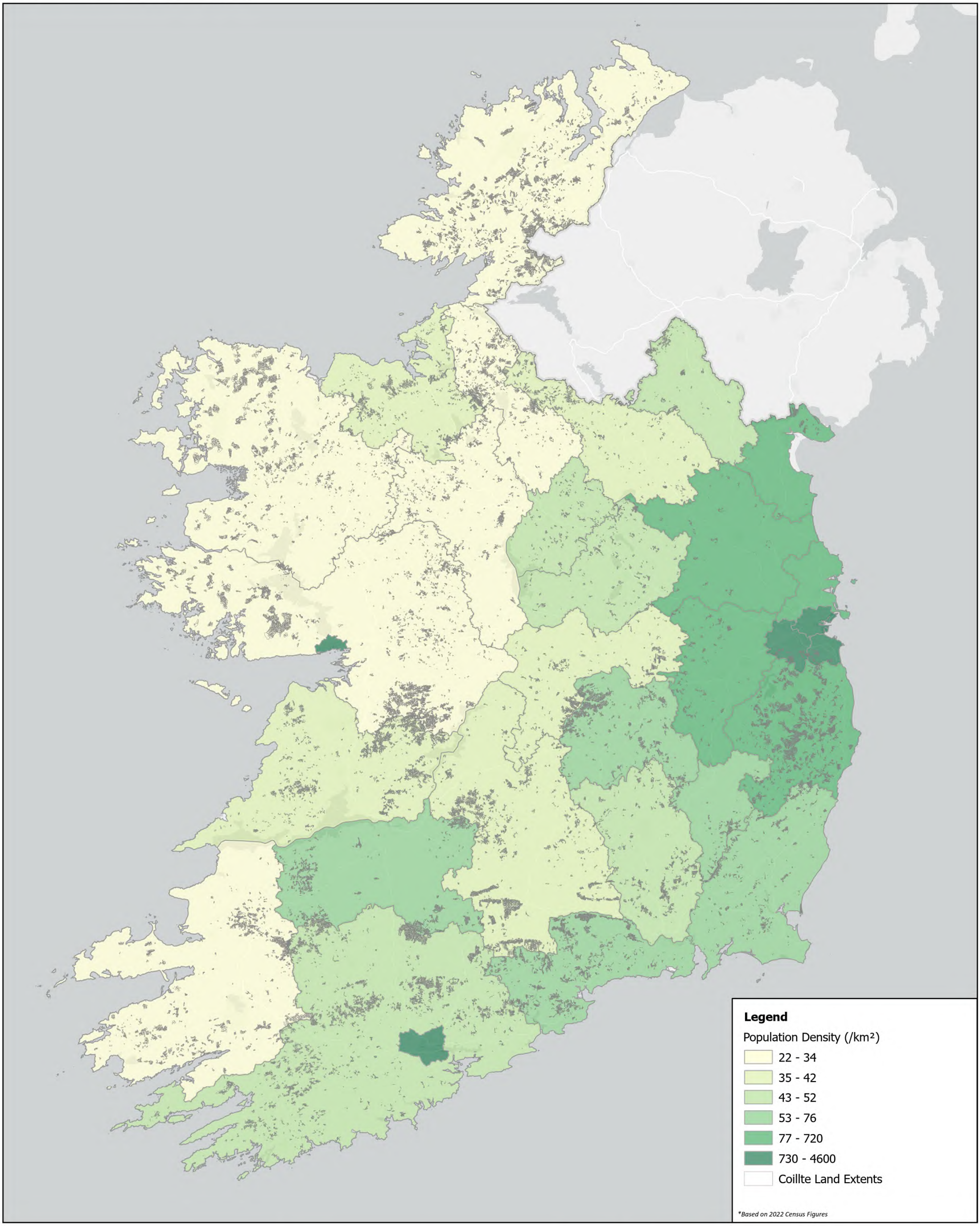
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TITLE: Population Density	**FIGURE NO:** 4-5
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4.5 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna

4.5.1 Current Conditions

Forestry has been observed to impact 35% of protected habitats, largely due to non-woodland habitats being converted to commercial forestry, forestry activities impacting water quality, and drainage for afforestation.

The SEA has considered available information on designated sites of conservation interest as well as protected species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats which have high ecological value. There are a number of considerations for nature conservation designations in Ireland at an international, European and national level and these have been outlined in Table 4-4. Approximately 96,000 ha of Coillte land is designated as SACs, SPAs, NHAs or pNHAs and Coillte actively works to engage with regulators in relation to activities planned in designated sites and undertakes any ecological assessments and consents required. SACs and SPAs in Ireland are shown in Figure 4-6, while NHAs and pNHAs are displayed in Figure 4-7.

Annex I to the Habitats Directive list the types of habitats whose conservation requires the designation of SACs. Mapping showing the known or best estimate of national distributions of Annex I habitats is provided in Figure 4-8.

Table 4-4: Designated Ecological Sites and Protected Species

Environmental Features	Description
UNESCO[23] (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) World Heritage and Biosphere sites	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage List comprises sites of outstanding universal value: cultural, natural or mixed. The UNESCO Biosphere Reserves List comprises areas of terrestrial and coastal ecosystems promoting solutions to reconcile the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use. There are currently two World Heritage sites in the State - Brú na Bóinne and Sceilg Mhichíl, a further seven sites on a tentative list, and two Biosphere sites - Kerry Biosphere and Dublin Bay Biosphere.
National Parks[24]	National Parks are specially designated protected areas of unspoilt beauty and there are six located in Ireland. The primary purpose of the National Parks is the conservation of biodiversity and landscape; however, they also provide recreational space for locals and visitors.
Nature Reserves[25]	A Nature Reserve is an area of importance to wildlife, which is protected under Ministerial order. There are currently 78 Statutory Nature Reserves. Most are owned by the State, but some are owned by organizations or private landowners.
Special Areas of Conservation[26] (SACs)[27]	Designated under the Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora). There are currently 441 sites nationally.
Special Protection Areas[28] (SPAs)[29]	Designated under the Birds Directive (EC Directive 200/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds). There are currently 167 sites nationally

[23] Home - World Heritage Ireland
[24] National Parks in Ireland | National Parks & Wildlife Service
[25] Nature Reserves in Ireland | National Parks & Wildlife Service (npws.ie)
[26] Designated site data | National Parks & Wildlife Service (npws.ie)
[27] Habitats Directive (1992/43/EEC) - habitats and species listed in Annex I and II
[28] Designated site data | National Parks & Wildlife Service (npws.ie)
[29] Birds Directive (2009/147/EEC)

Environmental Features	Description
RAMSAR sites[30]	The Convention of Wetlands of International Importance, especially as habitats for waterfowl, was established at Ramsar in 1971 and ratified by Ireland in 1984. The main aim of the Convention is to secure the designation by each contracting state of wetlands in its territory for inclusion in a list of wetlands of international importance for waterfowl. This entails the commitment of each contracting state to a policy of protection and management of the designated wetlands, and of formulating and implementing planning so as to promote the conservation of designated wetlands and, as far as possible, the wise use of wetlands in its territory. Ireland presently has 45 sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance, with surface areas of 66,994 hectares.
Natural Heritage Areas[31] (NHAs)	NHAs are designated due to their national conservation value for ecological and/or geological/geomorphological heritage. They cover nationally important semi-natural and natural habitats, landforms or geomorphological features, wildlife plant and animal species or a diversity of these natural attributes. NHAs are designated under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000. To date, 75 raised bogs have been given legal protection, covering some 23,000 hectares. These raised bogs are located mainly in the midlands. A further 73 blanket bogs, covering 37,000ha, mostly in western areas are also designated as NHAs.
Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs)[32]	There are 630 pNHAs, which were published on a non-statutory basis in 1995 but have not since been statutorily proposed or designated. These sites are of significance for wildlife and habitats.
Tree Preservation Order (TPO)	Tree Preservation Orders may be made under Section 45 of the Planning and Development Act (as amended) sets out the provisions for TPOs. TPOs can be made in the interest of amenity or the environment and allow for the protection of individuals or groups of trees. By 1996 there were 178 Tree Preservation Orders made in the State; some local authorities granted numerous orders (Meath County Council) while others viewed the designation as being ineffective and so granted no TPOs (Clare County Council).
Flora Protection Order Sites[33]	The Flora (Protection) Order, 2022 (S.I. No. 235 of 2022) gives legal protection to 65 species of vascular plants and 65 species of bryophytes in the Republic of Ireland (25 liverworts and 40 mosses). The current list of plant species protected by Section 21 of the Wildlife Act, 1976 is set out in the Flora (Protection) Order, 2022, which supersedes orders made in 1980, 1987, 1999 and 2015.
Wildfowl Sanctuaries[34] (see S.I. 192 of 1979)	Wildfowl Sanctuaries are areas that have been excluded from the 'Open Season Order' so that game birds can rest and feed undisturbed. There are 68 sanctuaries in the State. Shooting of game birds is not allowed in these sanctuaries.

[30] Ramsar Sites - Datasets - data.gov.ie
[31] Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) | National Parks & Wildlife Service (npws.ie)
[32] EPA Maps
[33] Flora Protection Order Map Viewer (npws.ie)
[34] Wildfowl Sanctuaries | National Parks & Wildlife Service (npws.ie)

Environmental Features	Description
Salmonid Waters[35]	Salmonid waters are designated and protected under the European Communities (Quality of Salmonid Waters) Regulations 1988 (SI No. 293 of 1988). Designated Salmonid Waters are capable of supporting salmon (Salmo salar), trout (Salmo trutta), char (Salvelinus) and whitefish (Coregonus).
OSPAR Marine Protected Areas[36] (MPA)	Under the OSPAR Convention to Protect the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic, Ireland committed to establishing marine protected areas to protect biodiversity (i.e., OSPAR MPAs). There are currently 19 OSPAR sites proposed in the State.

The SEA has considered potential positive and negative impacts the Plan may have on non-designated habitats that are of ecological value. Categories of such non-designated habitat relevant to the Plan are presented in Table 4-5.

Table 4-5: Ecological Connectivity and Non-designated Habitats

	Description
Ecological connectivity and networks (including stepping stones and corridors)	Coastal systems, riparian habitats, hedgerow, and other blue and green infrastructure networks. Ecological connectivity and networks is a key consideration along with invasive species - particularly those listed on the Third Schedule to the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 [S.I.477/2011].
Other non-designated sites of high biodiversity value or ecological importance	Important non-designated habitats, including semi-natural habitats in National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) national surveys (native woodlands, reef systems, tidal habitats, grasslands, peatlands etc.) is key consideration. Forests, ancient and old woodlands and important trees that carry ecological value is a key consideration. Forest cover in Ireland has reached 11.6% of the total land area, with a wide variety of forest types present. Coillte own and manage circa 440,000 ha of lands, which is nearly 7% of the total land area of Ireland. Forested areas can provide eco-system services and can have significant ecological value. Coillte currently assigns 90,000 ha of land within its estate for nature conservation (biodiversity areas, riparian buffers and biodiversity features). Approximately half of this land lies outside legally designated ecological sites.

[35] Register of Protected Areas - Salmonid Water Regs Table - Datasets - data.gov.ie
[36] OSPAR Convention to Protect the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic, Ireland committed to establishing marine protected areas to protect biodiversity

4.5.1.1 Forests[37]

Forest habitats support 80% of terrestrial species providing food, shelter and space to a range of plants, invertebrates, mammals and birds[38] (FAOUN, 2020). Forest canopies are species rich terrestrial habitats supporting about 40% of invertebrate species, of which 10% are considered canopy specialists[39] (J O'Halloran et al., 2011).

Native forests tend to have a higher percentage of species diversity[40] (O Sweeney et al., 2010) than non-native forests however, this does not dismiss the biodiversity value of the latter[41] (S Iremonger et al., 2006).

Ireland is home to a range of forest types including conifer forest (>80% conifer tree species), mixed forest (conifers and broadleaves tree species each account for 20 - 80% of canopy) and broadleaf forest (>80% broadleaf tree species). The total forested area in Ireland is ca. 808,848 ha. It is estimated that 21% of this area (ca. 169,858 ha) can be categorised as native forest (>80% of native species present) and 12% of this area (ca. 97,061 ha) can be categorised as mixed forest (20 - 80% native tree species present). Native forests cover 2.5% of the national land area of Ireland.

Forests provide a variety of ecosystem services (e.g. protecting/maintaining water quality and flow, nutrient recycling etc.) as well as playing an important role in climate change mitigation (carbon sequestration), conservation and recreation.

Compared with 'natural forests' or mixed-species forests, conifer forests usually have less tree species diversity (i.e. a lower number tree species in canopies). Conifer forests that have fewer tree species in the canopy have less potential to deliver ecosystem services. For example, mixed forests tend to be more effective in delivering a range of provisioning services and are more resistant to various disturbances than single species planted forests[42] (Jactel et al. 2017). The relationships between forest type, biodiversity and ecosystem services are highly relevant for informing forest policy and management, although given the multitude of ecosystem services, it is difficult to generalise about the role of forest diversity. There are also trade-offs between different ecosystem services depending on the tree mixture and stand type involved. Some tree mixtures are superior at providing certain services, but other tree mixtures or even single-species forests are more effective for other services[43] (Brockerhoff et al. 2017). In an Irish context, given the lack of native or mixed forests in the landscape due to ancient and historic deforestation, and the prevalence of conifer forests, conifer forests can provide significant ecological value.

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[37] Inclusive of forests comprised of native species and non-native species, broadleaves and conifer forests.
[38] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAOUN) (2020). The state of the world's forests. Available at: State of the World's Forests 2020
[39] O'Halloran, J., Irwin, S. , Kelly, D. L., Kelly, T. C., Mitchell, F. J. G., Coote, L., Oxbrough, A., Wilson, M.W., Martin, R. D., Moore, K., Sweeney, O., Dietzsch, A. C., Walsh, A., Keady, S., French, V., Fox, H., Kopke, K., Butler, F. and Neville, P. 2011. Management of biodiversity in a range of Irish forest types. Report prepared for the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. 391pp
[40] Sweeney O, Wilson M, Irwin S, Kelly T, O'Halloran J: Are bird density, species richness and community structure similar between native woodlands and non-native plantations in an area with a generalist bird fauna? Biodiversity and Conservation 2010, 19:2329-2342
[41] S. Iremonger, J. O'Halloran, D.L. Kelly, M.W. Wilson, G.F. Smith, T. Gittings, P.S. Giller, F.J.G. Mitchell, A. Oxbrough, L. Coote, L. French, S. O'Donoghue, A.-M. McKee, J. Pithon, A. O'Sullivan, P. Neville, V. O'Donnell, V. Cummins, T.C. Kelly and P. Dowding P 2006, Biodiversity in Irish plantation forests - Large Scale Project in the Environmental RTDI Programme 2001-2006. University College Cork, University College Cork.
[42] Jactel H, Bauhus J, Boberg J, Bonal D, Castagneyrol B, Gardiner B, Gonzalez-Olabarria JR, Koricheva J, Meurisse N, Brockerhoff EG (2017). Tree diversity drives forest stand resistance to natural disturbances. Curr For Rep 3:223–243
[43] Brockerhoff, E.G., Barbaro, L., Castagneyrol, B. et al. Forest biodiversity, ecosystem functioning and the provision of ecosystem services. Biodivers Conserv 26, 3005–3035 (2017). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10531-017-1453-2

Coillte have defined High Conservation Value Forests within its estate. These are defined as areas of the estate that lie within SACs, SPAs, NHAs or pNHAs as detailed in Table 4-5. A map showing these High Conservation Value Forest areas is presented in Figure 4-9.

Ancient Woodland is defined as areas of woodland believed to have remained continuously wooded since 1660[44] i.e. since before the period when planting and afforestation became common practice. Many of these woodlands are important in terms of their biological and cultural value. These forests would typically have developed naturally throughout the country from early in the post-glacial period, which started approx. 10,000 years ago. Many Ancient woodlands are considered irreplaceable habitats of high biodiversity value. Only tiny areas of ancient woodlands are present in Ireland today.

Old or long-established woodlands are defined as sites in Ireland that have been apparently forested since the 1830's[44], when the earliest Ordnance Survey maps were prepared. Old woodland sites account for approx. 6% of the total area of the Coillte estate and are very variable in character: some have plentiful semi-natural characteristics, while others have few or none. These woodlands may or may not have ancient origins. The locations of Coillte's old woodland sites are shown in Figure 4-10.

There are also managed conifer forests across the country that have a long history of forest cover. These areas can have high ecological value because they often retain some semi-natural characteristics (e.g. veteran trees, native regeneration in gaps, deadwood, diverse ground flora).

Threats to forest habitats include spatial fragmentation (i.e., removal of forests/conversion to open habitat), invasive species (e.g. *Rhododendron ponticum* and *Prunus laurocerasus)*, disease (i.e., *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*, *Phytophthora ramorum* and *Tetropium fuscum*), windfall and storm damage, deer browsing amongst others[45] (P.M. Perrin, et al., 2008) which can have a knock-on effect for the species and biodiversity value of these habitats.

Conifer forests account for the majority of Ireland's forest and provide habitat for a range of native flora and fauna, making a positive contribution to biodiversity conservation. Semi-natural forests - and any forests with a high degree of 'naturalness' - tend to be richer in biodiversity because they are more diverse in structure and composition. All forests can be enhanced for biodiversity through close to nature management practices.

4.5.1.2 Birds

BirdWatch Ireland and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) in NI provide a list of priority bird species for conservation on the island of Ireland. This list is referred to as the Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland BoCCI List. In this list, birds which breed and/or winter in Ireland are classified into three separate lists (Red, Amber and Green), based on the conservation status of the bird and hence conservation priority. Birds on the Red List are those of highest conservation concern, the Amber List are of medium conservation concern and the Green List birds are not considered threatened.[46] The number and breakdown of bird species on the Red and Amber List is shown in Table 4-6.

[44] Philip M. Perrin and Orla H. Daly (2010). A provisional inventory of ancient and long-established woodland in Ireland.
[45] Perrin PM, James M, Barron S, O'Neill F, NcNutt K, Delaney A: National Survey of Native Woodlands 2003-2008 - Volume 1; Main Report. BEC Consultants for National Parks and Wildlife Service 2008 [http://www.botanicalenvironmental.com/ wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Volume-I.pdf].
[46] Gilbert G, Stanbury A and Lewis L (2021), "Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland 2020 –2026". Irish Birds 9: 523—544 The categorisation of species as breeding, wintering etc. ref

Table 4-6: Red and Amber Bird Types

Bird Types	Red List	Amber List
Breeding	27	43
Passage	3	8
Wintering	13	11
Breeding and Wintering	11	18

As well as considerations related to European sites - a focus is placed on protected species outside of these designations such as bats[47], breeding birds[48], badgers[49] etc. as well as all related species listed within the Flora (Protection) Order, 2022 (S.I. No. 235 of 2022).

4.5.2 Future Trends (Evolution of the Baseline)

Increasing land-use change such as urbanisation, afforestation and its associated management and changing agricultural practices are likely to continue to pose risks to the quality and distribution of aquatic and terrestrial habitats and species, both within and outside protected sites. However, the continued implementation of measures required in achieving the objectives of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the requirements of the Habitats Directive are likely to benefit protected sites and the wider aquatic environment in the future.

The conservation objectives developed by the NPWS for European sites, as well as other management plans for declining species (e.g., Threat Response Plans) will contribute to the critical changes needed to reverse biodiversity declines nationally and internationally. Future trends will be influenced by changes/additions to existing designated (SAC, SPAs and NHAs). Several pNHAs may be reviewed and upgraded to NHAs and, similarly, sites listed as tentative on the UNESCO Heritage list may be upgraded to designated heritage sites.

There are currently 29 established and 18 potential invasive species threats. Species which are listed as potential threats may become established threats in the near future. The EPA's report on alien invasive species and the continuing development of the National Biodiversity Data Centre National Invasive Species Database will aid in the documentation of the distribution of invasive species in Ireland. These reports and datasets will go towards the implementation of the recent European legislation on halting the spread of invasive species (Regulation 1143/2014, entered into force on 1 January 2015).

[47] The Habitats Directive (1992/43/EEC) and Birds Directive (2009/205/EEC) provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. The overall aim of the Habitat and Birds Directives are to maintain or restore the "favourable conservation status" of habitats and species of European Community Interest. These habitats and species are listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives (Habitats Directive as above and Directive 2009/205/EC on the conservation of wild birds) with Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated to afford protection to the most vulnerable among them. These two designations are collectively known and referred to as European sites. Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directives set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect such sites. Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for AA. These requirements are implemented in the Republic of Ireland by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). Further to the requirements of considerations related to European sites protected Annex IV of the Habitats Directive identifies priority species which are afforded protection in their own right - these include all Irish species of bats. Bats are also protected under the Irish Wildlife Acts, 1976 and 2000.

[48] Irish Wildlife Acts, 1976 (as amended)

[49] Irish Wildlife Act 1976 (as amended) and Bern Convention Appendix III

The continued maturation of conifer forests in existence in Ireland since the 1950s has the potential to increase the level of eco-system services and ecological value associated with these areas going forward.

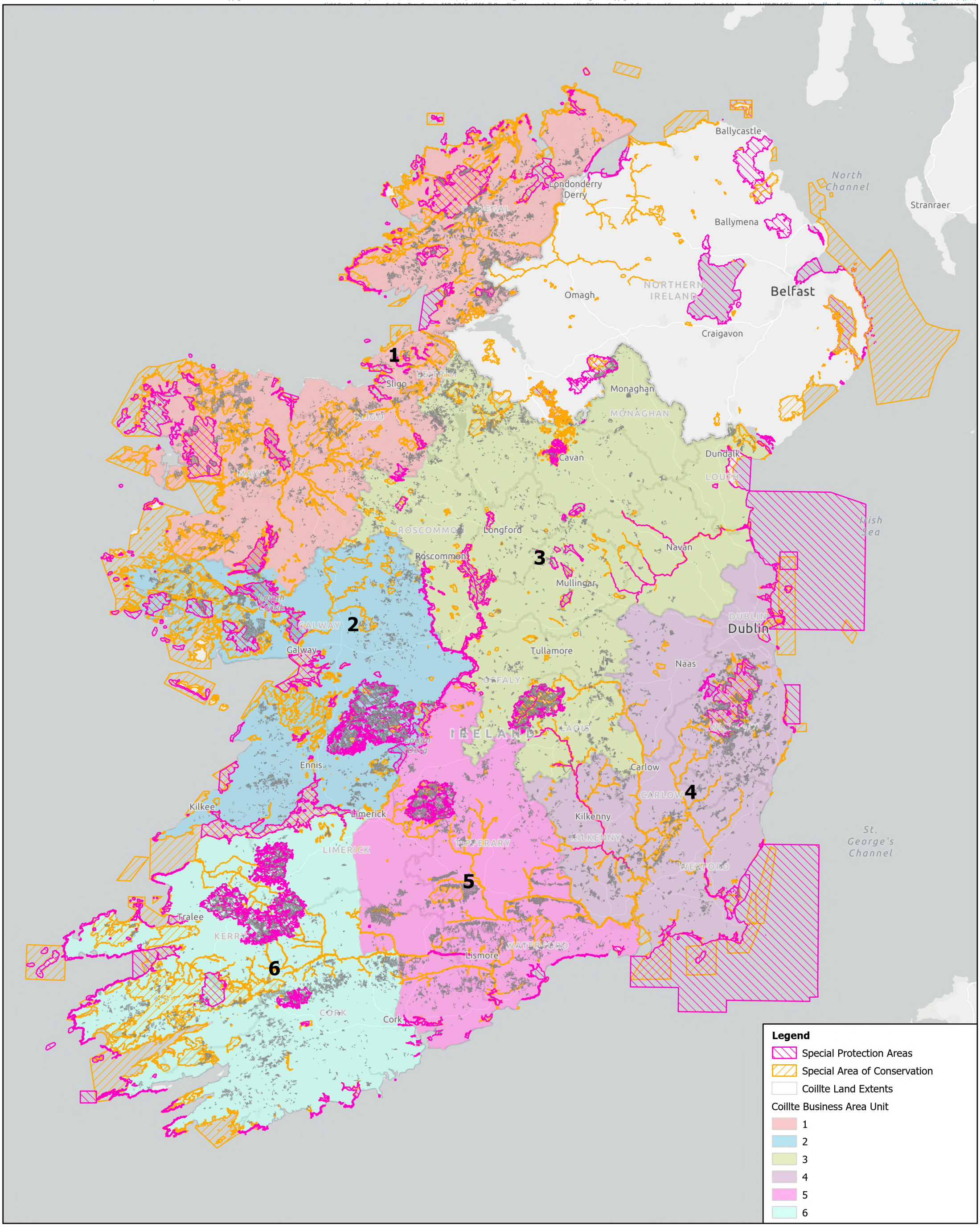
Increased impact to forests through windfall and storm damage as a results of increased extreme weather events due to Climate Change will be a key pressure on forest habitats going forward.

4.5.3 Key Considerations Relating to the LUSIP

The key considerations in relation to Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna are as follows:

- The potential effects of forestry activities (e.g. afforestation, reforestation, felling, roading, recreation) on non-designated biodiversity features e.g. important habitats and species outside designated sites - particularly with regard to barriers to movement and displacement.
- The potential for effects on designated areas.
- The potential to spread invasive species and opportunities to reduce the harmful impact these species have on biodiversity (as set out in out in outcome 2H of the National Biodiversity Plan 2023-2030).
- Potential impact of forestry management and recreation development on flora species listed under the Flora (Protection) Order, 2022 (S.I. No. 235 of 2022).
- Potential impact of renewable energy development supported by the Plan on biodiversity.
- Opportunities to promote green infrastructure, ecological connectivity nature-based solutions, and biodiversity net gain through the LUSIP.
- Nature conservation and restoration is an intrinsic component of the Plan. The Plan has the potential to support biodiversity protection and enhancement in alignment with nature legislation and policy (e.g., the Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan).

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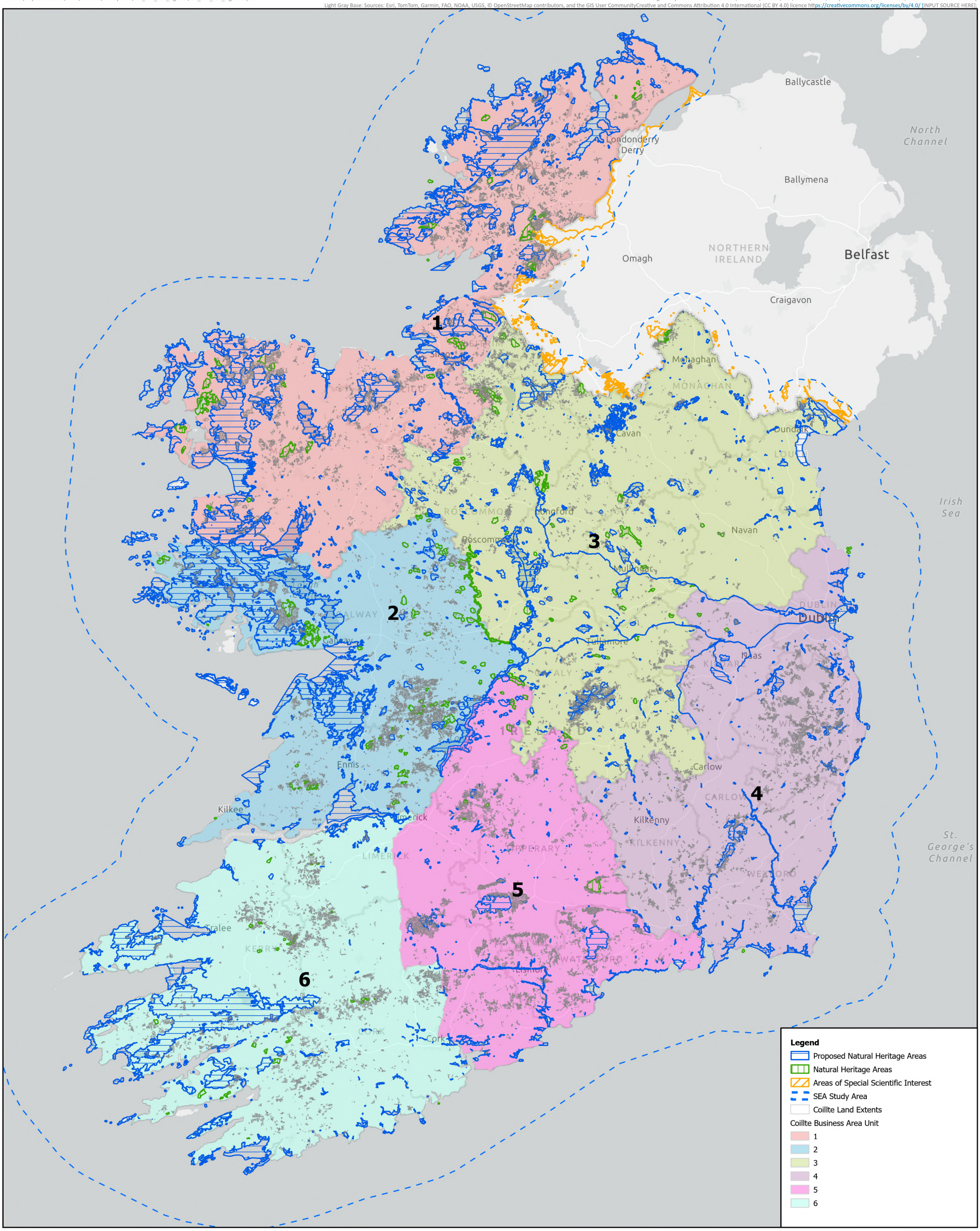
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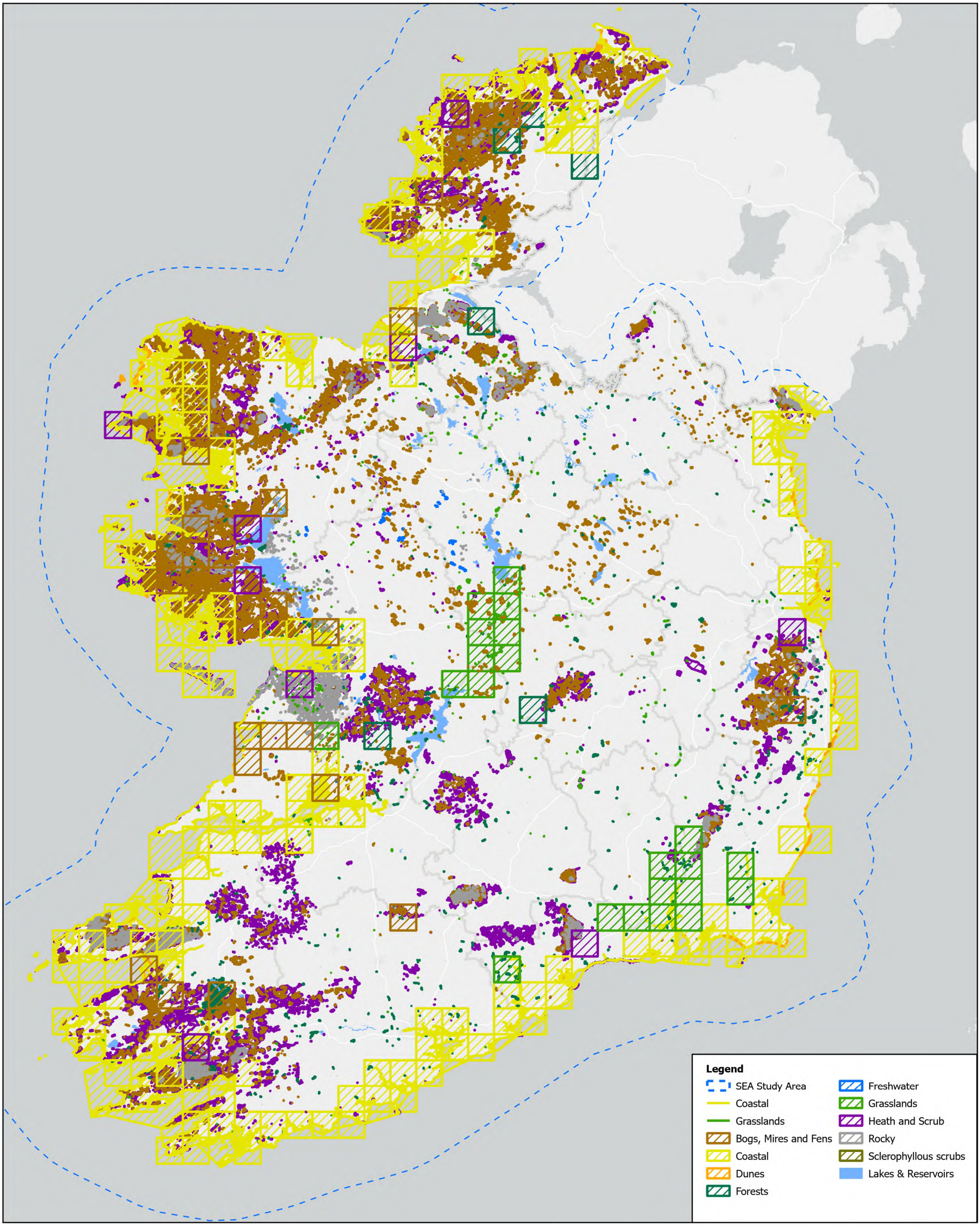
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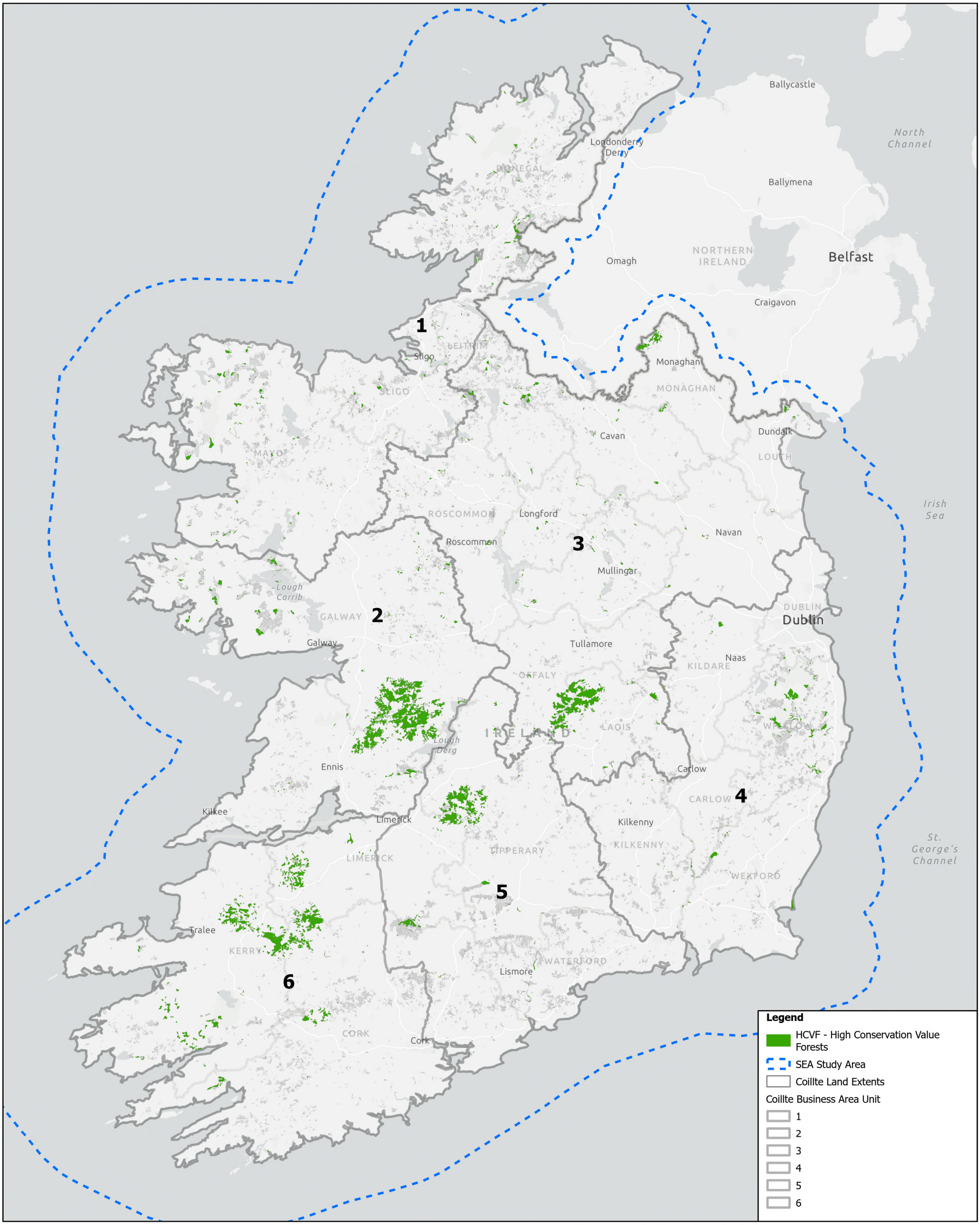
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Legend

- HCVF - High Conservation Value Forests
- SEA Study Area
- Coillte Land Extents

Coillte Business Area Unit

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TITLE: High Conservation Value Forests	**FIGURE NO:** 4-9		
	CLIENT: COILLTE		
PROJECT: Coillte Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan SEA	**SCALE:** 1:1,300,000	**REVISION:**	0
	DATE: 19/01/2026	**PAGE SIZE:**	A3

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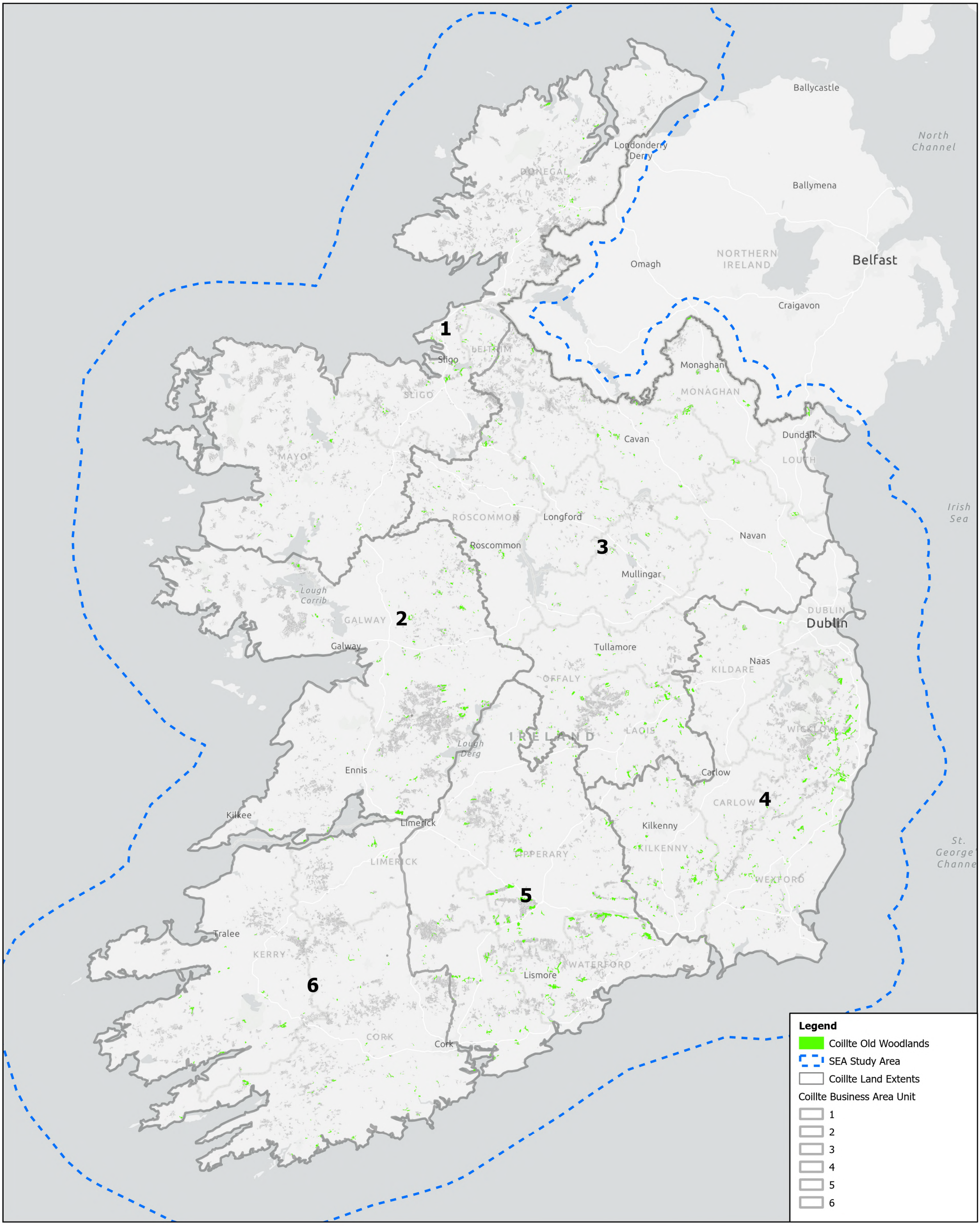
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Coillte Land Extents:
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Legend

- Coillte Old Woodlands
- SEA Study Area
- Coillte Land Extents

Coillte Business Area Unit

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TITLE: Old Woodland Sites	**FIGURE NO:** 4-10		
	CLIENT: COILLTE		
PROJECT: Coillte Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan SEA	**SCALE:** 1:1,300,000	**REVISION:**	0
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4.6 Landscape, Seascape and Visual Amenity

4.6.1 Current Conditions

There are six areas designated and recognised as nationally important landscapes within the Republic of Ireland. All of these are National Parks. Ireland has no Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); however, there are AONB within NI, such as the Ring of Gullion AONB and the Mourne AONB which are considered as part of the Transboundary effects.

There is a National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025, which was published by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG) in 2015. There is currently no approved national level landscape mapping for Ireland. The Landscape Institute published a draft landscape database of the UK and Ireland in March 2023, which provides a centralized repository of landscape character data for the whole island of Ireland. However, the data is not harmonized and consists of links to landscape character data from the various Local Authorities throughout Ireland.

The Irish landscape has been characterised into physiographic units by the GSI. This has been presented in Figure 4-11.

The Planning and Development Act (as amended) defines the term 'landscape,' which is used in the SEA. In addition, many Local Authorities have incorporated landscape designation into their County Development Plans in the form of protected views, prospects, landscape conservation areas and scenic routes etc. Similar to LCAs, there is no national standardised approach for designation of protected views, prospects, scenic routes etc. for landscape features/sites. The EPA's document on *Good practice guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Landscape*[50] has informed the SEA.

The Marine Institute published a Regional Seascape Character Assessment for Ireland in 2020. This identified 13 different Irish seascape character types, within 17 regional seascape character areas. This is reflected in the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF). The NMPF defines seascape as '*landscapes with views of the coast or seas, and coastal areas and the adjacent marine environment with cultural, historical and archaeological links with each other. Seascape can be broken down into its constituent parts of visual resource and marine character. Visual resource refers to views of the coast and sea from land, views from the sea to land, and views from sea to sea. Character is the perception of an area, the combination of characteristics at the surface, within the water column and on the seabed*.' National seascape character types in Ireland are shown in Figure 4-12.

The above and any other or emerging landscape designations has been considered by the assessment.

The SEA assessment of landscape utilises information from the following sources:

- The National Landscape Strategy (NLS) for Ireland
- Forest cover/Indicative Forest Strategies[51]

[50] EPA (2023) *Good practice guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Landscape*, available: Good practice guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Landscape
[51] Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

4.6.2 Future Trends (Evolution of the Baseline)

In May 2015, the DAHG published the National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025. This is in line with Ireland's ratification of the European Landscape Convention (ELC) (2000). The National Landscape Strategy will be used to aid compliance with the ELC. It is a high-level policy framework aimed at achieving a balance between the protection, management and planning of the landscape by way of supporting actions (DAHG, 2016). This strategy (and its successor) will strongly influence landscape in the country into the future.

Landscape and seascape trends in Ireland will continue to be strongly influenced by land use planning requirements relating to landscape, seascape and visual amenity protection (e.g., such as those defined in County/City Development Plans), as provided for under the Planning and Development Act (as amended).

Renewable energy development is foreseen to significantly influence and alter existing landscape, seascape and visual amenity throughout the country and in marine areas. Other development and activities, such as agriculture, forestry, transport development and urban development/expansion will also continue influence landscape, seascape and visual amenity in the country.

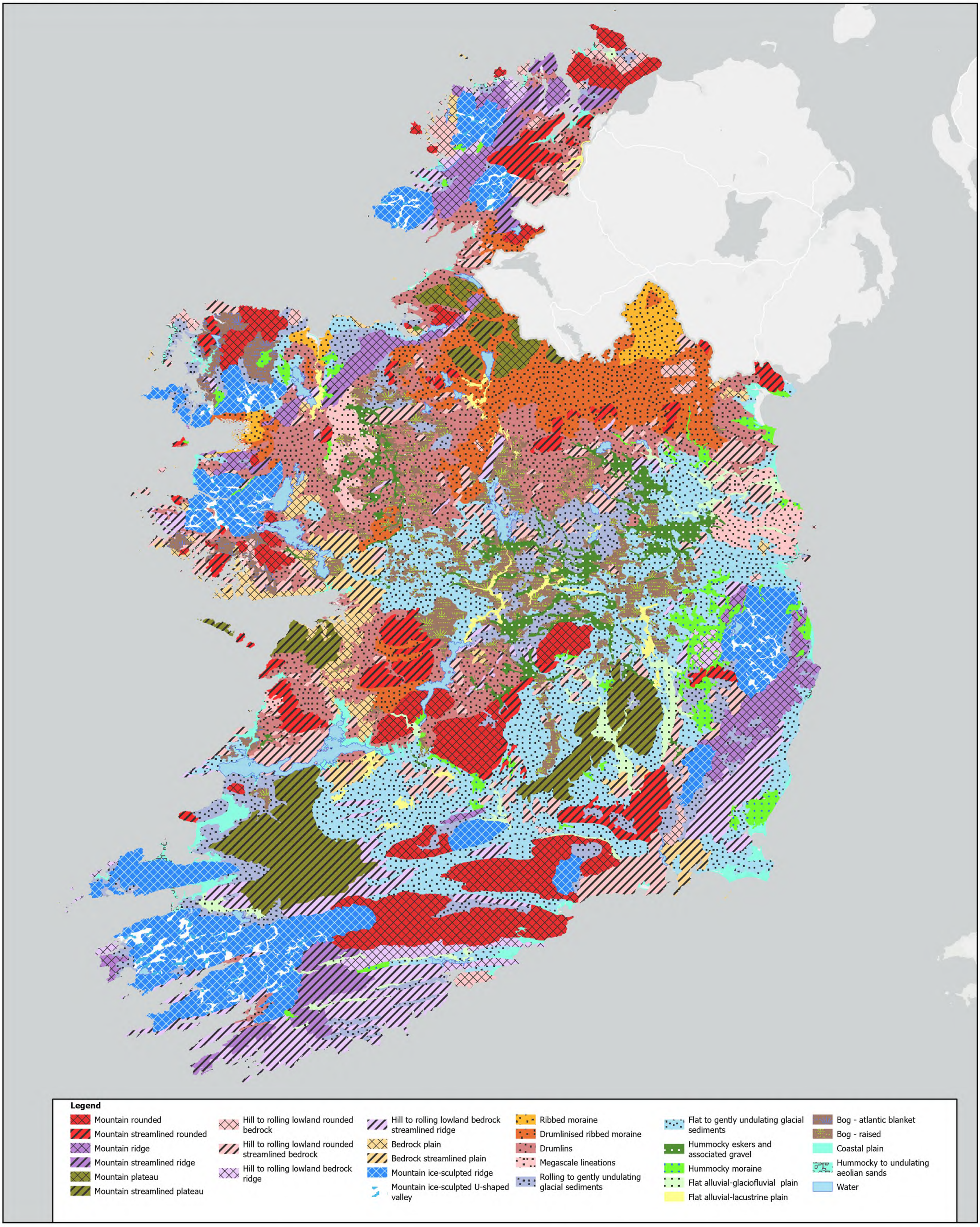
4.6.3 Key Considerations Relating to the LUSIP

The key considerations in relation to Landscape, Seascape and Visual Amenity are as follows:

- Effects of Coillte activities on areas of designated landscape quality and views and prospects.
- Impact of recreational development on general visual amenity in the vicinity of these developments and wider landscape character.
- Potential negative impacts on seascapes through changes in the natural, social, cultural, perceptual, and aesthetic characteristics as a result of projects carried out by Coillte.

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TITLE: Landscape Map	**FIGURE NO:** 4-11		
	CLIENT: COILLTE		
PROJECT: Coillte Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan SEA	**SCALE:** 1:1,400,000	**REVISION:**	0
	DATE: 06/10/2025	**PAGE SIZE:**	A3

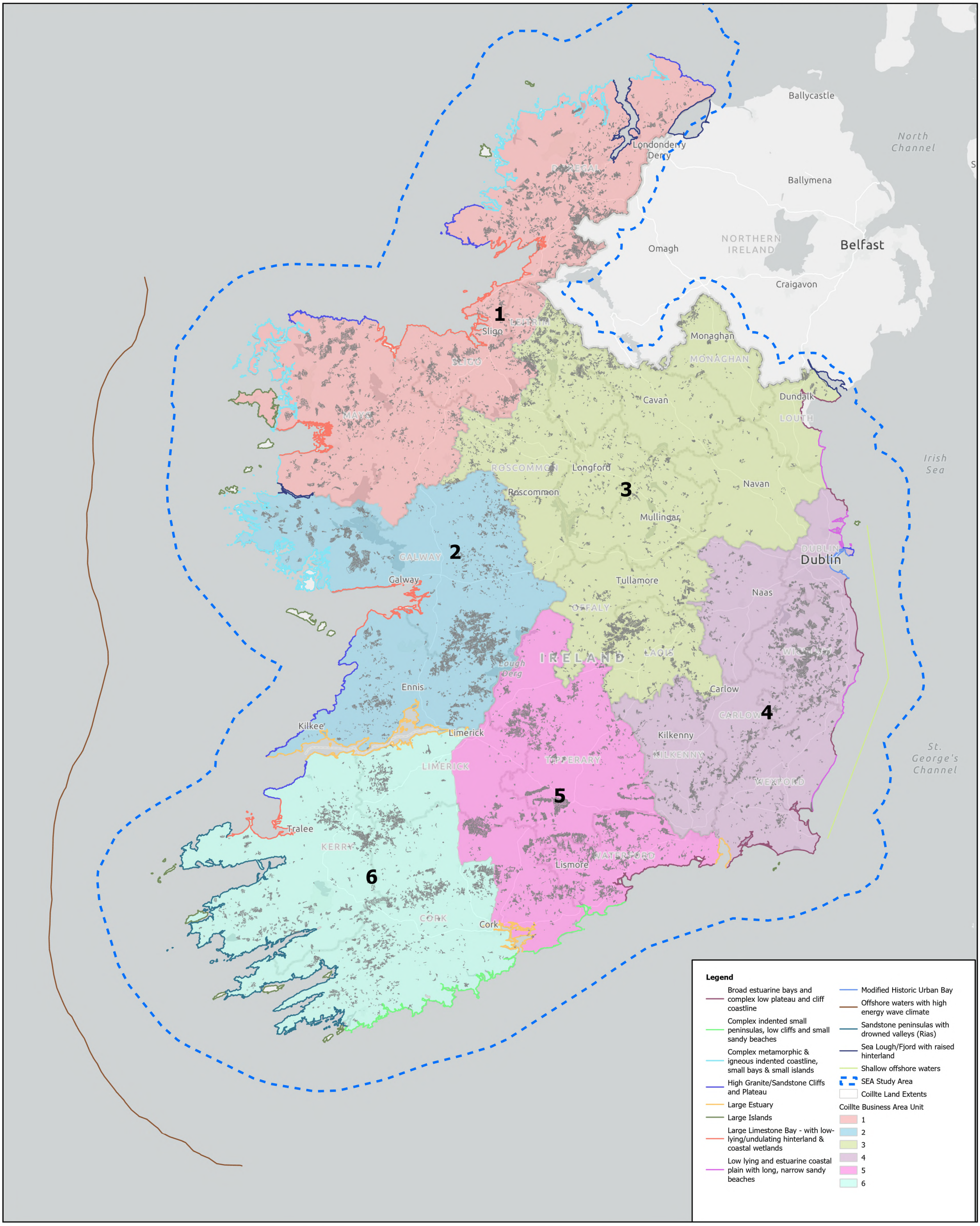
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TITLE: National Seascape Character Types	**FIGURE NO:** 4-12		
PROJECT: Coillte Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan SEA	**CLIENT:** COILLTE		
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4.7 Cultural Heritage - Archaeological and Architectural

4.7.1 Current Conditions

Archaeological sites are legally protected.[52] One of the primary sources of information for known archaeological features is the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP).[53] The RMP is an inventory of sites and areas of archaeological significance. There are 150,800 recorded monuments on the RMP and over 138,800 of these relate to archaeological monuments (NMS, 2020).

Local authorities compile and maintain the Record of Protected Structures (RPSs),[54] these RPSs are listed in the County Development Plans, but are not available in digital map format for some County Council's. It is acknowledged that the register of protected structures documented in CDPs may not represent all Ministerial recommended sites/structures which are included in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH).[55] The purpose of the NIAH is to identify, record, and evaluate the post-1700 heritage of Ireland and there are over 50,000 listings on the NIAH in Ireland. These provisions include historic gardens, designed landscapes and underwater archaeological heritage.[56] The Wreck Inventory of Ireland Database (WIID) holds records of over 18,000 known and potential wreck sites in Irish waters[57]; this is managed by the underwater archaeology unit.

Architectural Conservation Areas[58] (ACAs) are designated for their special characteristics and distinctive features. An Architectural Conservation Area has been defined by the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) as *'a place, area, group of structures or townscapes, that is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, technical, social interest or value, or contributes to the appreciation of Protected Structures.'* ACAs in Ireland are detailed in the various County and Local Area Development Plans (some of which are pending designation). Archaeological heritage sites in Ireland are displayed in Figure 4-13.

The Irish Government's has a vision for fostering World Heritage in Ireland. This involves the exemplary protection and management of World Heritage Properties, empowered local communities and stakeholders, enhanced awareness and understanding of World Heritage generally, and the inscription of further Irish properties on the World Heritage List.

There are two registered UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the Republic of Ireland:

- Brú na Bóinne - Archaeological Ensemble of the Bend of the Boyne in Co. Meath.
- Skellig Michael off the coast of Co. Kerry.

[52] Historic and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act (2023), the National Cultural Institutions Act 1997 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)
[53] Data available at National Monuments Service - Archaeological Survey of Ireland - Datasets - data.gov.ie
[54] under Section 51 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended).
[55] Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act (2023). Data available at National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) National Dataset - Datasets - data.gov.ie
[56] Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. 2015. Advice to the Public on Ireland's Underwater Archaeological Heritage.
[57] National Monuments service - Wreck Inventory of Ireland - Dataset - data.gov.ie
[58] Designated under Section 81 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended)

There also exists a World heritage tentative List for Ireland (last updated 2025).[59] This list is an inventory of natural and cultural heritage sites that may have potential to demonstrate Outstanding Universal Value and therefore considered suitable for nomination to the World Heritage List. It is important to note that the nomination process does not necessarily result in the inscription of a site on the World Heritage List. A site can be inscribed on the World Heritage List only if the World Heritage Committee determines it is of Outstanding Universal Value for all of humanity. The following are currently sites on this tentative list:

- The Historic Astronomical Observatories of Ireland
- The Passage Tomb Landscape of County Sligo
- Royal sites of Ireland: Ancient Irish Sites of Royal Inauguration
- Transatlantic Cable Ensemble

Within Ireland there also exists three UNESCO global geoparks. These Geoparks are areas of exceptional geological significance that promote awareness of the earth's geological heritage.[60] The three Geoparks in Ireland are:

- Joyce Country and Western Lakes Geopark
- The Copper Coast Global Geopark
- Burren and Cliffs of Moher Global Geopark

The SEA assessment of Cultural Heritage - Archaeological and Architectural utilises information from the following sources:

- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (including underwater archaeology such as wreck data[61])
- National Monuments Service (including the Underwater Unit)
- Built Heritage and Architectural Policy Section (the NIAH)[62]
- Heritage Council
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- National Built Heritage Service (NBHS)[63]

[59] UNESCO World Heritage Ireland - Tentative List, available: Tentative Property Archives - World Heritage Ireland
[60] Government of Ireland - UNESCO global geoparks, available: Geoparks | Permanent Representation To The OECD And UNESCO | Ireland.ie | Ireland.ie
[61] Available at Wreck Viewer | National Monuments Service (archaeology.ie)
[62] Data available at National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) National Dataset - Datasets - data.gov.ie
[63] Data available at Buildings of Ireland: National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

The SEA assessment of Cultural Heritage - Archaeological and Architectural is informed by guidelines set out for the protection of heritage assets. The assessment considers the Plan in relation to other plans set out for heritage sector. These include:

- Built & Archaeological Heritage: Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan (2019)[64]
- Ministerial Guidelines 'Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities'.
- The Built Heritage chapters within the relevant local authority County Development Plans.

4.7.2 Future Trends (Evolution of the Baseline)

The archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage within Ireland is a finite resource and protection of this resource is a continuous requirement set down in national legislation. New Therefore, the existing cultural heritage environment is not expected to change significantly in the immediate future. New heritage related features may become known or be designated in the future. There are also sites on the UNESCO tentative list that may be designated in the near future.

4.7.3 Key Considerations Relating to the LUSIP

The key considerations in relation to Cultural Heritage are as follows:

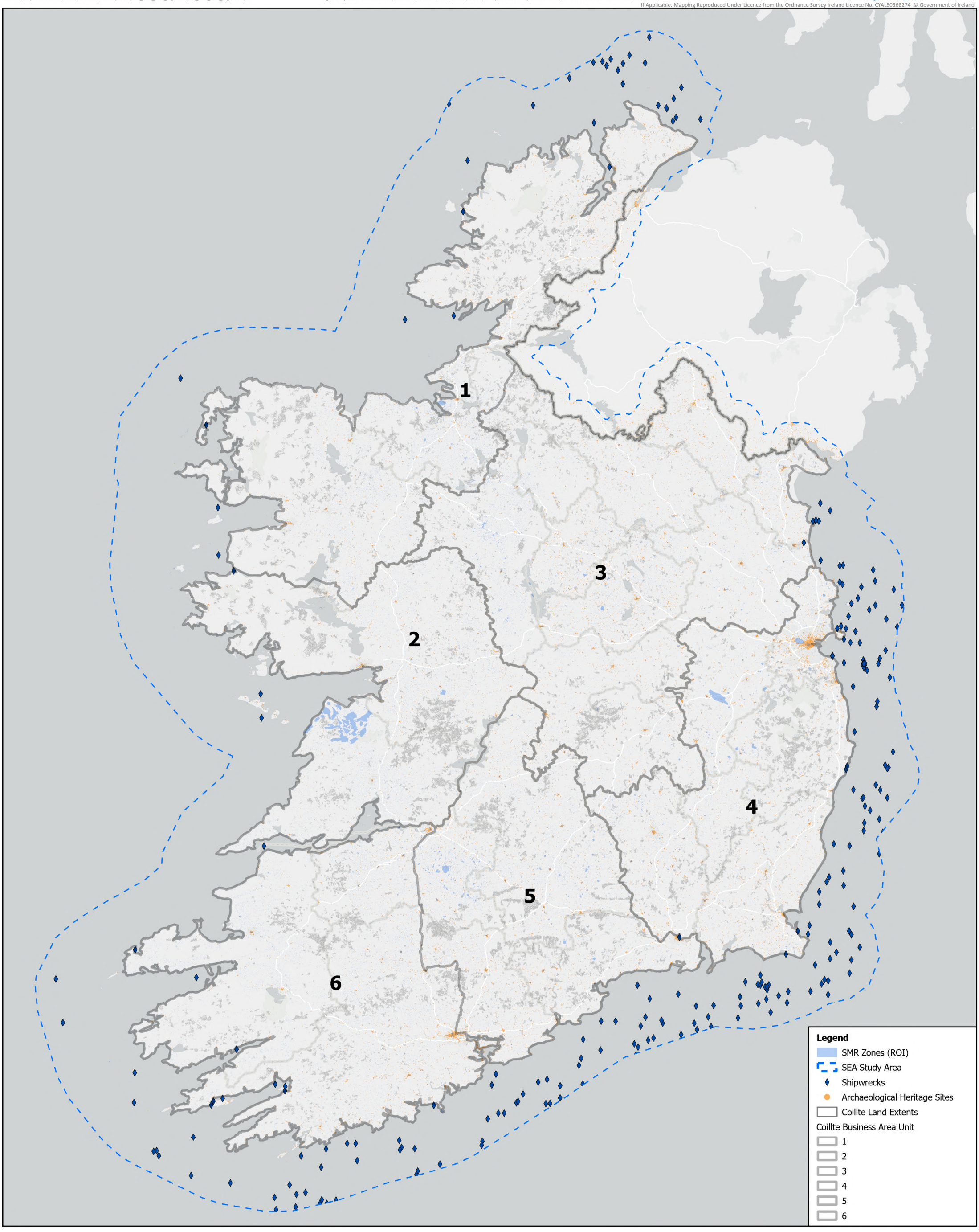
- The potential impact of development (new road networks, recreational facilities) on existing and unknown archaeological sites, architectural heritage sites, and protected structures.
- The potential effects of Coillte forestry activities (such as afforestation/reforestation) and development on existing and unknown archaeological sites, architectural heritage sites, and protected structures.
- The potential impact of Coillte greenfield development or Coillte activities (such as forestry or peatland restoration/re-design projects) on archaeological remains.
- The potential impact on the setting of heritage assets (the surroundings in which the asset is understood, experienced and appreciated) through changes in the physical landscape and changes in setting that have transboundary effects.

[64] Note that this Plan is expected to be updated in September 2025 following the development of the new National Adaptation Framework (2024)

Archaeological Heritage Sites:
Coillte Ownership Extents:
SMR Zones (ROI):

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	CLIENT: COILLTE		
PROJECT: Coillte Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan SEA	**SCALE:** 1:1,400,000	**REVISION:**	0
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4.8 Soils and Geology

4.8.1 Current Conditions

4.8.1.1 Geology

The geology of Ireland varies greatly, comprising of a low-lying central limestone plain that is surrounded by coastal mountains. The mountains to the north-west (Galway, Mayo and Donegal) and east (Wicklow Mountains) are comprised of granite. The north-east of Ireland is covered in a basalt plateau and to the south, the mountains run in an east-west direction and is largely composed of a red sandstone rock. The geology of Ireland is presented Figure 4-14.

As part of the Irish Geological Heritage (IGH) Programme, a partnership between Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) and the NPWS, the GSI have identified important geological and geomorphological sites which could be conserved as NHAs. Until designation is confirmed, these sites are classified as Irish Geological Heritage Sites (IGHS). There are over a thousand audited geological heritage sites identified around Ireland.

4.8.1.2 Soils

Soil is a key environment component essential for the forestry sector, in addition to being instrumental in interactions with other environmental components such as water, biodiversity, landscape, human health and the climate. The quality of Irish soils is considered generally 'good' in terms of its physical, chemical and biological parameters. There are, however, pressures that impact on its long-term health, such as population growth and land-use changes including agriculture, afforestation/reforestation. Soil contamination can also occur from leakages, spillages from industry, old mining sites and landfills. Diffuse pollution will usually arise from primary activities such as agriculture, forestry and horticulture.

Subsoils in Ireland are made up of glacial and post-glacial sediments. Glacial till makes up the majority of subsoil, while other subsoils found in Ireland are sand and gravel, lake deposits, alluvium and peat. National soil types in Ireland are shown in Figure 4-15.

There is no legislation solely directed to soil protection in Ireland. The EU soil strategy for 2030 sets out a framework and concrete measures to protect and restore soils and ensure that they are used sustainably. A new Soil Monitoring Law will put the EU on a pathway to healthy soils by 2050.

Soils can contain a vast amount of carbon, primarily in the form of soil organic matter (SOM), which comes from decomposed plant and microbial biomass. Soil carbon plays a crucial role in maintaining soil health, enhancing fertility, and supporting biodiversity. Soils are the largest terrestrial carbon pool and are an essential component of the global carbon cycle. Grassland soils in Ireland store significant amounts of carbon, approximately 440 t CO_2/ha or an estimated 1,800 Mt CO_2 across all mineral soils.[65]

Healthy soils with high carbon content contribute to improved agricultural productivity, better water retention, and greater resilience against erosion. However, when soil carbon levels decrease due to land use changes, deforestation, or poor agricultural practices, more carbon is released into the atmosphere, contributing to climate change. A map showing the soil carbon content of Irish soils is shown in Figure 4-16.

[65] C. Paul, R. Fealy, O. Fenton, G. Lanigan, L. O'sullivan, R.P.O. Schulte Assessing the role of artificially drained agricultural land for climate change mitigation in Ireland (2018).

In Ireland, peatland areas comprise 20.6% of our land area (An Taisce, 2022). Peatlands include blanket bogs, raised bogs, fens and wet and dry heath. The main threats to peatland areas in Ireland are peat extraction, habitat changes, drainage, invasive alien species, nutrient pollution and climate change (Teagasc, 2016). The loss and degradation of peatlands can affect biodiversity, flooding and climate change (carbon sinks). Peatland areas can be categorised by organic matter content in soils. Soils can be categorised into the following groups in Ireland: Organo-mineral soils, organic soils and mineral Soils. Organic soils are characterized by a high percentage of organic matter. Mineral soils are Primarily composed of inorganic materials (rocks, minerals) with a small amount of organic matter. Organo-mineral soils contain a significant amount of organic matter, but less than organic soils. A map presenting these soils groups is presented in Figure 4-17.

4.8.2 Future Trends (Evolution of Baseline)

4.8.2.1 Geology

The GSI are in the process of compiling a list of geological and geomorphological sites in need of protection through NHA (Natural Heritage Area) Designation. The GSI has completed its list of karst (i.e. exposed limestone) and early fossil sites. It is therefore envisaged geology of importance will be provided further protection into the future.

4.8.2.2 Soils

In 2022, the Eighth EU Environment Action Programme (EAP) was adopted by the European Parliament and council. This EAP directly mentions soil in two of its six top priority objectives:

- Objective 4 - Pursuing zero-pollution, including in relation to harmful chemicals, in order to achieve a toxic-free environment, including for air, water, **soil** as well as in relation to light and noise pollution, and protecting the health and well-being of people, animals and ecosystems from environment-related risks and negative impacts.
- Objective 5 - Protecting, preserving and restoring marine, terrestrial and inland waters biodiversity inside and outside protected areas by, inter alia, halting and reversing its loss and improving the state of ecosystems and their functions and the services they provide, and the environment, in particular air, water, and **soil**, as well as combating **desertification and soil degradation**.

The 8th EAP set a list of the EU's to do list for immediate action. Number five on this list is '*Ensure sustainable use of soil and transform the EU's food system to protect and restore biodiversity*'. Under this action there was a goal to introduce a dedicated legislative proposal on soil health by 2023 to ensure the protection and sustainable use of soil. They have since proposed the *Soil Monitoring Law*, which provides a legal framework to help achieve healthy soils by 2050 and aims to address key soil threats in the EU, such as erosion, floods and landslides, loss of soil organic matter, salinisation, contamination, compaction, sealing, as well as loss of soil biodiversity.

The EPA's National Soil Database (NSDB) produced a national baseline database of soil geochemistry including spatial maps of major nutrients, and essential trace elements. This study provides Ireland with a good baseline of soil geochemical properties should any future soil protection policies be developed.

It is envisaged that measures will be implemented into the future to ensure the protection and enhancement of soil health into the future.

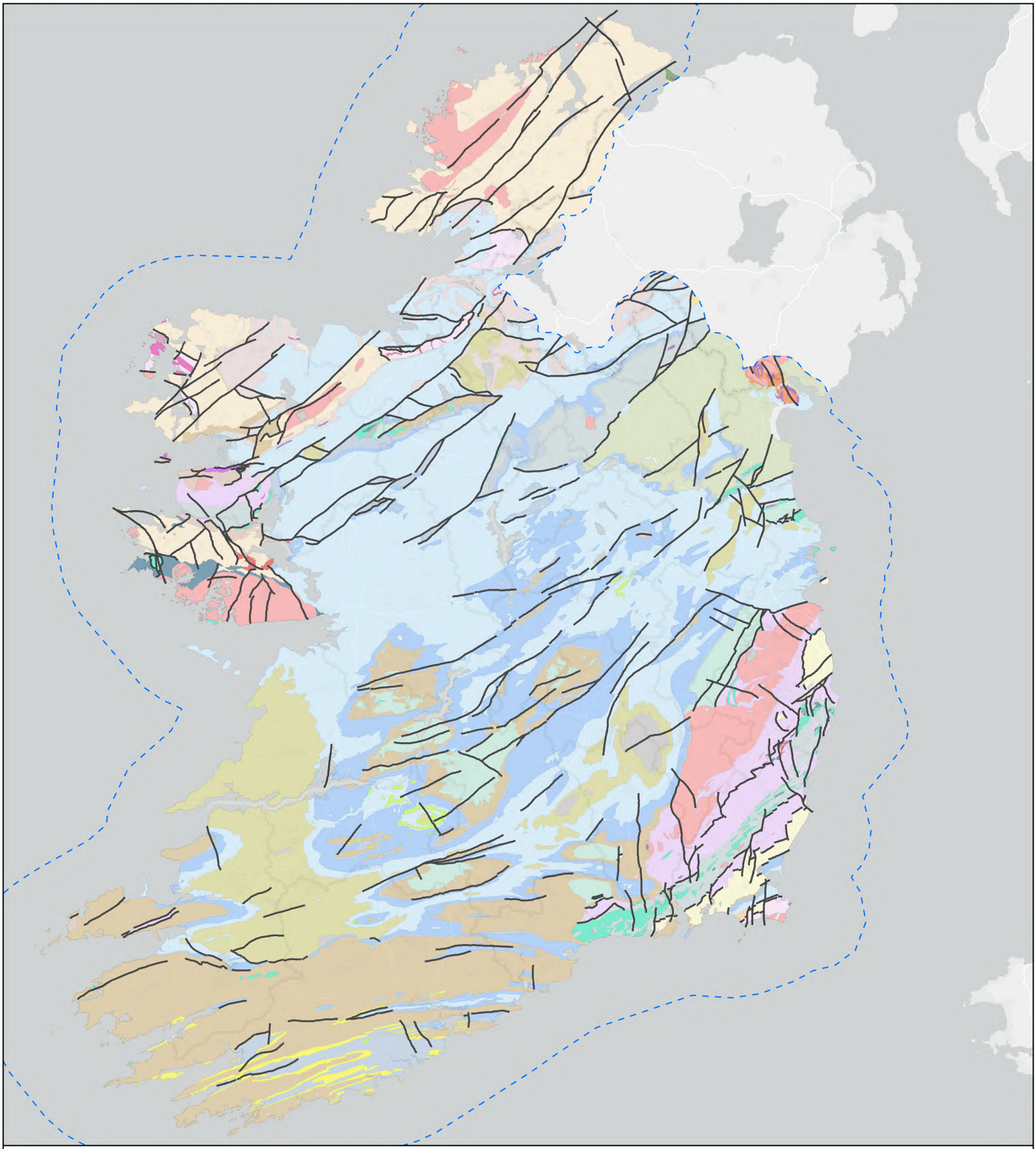
4.8.3 Key Considerations Relating to the LUSIP

The actions proposed in the LUSIP have the potential to result in the following impacts on the baseline environment:

- Potential impacts to soils/lands vulnerable to erosion, resulting in landslides.
- Potential for soil degradation (e.g. organic matter decline, altering pH, salination, increased fertiliser application) and soil sealing/compaction from construction activity in forested areas/
- Potential to impacts on audited and unaudited geoheritage sites.
- Potential for forestry to contribute to positive effects on soils (e.g., soil stabilisation, control of surface water run-off).

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- Faults
- Serpentinite and sedimentary melange (Palaeozoic)
- Ordovician granitic rocks
- Lr Palaeozoic basic-intermediate intrusion
- Siluro-Devonian granitic rocks & appinite
- Palaeogene granitic rocks
- Palaeogene rhyolite
- Palaeogene basic intrusive rocks
- Palaeoproterozoic gneiss
- Mesoproterozoic gneiss
- Neoproterozoic schist and gneiss
- Neoproterozoic metasedimentary rocks - Dalradian
- Cambrian greywacke, slate, quartzite
- Ordovician volcanic rocks
- Lower-Middle Ordovician slate, sandstone, greywacke, conglomerate
- Middle-Upper Ordovician slate, sandstone, greywacke, conglomerate
- Late Ordovician-Silurian deep marine greywacke, mudstone (Longford-Down)
- Silurian terrestrial - shallow marine sandstone, siltstone, conglomerate
- Silurian deep marine mudstone, greywacke & conglomerate
- Devonian volcanic rocks
- ORS, sandstone, conglomerate & mudstone
- Up. Devonian sandstone & mudstone (Old Head Sandstone Fm)
- Carboniferous volcanic rocks
- Tournaisian sandstone, mudstone, limestone
- Tournaisian limestone
- Visean limestone & calcareous shale
- Visean sandstone, mudstone & evaporite
- Visean to Westphalian redbed sandstone, conglomerate & mudstone
- Namurian shale, sandstone, siltstone & coal
- Westphalian shale, sandstone, siltstone & coal
- Permian sandstone, conglomerate, evaporite
- Triassic sandstone, mudstone, evaporite
- Jurassic mudstone & limestone
- Cretaceous chalk, flint, glauconitic sandstone
- Palaeocene basalt lava
- Oligocene clay, sand & lignite
- SEA Study Area
- Coillte Land Extents

TITLE: Geology	**FIGURE NO:** 4-14		
	CLIENT: COILLTE		
PROJECT: Coillte Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan SEA	**SCALE:** 1:1,400,000	**REVISION:** 0	
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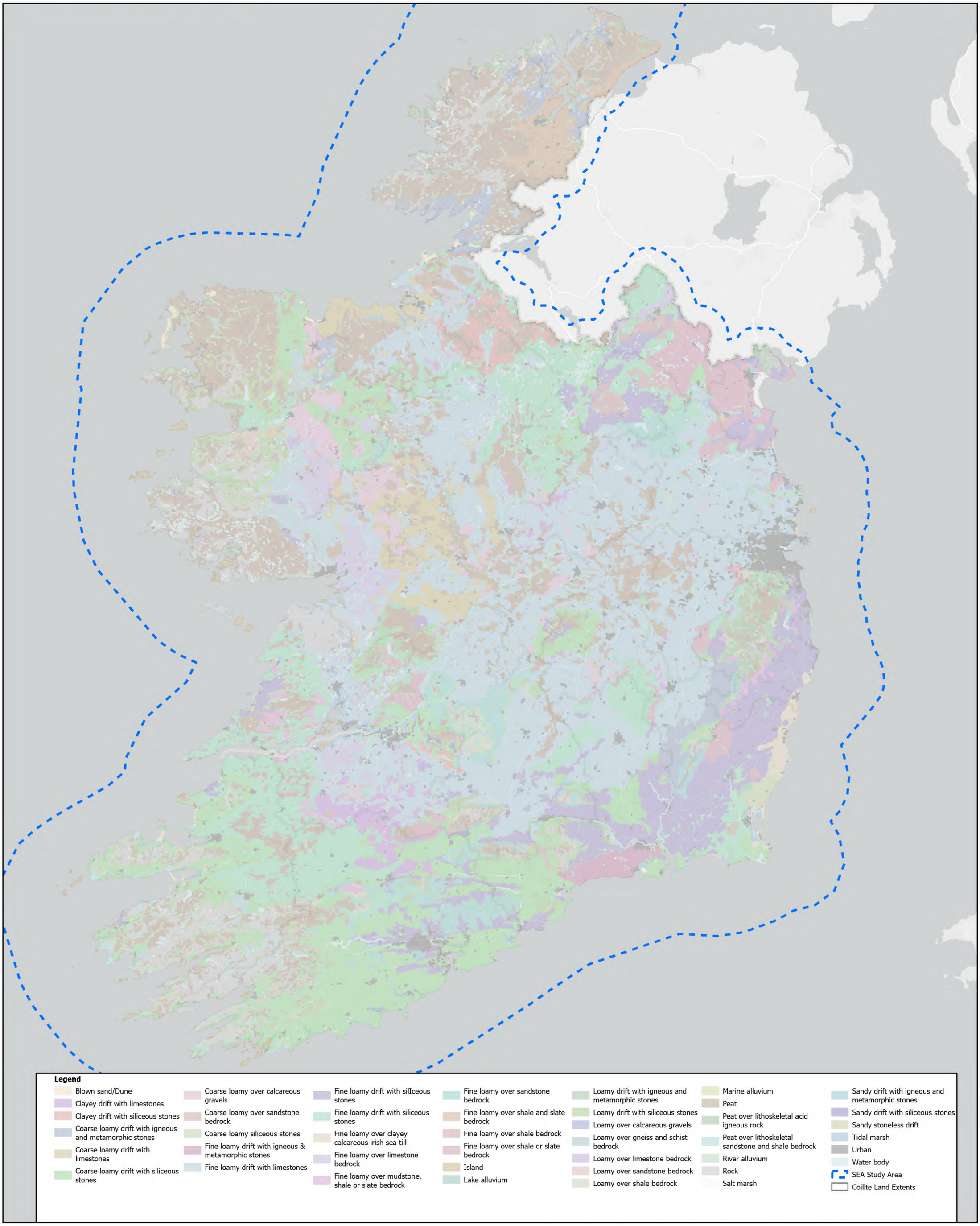
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TITLE: Soils	**FIGURE NO:** 4-15		
	CLIENT: COILLTE		
PROJECT: Coillte Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan SEA	**SCALE:** 1:1,400,000	**REVISION:**	0
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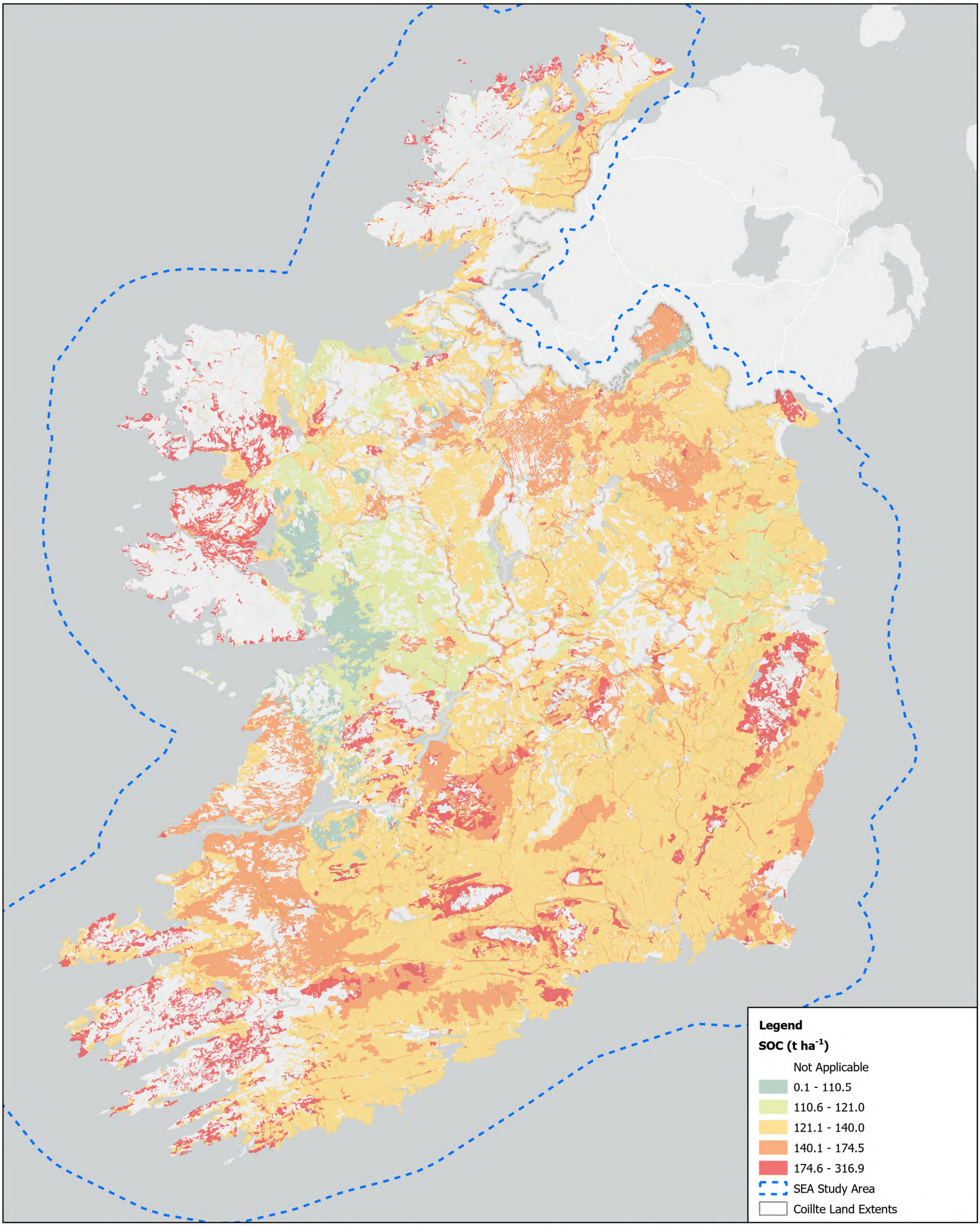
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TITLE: Soil Carbon	**FIGURE NO:** 4-16		
	CLIENT: COILLTE		
PROJECT: Coillte Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan SEA	**SCALE:** 1:1,300,000	**REVISION:**	0
	DATE: 06/10/2025	**PAGE SIZE:**	A3

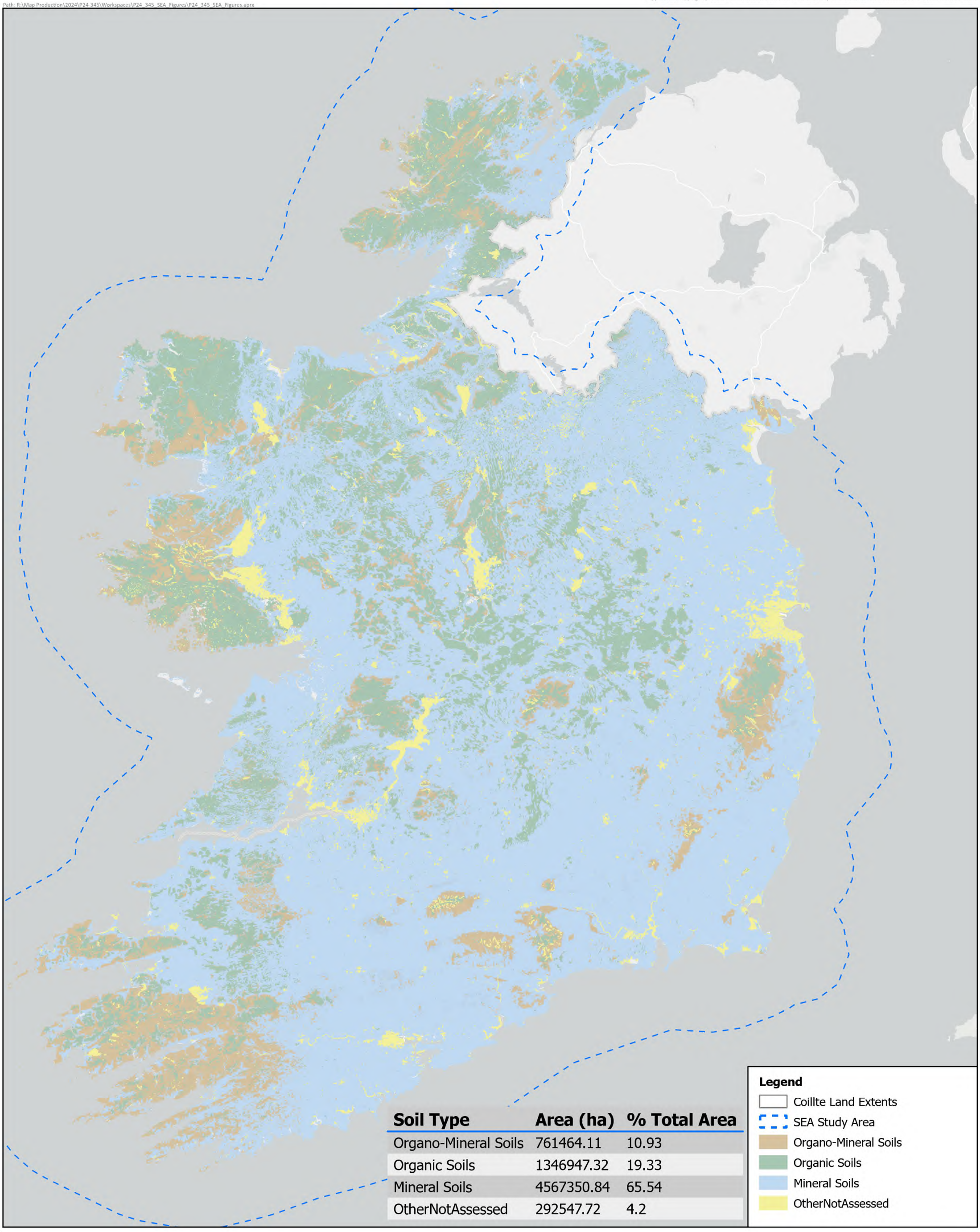
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Soil Type	Area (ha)	% Total Area
Organo-Mineral Soils	761464.11	10.93
Organic Soils	1346947.32	19.33
Mineral Soils	4567350.84	65.54
OtherNotAssessed	292547.72	4.2

Legend

- Coillte Land Extents
- SEA Study Area
- Organo-Mineral Soils
- Organic Soils
- Mineral Soils
- OtherNotAssessed

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TITLE: Soil Group Map	**FIGURE NO:** 4-17		
PROJECT: Coillte Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan SEA	**CLIENT:** COILLTE		
	SCALE: 1:1,300,000	**REVISION:**	0
	DATE: 06/10/2025	**PAGE SIZE:**	A3

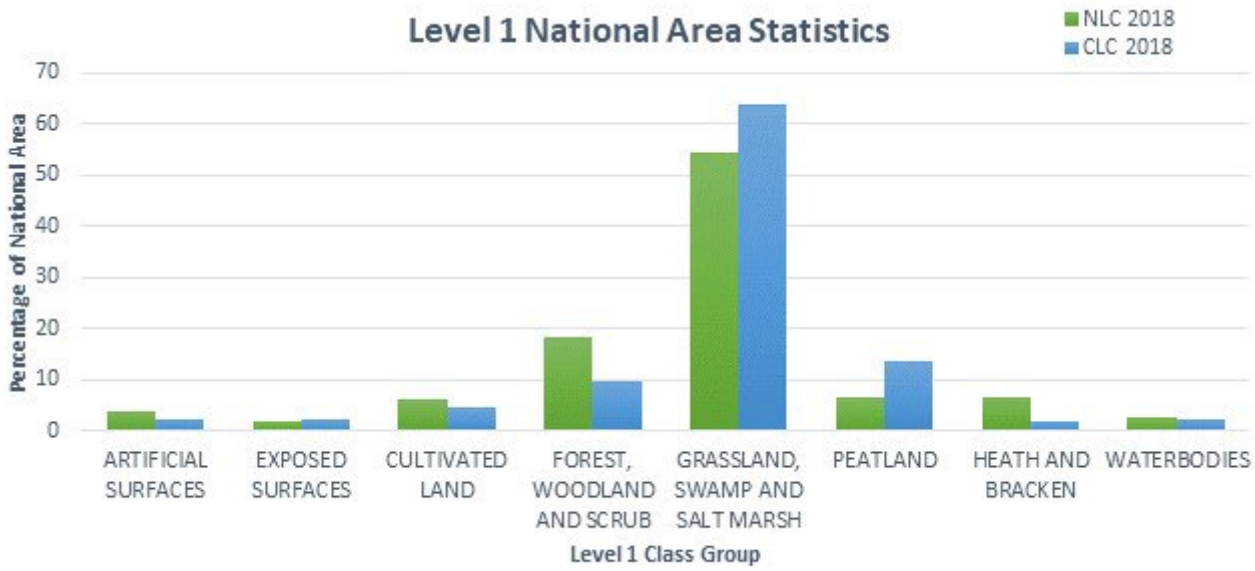
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4.9 Land Use

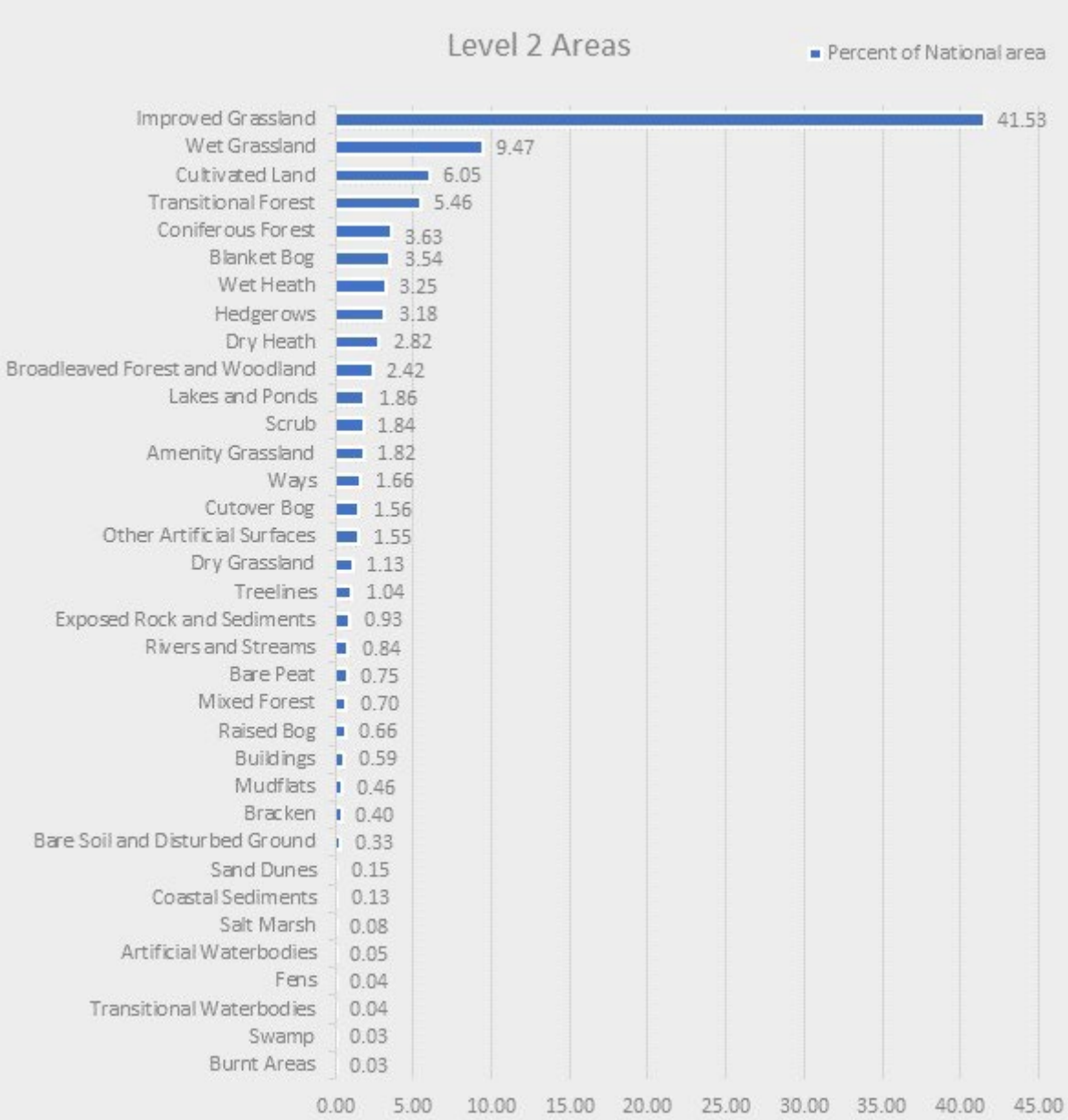
4.9.1 Current Conditions

4.9.1.1 Land Use in Ireland

The National Land Cover (NLC) Map of Ireland (2018) was developed by the National Mapping Division of Tailte Éireann and the EPA. Land cover data obtained from CORINE Land Cover (CLC) Inventory includes archives which document land-use change over time. The comparison of NLC 2018 and CORINE 2018 data at Level 1 (as shown below) indicates that Grasslands and Peatlands were overestimated in CLC 2018, while Forest Areas, Cultivated Land, Heath and Bracken, and Artificial Surfaces were underestimated.



Many of these identified changes have been the result of the differences in the resolution of data, with CORINE 2018 possessing a resolution of 25-hectares and therefore generalising many smaller land cover classes into the dominant classes. In comparison, the NLC dataset possesses a higher resolution with more smaller features mapped into appropriate categories, therefore increasing the representation of these classes and decreasing the percentage area of dominant land cover classes. The NLC is therefore more representative of the land cover classes present in Ireland. An overview of the percentage of national area that each NLC 2018 Level 2 class represents is provided below.



Improved Grassland is the single most dominant land cover type in Ireland. It covers 2.93 million hectares or 41.53% of the total national area. It is the only class that exceeds 10% of the national area with the second most widespread class being Wet Grassland at 9.47%. These two grassland classes together account for over 50% of the national area.

Cultivated Land is the third most dominant land cover type in Ireland 6.05%, the map also shows it has a strong regional concentration in the East and Southeast. Transitional and Coniferous forest lands, both associated with commercial forestry account for 5.46% and 3.63% of the national area respectively. Blanket Bog and Wet Heath occupy 3.54% and 3.25% of the national area respectively. The first national scale mapping of hedgerows in Ireland show that they cover 224,787 ha or 3.18% of the total national area.

All other classes are below 3% of the national area with full national-scale mapping achieved for the first time for many other land cover classes including Dry Heath (2.82%), Broadleaved Forest and Woodland (2.42%), Scrub (1.84%), Amenity Grassland (1.82%), Cutover Bog (1.56%) and Raised Bog (0.66%).

4.9.1.2 Forestry

As of 2022, the 4th National Forest Inventory (NFI) estimate the area of forest in Ireland to be 808,848 hectares or 11.6% of the land area, excluding inland water bodies. County Leitrim possess the highest percentage of forest cover (20.1%), with County Cork with the largest forest area (92,471 ha). Within the national forest estate, the three main forest ownership categories area as follows:

1. **Public**: All State-owned forests, mainly Coillte
2. **Private (grant-aided)**: private, afforested land which was in receipt of either grant or premium since 1980
3. **Private (non-grant aided)**: private forests not in receipt of grant-aid post 1980. Includes areas semi-natural forests that have regenerated naturally and other long-standing commercial forests on private estate holdings.

There are currently more privately-owned forests than publicly owned forests. In 2022, 49.1% of forests were in State ownership, which has seen a reduction from 50.8% in 2017. The expansion of the private sector forest cover has been attributed to afforestation and natural expansion of semi-natural forests.[66]

Sitka spruce is the common tree species within these forests, occupying 44.6% of the total forest area. The species composition of the total stocked forest (i.e., the area with trees present) area across Ireland can be viewed in Table 4-7 below.

Table 4-7: Species Composition of the total stocked forest area (NFI, 2022)

Species	Area (1,000s ha)	Percentage
Sitka Spruce	360.9	50.6
Norway Spruce	27.0	3.8
Scots pine	8.4	1.2
Other pine spp.	62.8	8.8
Douglas fir	9.3	1.3
Larch spp.	23.8	3.3
Other conifers	2.9	0.4
Pedunculate and sessile oak	20.2	2.8
Beech	10.7	1.5
Ash	24.3	3.4
Sycamore	10.5	1.5
Birch spp.	58.0	8.1
Alder spp.	19.7	2.8
Other short living broadleaves	63.3	8.9
Other long living broadleaves	11.4	1.6
Total	**713.2**	**100**

[66] The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine: Forest Statistics Ireland 2024 (https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/297338/a280944a-dace-4812-9d6d-48822a5ab87e.pdf#page=null, accessed 26/11/2024)

Level 2 Categories of the NLC 2018 dataset combine to include coniferous forest, mixed forest, transitional forest, and broadleaved forest and woodland and totals to a forest area of 862,479 ha or 12.2% of the total land area. A breakdown of this with the inclusion of hedgerows and treelines is provided in Table 4-8.

Table 4-8: Species Composition of the total stocked forest area (NFI, 2022)

Code (Level 2 of NLC 2018)	Land Cover Class	Area (hectares)	% of Area
410	Coniferous Forest	256,443	3.6%
420	Mixed Forest	49,503	0.7%
430	Transitional Forest	385,673	5.5%
440	Broadleaved Forest and Woodland	170,860	2.4%
Total Forest (410-440)		**862,479**	**12.2%**
460	Hedgerows	224,787	3.2%
470	Treelines	73,393	1.0%
Total Hedgrows (including treelines) (460-470)		**298,180**	**4.2%**
450	Scrub	130,098	1.8%

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine has published an eligibility document entitled 'Land Types for Afforestation: Soil & Fertility' (2024),[67] which provides guidance for grant applications for the planting and expansion of forest resources. Soil types eligible for such applications are:

- Mineral soils: Eligible soil type for afforestation under all Forest Types (FTs).
- Organo-mineral soils with a peat (organic layer) depth of 30cm or less: Eligible soil type for afforestation under all FTs.
- Modified fens and modified cutaway raised bogs: Eligible soil type for afforestation, but only under those Forest Types (FTs) involving native woodland creation and only if capable of supporting the establishment and development of the most relevant native woodland type identified for the site, without further drainage.

The following examples are likely to fall under one of the aforementioned soil type categories:

- Cultivated and fertilised fields used for tillage, crops and pasture grazing, and land reclaimed for grazing prior to the 1st of January 2011.
- Fields and dry grassland hill sites where the parent material is limestone or Silurian shale, or where steeper slopes limit the use of agricultural machinery.
- Pasture dominated by soft rush, where poorer drainage restricts agricultural activity.

[67] The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine: Land Types for Afforestation: Soil & Fertility (June 2024) (https://assets.gov.ie/121183/49933794-2a40-4cef-be2b-cef1adacd43f.pdf, accessed 26/11/2024)

- Areas of Midland fen peats that cannot be wetted, and peats previously reclaimed for agriculture and now supporting rush pasture vegetation.
- Lands showing evidence of agricultural improvement, either through the soil conditioning of animal husbandry / manuring or historic crop production.
- Old hill pastures composed predominately of velvet bent, tufted hair-grass, sheep's fescue, Yorkshire-fog and sweet vernal-grass.
- Sites with the following species of rush: sharp-flowered rush, compact rush, bulbous rush and soft rush.
- Drier sites on hillsides, comprising dense bracken.
- If present, purple moor-grass should occur with better pasture grasses, i.e., sweet vernal-grass or bent grass, or with abundant soft rush, and should not constitute heathland-type vegetation.

According to the DAFM, ineligible land for forestry in Ireland includes the following:

- Sites that do not meet the soil requirements set out in Section 2 of the document (i.e., mineral soils, organo-mineral soils with a peat (organic layer) depth of 30 cm or less, or modified fens and modified cutaway raised bogs).
- Sites with a R+N score of less than 6.0.
- Severely exposed sites and some sea-facing locations.
- Sites over 300 m above sea level in the west of Ireland, and over 400 m above sea level in the east of Ireland.
- Sites that are prone to flooding and / or cannot be adequately drained. Exceptions may exist in relation to some site types potentially suitable under Native Woodland Scenario 6: Alluvial Woodland.
- Sites with rock outcrop and associated shallow soils accounting for 25% or more of the area.
- Sites with shell marl within 70 cm of the soil surface.
- Shallow soils.
- Private gardens.
- Golf courses (with the exception of areas that are not an integral part of the playing course – such area may be considered for afforestation, on application).
- Lands excluded for environmental reasons, due to sensitivities concerning water, biodiversity, archaeology, etc. Examples include sites within Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds or containing Annex 1 habitats that are protected under the EU Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. This exclusion does not apply to environmental setbacks incorporated into the afforestation design, as per the current Environmental Requirements for Afforestation (DAFM, 2025).

4.9.2 Future Trends (Evolution of Baseline)

The largest land use activity in Ireland is agriculture. The future of Irish agriculture depends on initiatives such as Food Vision 2030 (which has an aim of delivering a climate-neutral food system by 2050, with verifiable progress by 2030), Bord Bia's Origin Green Initiative (which enables farmers and producers to set targets aimed at protecting the environment and sustainability) and the Sustainable Healthy Agri-food Research Plan (SHARP) to make the best use of research and new technology in agriculture.

The Irish Government has made a commitment to increase the forest area in Ireland to 18% of the total land area. Afforestation is detailed in CAP25 as a major land-use measure for carbon sequestration, with a commitment to the enhanced delivery of afforestation and increased use of harvested wood products also included. CAP25 identifies specific measures to deliver reductions in emissions, including supporting Coillte's Strategic Vision, the management of the Coillte estate to increase carbon storage by managing the age profile of forests to improve carbon efficiency, expanding proactive silvicultural management of the broadleaf estate, and redesigning peatland forests to improve the carbon balance.

The NPWS have prepared a National Peatland Strategy, a Draft Raised Bog SAC Management Plan, and a Raised Bog NHAs Review, to protect and manage significant peatlands in Ireland, which are designated under EU and National legislation.

The National Just Transition Fund is a fund to support the transition of land uses to low carbon alternatives, additionally in 2023 each local authority has prepared Local Authority Climate Action Plans which will support the just transition process and aims to facilitate sustainable future development options related to energy need. Therefore, it is likely that the future trends related to land use – and land use change – are likely to be favourable in terms of environmental impacts due to the collaborative thinking approach being taken through these initiatives.

4.9.3 Key Considerations Relating to the LUSIP

The key considerations in relation to Land Use are as follows:

- Constraints from pressures such as urban sprawl and agriculture.
- Degradation of interacting environmental components (soil and water environments) from construction activity in forest areas.
- The requirement to achieve Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emission reductions under the EU LULUCF Regulation.[68]

[68] This regulation sets an EU-wide net target of 310 million tonnes of CO_2 equivalent carbon removals in the LULUCF (Land Use, Land Change and Forestry) sector by 2030. Each member state has a specific target under this regulation which they must meet to contribute towards the EU-wide net target. Ireland's binding target is to achieve a reduction of 0.6 Mt CO_2 equivalent LULUCF emissions by 2030, relative to average levels in 2016-2018.

4.10 Air Quality and Noise

4.10.1 Current Conditions

4.10.1.1 Air

The World Health Organization (WHO) has identified poor air quality as the single largest threat to public health. Poor air quality is linked to premature death and life-limiting conditions such as dementia, type 2 diabetes and neonatal mortality. Long-term exposure to particulate matter contributes to the risk of developing cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, as well as lung cancer

According to the EPA's 2023 report on Air Quality in Ireland,[69] the nation is in compliance with current EU standards under the Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFE) Directive (2008/50/EC)[70] with no pollutant exceeding the EU legal limit values. However, there are localised areas of pollution which are a concern. It is estimated that approximately 1,600 premature deaths occur in Ireland annually due to air pollution. Fine particulate matter (PM2.5) from solid fuel combustion and nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) from vehicle emissions are the main pollutants of concern in Ireland, as well as Ammonia (NH_3) emissions from agriculture. People's health and the health of our environment is impacted by these pollutants.

Ireland's ambition in the Clean Air Strategy is to move to alignment the WHO Air Quality guideline limits.[71] At present, Ireland is not on track to achieve the interim targets in the guidelines that they aimed to achieve by 2026. Moving forward, the achievement of future targets will be very challenging.

Under the CAFE Directive EU member states must designate 'Zones' for the purpose of managing air quality. There are four such zones in Ireland as follows:

- Air Zone A: Dublin conurbation.
- Air Zone B: Cork conurbation.
- Air Zone C: Other cities and large towns.
- Air Zone D: Rural Ireland.

4.10.1.2 Noise

The European Environment Agency (EEA) states that *'environmental noise can be defined as unwanted or harmful outdoor sound.'* The EU Environmental Noise Directive (2002/49/EC)[72] relates to the assessment and management of environmental noise. This Directive called for the development of strategic noise maps and action plans for major roads, railways, airports and cities. The fourth round of noise mapping is the most recent undertaken (round 4). The maps cover major roads, major railways, one major airport (Dublin Airport) and the cities of Dublin, Cork and Limerick (i.e. agglomerations of more than 100,000 inhabitants).

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[69] Environmental Protection Agency (2024) *Air Quality in Ireland – Report 2023*, Environmental Protection Agency: Ireland, available: Air Quality in Ireland 2023 [accessed 26 November 2024].
[70] Transposed into Irish legislation by the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 180 of 2011).
[71] World Health Organization (2021) *WHO global air quality guidelines: particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10), ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide*, License: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO, World Health Organization. https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/345329 [accessed 26 November 2024.
[72] Transposed into Irish law as Statutory Instruments: The European Communities (Environmental Noise) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 549/2018) and its amendment S.I. No. 663/2021 - European Communities (Environmental Noise) (Amendment) Regulations 2021.

The Centers for Disease Control[73] and Prevention notes that Forestry comprises one of the top industry sectors for worker exposure to hazardous noise that can contribute to hearing loss. Activities associated with worker tasks in forestry can include the use of chainsaws and other heavy machinery. Such prolonged noise exposure, among others, contribute to the elevated prevalence of hearing loss reported within this industry.

The forestry sector in Ireland operates within a legal and regulatory framework to protect forests and ensure that forestry operations and activities are in compliance with the principles of sustainable forest management. Forestry operations such as Forestry operations such as tree felling and forestry road construction are regulated by a licencing system. The legal and regulatory framework governing such activities include the Wildlife Acts 1976 and 2000, to ensure that wildlife and sensitive habitats are protected from disturbance.

Health issues related to long-term noise exposure include annoyance, sleep disturbance, cardiovascular and metabolic issues. Anthropogenic noise remains a pressure on marine mammals and other wildlife. The most widespread sources of noise pollution and exposure in Ireland are various forms of transport. Environmental noise can also arise from a variety of other sources including the night-time economy, domestic or neighbourhood noise and industrial or commercial activities. The Round 4 Noise Maps day-evening-night noise levels (L_{den}) for the Plan area is displayed in Figure 4-18.

4.10.2 Future Trends (Evolution of the Baseline)

Although air quality in Ireland is good, there is potential for pollutants to rise above emerging limits/targets in the future. The CAFE directive has recently been subject to review and is aiming to move Europe's air quality standards towards the health-based WHO guideline limits in a stepwise manner. Its new provisions include tighter limits on air pollutants and a strengthened regime for Member States' air quality plans when new limits have not been met. This is a future concern for Ireland as current monitoring results were higher than the WHO air quality guidelines for a number of pollutants including: particulate matter (PM), nitrogen dioxide ($N0_2$), sulphur dioxide (SO_2) and ozone (O^3)[74]. The main sources of these pollutants are the burning of solid fuel in towns and road traffic. Residential emissions are projected to decrease under existing and future measures that have been introduced. Transport-related air pollution emissions is also set to decrease in the future under reduction actions.

Future noise trends are difficult to predict. The European Communities (Environmental Noise) Regulations may be revised in future to enforce a stricter level of noise management, and further strategic noise maps and plans are to be developed. The EU Zero Pollution Action Plan sets out to reduce the share of people chronically disturbed by transport noise by 30% by 2030 across the EU. New measures need to be introduced in Ireland to contribute to this reduction. Current WHO guidance values[75] on noise levels above which it considers that adverse effects on health and sleep occur are below the Environmental Noise Directive (END) mandatory noise level reporting thresholds of 55 dB (L_{den}) and 50 dB (L_{night}). This may have implications in the future with regards to future noise level limits.

[73] *Timber, Noise and Hearing Loss: A Look into the Forestry and Logging Industry* (NIOSH Science Blog, Available at: https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2018/05/24/noise-forestry/#:~:text=Activities%20associated%20with%20these%20tasks,hand%20tools%20and%20vehicle%20systems; Accessed January 2026)

[74] Environmental Protection Agency (2024) *Ireland needs to tackle solid fuel burning and transport emissions to meet Clear Air Strategy ambition and protect public health*, available: Ireland needs to tackle solid fuel burning and transport emissions to meet Clear Air Strategy ambition and protect public health | Environmental Protection Agency [accessed 26 November 2024].

[75] World Health Organization (2018) *Environmental Noise Guidelines for the European Region*, WHO: Denmark, available: 9789289053563-eng.pdf [accessed 26 November 2024].

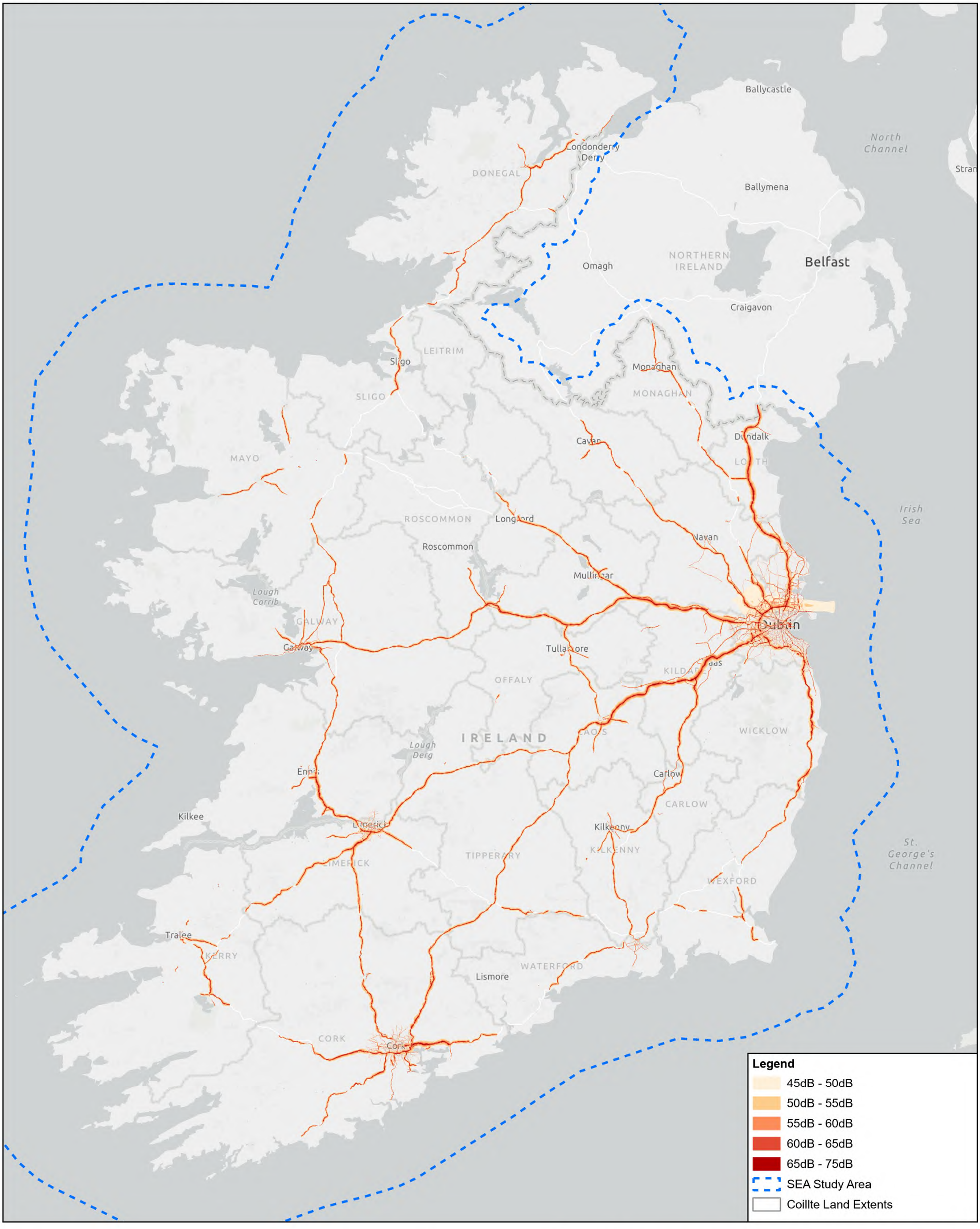
4.10.3 Key Considerations Relating to the LUSIP

Overall, the LUSIP is likely to have positive effects on air quality due to the nature of the plan; however, there are potential issues which may arise due to the implementation. The key issues in relation to Air Quality and Noise are as follows:

- Estate developments, particularly during the construction phase, may have a temporary negative impact on air quality and create noise pollution.
- Renewable energy developments supported by the Plan may have impacts on noise pollution, particularly at sensitive receptors which are in proximity to the development.
- Increased timber production and supply will lead to increased leading timber transport, resulting in negative air quality, climate and noise effects.
- Increased nitrogen deposition in ecologically sensitive areas from forestry activities could lead to negative environmental effects including eutrophication and biodiversity loss.
- Increased ammonia deposition from potential fertiliser application will affect sensitive receptors including biodiversity, flora and fauna, water, and human health
- Forestry supported by the Plan has the potential to contribute to air quality improvements through the absorption of pollutants (including carbon dioxide) and the release of oxygen through photosynthesis.

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TITLE: Noise	**FIGURE NO:** 4-18		
	CLIENT: COILLTE		
PROJECT: Coillte Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan SEA	**SCALE:** 1:1,300,000	**REVISION:**	0
	DATE: 06/10/2025	**PAGE SIZE:**	A3

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4.11 Water

4.11.1 Current Conditions

The EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) (2000/60/EC) establishes a framework for the protection of both surface and groundwater. Transposing legislation outlines the water protection and water management measures required in Ireland to maintain high status of waters where it exists and to prevent any deterioration in existing water status. The 'Water Action Plan 2024: A River Basin Management Plan for Ireland' is Ireland's third River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027. It outlines the measures the Government and other sectors are taking to protect and restore water quality in Ireland. The overall aim of the plan is to ensure that our natural waters are sustainably managed and that freshwater resources are protected so as to maintain and improve Ireland's water environment. Within this plan there are ten actions related to specifically forestry that set out how this sector can help support the achievement of the overall Water Action Plan aim. WFD catchments and waterbodies are displayed in Figure 4-19.

In 2022, the EPA reported that nearly half of all surface waters were not ecologically healthy due to pressures such as agriculture, damage to hydromorphology, commercial conifer forestry plantations, and poorly treated sewage. Forestry was found to be a pressure impacting 216 waterbodies, with forestry activities (afforestation, forest road works, thinning, clear-felling, and reforestation) can cause the release of sediments, nutrients and pesticides to water bodies and impact habitat conditions. Much of this pressure arises from inappropriate historical afforestation practices, which included the planting of commercial conifers on peat soils, on sensitive uplands and without water setback distances. Evidence indicates that water quality decline caused by commercial forestry activities can be substantial with drops in two or sometimes three status classes. Water bodies, however, can recover and sustain good condition when forests are stable between harvesting events.

There are over 4,810 surface and groundwater bodies in Ireland. Water quality data is collected by the EPA[76] and publishes a full assessment of the condition of Ireland's waters every three years. The latest assessment for the period 2016-2021 shows that over half (54%) of Ireland's surface waters are in good or better ecological status which means that nearly half (46%) are in unsatisfactory condition. There has been a 1% decline in the ecological health of monitored river water bodies since the 2013-2018 period. The WFD surface water at-risk status is shown in Figure 4-20. The majority of Ireland's population live on or near the coast and this creates pressure for transitional waters. Pollution from agricultural runoff (nitrates, phosphates etc.) and urban wastewater pose the biggest threat to transitional and coastal waters.

The EPA's Water Quality Indicators Report for the country was produced in 2023.[77] This report concluded in the following:

- The proportion of rivers in satisfactory biological condition is relatively unchanged since 2018 and there is no indication yet of an improvement.
- Of the 1,459 river water bodies monitored in 2022 and 2023 there has been a further small net decline in biological quality of 45, with the number of declines (232) exceeding the number of improvements (187).
- There has been a slight decline in the proportion of lakes with satisfactory (high and good) biological quality, driven by a reduction in the number of lakes with high biological quality.
- Elevated levels of nitrogen in Ireland's waters are found mainly in the east, south east and south of the country and are too high to support good water quality in our estuaries. This is primarily attributable to intensive agricultural activities on freely draining soils in these areas.

[76] EPA Maps. Water.
[77] Water Quality in 2023: An Indicators Report (EPA, 2023).

- Total phosphorus concentrations were too high in rivers and lakes in Ireland. The majority of lakes with elevated phosphorus are in the border region.

The EU Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC) uses a holistic approach to groundwater by addressing the relationships between groundwater, surface water and ecological receptors. Groundwater is considered by its ecological status, which is based on two assessments: chemical and quantitative status. Both of these need to be in good condition for the overall water body to be classified as good.

Pressures on waterbodies that are failing to meet the WFD's overall objective of 'good' status will be identified by the SEA. The EPA[78] have identified forestry as the third most prevalent significant pressure on waterbodies, impacting approximately 12% of all surface waterbodies that are 'At risk' of not achieving their environmental objective under the Water Framework Directive. The EPA note that forestry impacts a relatively high proportion of High Ecological Status waterbodies which are often upland vulnerable catchments in the headwaters of streams. These high-status headwaters are important 'biodiversity reservoirs' that play a role in restoration further downstream. The most common water quality issues arising from forestry relate to the release of sediment and nutrients into the aquatic environment, hydro-morphological impacts and acidification. Waterbodies identified as being at risk from forestry are shown in Figure 4-21. The identification process took place in accordance with the EPA's Water Framework Directive Guidance on Characterisation Methodology V4.0 – September 2016 and considered water quality and the correlation between forestry activities (planting and establishment, drainage, clearfelling) included in various forestry related datasets, including the Forest Service Forest Inventory and Planning System (FIPS) dataset (2007) and Coillte's land use type dataset.

Forestry can, however, achieve multiple environmental benefits in a river basin catchment or sub-catchment context. Forests act as natural water regulators, moderating the flow into watersheds by absorbing water through their dense vegetation and root systems. Forests aid in water quality as they naturally filter and trap pollutants and sediments. Forests are also good at providing erosion control as their roots stabilize the soil and their canopy protects the soil from direct rainfall, all helping to reduce the movement of sediment into the water system. Forests aid in natural groundwater recharge as their presence enhances the ability of the soil to absorb water, thus facilitating the percolation of water down into the aquifers, replenishing them. Lastly forests which support wide range of biodiversity allow for increased functionality and health of forest watershed systems as there is a diverse range of plants and animals to carry out roles that contribute to the stability and resilience of the watershed.

With regards to water quality, high risk areas for phosphorus loss typically have poorly draining soils and dominant overland flow pathways. Whereas areas with freely draining soils and substantial groundwater pathways are high risk for nitrogen losses.

Pollution Impact Potential (PIP) maps have been created by the EPA to show the highest risk areas for diffuse phosphorus (P) loss to surface water and diffuse nitrogen (N) loss to surface and groundwater. These maps act as signposts for where further actions should be prioritised and can be used to target measures in catchments where monitoring data has indicated that there is a problem. PIP maps for the Plan area are shown in Figure 4-22 (Nitrate) and Figure 4-23 (Phosphorus).

The SEA provides information on aquifer vulnerability, aquifer productivity and entries to the WFD's Registers of Protected Areas.

[78] Report series: Impacts of pressures on water quality Forestry, Environmental Protection Agency Catchment Science & Management Unit, May 2024

The GSI have assigned aquifers into appropriate categories (see Figure 4-24), and rated groundwaters according to both their productivity and vulnerability to pollution. Aquifer vulnerability (see Figure 4-25) refers to the ease with which pollutants of various kinds can enter into groundwater. The GSI also rates aquifers based on the hydrogeological characteristics and on the value of the groundwater resource. This is referred to as aquifer productivity and is mapped on Figure 4-26.

Over 70% of public water supplies take groundwater from boreholes, springs and infiltration galleries. Drinking Water Source Protection Areas have been mapped by GSI. These are areas outlined around groundwater abstraction points (e.g. borehole) that provide drinking water, which aim to protect groundwater by placing controls on activities within all or part of the zone of contribution of the source. Two Source Protection Areas are outlined. The Inner Protection Area, which aims to protect against the effects of human activities that might have an immediate effect on the source and against microbial pollution. The Outer Protection Area covers the rest of the zone of contribution to the groundwater abstraction point. Drinking water Source Protection Areas within the Plan area are shown on Figure 4-27.

In accordance with the requirements of the WFD, the EPA have compiled the Register of Protected Areas (RPAs). These RPAs are identified as areas requiring special protection under existing national or European Legislation, either to protect their surface water or groundwater, or to conserve habitats/species that directly depend on those waters. RPAs are displayed in Figure 4-28 (a-d).

The EU Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC) aims to protect the environment and the health of Europeans by attaining good bathing water quality throughout the EU. This directive is implemented in Ireland through The Bathing Water Quality (Amendment) Regulations 2024. Bathing water quality is assessed through water quality samples taken by local authorities before the bathing season (1st June - 15th September) begins and at regular intervals throughout the season. Based on these results the bathing water is then classified under four different water quality designations: excellent, good, sufficient, and poor. At present, in 2025, there are 153 identified bathing waters within Ireland that are being monitored for bathing water quality. Nationally the bathing water quality within Ireland is improving with 96% of the 151 monitored sites in 2024 meeting or exceeding the minimum requirement of 'sufficient'.[79] However, Ireland is below the EU average (85.4%) for bathing waters attaining excellent quality, with 81% of waters achieving this water quality classification in 2024. The number of bathing waters that are of Poor quality in 2024 was two, this is a decrease from the five identified in 2023. An overview of recent Bathing water compliance records is provided in Figure 4-29.

The EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) aims to achieve Good Environmental Status (GES) for all marine waters in Europe and protect the resource base for marine related economic and social activities. Ireland is currently under its third cycle of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) (2023-2028). The MSFD is implement through the national Marine Strategy in Ireland. The Marine Strategy aids in the accomplishment of this 'GES' by setting out the steps that need to be taken. It is broken into three parts: Assessment and Environmental Targets, Monitoring Programmes, and Programme of Measures. Each part is reported in two-year intervals.

[79] EPA (2025) *Bathing Water Quality in Ireland - A report for the year 2024* - Available at https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring--assessment/freshwater--marine/Bathing-Water-Quality-in-Ireland-2024_Final.pdf

As an Ireland nation, Ireland has a large marine territory, with over 880,000 km^2 of waters classified as either estuarine, coastal or marine. According to the EPA's 2022 report on '*Water Quality in Ireland 2016-2021'* which sets out the latest assessment of the health of Ireland's rivers, lakes, canals, groundwaters, and transitional (estuaries) and coastal waters, of Ireland's surface waters the coastal waters have the highest percentage of waters at high or good ecological status (81%) while estuarine waters had the worst (36%). Nutrient enrichment is a significant pressure affecting nearshore and estuarine waters. While not yet a problem in wider coastal and marine areas, the continued pressure will likely have an effect in these areas in time if measures identified under the MSFD and WFD are not fully implemented to address this.

The EPA's Water Quality Indicators Report (2023),[80] concluded in the following for estuarine and coastal bodies:

- 17% of our estuarine and coastal water bodies assessed were in unsatisfactory condition for nitrogen, while nitrogen loads to the marine environment are largely unchanged over the past four years.
- The elevated levels of nitrogen in our waters are found mainly in the east, south east and south of the country and are too high to support good water quality in our estuaries. This is primarily attributable to intensive agricultural activities on freely draining soils in these areas.
- The vast majority of estuaries and coastal waters have satisfactory concentrations of winter phosphate and annual phosphate loadings to the marine environment have been broadly unchanged over the last few years.

Under the MSFD there are eleven environmental descriptors that are required to be reached in order to attain GES. The most recent Draft Marine Strategy Framework Directive assessment (published for public consultation in 2024) indicated that five descriptors have met GES, three have achieved GES for some elements but some information is still lacking, and one descriptor has insufficient information to assess its environmental status. The table from the EPA's 2024 State of the Environment Report that details the draft Good Environmental Status (GES) Assessment for the eleven MSFD descriptors can be seen below.

[80] Water Quality in 2023: An Indicators Report (EPA, 2023).

Descriptor	Draft 2024 MSFD assessment
1. Biological Diversity	Achieved GES for some elements of biological diversity, but the status of many species groups is unknown. Numerous species, in particular a significant proportion of fish species, are not at GES
2. Non-indigenous species	Achieved GES
3. Population of commercial fish/ shellfish	GES has been achieved for 29 stocks of commercially exploited fish and shellfish. GES has not been achieved for 46 stocks, and the status of 99 stocks remains unknown
4. Elements of marine food webs	Environmental status for this descriptor remains unclear
5. Eutrophication	Achieved GES
6. Sea floor integrity	GES has been achieved for 75% of the MSFD areas; however, the status of 15% of the area remains unknown and approximately 11% has not achieved GES. Disturbance due to bottom trawling is widespread, with 40% of the MSFD assessment area affected to varying degrees
7. Alteration of hydrographical conditions	Achieved GES
8. Concentrations of contaminants	GES has been largely achieved for concentrations of most contaminants in seawater, sediments and biota in Irish coastal and marine waters. Concentrations of most parameters assessed are at levels that ensure the protection of the marine environment
9. Contaminants in fish/seafood for human consumption	Achieved GES
10. Marine litter	GES has not been achieved for marine litter
11. Introduction of energy including underwater noise	GES has been achieved for continuous and impulsive noise

An overview of the latest status of transitional and coastal waters in Ireland is provided in Figure 4-30.

4.11.1.1 Flood Risk

Flooding, particularly from fluvial and coastal sources, is an increasing problem in Ireland and there have been notable flood events over the last ten years[81]. The OPW is the lead agency tasked with the management of flood risk in Ireland. In 2022, the OPW reviewed their 2016 Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMP). The purpose of each FRMP is to outline the long-term strategy to manage flood risk in Ireland.

Figure 4-31 presents flood risk data (Catchment Flood Risk Assessment Management dataset) setting out flood event probabilities across Coillte estates.

The Water assessment has utilised information from the following sources:

- EPA and Marine Institute - WFD Data.
- GSI data on groundwaters, aquifers and bedrock information.
- Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Study and associated FRMPs (OPW, as reviewed 2022).
- Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) Mapping[82] (OPW).

[81] Floodlist (2022) Archive of significant flood events in Ireland - Available at https://floodlist.com/tag/ireland
[82] OPW (2022) Flood risk maps and data platform - Available at https://www.floodinfo.ie/map/floodmaps/

4.11.2 Future Trends (Evolution of the Baseline)

Ireland currently has a good understanding of the causes of water pollution, due to the implementation of the WFD. Proposed future development must meet the requirements of the WFD and aim to drive improvements and maintenance of water quality in the short term and provide a basis for the continued maintenance of good status in the future. It is envisaged water quality in Ireland broadly will gradually improve in line with the objective of the WFD.

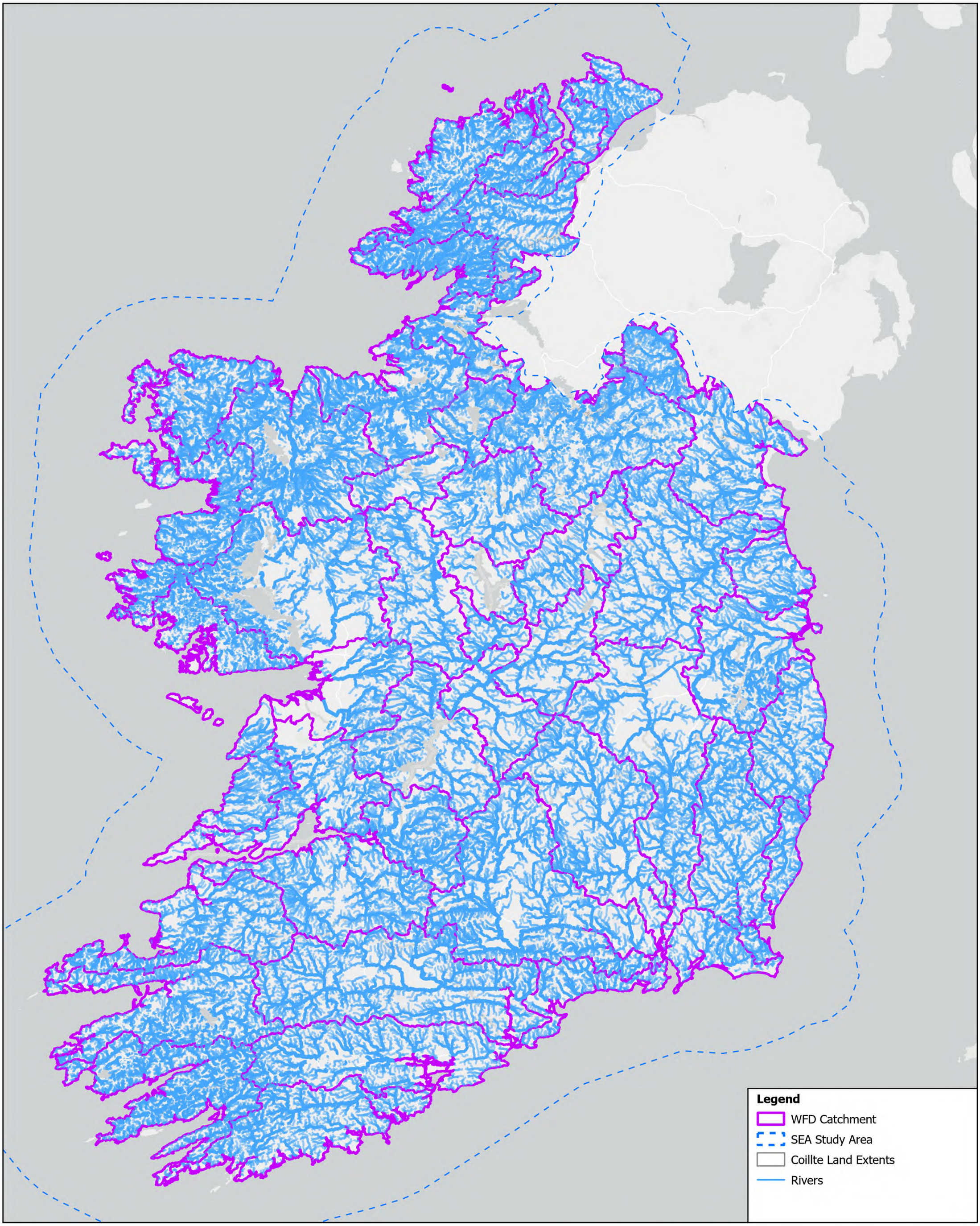
4.11.3 Key Considerations Relating to the LUSIP

The key considerations in relation to Water are as follows:

- Potential pressures and impacts on water body status from forestry activities (e.g., increased use of fertilisers, potential sedimentation (during afforestation, reforestation and felling in particular) and accidental spillage/run-off).
- Changes in hydrology (and reliant aquatic ecology) due to forestry activities.
- Potential impact of Coillte development (e.g., peatland restoration/re-design projects, tourism and recreation development) on water quality and hydrology (e.g., due to construction phase polluting run-off, unintended release of nutrients, adverse changes in hydrological conditions etc.)
- Potential benefits on river basin catchments/sub-catchments as a result of well-managed forestry or peatland restoration/re-design projects.

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TITLE: Hydrology and Water Catchments	**FIGURE NO:** 4-19		
	CLIENT: COILLTE		
PROJECT: Coillte Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan SEA	**SCALE:** 1:1,300,000	**REVISION:**	0
	DATE: 06/10/2025	**PAGE SIZE:**	A3

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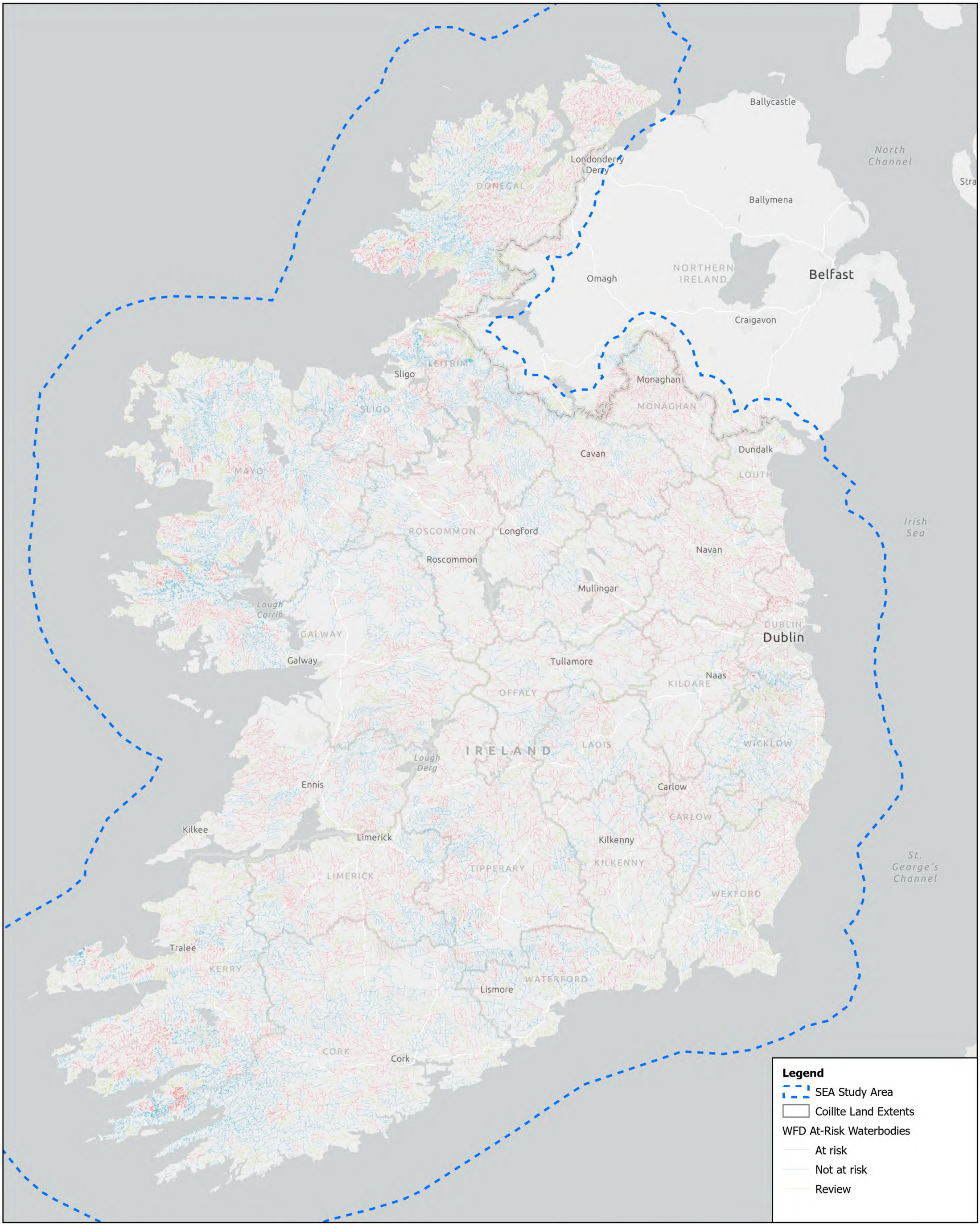
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TITLE: WFD Surface Water Status	**FIGURE NO:** 4-20
PROJECT: Coillte Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan SEA	**CLIENT:** COILLTE
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	DATE: 06/10/2025 — **PAGE SIZE:** A3

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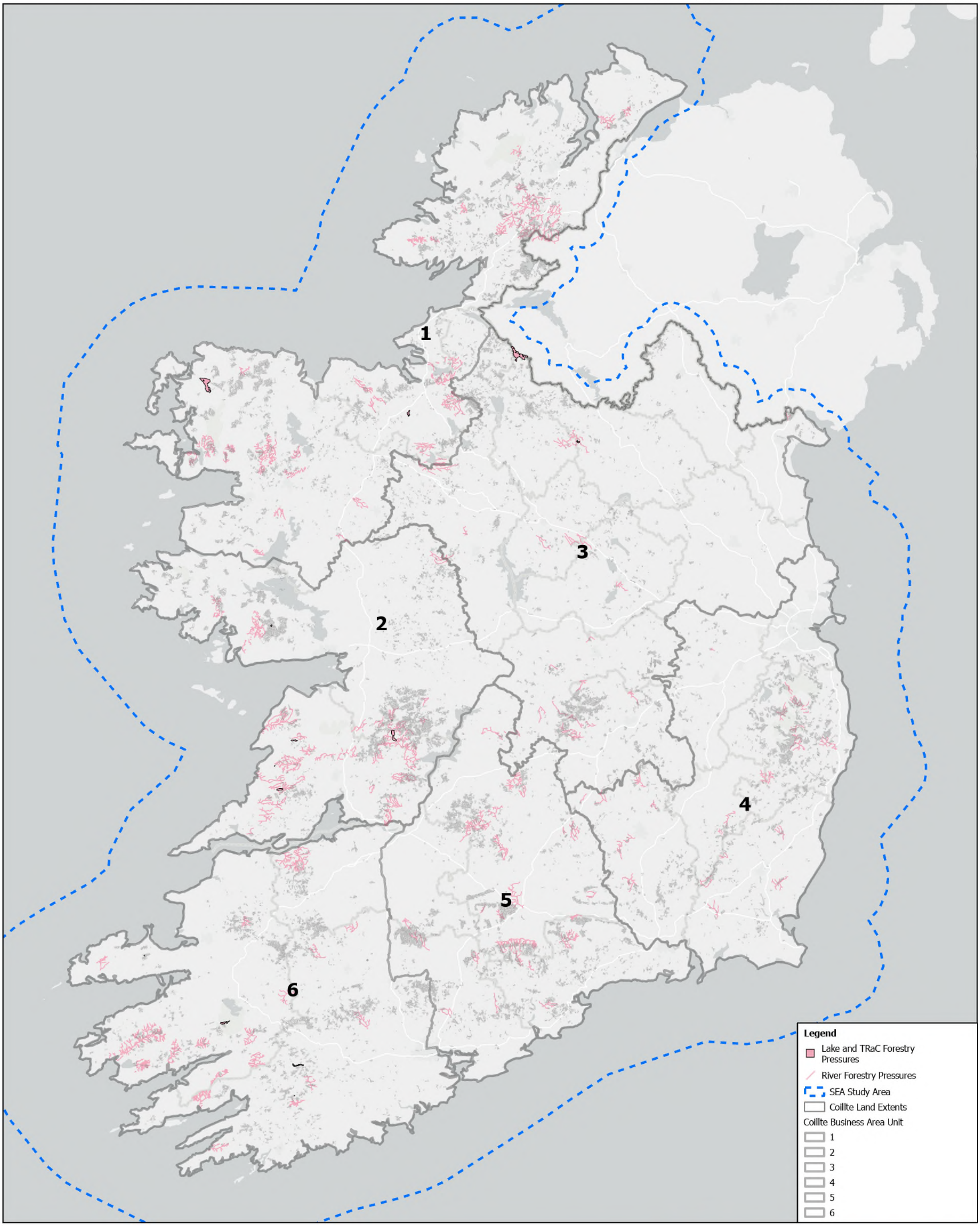
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TITLE: Water Bodies at Risk from Forestry	**FIGURE NO:** 4-21		
PROJECT: Coillte Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan SEA	**CLIENT:** COILLTE		
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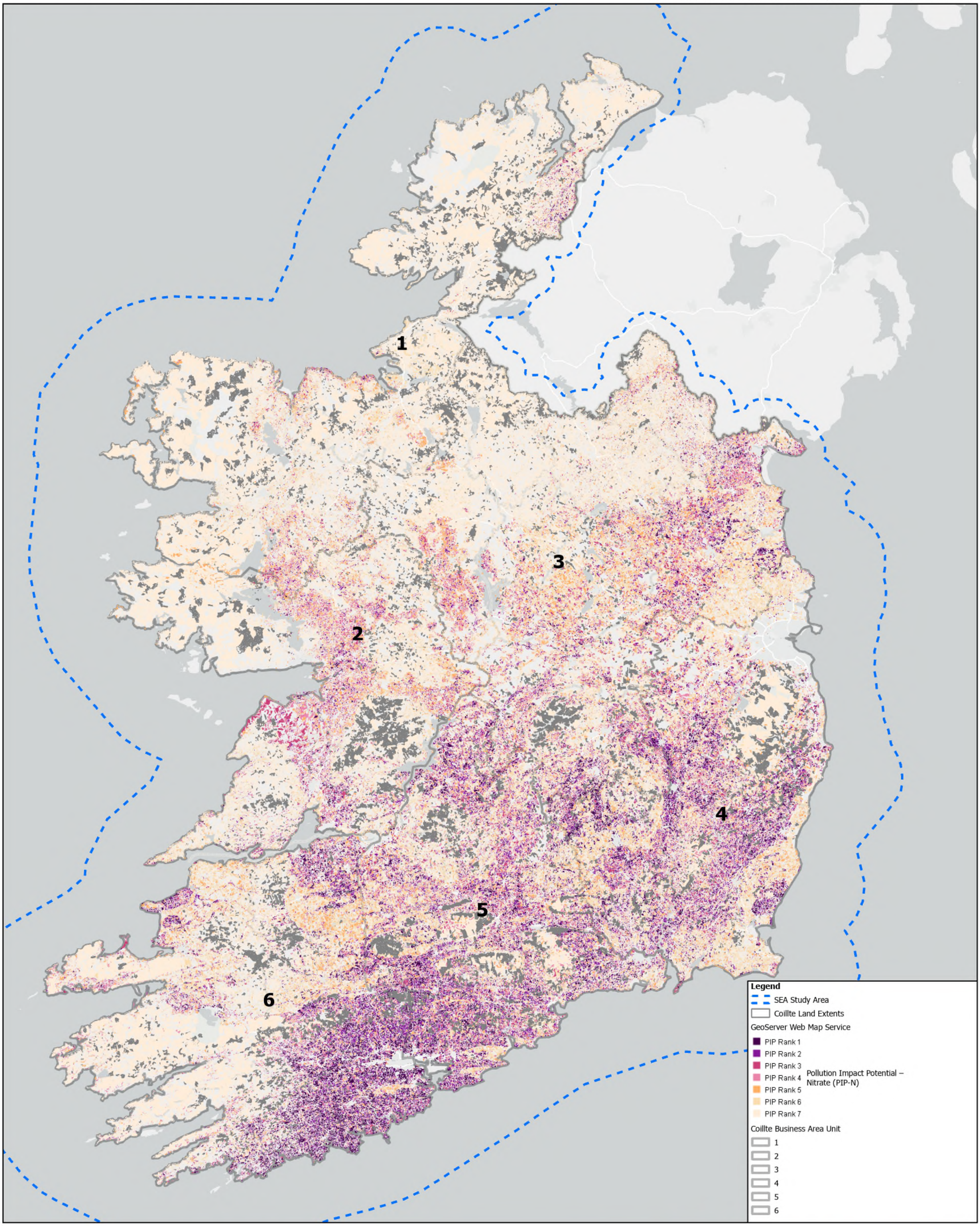
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TITLE: Pollution Impact Potential (Nitrate)	**FIGURE NO:** 4-22		
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PROJECT: Coillte Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan SEA	**SCALE:** 1:1,300,000	**REVISION:** 0	
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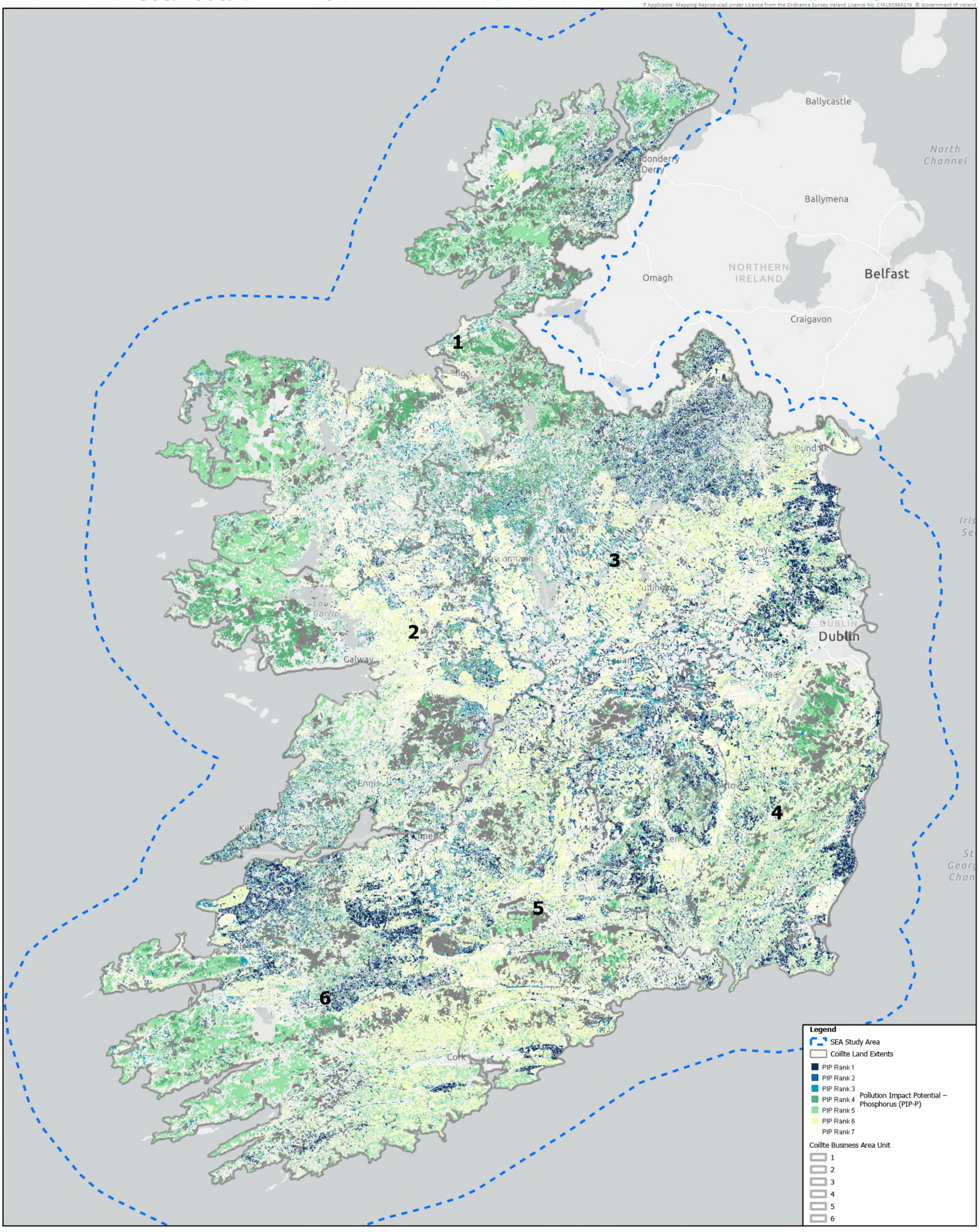
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TITLE: Pollution Impact Potential (Phosphorus)	**FIGURE NO:** 4-23		
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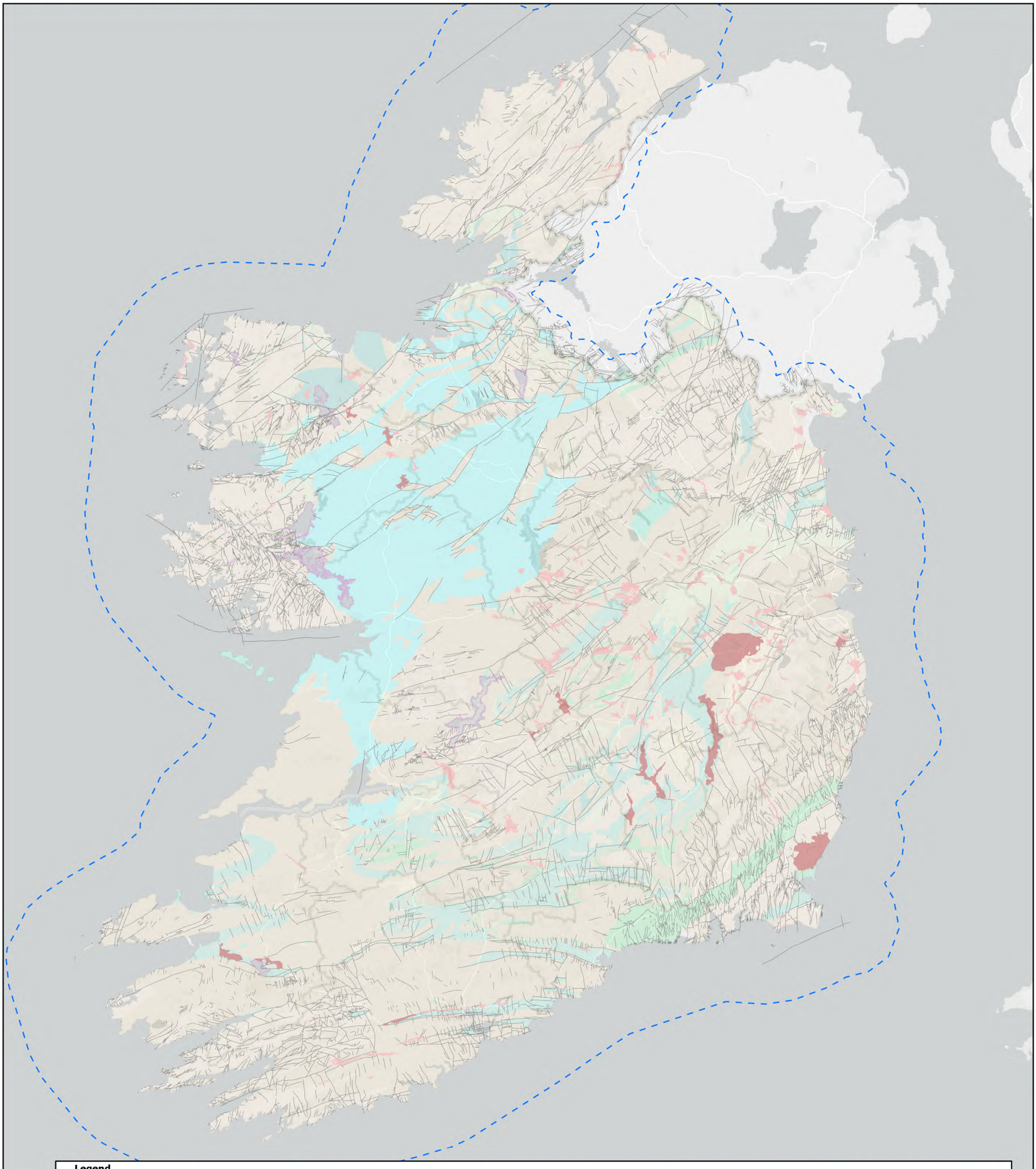
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TITLE: Aquifer Classification	**FIGURE NO:** 4-24		
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PROJECT: Coillte Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan SEA	**SCALE:** 1:1,400,000	**REVISION:**	0
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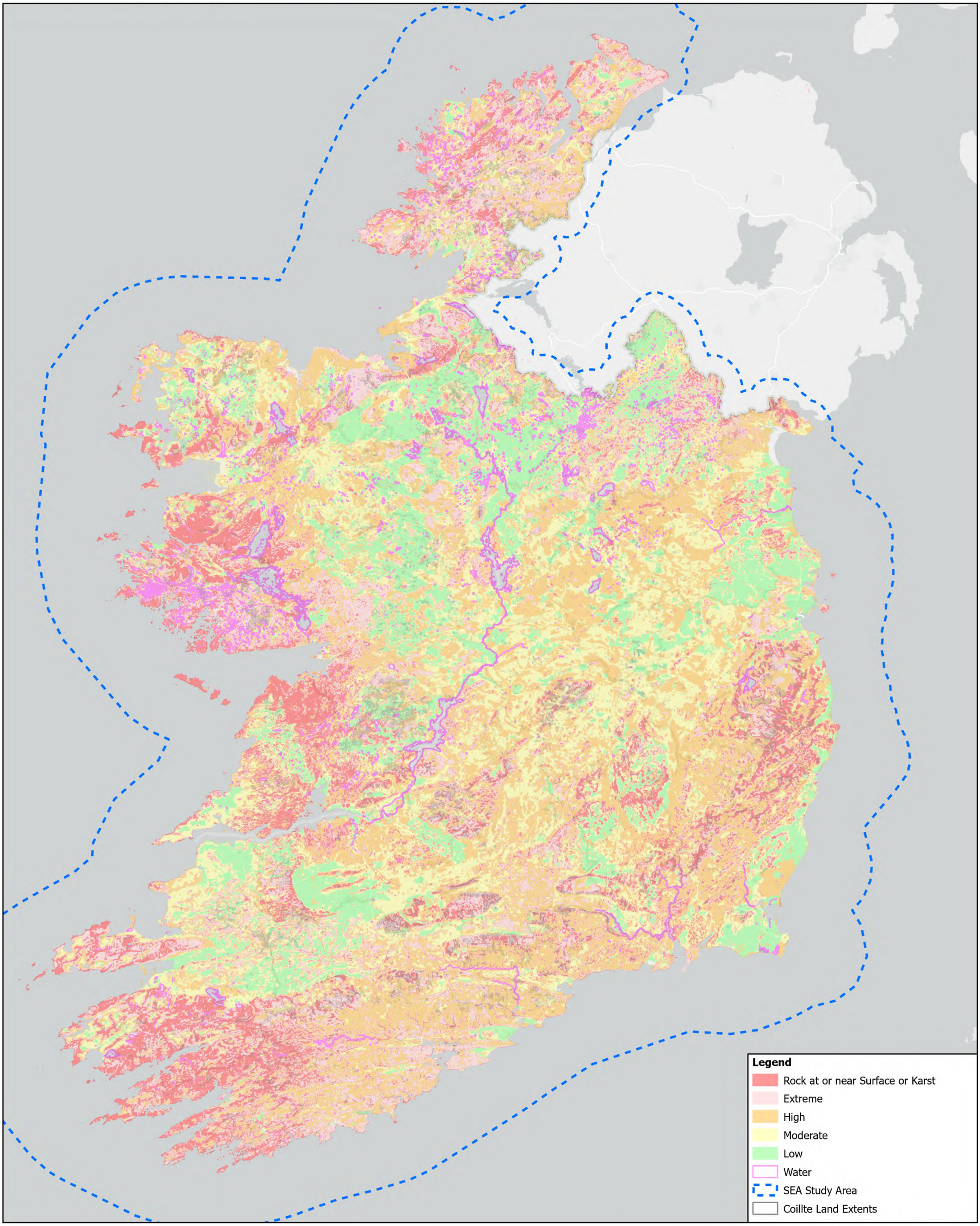
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TITLE: Groundwater Vulnerability	**FIGURE NO:** 4-25		
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PROJECT: Coillte Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan SEA	**SCALE:** 1:1,300,000	**REVISION:**	0
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Legend

Bedrock Aquifers

- Lk: Locally Important Aquifer - Karstified
- Ll: Locally Important Aquifer - Bedrock Mod Productive Locally
- Lm: Locally Important Aquifer - Bedrock Generally Mod Productive
- Pl: Poor Aquifer Bedrock Generally Unproductive Except Locally
- Pu: Poor Aquifer Bedrock Generally Unproductive
- Rf: Regionally Important Aquifer - Fissured Bedrock
- Rk: Regionally Important Aquifer - Karstified
- Rkc: Regionally Important Aquifer - Karstified (conduit)
- Rkd: Regionally Important Aquifer - Karstified (diffuse)
- Unclassified
- SEA Study Area
- Coillte Land Extents

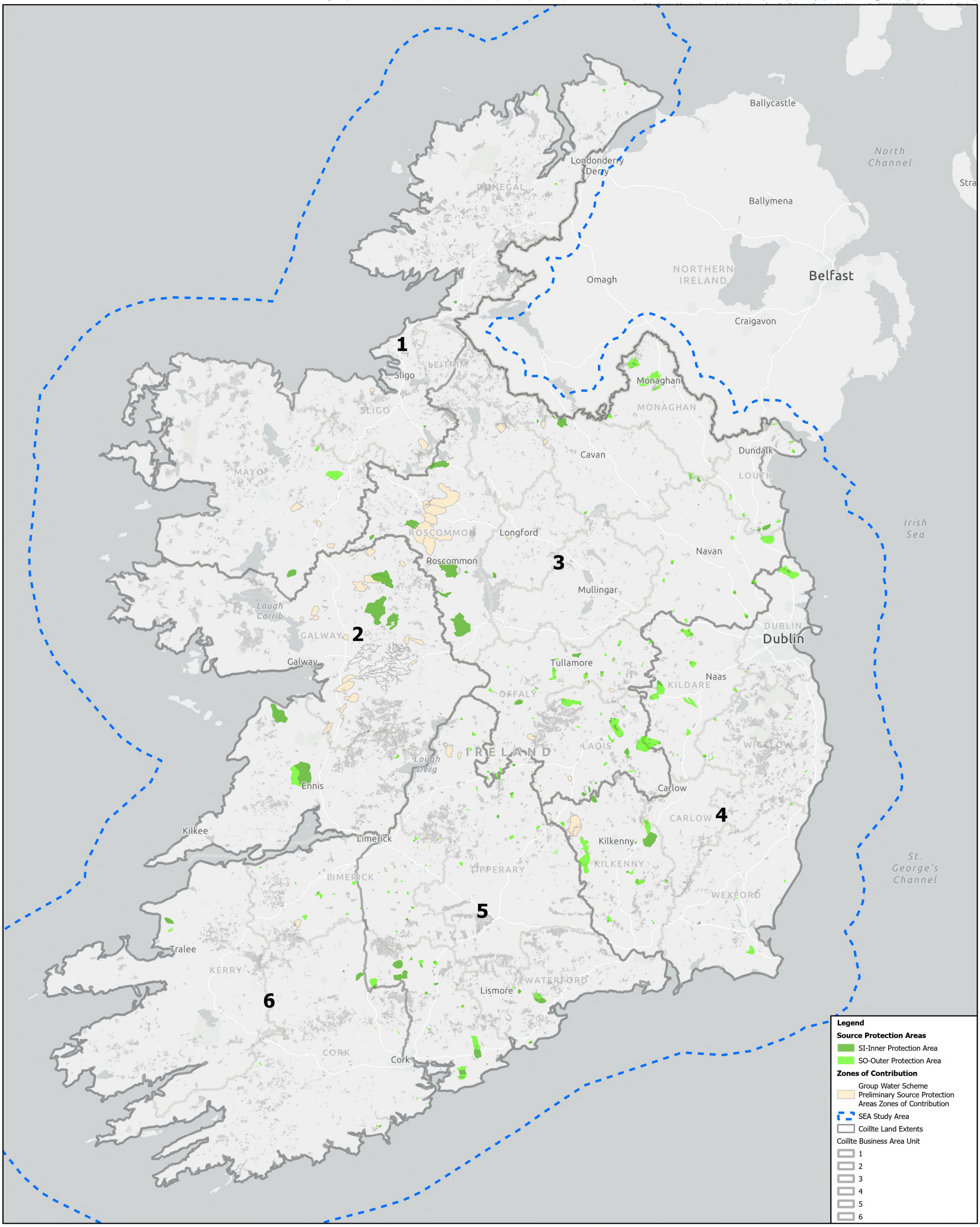
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	CLIENT: COILLTE		
PROJECT: Coillte Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan SEA	**SCALE:** 1:1,400,000	**REVISION:**	0
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Legend

Source Protection Areas
- SI-Inner Protection Area
- SO-Outer Protection Area

Zones of Contribution
- Group Water Scheme Preliminary Source Protection Areas Zones of Contribution
- SEA Study Area
- Coillte Land Extents

Coillte Business Area Unit
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6

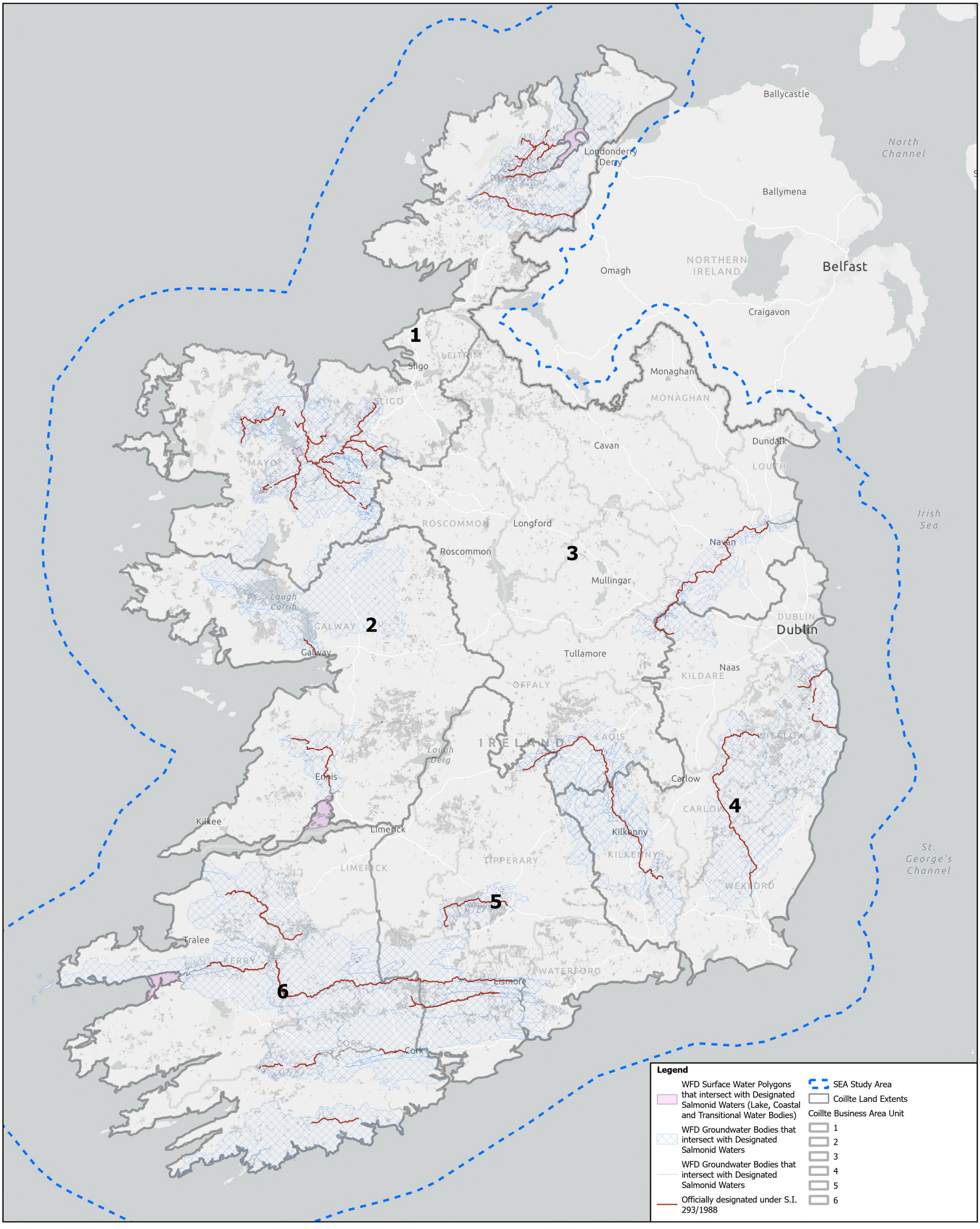
TITLE: Drinking Water Source Protection Areas	**FIGURE NO:** 4-27
PROJECT: Coillte Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan SEA	**CLIENT:** COILLTE
	SCALE: 1:1,300,000 — **REVISION:** 0
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TITLE: Register of Protected Areas - Salmonid	**FIGURE NO:** 4-28a
PROJECT: Coillte Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan SEA	**CLIENT:** COILLTE
	SCALE: 1:1,300,000 — **REVISION:** 0
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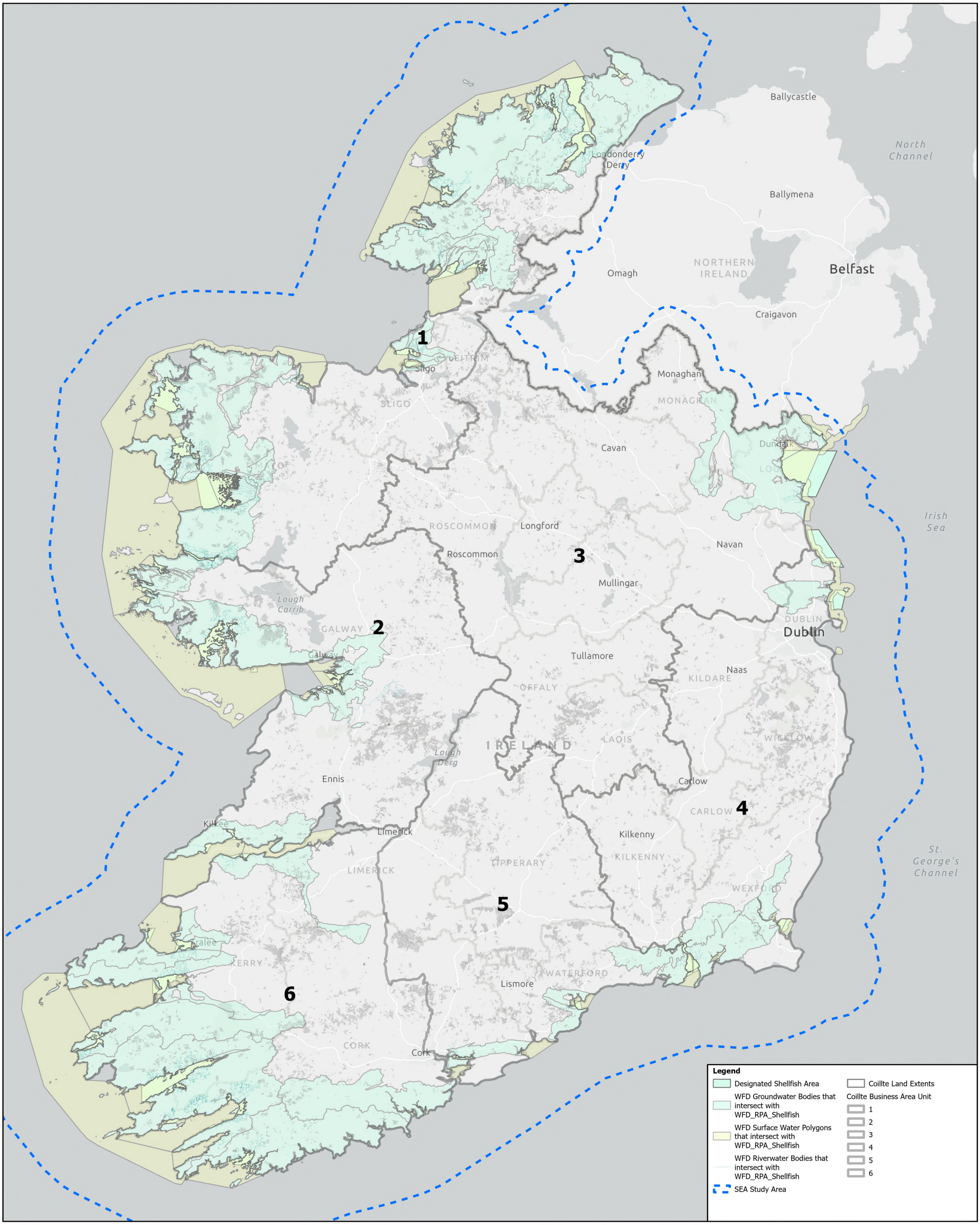
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TITLE: Register of Protected Areas - Shellfish	**FIGURE NO:**	4-28b	
	CLIENT:	COILLTE	
PROJECT: Coillte Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan SEA	**SCALE:**	1:1,300,000	**REVISION:** 0
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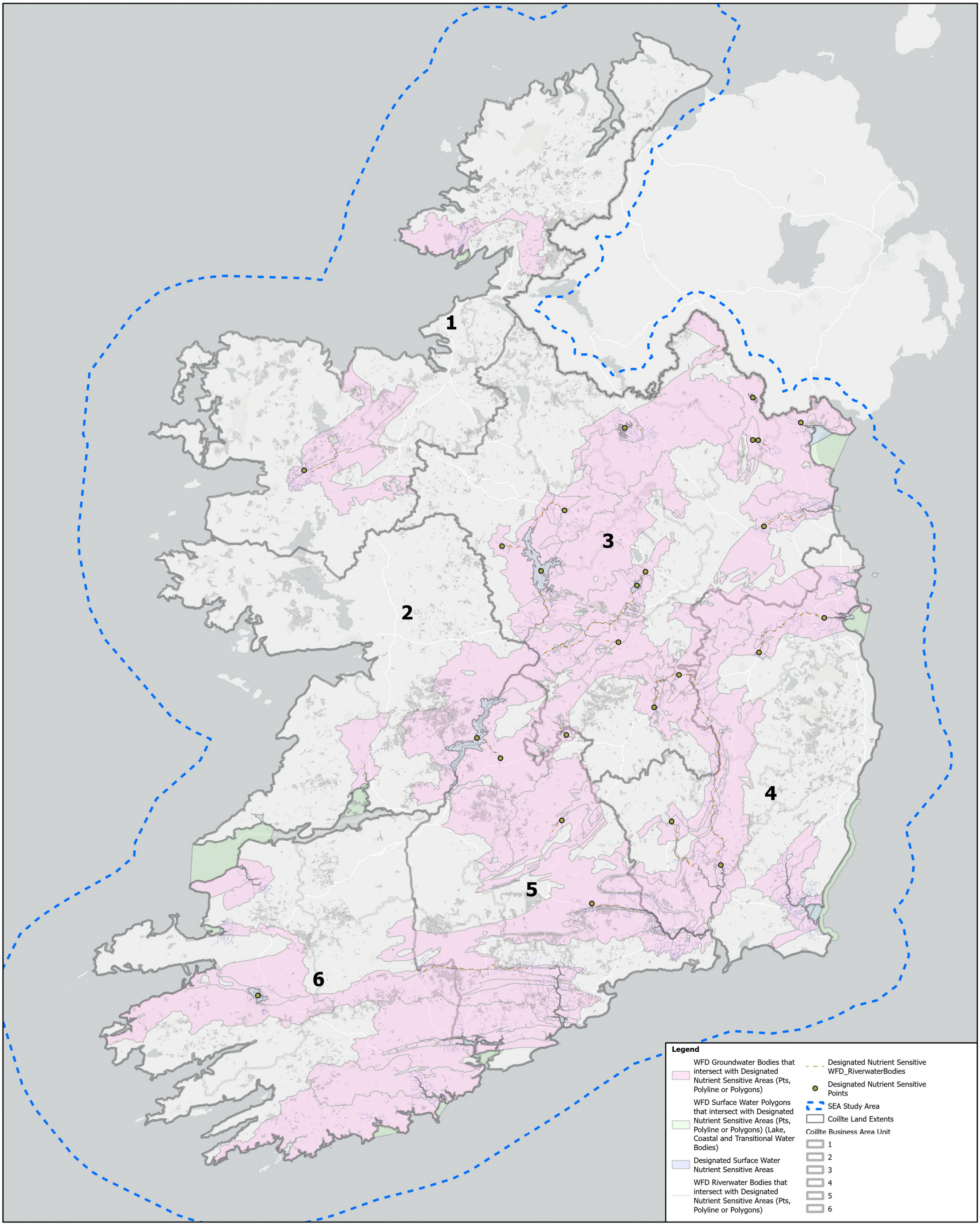
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TITLE: Register of Protected Areas - Nutrient Sensitive Areas	**FIGURE NO:** 4-28c
PROJECT: Coillte Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan SEA	**CLIENT:** COILLTE
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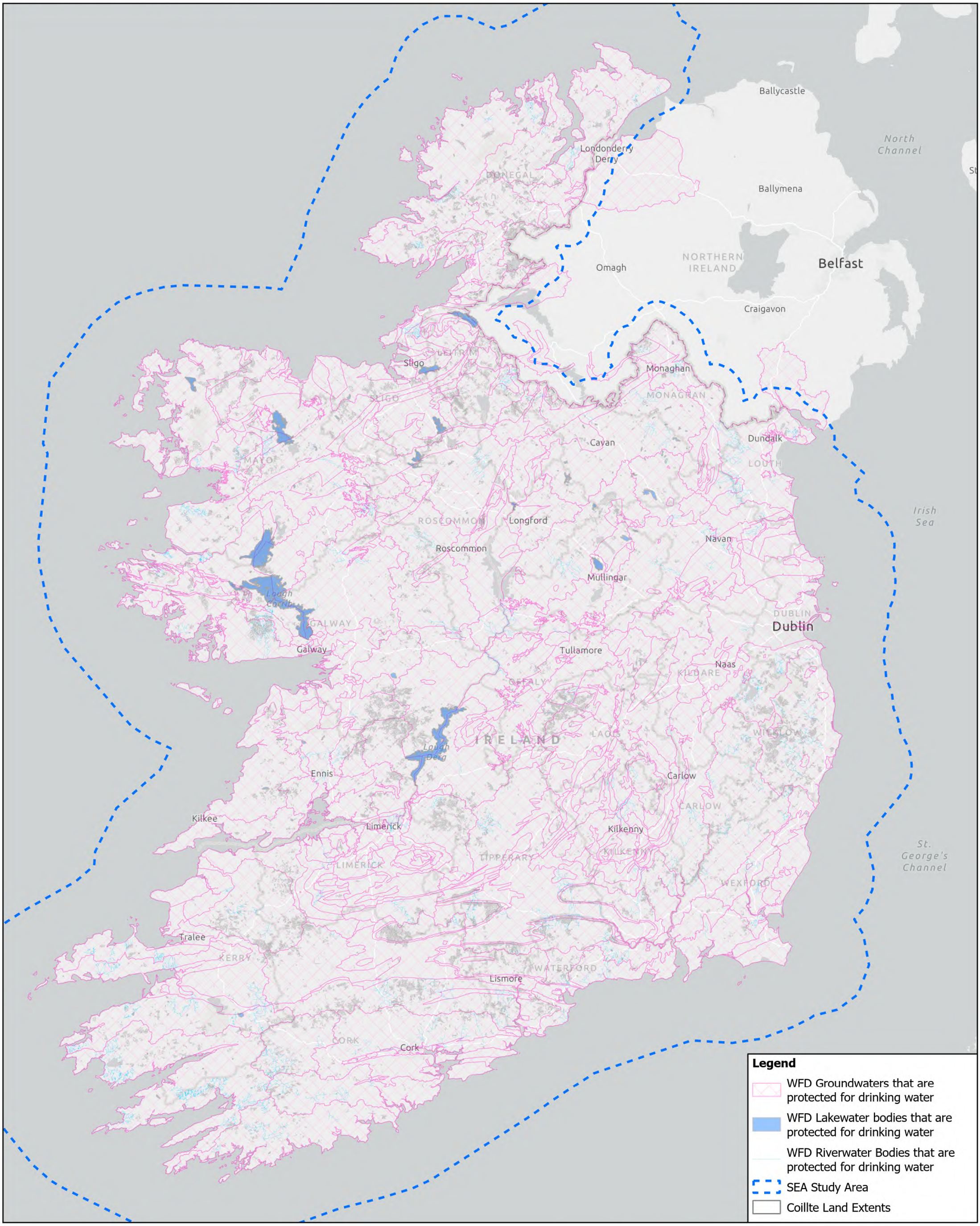
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TITLE: Register of Protected Areas - Drinking Water	**FIGURE NO:** 4-28d
PROJECT: Coillte Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan SEA	**CLIENT:** COILLTE
	SCALE: 1:1,300,000 — **REVISION:** 0
	DATE: 06/10/2025 — **PAGE SIZE:** A3

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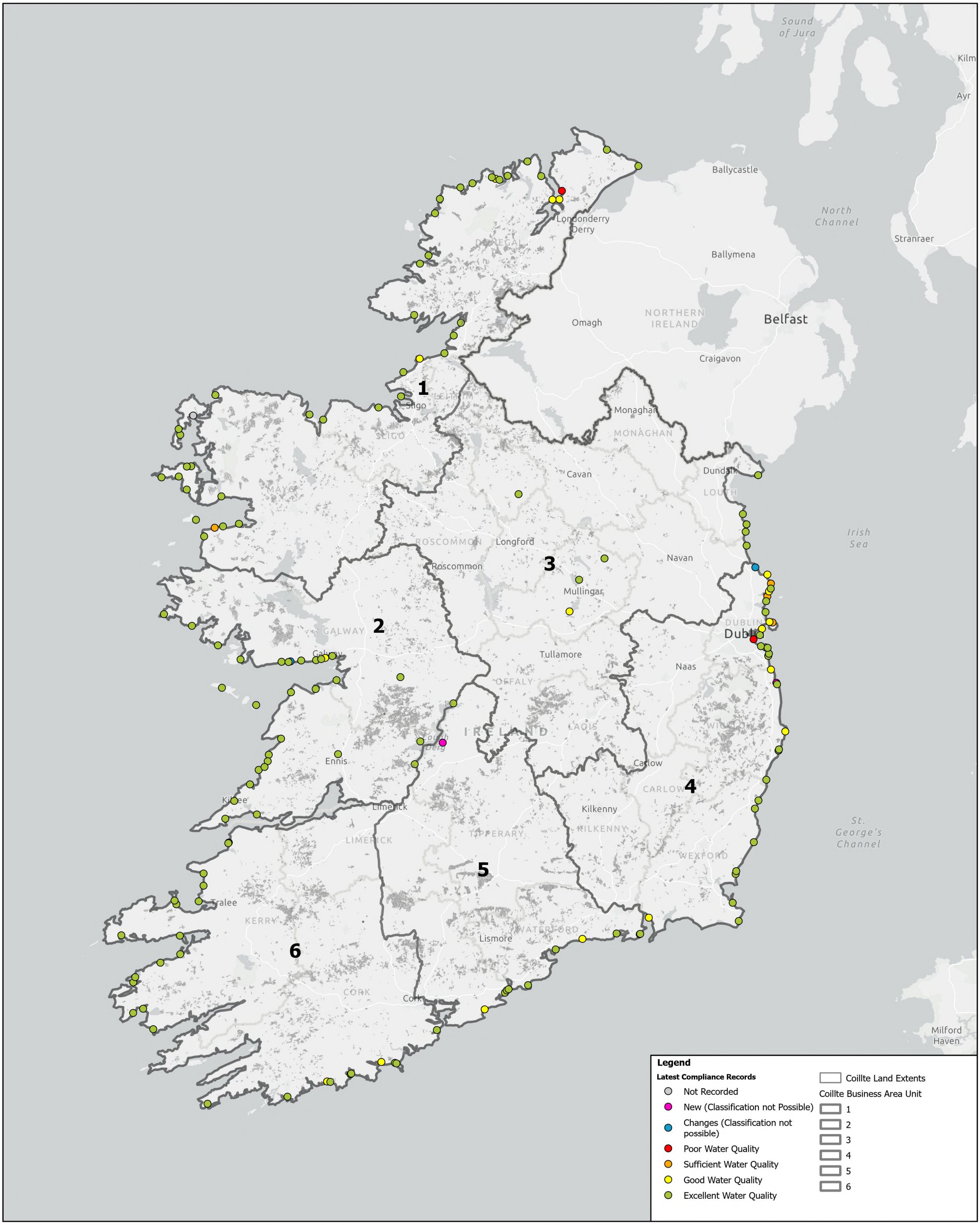
0 12.5 25 50 75 100 Kilometers

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Coillte Land Extents:
Coillte Ownership Extents:
Light Gray Reference: Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community
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TITLE: Bathing Water Compliance	**FIGURE NO:** 4.29		
	CLIENT: COILLTE		
PROJECT: Coillte Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan SEA	**SCALE:** 1:1,500,000	**REVISION:** 0	
	DATE: 19/01/2026	**PAGE SIZE:** A3	

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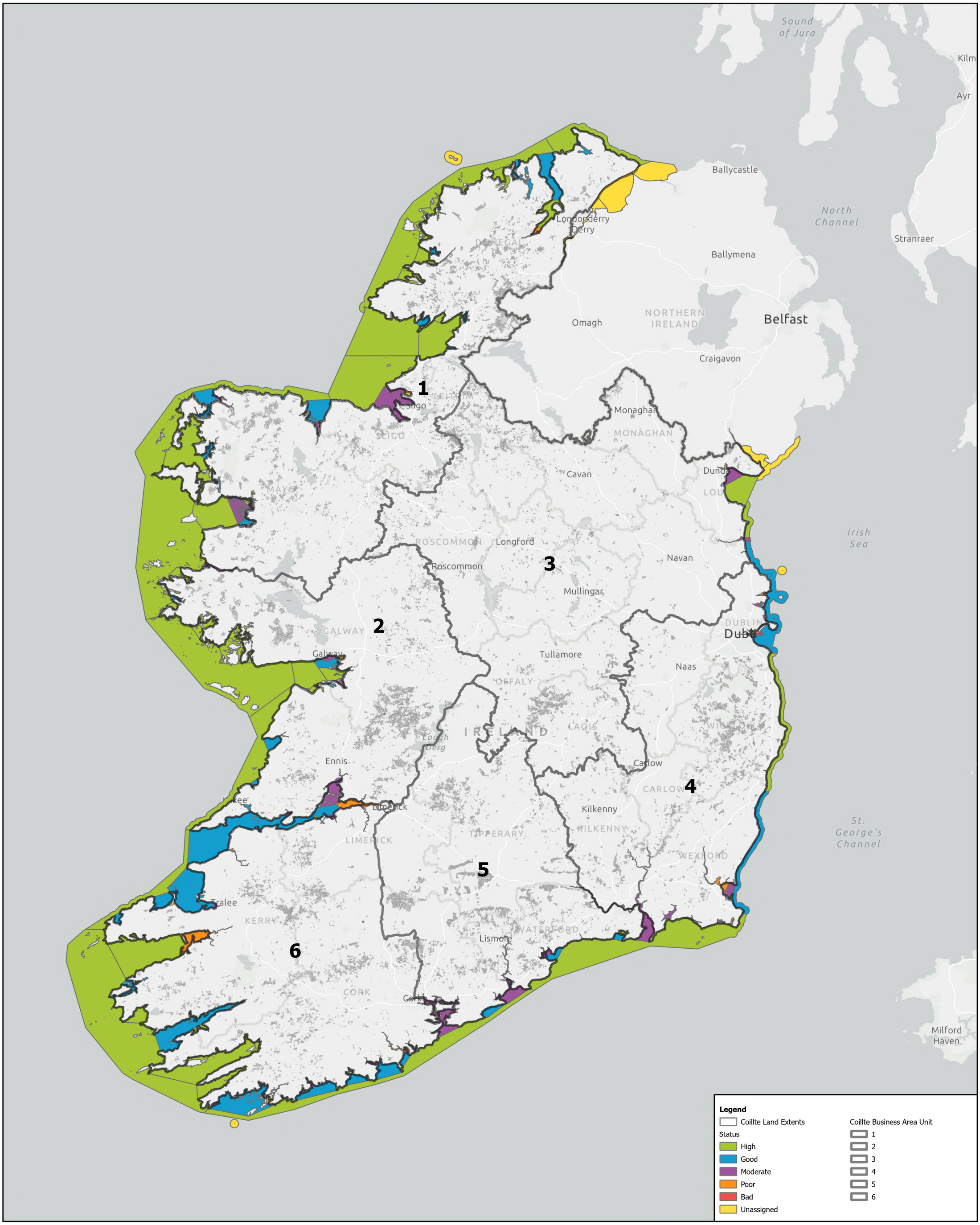
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Coillte Ownership Extents:
Light Gray Reference: Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community
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Legend

Coillte Land Extents	Coillte Business Area Unit
Status	1
High	2
Good	3
Moderate	4
Poor	5
Bad	6
Unassigned	

TITLE: WFD Transitional and Coastal Water Status	**FIGURE NO:** 4.30		
	CLIENT: COILLTE		
PROJECT: Coillte Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan SEA	**SCALE:** 1:1,500,000	**REVISION:**	0
	DATE: 19/01/2026	**PAGE SIZE:**	A3

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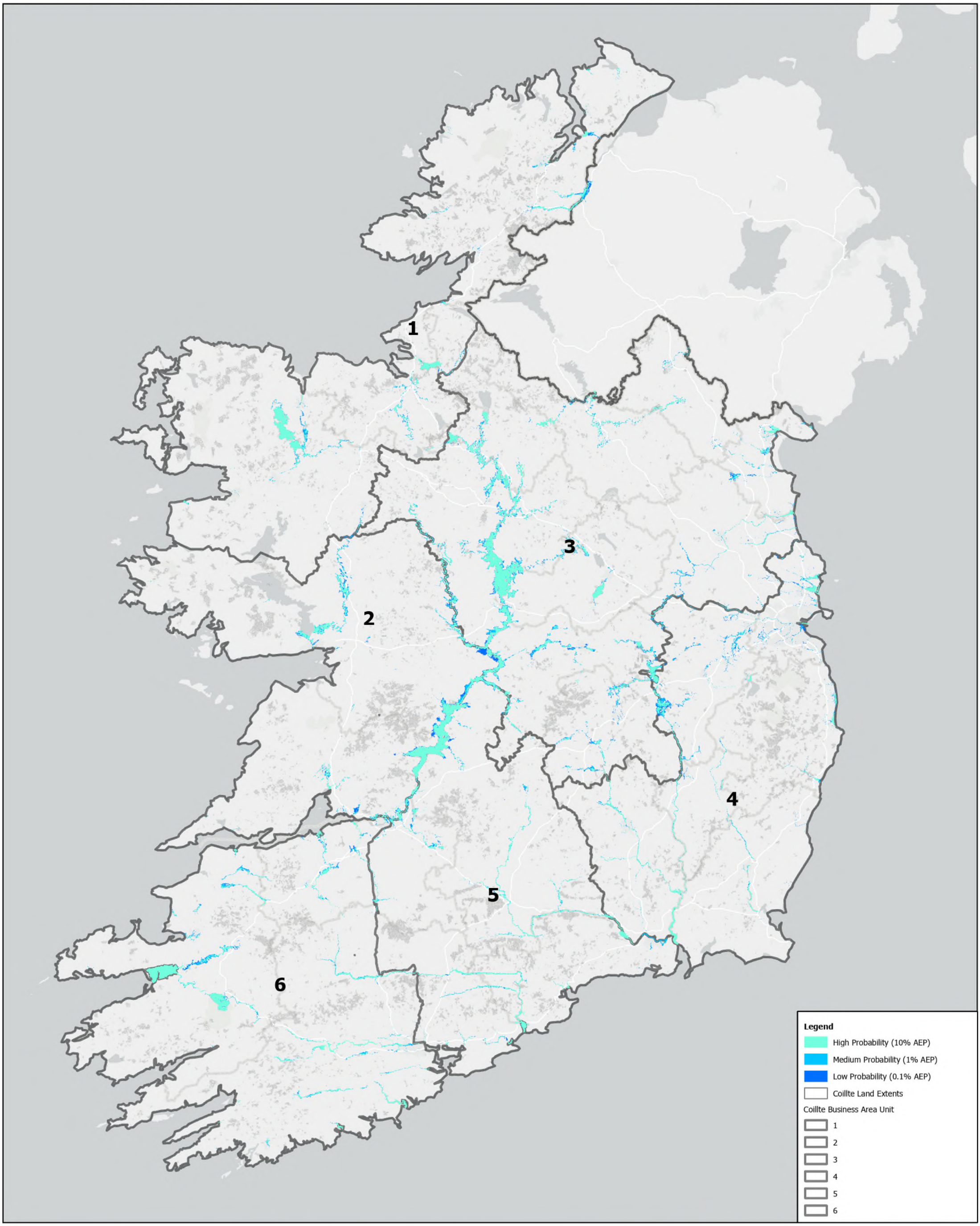
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Coillte Ownership Extents:
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TITLE: Flood Risk (CFRAM)	**FIGURE NO:** 4-31		
	CLIENT: COILLTE		
PROJECT: Coillte Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan SEA	**SCALE:** 1:1,300,000	**REVISION:**	0
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4.12 Material Assets

4.12.1 Current Conditions

4.12.1.1 Forestry and Forestry Products

Coillte's main business operation is the forestry sector, with the mission to balance and deliver the multiple benefits of Irish forests to society. In 2024, Coillte planted 15 million trees and reforested over 6,000 hectares (ha) of new forest across Ireland.[83] Coillte own and manage about 440,000 ha of lands, which comprise nearly 7% of total land area in Ireland. Of the 440, 000 ha of land owned and managed by Coillte, approximately 364,000 ha (84%) is forested land. The non-forested land consists of a range of land-cover types, unsuitable for afforestation, these include upland heaths and bogs, lakes, ponds and swamps and are generally maintained in their current state. Ca. 16% of this is managed for biodiversity. Roundwood for consumer purposes produced by Coillte in 2020 totalled 2.31 million m^3.

4.12.1.2 Forest-Based Energy

Bioenergy, as defined by the SEAI,[84] is a form of renewable energy generated when biomass fuel is burned. Biomass fuels are sourced from organic material such as harvest residue, purpose-grown crops, and organic waste. Bioenergy is a low-carbon renewable energy that can be used for phasing out carbon-intensive fossil fuels.

The EU Green Deal, Fit for 55, EU Forestry Policy, and the Renewable Energy Directive promote the use of wood under the 'cascade' principle. The principle notes that the use of wood material, according to a priority based on the added value and carbon storage that can be potentially generated, raw material from forests should preferably be used for construction, furniture and other products with longer life spans, capable of storing the biogenic carbon in the products, and bioenergy should be preferably derived from the use of waste wood, wood residues, or recycled, end-of-life products.

Biomass from Irish forests is considered a renewable energy source, on the condition that the forests are sustainably managed and harvested trees are replaced. Wood residue derived from low-value tree parts, generated from forest felling or as part of forest maintenance, is the most commonly-used solid biomass fuel worldwide. According to COFORD's *All Ireland Roundwood Production Forecast 2021-2040*, the potential wood mass available for energy and other uses is 34.78 million m^3 over the forecast period.

4.12.1.3 Renewable Energy Developments

The electricity sector requires a 75% reductions in emissions (based on 2018 levels) by 2030 based on the sectoral emissions ceiling of 40 $MtCO_2eq.$ for 2021-2025. To achieve this goal, the share of renewable energy will need to be increased up to 80%. The EU 2030 Climate and Energy Framework (2018) incorporates EU legislative measures to achieve three EU-level key targets:

- At least a 40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions
- At least a 32% share for renewable energy and
- At least a 32.5% improvement in energy efficiency.

[83] Coillte: Forestry (https://www.coillte.ie/our-business/our-divisions/forestry/, accessed 26/11/2024)
[84] SEAI: What is Bioenergy? (https://www.seai.ie/renewable-energy/bioenergy/what-is-bioenergy, accessed 26/11/2024)

The generation of renewable energy has been increasing over the last decade, with a growth in the number of wind farms. Wind Energy Ireland (WEI) statistics[85] indicate, as of 2024, that there are over 300 wind farms in the Republic of Ireland, with a total installed capacity of 4,332.5 megawatts (MW). In 2023, 40.7% of Ireland's electricity supply was sourced from renewable energy (up from 38.6% in 2022), with over a third of total electricity sourced from wind energy[86].

Coillte's land bank has contributed considerably to Ireland's 2020 target of achieving 40% of electricity consumption from renewable sources. One of Ireland's largest wind farms, Galway Wind Park, is located in Cloosh Valley, Connemara in County Galway. Galway Wind Park was developed by SSE Renewables and Coillte and became operational in 2017. The wind farm comprises 58 3 MW wind turbines and producing enough renewable energy every year to power over 140,000 Irish homes.[87]

4.12.2 Future Trends (Evolution of Baseline)

There are a number of national strategies and plans in place for Ireland's energy needs, with specific plans developed for renewable energy. This includes CAP25, Local Authority Climate Action Plans, the Government's White Paper Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future (2015-2030).

The forestry sector is a key asset to the Republic of Ireland. The Irish Government have given a commitment to the enhanced delivery of afforestation, with an increase of the forest area in Ireland to 18% of the total land area forecasted, along with an increased use of harvested wood product to meet climate targets and resource demands. In order to achieve this, Ireland's Forestry Strategy Implementation Plan has set a target of 8,000 ha of afforestation per annum. At present afforestation rates are well below this annual target (ca. 2,000 ha/annum). Research done by the EPA, SeQUEsTER (Scenarios Quantifying land Use & Emissions Transitions towards Equilibrium with Removals) suggested that between 13,000 hectares and 20,000 hectares per annum of afforestation would be needed from 2025 to 2050 to offset projected CO_2 and N_2O emissions from the agriculture sector.[88] Associated land-use, such as the development of renewable energy infrastructure is also expected to increase.

4.12.3 Key Considerations Relating to the LUSIP

The key considerations in relation to Material Assets include:

- Economic growth and development of infrastructure will increase the energy requirement within Ireland - particularly in the heat and transport sectors as they are electrified.
- Demands for increased renewable infrastructure and associated connection networks.
- Increased demand for construction materials (wood) with population growth and housing targets defined in the National Planning Framework and lower-order land use plans.
- The Plan will support the carrying out of commercial forestry and the delivery of wood product to the market. Wood product is a valuable material asset that underpins various sectors, including the construction sector.

[85] Wind Energy Ireland: Wind Stats (https://windenergyireland.com/about-wind/the-basics/facts-stats, accessed on 26/11/2024)
[86] SEAI: Renewable Energy in Ireland (https://www.seai.ie/data-and-insights/seai-statistics/key-publications/renewable-energy-in-ireland, accessed on 26/11/2024)
[87] SSE: Galway Wind Park (https://www.sserenewables.com/onshore-wind/ireland/galway-wind-park/, accessed 26/11/2024)
[88] University of Limerick (2024) *Towards a Climate-neutral Land Sector by 2050 - Scenarios Quantifying Land-Use & Emissions Transitions Towards Equilibrium with Removals* (SeQUEsTER), EPA, available: Research_Report-457.pdf

4.13 Tourism and Recreation

4.13.1 Current Conditions

Tourism and recreation are influenced by a range of factors in Ireland. For example, natural heritage in Ireland is characterized by a range of scenic landscapes which offer tourism and recreational opportunities such as walking, beaches, equestrian activities and golfing.

Failte Ireland launched their four brand strategies[89] which will define the spatial scope and spread of future tourism developments within Ireland. The global brand success may result in increased infrastructure demands to previously less trafficked areas. As Ireland moves towards a low-carbon economy, Fáilte Ireland will deliver the Regenerative Tourism Scheme as part of the EU Just Transition Fund. Through this scheme, we'll develop tourism projects across the Midlands – sustaining jobs, businesses and communities. In March 2017, each local authority launched Tourism Strategy Statements and Workplans. These are aligned with the objectives of the Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs). The Tourism Strategy Statements and Workplans are aligned with local, regional and national strategies and plans, in particular the Regional Action Plans for Jobs and the Government's tourism policy, 'People, Place and Policy: Growing Tourism to 2025'. Impact occurrence and severity are predicted by site type, visitor demographics and activity profile (Torsney & Buckley 2023).

Failte Ireland's Tourism Barometer Strategic Research and Insight January 2024 identifies that:

- About three in five (59%) of businesses say they have had more visitors in 2023 compared to 2022.
- Only about one in five (22%) noted visitor numbers down.
- The highest proportions reporting to be up in 2022 are found among Inbound Tour Operators & Destination Management Companies (76%), hotels (75%), attractions (72%) and tour guides (72%).
- The North American market was up for 61% of operators and down for only 20%
- 44% of businesses expect to be up on visitors in 2024 and 21% expect to be down.
- The top three concerns in 2024 are rising costs besides energy or payroll (58%), rising energy costs (55%) and rising payroll costs (51%).

Failte Ireland has also recently launched the Climate Action Programme which will provide support and investment advice for tourism businesses to accelerate the decarbonisation of the tourism sector in line with national carbon emissions reduction targets. There may be interactions between the programme and potential Coillte recreational areas and development.

Landscape is also an important aspect in terms of Tourism, see Section 4.6. Cultural Heritage - Archaeological and Architectural sites also support heritage-related tourism and recreation, see Section 4.7.

The assessment of Tourism and Recreation will also utilise the follow information sources:

- Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
- Central Statistics Office (CSO)
- Recreational sailing groups and ferry operators
- Fáilte Ireland
- National Trails Office

[89] Wild Atlantic Way, Dublin's a Breath of Fresh Air, Ireland's Ancient East and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands

4.13.2 Future Trends (Evolution of the Baseline)

There is now a requirement for local authorities to produce county specific tourism masterplans to facilitate and coordinate tourism in the county and region. The four brand strategies from Failte Ireland focus on only providing funding and promotion support to environmentally compliant plans/projects. In the past decade there has been increased communication and alignment between tourism policy and on the ground action through the NPF and associated tourism plans.

The high-level coordination and comprehensive set of tourism policies which are now clearly entrenched in the working processes of Failte Ireland and the local authorities lends itself to tourism having a more environmentally aware future. Additionally, Failte Ireland has developed a national tourism monitoring programme to further the current understanding of environmental impacts from tourism and have committed to providing the learning outcomes from this monitoring programme in the form of guidelines.

4.13.3 Key Considerations Relating to the LUSIP

- Tourism and recreation development projects supported by the Plan may impact upon sensitive environmental receptors such as biodiversity, cultural heritage, landscape, seascape and visual amenity.
- People visiting tourism and recreation sites may contribute to negative effects on biodiversity (e.g., disturbance, trampling, noise etc.).
- Recreational development supported by the plan may have positive impacts on the tourism and recreation sector.

4.14 Climate Change

4.14.1 Background

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 (as amended) was established to provide for the approval of plans by the Government in relation to climate change.

This aims at pursuing the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich and climate neutral economy by no later than the end of the year 2050. Ireland's Climate Action Plan 2024 sets out Ireland's National targets in this regard. The Climate Action Plans are renewed every year, and the current 2025 Climate Action Plan has been published. Under these action plans, there are targets set for the forestry sector to reduce its emissions such as:

- Delivery of the Ireland’s Forest Strategy (2023-2030) and Forestry Programme 2023-2027, which includes a range of forest creation measures, including native woodland expansion and planting of small native trees areas.
- Undertake a midterm review of the Forestry Programme 2023-2027.
- Supporting Coillte’s Strategic Vision which aims to capture additional CO_2 in its forests, soils and wood products by 2050.
- Prepare a Land-Use Strategic Implementation Plan to deliver the Coillte Forest Estate Strategic Land-Use Plan.
- Continuing to manage the Coillte estate to increase carbon storage by managing the age profile of our forests to improve carbon efficiency.

- Expanding proactive silvicultural management of our broadleaf estate, and redesigning peatland forests to improve the carbon balance.
- Continuing to support sustainable forest management (SFM) interventions across the entire forestry sector, through the Forestry Programme 2023-2027 and the Coillte Strategic Vision.
- Continued increased use of harvested wood products in the built environment by working to address barriers in construction.
- Continuing to support sustainable production of wood biomass for energy contributing to the reduction of fossil fuels.
- Incentivise increased afforestation to 8,000 ha per annum.
- Continue to manage the Coillte estate to increase carbon storage by managing the forest estate age profile to improve carbon efficiency, expanding proactive silvicultural management of broadleaf estates, and redesigning peatland forests to improve the carbon balance.
- Raise awareness among forest owners of the impact of timing when deciding to harvest their forest.

Coillte also has its own ambition to redesign 30,000 ha of peatland forests by 2050 through rewetting or rewilding to reduce carbon emissions and support carbon sequestration and biodiversity enhancement - in alignment with the Climate Action Plan 2025 and the EU Nature Restoration Law.

The EPA Research report (Report No. 457) *Towards a Climate-Neutral Land Sector by 2050* (EPA 2024) notes that Ireland's land sector (inclusive of agriculture, forestry and other land use sectors) is a large net emitter of carbon dioxide owing to large areas of drained organic soils and a low afforestation rate relative to the forest harvest rates. These land use sectors accounts for over 40% of national greenhouse gas emissions, therefore raising an urgent need to identify potential agriculture and land-use configurations that are compatible with net zero targets and objectives. Furthermore, *Ireland's State of the Environment Report* (EPA, 2024) has reported on long-term trends on greenhouse gas emissions. Emissions have decreased by 1.2% since 1990. In 2023, greenhouse gas emissions (excluding land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF)) are estimated to have been 55.00 Mt CO2 eq or 9.3% of all sectoral emissions. This is 6.8% lower (or 4.00 Mt CO2 eq) than emissions in 2022 (59.00 Mt CO2 eq). Emissions in 2023 were 7.9% lower than pre-pandemic 2019 figures (EPA, 2024b). Ireland's Climate Change Assessment projects increases in the frequency and severity of droughts which may impact regional agricultural and forestry land use and ecosystems.

The Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) sector in Ireland is the fourth largest national source of GHG emissions. This is unusual internationally, where the sector is commonly a sink, providing net CO_2 removals on an annual basis. This is mainly due to the presence of large areas of degraded peatlands in the county (which are a source of GHG emissions) and the recent lack of afforestation in the county.

This is leading to significant emissions greater than the removals resulting from forestry or other land uses. Additionally, there has been a long-term decline in the area of land afforested annually (Decline from an estimated 17,000 hectares/year in the 1990s to an estimated 1,650 hectares by 2023, well below rates (8,000 ha/year) suggested in the 2024 Climate Action Plan). Increased harvest also plays a role in these emissions due to the increased level of harvesting (1.7 million m^3 in 1990 to 4.0 million m^3 annually in recent years), which is set to increase as the forest estate matures. In 2023 Teagasc released its third rendition of the Marginal Abatement Cost Curve (MACC) for the LULUCF sector. It identifies the most cost-effective pathway to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and enhance carbon sequestration in the Agricultural, Land-Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry sectors plus (Bio) energy. This report aims to assist in providing a pathway to Irelands Climate targets set out under CAP25.

The generation of renewable energy has been increasing over the past ten years, with a growth in the number of wind farms. Wind energy generation in Ireland has increased from 4,542 GWh in 2013 to 11,589 GWh in 2023. The Government's Climate Action Plan includes a targeted 51% reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030; setting Ireland on a path to reach net-zero emissions by no later than 2050. In an effort to maximise Ireland's renewable energy potential and accelerate its transformation to a low carbon energy economy, Coillte and ESB joined forces in 2021 to launch FuturEnergy Ireland. This joint venture company will help increase Ireland's renewable energy infrastructure, contributing to a more sustainable future.

4.14.2 Future Trends (Evolution of the Baseline)

Future changes in climate and associated impacts on sea level, rainfall patterns/intensity and river flow will influence flooding frequency and extent in the future. Local Authorities in compliance with the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategies are attempting to adopt sustainable flood risk strategies in areas likely to be at risk of flooding in the future in the context of climate change and changing weather patterns. Changes to climate could lead to an increase in flooding events in Ireland. The OPW has undertaken a number of Flood Risk Management Studies for different River Basin Districts (RBDs) in Ireland. These studies have identified the areas which are most at risk and management measures have been adopted by the OPW. In some cases, management measures will involve the construction of physical flood defences. These flood risk management-related trends will influence the climate baseline going forward.

It is also foreseen that climate change will present a variety of other hazards to society into the future, including:

- Changes in temperature and precipitation patterns/phenological changes.
- Increases in frequency of heatwave events/extreme heat and drought conditions.
- Extreme Cold.
- Extreme precipitation.
- Coastal erosion.
- Extreme winds.
- Increased dispersal and survival of pests and diseases as a result of changing climate conditions.

The climate baseline going forward will be strongly influence by climate mitigation and adaptation measures defined in climate/energy related legislation the national Climate Action Plan, Local Authority Climate Action Plans and Sectoral Adaptation Plans developed under the National Adaptation Framework. GHG emissions in Ireland are trending downwards and this is foreseen to continue. It is envisaged greater degree of climate resilience will be embedded into sectors going forward.

4.14.3 Key Considerations Relating to the LUSIP

SEA processes can be utilised to maximise positive climate effects and co-benefits associated with the Plan.

- The Plan will contribute to the targets set out in the Climate Action Plan 2025.
- Climate change related risks should be considered when estate planning (e.g., flooding, extreme weather (e.g., storms, extreme wind, drought), wildfire, invasive species spread etc.).
- Opportunities to promote green/net zero buildings/development.
- Opportunities to promote carbon sequestration and enhanced land use.
- The production of wood indigenously can support and underpin low-carbon construction and the circular bio-economy.

- Greenhouse gas fluxes associated with peatland forest restoration projects

4.15 Transboundary Baseline and Issues

The SEA consider potential transboundary effects in Northern Ireland. The environmental issues for Northern Ireland are similar to those outlined under each environmental component in the previous sections. Northern Irish baseline environment data has been presented in maps in preceding sections wherever such relevant/similar data is available. An overview of the key baseline environmental characteristics relevant to Northern Ireland is presented in Table 4-9.

Table 4-9: Key Baseline Environmental Characteristics Relevant to Northern Ireland

SEA Topic	Key Findings
Population, Human Health and the Economy	The latest figures from Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) show that at the time of the 2021 Census, the population was 1.9 million. An increase of 5% since the 2011 Census, with further growth projected to increase to 2.003 million by 2046. In the 2022/23 Health survey 72% people rated their general health as very good or good, 18% said it was fair, and 10% said it was bad/very bad. 20% of people were found to have potential mental health problems. At present the Northern Irish economic activity has recovered from reduced output due to the covid pandemic and is preforming well, experiencing growth levels not seen since 2007. Unemployment levels are currently 1.8% (February-April 2025) and are lower than the levels seen during the Covid pandemic and 2007/8 recession.
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	The State of Nature 2023 report[90] for Northern Ireland shows that NI is now one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world with 12% of species assessed, threatened with extinction. The main cause of this decline has been attributed to land management for agriculture and the ongoing effects of climate change, as well as marine development and unsustainable fishing for marine and coastal biodiversity. Key results to come from the report were as follows: • The abundance of 17 farmland bird species has on average fallen by 43% across Northern Ireland since 1996. Across all 64 breeding birds assessed, species' abundance had declined on average by 10%. • Since 1970, the distributions of 576 species of bryophytes (mosses and liverworts) have declined on average by 54% and the distributions of 891 species of flowering plants by 14%. • There was an average 24% increase in the distributions of invertebrate species. Seventy per cent of species in this assessment were moths. The distributions of 552 invertebrate species in Northern Ireland showed contrasting recent trends, the distributions of 162 species (29%) declined and the distributions of 223 species (40%) increased. • The indicator of average species' abundance in Northern Ireland of 36 wintering waterbird species has fallen by 30% since 1988. • Of 2,508 species in Northern Ireland that have been assessed using IUCN Regional Red List criteria, 12% have been classified as threatened with extinction from Ireland as a whole.

[90] State of Nature Partnership (2023) State of Nature Northern Ireland, available: TP26055-SoN-N_Ireland-summary-report-v4-1.pdf.pagespeed.ce.aZ-viXI6Dd.pdf

SEA Topic	Key Findings
	A variety of internationally and nationally designated sites have been considered in the SEA, including: • Special Protection Areas (SPA) – 16 • Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) – 58 • Ramsar Sites - 20 • Nature Reserves – 48 • Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ)– 5 • Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) - 394 • Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance (SLNCIs) – over 100 • Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty – 9 • World Heritage Site – 1 (Giant's Causeway) Within Northern Ireland MCZs, SPAs, SACs, ASSI, and Ramsar sites are considered 'Nature Conservation Designation' areas. These Protected sites have been designated based on specific qualifying features of interest, which include many types of habitats, species and earth science features. The most up-to-date features highlight that 54% of all protected features, both terrestrial and marine, are in favourable condition, 38% are in unfavourable condition, 2% are unfavourable-recovering and less than 1% are destroyed. A total of 4% of features have not had a formal condition assessment therefore a condition cannot be determined for these features. When these protected sites are investigated according to their special qualifying features of interest, it is found that 35% of habitats and 58% of species features are in favourable condition, compared to 93% of Earth science features in favourable condition. This reflects the relative stability of geological features compared to the increasing pressures on the natural environment, contributing to the comparatively lower percentages for habitats and species features.[91] There are several protected features within The Republic of Ireland which have transboundary connections to Northern Ireland with regards to overlapping geographical connections.
Landscape, Seascape and Visual Amenity	The landscape environment and trends are similar in Ireland and Northern Ireland and therefore the same key issues should be considered. Within Northern Ireland important seascapes (an area of sea, coastline and land, as perceived by people, whose character results from the actions and interactions of land with sea, by natural and/or human factors.) are divided into Seascape Character Areas (A unique geographic area of land, intertidal and marine area with a recognisable sense of place and identity). There are 24 different Regional Seascape Character Areas within the coast of Northern Ireland. All Seascape Character areas within The Plan Zone of Influence (or those which are hydrologically connected) are considered for potential transboundary impacts.

[91] NISRA (2025) Northern Ireland Environmental Statistics Report, available: NI Environmental Statistics Report 2025

SEA Topic	Key Findings
Cultural Heritage - Archaeological and Architectural	Cultural Heritage designations of Northern Ireland are considered in the SEA, including. • Sites and Monuments – over 18,000 • Monuments in State Care – 187 • Scheduled Historic Monuments – over 2,000 • Historic Buildings – approximately 9,000 • Listed Buildings – over 8,900 • Industrial heritage record - approximately 16,000 • Areas of Significant Archaeological Interest – 11 • Areas of Archaeological Potential - 132 • Conservation Areas – 58 • Defence Heritage Features – over 4,500 • Battle sites – Over 300 • Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes – over 700 • UNESCO World Heritage Sites – 2 (The Giant's Causeway and Gracehill Moravian Church Settlements, both located in Co. Antrim) The Northern Ireland Department of Communities historic environmental datasets have been important in consideration of potential transboundary impacts on the setting of heritage assets along the border region.[92] There are several features of geological, natural and cultural heritage within Ireland which have transboundary connections to Northern Ireland that have been considered in the SEA, such as UNESCO Geoparks (Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark, Mourne Gullion Strangford Geopark) and the Royal Sites of Ireland. The most likely potential transboundary impact for cultural heritage in Northern Ireland is the impact on the setting of heritage assets (the surroundings in which the asset is understood, experienced and appreciated) through changes in the physical landscape. Other potential impacts include physical changes to assets which are transboundary in their geographical nature, and environmental effects on heritage landscapes such as on the Register of Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes.
Soils and Geology	The Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland are similar in the geological and soil baseline environments, particularly in the presence of limestone, granite, sandstone and basalt. Numerous Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs) have been designated for geological and natural heritage and are considered in terms of impacts from the proposed Plan.
Land Use	The Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland are relatively homogenous in their land cover trends for forestry, peatlands and agriculture, with the latter extending to 75% of the land area in NI. Similar pressures on the forest land cover exist in NI, with urban sprawl and development that overlaps with forested land.

[92] Available at https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/services/historic-environment-map-viewer

SEA Topic	Key Findings
Air Quality and Noise	There are currently 19 Air Quality Management Areas that are leading the activity to tackle air quality problems. There is continued improvement in air quality, but problems do remain for nitrogen dioxide emissions due to transport. Agricultural emissions from ammonia remain high and threaten ecosystems and habitats. Continued effort is required to reduce air pollution from key sources such as road transport and agriculture. For Particulate matter (PM_{10}) in 2024 here was no breach of the UK Strategy Objective or The Air Quality Standards Regulations Limit Values of 40 µg/m3 for the annual mean concentration of PM_{10}. Noise emissions are considered similar to the Republic of Ireland, with similar sources.
Water	There has been a long-standing concern for water quality in Northern Ireland. Diffuse pollution from agriculture is listed as the most significant pressure on water quality in Northern Ireland, particularly the release of the nutrients phosphorus and nitrogen from agricultural sources. One noteworthy example of this issue is the impact diffuse pollution is having on Lough Neagh which is currently affected by recurrent algal blooms. A 2024 report[93] by the Northern Ireland Audit Office found that the target for 100% of surface water bodies in Northern Ireland to attain 'Good' or 'High' ecological status by 2027 will not be met. In 2024, 29% of river waterbodies, 24% of lake water bodies, and 40% of transitional and coastal waterbodies were classified as good or high ecological status.[94] There are numerous waterbodies which cross the Irish border that have the potential to cause transboundary impacts on aquatic environments within Northern Ireland. Cross border catchments in Ireland include: • Lough Neagh and Lower Bann: This catchment includes the area drained by the River Bann and by all streams entering tidal water between the Barmouth and Ballyaghran Point, Co. Derry. This is a cross-border catchment with a surface area of 5,787km², 374km² of which is located within the Republic of Ireland. • River Foyle: The Foyle catchment includes the area drained by the River Foyle and by all streams entering tidal water between Culmore Point, Co. Derry and Coolkeeragh, Co. Derry. This is a cross-border catchment with a surface area of 2,919km², 914km² of which is located within the Republic of Ireland. The eastern half of the catchment, located in Northern Ireland, drains most of County Tyrone and a small part of north western County Derry. The part of the catchment located in Donegal is largely mountainous. • Newry, Fane, Glyde and Dee: This catchment includes the area drained by the Newry, Fane, Glyde and Dee rivers, and by all streams entering tidal water between Murlough Upper and The Haven, Co. Louth. This is a cross-border catchment with a surface area of 2,125 km², 1390 km² of which is located within the Republic of Ireland.

[93] Northern Ireland Audit Office (2024) *Water Quality in Northern Ireland's Rivers and Lakes*, available: Water Quality in Northern Ireland's Rivers and Lakes | Northern Ireland Audit Office
[94] NIEA (2025) *Water Classification Statistics Report 2024*, available: NIEA - WMU - ICP - NI Water Classification Statistics Report 2024.pdf

SEA Topic	Key Findings
	There are 37 no. transboundary groundwater bodies between the Republic of Irealnd and Northern Ireland: Anierin-Cuilcagh East, Aughnacloy, Ballinamore-Swanlinbar, Ballintempo, Ballybofey, Ballyshannon East, Ballyshannon South, Belcoo Boho, Bundoran, Castlecaldwell Forest, Castlederg, Claudy, Clones, Cooneen Water, Crilly, Crom Castle, Derrylin, Donagh, Ederney, Florence Court-Drumgormley, Keady, Kilcoo, Kiltyclogher, Knockatallon, Lough Swilly, Louth, Magheraveely, Marble Arch, Monaghan Town, Newry, Newtown-Ballyconnell, Pettigo, River Foyle, Rossinver, Slieve Rushen, Slieve Rushen South, and Tullaghan-Lough Melvin. The cross-border impacts on these waterbodies should be considered under the SEA. Where a potential transboundary impact for Northern Ireland is identified, the NI River Basin Management Plans will be considered during the SEA process.
Material Assets	While forestry is an important economic and ecological asset to Northern Ireland, tree-cover rates in NI is the lowest in the UK and lower than those in the European Union, at approximately 8%. In comparison, agricultural land-cover extends to nearly 75% of NI's land-bank. However, given that forestry is still significant in the role it plays in tourism and recreation and regulation of the ecosystem, it is expected that the protection afforded to existing forestry will be maintained. The installed capacity of renewable energy in Northern Ireland is currently 1,276 MW (WEI, 2024). The NI Climate Change Act has set a target of 80% renewable energy by 2030, therefore requiring more than double the current renewable electricity generate to meet this demand.
Tourism and Recreation	Tourism Ireland has launched its 2025 marketing plan[95] with an aim to Increase overseas tourism revenue across the island of Ireland by +5.6%1 growth per year on average over the period 2024 to 2030, growing revenue in NI by an average +6.5% per year over that period. The vision of this plan is to '*Increase the value of overseas tourism to the island of Ireland, sustainably supporting economies, communities and the environment by inspiring visitors and strengthening strategic partnerships*'. As well as '*Foster a world-class team demonstrating integrity, living our values and growing expertise*'. There will be a continued focus on tourists with 'value adding tourism traits' i.e., those people who have funds to travel, who prize memorable experiences and tend to travel around regions and across seasons. The Plan has added for 2025 the 'Slow Tourism month', where Tourism Ireland will build on promotional activities to support environmentally friendly itineraries on the island of Ireland. During 'slow tourism month' an overseas marketing initiative will focus advertising, social media and publicity activities on car free itineraries that support greater dwell time in communities and in nature. Any proposals in proximity to Northern Ireland should assessed in terms of the potential to impact or reduce access to tourism and recreation attractions in Northern Ireland.

[95] Tourism Ireland (2025) *Tourism Ireland Business Plan 2025*, available: tourism-ireland-business-plan-2025.pdf

SEA Topic	Key Findings
Climate Change	The UK Climate Change Act commits the UK to reducing emissions by 100% by 2050 from 1990 baseline levels. In 2022, Northern Ireland's total greenhouse gas emissions accounted for 5.3% of the UK total, whilst accounting for 2.8% of the UK's population. Since the base year (1990), Northern Ireland's total greenhouse gas emissions have decreased by 26.4% from 29.0 to 21.3 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent ($MtCO_2e$). This is less than the reduction seen for the UK as a whole, which saw a decrease of 50.2% compared to the base year. Agriculture plays a significant role in high emissions due to the importance of agriculture in the country's economy. Buildings and product uses followed by domestic transport, and electricity supply are the next biggest emitters.[96]

4.16 Summary of Key Considerations relating to the Plan

A summary of the key environmental considerations relating to the Plan is provided in Table 4-10.

Table 4-10: Summary of Key Environmental Considerations relating to the Plan

Environmental Component	Summary of Key Environmental Considerations relating to the PLan
Population and Human Health	• Population and development growth will grow the raw material requirement within Ireland. • Settlement patterns could influence the location and acceptability of different Coillte development projects. • The construction or maintenance of new or existing infrastructure on forest estate lands may cause temporary disruption the local communities, through noise, dust, disruption to services/utilities and traffic etc. • The construction or maintenance of new or existing infrastructure on the forest estate may temporarily impede public access to forests. • Infrastructure development may influence the human environment and land use in Ireland. • Development construction activities may generate air emissions, vibration or noise that may temporarily impact human health and well-being. • A spatially concentrated deterioration in human health, if effects arising from environmental vectors such as water and air are not mitigated. • Recreational and development pressures on habitats and landscapes. • Renewable energy development could influence residential amenity within the zone of influence and may have a visual/noise impact. • The Plan will support the carrying out of commercial forestry and the delivery of wood product to the market. These economic and material assets have the potential to underpin and support economic and infrastructural development, including housing development, resulting in positive effects for people.

[96] Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (2024) Northern Ireland Greenhouse Gas Emissions 2022, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, available: Northern Ireland Greenhouse Gas Emissions 2022 [accessed 29 November 2024].

Environmental Component	Summary of Key Environmental Considerations relating to the PLan
	• Afforestation has the potential to drive carbon sequestration resulting in positive climate impacts and the achievement of Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emission reduction targets defined under the EU LULUCF Regulation. • Renewable energy development supported by the Plan has the potential to result in positive climate impacts and support the achievement of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emission reduction targets defined in Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended by the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021. This climate mitigation has the potential to have positive effects on people through reducing the effects of climate change.
Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	• The potential effects of forestry activities (e.g. afforestation, reforestation, felling, roading, recreation) on non-designated biodiversity features e.g. important habitats and species outside designated sites - particularly with regard to barriers to movement and displacement. • The potential for effects on designated areas. • The potential to spread invasive species and opportunities to reduce the harmful impact these species have on biodiversity (as set out in out in outcome 2H of the National Biodiversity Plan 2023-2030). • Potential impact of forestry management and development on flora species listed under the Flora (Protection) Order, 2022 (S.I. No. 235 of 2022). • Potential impact of renewable energy development supported by the Plan on biodiversity. • Opportunities to promote green infrastructure, ecological connectivity nature-based solutions, and biodiversity net gain through the LUSIP. • Nature conservation and restoration will be an intrinsic component of the Plan. The Plan has the potential to support biodiversity protection and enhancement in alignment with nature legislation and policy (e.g., the Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan).
Landscape, Seascape & Visual Amenity	• Effects of landscape changes as a result of the Plan on areas of designated landscape quality and views and prospects. • Impact of the changes occurring as a result of the Plan on general visual amenity in the vicinity of these developments and wider landscape character. • Potential negative impacts on seascapes through changes in the natural, social, cultural, perceptual, and aesthetic characteristics as a result of projects carried out by Coillte.
Cultural Heritage - Archaeological & Architectural	• The potential impact of development (new road networks, recreational facilities) on existing and unknown archaeological sites, architectural heritage sites, and protected structures. • The potential effects of Coillte forestry activities on existing and unknown archaeological sites, architectural heritage sites, and protected structures. • The potential impact of greenfield development on archaeological remains. • The potential impact on the setting of heritage assets (the surroundings in which the asset is understood, experienced and appreciated) through changes in the physical landscape.

Environmental Component	Summary of Key Environmental Considerations relating to the PLan
Soils & Geology	• Potential impacts to soils/lands vulnerable to erosion, resulting in landslides. • Potential for soil degradation (e.g. organic matter decline, altering pH, salination, increased fertiliser application) and soil sealing/compaction from construction activity in forested areas. • Potential to impacts on audited and unaudited geoheritage sites. • Potential for forestry to contribute to positive effects on soils (e.g., soil stabilisation, control of surface water run-off).
Land Use	• Constraints from pressures such as urban sprawl and agriculture. • Degradation of interacting environmental components (soil and water environments) from construction activity in forest areas. • The requirement to achieve Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emission reductions under the EU LULUCF Regulation.
Air Quality & Noise	• Estate developments, particularly during the construction phase, may have a temporary negative impact on air quality and create noise pollution. • Renewable energy developments supported by the Plan may have impacts on noise pollution, particularly at sensitive receptors which are in proximity to the development. • Increased timber production and supply will lead to increased leading timber transport, resulting in negative air quality, climate and noise effects. • Increased nitrogen deposition in ecologically sensitive areas from forestry activities could lead to negative environmental effects including eutrophication and biodiversity loss. • Forestry supported by the Plan has the potential to contribute to air quality improvements through the absorption of pollutants (including carbon dioxide) and the release of oxygen through photosynthesis.
Water	• Potential pressures and impacts on water body status from forestry activities and development at the estate (i.e. increased use of fertilisers, potential sedimentation (during afforestation, reforestation and felling in particular) and accidental spillage/run-off). • Changes in hydrology (and reliant aquatic ecology) due to forestry activities and flood risk contributing to an increase in flood risk.
Material Assets	• Economic growth and development of infrastructure will increase the energy requirement within Ireland - particularly in the heat and transport sectors as they are electrified. • Demands for increased renewable infrastructure and associated connection networks. • Increased demand for construction materials (wood) with population growth and housing targets defined in the National Planning Framework and lower-order land use plans. • The Plan will support the carrying out of commercial forestry and the delivery of wood product to the market. Wood product is a valuable material asset that underpins various sectors, including the construction sector.

Environmental Component	Summary of Key Environmental Considerations relating to the PLan
Tourism & Recreation	• Tourism and recreation development projects supported by the Plan may impact upon sensitive environmental receptors such as biodiversity, cultural heritage, landscape, seascape and visual amenity. • People visiting tourism and recreation sites may contribute to negative effects on biodiversity (e.g., disturbance, trampling, noise etc.). • Recreational development supported by the plan may have positive impacts on the tourism and recreation sector.
Climate Change	• The Plan will contribute to the targets set out in the National Climate Action Plan 2025. • Climate change related risks should be considered when estate planning (e.g., flooding, wildfire, invasive species spread etc.) • Opportunities to promote green/net zero buildings/development. • Opportunities to promote carbon sequestration and enhanced land use. • The production of wood indigenously can support and underpin low-carbon construction and the circular bio-economy. • Greenhouse gas fluxes associated with peatland forest restoration projects

5. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES

The SEA Directive states that an SEA should also look at *'the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.'* The identification of environmental protection objectives relevant to a plan provide the basis for evaluating the significance of impacts during the SEA process. All environmental protection objectives relevant to the Plan were identified. Further information on other plans and programmes that define inter-related environmental protection objectives relevant to the Plan is provided in Appendix 1 to this document.

Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) are methodological measures which facilitate the development of targets against which the environmental effects of the Plan can be tested. SEOs are based on wider environmental protection objectives on local, regional, national, European and international level that are relevant to Coillte's Plan. They are high-level in nature and set strategic goals for improvement.

In this section, SEOs have been defined for the range of Environmental Components considered under this SEA. These SEOs can be used as standards against which the provisions of the Plan can be evaluated in order to help identify areas in which potential significant adverse impacts may occur. The use of these objectives ensured that the SEA focused only on those environmental issues that are most relevant and significant to the Plan and the Study Area.

The development of SEOs was appropriately informed by the SEA Scoping stage of the SEA process, including consultation with the statutory Environmental Authorities.

All SEOs defined for the Plan are presented in Table 5-1.

Table 5-1: Strategic Environmental Objectives

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
Overall	O1	Ensure, where appropriate, that lower-level plans and projects contribute to overall environmental monitoring processes within the LUSIP.
Population, Human Health & the Economy	PHH1	Minimise adverse impacts from development and operations on population and human health.
	PHH2	Minimise impacts from development and operations on economic activity and growth.
	PHH3	Engage with local communities and provide areas for amenity and recreational uses to promote wellbeing and human health.
	PHH4	Contribute positively to the well-being of workers and local populations.
	PHH5	Promote economic growth within the forestry sector and contribute to job creation and business development in rural areas.
	PHH6	Provide sustainable, high-quality timber products to the Irish market to meet demand and in support of housing development.
Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	B1	Avoid significant adverse effects on European Sites and protected habitats and species, and support compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives through Appropriate Assessment and implementation of mitigation measures.

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
	B2	Maintain and, where practicable, support ecological connectivity within the programme area through appropriate site design and management.
	B3	To minimise adverse impacts on semi-natural habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated national sites, non-designated locally important sites, and sites proposed for designation; in compliance with wildlife and invasive species legislation.
	B4	Achieve biodiversity protection and enhance (where feasible) and deliver forest management for nature - in response to the biodiversity emergency and in line with the National Biodiversity Plan and its targets.
	B5	Manage old and ancient woodlands to enhance their biodiversity value.
Landscape, Seascape & Visual Amenity	L1	Contribute to the conservation, protection, enhancement and management of the character and quality of Ireland's distinctive landscape and seascape.
	L2	Minimise development impacts on sensitive and / or important landscapes / seascapes, including those designated under the land use planning framework.
	L3	Minimise adverse visual effects, including effects on sensitive visual receptors and views and prospects designated under the land use planning framework.
Cultural Heritage	CH1	Protect and conserve archaeological heritage features, and the settings surrounding these features that are part of or contribute to the character and value of these features, including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), the prospective Register of Monuments and the Northern Ireland Sites and Monuments Record (NISMR).
	CH2	Protect and conserve architectural heritage features, and the settings surrounding these features that are part of or contribute to the character and value of these features, including entries to the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH), industrial heritage, Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) and features / conservation areas designated in Northern Ireland.
	CH3	Promote opportunities to enhance or conserve places, features, buildings and landscapes of cultural, historical archaeological or architectural heritage through the LUSIP, where feasible.
Geology and Soils	GS1	Minimise adverse effects on soil functions and deliver soil enhancement.
	GS2	Minimise adverse effects on the physico-chemical properties of soil.
	GS3	Increase uptake of sustainable soil management practices that contribute to the preservation of soil and peatlands, aiding in achieving good soil quality and stability.
Land use	LU1	Minimize effects on other land use activities / objectives and promote sustainable land use.
	AQN1	Minimise effects on local air quality.

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
Air Quality and Noise	AQN2	Minimise adverse noise impacts on sensitive receptors.
Water	W1	Maintain and / or improve, the quality and status of surface water bodies, in line with Water Framework Directive requirements.
	W2	Avoid deterioration and, where feasible, protect and improve groundwater quality within LUSIP-managed areas, applying best practice water protection measures.
	W3	Comply as appropriate with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines.
	W4	Promote sustainable drainage practices in development projects to improve water quality and flow.
	W5	Avoid significant adverse effects on drinking water quality arising from LUSIP implementation.
	W6	Avoid significant adverse effects on the status of transitional, coastal and marine waters arising from LUSIP implementation.
	W7	Avoid significant adverse effects on bathing water quality arising from LUSIP implementation.
Material Assets & Infrastructure	MA1	Minimise effects on or conflicts with local, regional and national material assets and infrastructure, including future, planned infrastructure.
	MA2	Promote sustainable travel and transport
	MA3	Promote the effective and sustainable use of forest products.
	MA4	Enable the delivery of renewable energy projects for the benefit of national energy demands - through its joint venture FuturEnergy Ireland and via land agreements with other renewable energy developers.
	MA5	Promote sustainable waste / material management and the circular economy.
Tourism & Recreation	TR1	Minimise adverse effects upon tourism and recreation amenities, and enhance tourism and recreation, where possible.
Climate Change	CC1	Contribute towards the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the delivery of renewable energy projects in line with national objectives and targets.
	CC2	Promote carbon sequestration in line with national objectives and targets.
	CC3	Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from forest related transport operations.
	CC4	Integrate sustainable and low / zero carbon design solutions into Coillte development projects, where possible.
	CC5	Contribute to sectoral adaptation to minimise the effects of climate change.

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
	CC7	Consider and appropriately manage the effects of climate change during development and forest planning processes.

6. DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION OF PLAN ALTERNATIVES

6.1 Introduction

Article 5(1) of the SEA Directive states that: *'Where an environmental assessment is required under Article 3(1), an environmental report shall be prepared in which the likely, significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, and* reasonable alternatives *taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme, are identified, described and evaluated.'*

The SEA Directive requires that reasonable alternative means of achieving the strategic goals of the Plan (considering the ambitions, strategic objectives and the geographical scope of the Plan) are identified, described and evaluated for their likely, significant effects on the environment. Such reasonable alternatives must be realistic and capable of implementation.

Reasonable alternatives to the Plan were initially explored and examined during the SEA Scoping stage of the SEA process, having regard to the scope, function and strategic aims and main objectives of the Plan. This process facilitated the accurate identification of reasonable alternatives to the Plan and also suitably informed the plan-development process, ensuring optimal environmental outcomes.

Reasonable alternatives considered were assessed against the Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) established for the aspects of the baseline environment which are likely to be significantly affected by the Plan. The purpose of this was to determine if the reasonable alternative resulted in positive, negative, neutral or uncertain environmental outcomes. Preferred reasonable alternatives were then identified having regard to environmental considerations.

The reasonable alternative identification and assessment process has been clearly described and documented. A description of how the assessment of alternatives was carried out is provided. The description and evaluation of reasonable alternatives in this report was undertaken in accordance with guidelines defined in the following two guidance documents primarily:

1. Implementation of SEA Directive (2001/42/EC): Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment, DEHLG 2004.
2. Developing and Assessing Alternatives in Strategic Environmental Assessment, EPA 2015.

6.2 Goal of the Reasonable Alternative Evaluation Process in SEA

The underpinning goal of the reasonable alternative evaluation process is to ensure that the selection of preferred alternatives by Coillte is informed by environmental considerations, including:

- Which alternative best promotes and facilitates proper planning and sustainable development.
- Which alternative best supports the Ambitions and Strategic Objectives of the Plan.
- Which alternative best supports the Strategic Environmental Objectives defined for the Plan.
- Which alternative best supports the objectives of inter-related plans and policy, including their environmental protection objectives.
- The potential positive environmental effects associated with the alternative.
- The potential negative environmental effects associated with the alternative.

6.3 Approach to Developing Reasonable Alternatives

A range of alternatives to the Plan were considered during the Plan-development process. The approach for identifying reasonable alternatives to the Plan is defined below:

1. Iterative communication was held between the Plan-making and environmental assessment teams to identify the various alternative approaches and options being considered to achieve the Strategic Aim and Objectives of the Plan.
2. Reasonable alternatives considered were identified. For an alternative to be considered reasonable, it must be practical/functional, realistic and implementable. An evaluation of whether each alternative was practical/functional, reasonable and implementable took place. This evaluation considered the following factors:
    - The ambitions and strategic objectives of the Plan.
    - The geographic scope of the Plan.
    - The actual powers and functions of Coillte.
    - The genuine ability of the alternative to achieve the Plan ambitions and strategic objectives.
    - The technical feasibility of the alternative.
    - The availability of resources, including financial resources to deliver the Plan within the required timeframe.
    - The policy hierarchy and the parameters placed around the Plan by higher-level policy.
    - The legislative context and the parameters placed around the Plan by climate action and environmental related legislation.

The toolkit contained in the EPA's guidelines entitled '*Developing and Assessing Alternatives in Strategic Environmental Assessment Good Practice Guidance*' (2015) was utilised when identifying reasonable alternatives. The 'Why? What? Where? When?' Model defined in the guidelines were used when framing reasonable alternatives, as shown in Figure 6-1.

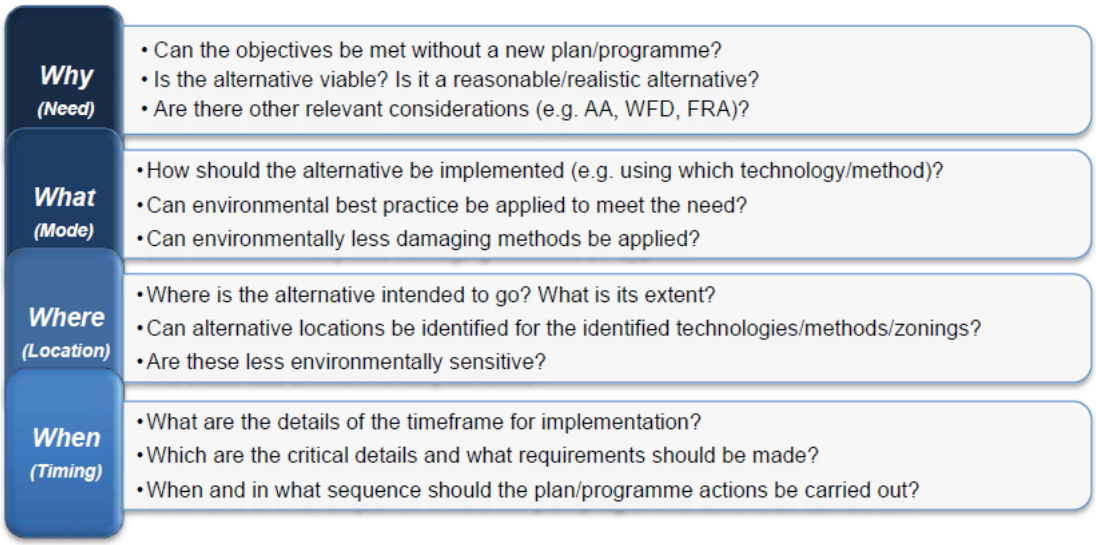


Figure 6-1: 'Why? What? Where? When?' Model for framing alternatives - Adapted from Figure 4.3 Developing and Assessing Alternatives in the Strategic Environmental Assessment Process (EPA, 2015).

6.4 Limitations in Assessing Reasonable Alternatives

The range of Reasonable Alternatives open to the Plan-making team is limited by the need to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and alignment with higher order ambitions and strategic objectives defined in the FESLUP.

6.5 Identification and Description of Reasonable Alternatives

Reasonable alternatives to the Plan were identified as the Plan-making process evolved. Details on all Reasonable Alternatives considered during Plan-making are presented in Table 6-1.

Table 6-1: Reasonable Alternatives considered during Plan-making

Theme	Description of Reasonable Alternatives
Scale of the Plan.	Alternative 1: Developing a nationally scaled Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan.
	Alternative 2: Developing a Land Use Strategic Implementation which is geographically scaled to Business Area Units.
Plan Duration.	Alternative 1: Implement the Plan over the duration of the Forest Estate Strategic Land Use Plan (2023 - 2050).
	Alternative 2: Implement the Plan over a 10 year timeframe.
Focus of Plan Actions.	Alternative 1: Development of operationally focused Plan actions.
	Alternative 2: Development of strategically focused Plan actions.
Measuring and Reporting of Plan Actions.	Alternative 1: Measuring/reporting at national level.
	Alternative 2: Measuring/reporting at Business Area Unit level.
	Alternative 3: Measuring/reporting at both national and Business Area Unit level.

6.6 Evaluation of Reasonable Alternatives

An evaluation of the potential effects of the reasonable alternatives on the baseline environment was carried out in accordance with the SEA Directive and best practice guidelines. A standardised evaluation matrix was developed to facilitate the evaluation of the environmental effects of reasonable alternatives on SEOs relating to each Environmental Component.

Potential effects of the reasonable alternatives were categorised as follows in the matrix:

- Potential Positive Environmental Impact (indicated in the matrix by a '+').[97]
- Potential Negative Environmental Impact (indicated in the matrix by a '-').[98]
- Potential Positive and Negative Environmental Impacts (indicated in the matrix by a '+/-').
- Uncertain Environmental Impact (indicated in the matrix by a '?').
- Neutral, No or Insignificant Environmental Impact (indicated in the matrix by a '0').
- Where positive effects are more likely or of a greater magnitude for a particular alternative, these effects are indicated in the matrix by a '++').

The evaluation of all Reasonable Alternatives considered during the Plan-making process is presented Tables 6-2 to 6-5. Reasons for selecting Preferred Alternatives are presented.

[97] Potential Positive Environmental Impacts are defined as having the potential to support the achievement of an SEO.
[98] Potential Negative Environmental Impacts are defined as having the potential to hinder the achievement of an SEO.

Table 6-2: Scale of the Plan

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Alternative 1: Developing a nationally scaled Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan	Alternative 2: Developing a Land Use Strategic Implementation which is geographically scaled to Business Area Units
Overall	O1	+	0
Population & Human Health	PHH1	++/-	+/-
	PHH2	++/-	+/-
	PHH3	++	+
	PHH4	++	+
	PHH5	++	+
	PHH6	++	+
Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	B1	++/-	+/-
	B2	++/-	+/-
	B3	++/-	+/-
	B4	++/-	+/-
	B5	++/-	+/-
Landscape, Seascape & Visual Amenity	L1	++/-	+/-
	L2	++/-	+/-
	L3	++/-	+/-
Cultural Heritage - Archaeology & Architectural	CH1	++/-	+/-
	CH2	++/-	+/-
	CH3	++	+
Geology and Soils	GS1	++/-	+/-
	GS2	++/-	+/-

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Alternative 1: Developing a nationally scaled Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan	Alternative 2: Developing a Land Use Strategic Implementation which is geographically scaled to Business Area Units
	GS3	++/-	+/-
Land Use	LU1	++/-	+/-
Air Quality and Noise	AQN1	++/-	+/-
	AQN2	++/-	+/-
Water	W1	++/-	+/-
	W2	++/-	+/-
	W3	++	+
	W4	++/-	+/-
	W5	++/-	+/-
	W6	++/-	+/-
	W7	++/-	+/-
Material Assets	MAI1	++/-	+/-
	MAI2	++/-	+/-
	MAI3	++	+
	MAI4	++/-	+/-
	MAI5	++/-	+/-
Tourism & Recreation	TR1	++/-	+/-
Climate Change	CC1	++/-	+/-
	CC2	++	+
	CC3	++	+
	CC4	++/-	+/-

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Alternative 1: Developing a nationally scaled Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan	Alternative 2: Developing a Land Use Strategic Implementation which is geographically scaled to Business Area Units
	CC5	++/-	+/-
	CC6	++/-	+/-
	CC7	++/-	+/-

Preferred Alternative

Alternative 1: Developing a nationally scaled Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan.

Reasons for Selecting the Preferred Alternative

Initially, Coillte considered having the LUSIP be geographically scaled to BAU level and for it to replace Coillte's existing Forest Management Plans (FMPs). Coillte's FMPs are developed for each BAU and set out plans for forestry and other activities across the BAUs over 5 years period. They are designed to support Coillte meeting certification requirements for sustainable forestry. Having the LUSIP geographically scaled to BAU level and replace FMPs would create efficiency in land use planning processes.

Actions defined in a LUSIP scaled to BAU level would be specific, detailed and operational in nature and would sever to guide activities and development on a granular level, supporting positive environmental outcomes. It was considered, however, this approach negatively impacts the scope to strategically plan, guide and implement forestry and non-forestry activities nationally and across all BAUs. Conducting SEA of a BAU level LUSIP would also be more akin to carrying out project-level environmental assessment, given the level of specific operational-level detail that would be contained in such a Plan. This would conflict with the goal of SEA to ensure environmental considerations are integrated into land use planning processes at an early stage of decision-making to guide lower-order actions.

It was therefore concluded that developing a nationally scaled LUSIP is a preferred option, compared to developing a LUSIP that is scaled to BAU level, for the following reasons:

- Development of a nationally scaled LUSIP that informs lower-order operational-level forestry planning would allow for better strategic planning and the integration of environmental considerations into land use planning processes at an early and more appropriate stage of decision-making. This has the potential to result in better environmental outcomes across multiple environmental components.
- It would give Coillte greater flexibility and control in relation to strategic-level planning and environmental considerations. Coillte would be in a better position to respond to environmental trends and issues that may rise during Plan implementation and develop remedial action at an appropriate scale.
- It would allow for better consideration of interactions and cumulative effects of Coillte strategic actions during the SEA of the Plan.
- It would allow for integration of environmental considerations and mitigation at an earlier and higher-level stage of Coillte's land use planning process. This framework of higher-order environmental mitigation measures will serve to suitably and effectively guide lower-order forest plans and operations.

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Alternative 1: Developing a nationally scaled Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan	Alternative 2: Developing a Land Use Strategic Implementation which is geographically scaled to Business Area Units
• Development of a BAU level LUSIP would require the Plan to define Actions and report on environmental metrics at forest-level, in order to meet Certification requirements. SEA of a BAU level Plan would likely be unwieldy and lack appropriate focus, reducing its effectiveness. • A single, nationally scaled LUSIP maintains a clear strategic perspective, and provides a coherent framework within which individual BAUs can interpret and implement actions in line with local context while still aligning with national priorities.			

Table 6-3: Plan Duration

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Alternative 1: Implement the Plan over the duration of the Forest Estate Strategic Land Use Plan (2023 - 2050)	Alternative 2: Implement the Plan over a 10 year timeframe.
Overall	O1	+	0
Population & Human Health	PHH1	++/-	+/-
	PHH2	++/-	+/-
	PHH3	++	+
	PHH4	++	+
	PHH5	++	+
	PHH6	++	+
Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	B1	++/-	+/-
	B2	++/-	+/-
	B3	++/-	+/-
	B4	++/-	+/-
	B5	++/-	+/-
Landscape, Seascape & Visual Amenity	L1	++/-	+/-
	L2	++/-	+/-
	L3	++/-	+/-
Cultural Heritage - Archaeology & Architectural	CH1	++/-	+/-
	CH2	++/-	+/-
	CH3	++	+
Geology and Soils	GS1	++/-	+/-
	GS2	++/-	+/-

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Alternative 1: Implement the Plan over the duration of the Forest Estate Strategic Land Use Plan (2023 - 2050)	Alternative 2: Implement the Plan over a 10 year timeframe.
	GS3	++/-	+/-
Land Use	LU1	++/-	+/-
Air Quality and Noise	AQN1	++/-	+/-
	AQN2	++/-	+/-
Water	W1	++/-	+/-
	W2	++/-	+/-
	W3	++	+
	W4	++/-	+/-
	W5	++/-	+/-
	W6	++/-	+/-
	W7	++/-	+/-
Material Assets	MAI1	++/-	+/-
	MAI2	++/-	+/-
	MAI3	++	+
	MAI4	++/-	+/-
	MAI5	++/-	+/-
Tourism & Recreation	TR1	++/-	+/-
Climate Change	CC1	++/-	+/-
	CC2	++	+
	CC3	++	+
	CC4	++/-	+/-

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Alternative 1: Implement the Plan over the duration of the Forest Estate Strategic Land Use Plan (2023 - 2050)	Alternative 2: Implement the Plan over a 10 year timeframe.
	CC5	++/-	+/-
	CC6	++/-	+/-
	CC7	++/-	+/-

Preferred Alternative

Alternative 2: Implement the Plan over a 10 year timeframe.

Reasons for Selecting the Preferred Alternative

Coillte considered having the LUSIP timeframe run from 2023 - 2050, in line with the timeframe of the higher-order FESLUP. This option would have ensured alignment between FESLUP and LUSIP ambitions, strategic objectives and actions. It was decided that the Plan would run for a 10 year time period, from 2026 to 2035, however. This was for the following reasons:

Adopting a 10 year Plan duration would allow Coillte to define more specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and targeted Actions which would sit under and support higher-order ambitions and strategic objectives. This level of Plan focus was considered optimal in the context of the FESLUP and lower-order forest planning processes at Coillte.

- The effectiveness of these Actions and their associated environmental effects would be easier to measure/monitor during Plan implementation.
- More accurate and effective monitoring of the effects of the Plan would allow Coillte to adapt better in response to environmental trends and issues related to the implementation of the Plan.
- A 10-year timeframe is a reasonable period to implement and monitor complex forest and land use initiatives, while still allowing for flexibility in land use planning processes.
- It was considered that a having a 10 year plan with more focused Actions sitting under the ambitions and strategic objectives of the FESLUP, but above operational-level forestry plans, would lead to the most optimal environmental outcomes, and is more likely to facilitate the achievement of Coillte's environmental goals, in line with wider environmental protection objectives. This level of focus was considered to be optimum for translating and driving Coillte's strategic vision at operational/project level.
- This level of focus was considered ideal for providing a coherent, effective, targeted and applicable framework of environmental mitigation to guide lower-order planning processes and projects.
- It was considered that this approach is more likely to result in and maximise positive environmental effects on environmental components due to Plan implementation. It is more likely to avoid, prevent and minimise the occurrence of negative environmental effects.

Table 6-4: Focus of Plan Actions

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Alternative 1: Development of operationally focused Plan actions	Alternative 2: Development of strategically focused Plan actions
Overall	O1	+	+
Population & Human Health	PHH1	+/-	++/-
	PHH2	+/-	++/-
	PHH3	++	++
	PHH4	++	++
	PHH5	++	++
	PHH6	++	++
Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	B1	+/-	++/-
	B2	+/-	++/-
	B3	+/-	++/-
	B4	+/-	++/-
	B5	+/-	++/-
Landscape, Seascape & Visual Amenity	L1	+/-	++/-
	L2	+/-	++/-
	L3	+/-	++/-
Cultural Heritage - Archaeology & Architectural	CH1	+/-	++/-
	CH2	+/-	++/-
	CH3	+	++
Geology and Soils	GS1	+/-	++/-
	GS2	+/-	++/-
	GS3	+/-	++/-

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Alternative 1: Development of operationally focused Plan actions	Alternative 2: Development of strategically focused Plan actions
Land Use	LU1	+/-	++/-
Air Quality and Noise	AQN1	+/-	++/-
	AQN2	+/-	++/-
Water	W1	+/-	++/-
	W2	+/-	++/-
	W3	+	++
	W4	+/-	++/-
	W5	+/-	++/-
	W6	+/-	++/-
	W7	+/-	++/-
Material Assets	MAI1	++/-	++/-
	MAI2	++/-	++/-
	MAI3	++	++
	MAI4	++/-	++/-
	MAI5	++/-	++/-
Tourism & Recreation	TR1	++/-	++/-
Climate Change	CC1	+/-	++/-
	CC2	+	++
	CC3	+	++
	CC4	+/-	++/-
	CC5	+/-	++/-
	CC6	+/-	++/-

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Alternative 1: Development of operationally focused Plan actions	Alternative 2: Development of strategically focused Plan actions
	CC7	+/-	++/-

Preferred Alternative

Alternative 2: Development of strategically focused Plan actions.

Reasons for Selecting the Preferred Alternative

In the early stage of the development of the LUSIP, Coillte identified over 200 actions. Multiple actions were identified for each strategic objectives defined in the FESLUP. It was considered these range of actions were overly specific, and the level of detail provided did not align with the strategic purpose of the LUSIP to bridge the gap between high-level policy and local implementation. A thorough cross-organisation review of the Actions was undertaken, and the Actions were consolidated and made more strategic in focus. The actions were also grouped under the 4 strategic pillars defined under the FESLUP. This allowed the Plan to maintain a clear, outcome-focused structure while remaining flexible enough for BAUs to interpret and implement actions in ways that suit their local context. The more operational or overly specific actions were therefore not included, as they would have shifted the Plan away from its intended strategic function. The main environmental reasons for selecting this preferred alternative are set out below:

- Defining strategically focused Plan Actions would better support effective Plan implementation and be more likely to lead to the realization of strategic objectives, including objectives relating to climate mitigation, nature restoration and environmental protection.
- This approach would better facilitate the translation of the ambitions and strategic objectives of the FESLUP to operational forest planning processes, which has the potential to result in better environmental outcomes.
- It was identified early on that consolidating Plan Actions and making the Plan more succinct and appropriately focussed would better facilitate the carrying out of more appropriately focused, accurate and clear SEA and AA, and better facilitate the integration of environmental considerations into the Plan.
- Making Plan Actions more strategically focussed than operationally focussed would allow for earlier consideration of environmental impacts in decision-making processes, in line with the principles of SEA.

Table 6-5: Measuring and Reporting of Plan Actions

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Alternative 1: Measuring/reporting at national level	Alternative 2: Measuring/reporting at Business Area Unit level	Alternative 3: Measuring/reporting at both national and Business Area Unit level
Overall	O1	+	+	+
Population & Human Health	PHH1	+/-	+/-	++/-
	PHH2	+/-	+/-	++/-
	PHH3	++	++	++
	PHH4	++	++	++
	PHH5	++	++	++
	PHH6	++	++	++
Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	B1	+/-	+/-	++/-
	B2	+/-	+/-	++/-
	B3	+/-	+/-	++/-
	B4	+/-	+/-	++/-
	B5	+/-	+/-	++/-
Landscape, Seascape & Visual Amenity	L1	+/-	+/-	++/-
	L2	+/-	+/-	++/-
	L3	+/-	+/-	++/-
Cultural Heritage - Archaeology & Architectural	CH1	+/-	+/-	++/-
	CH2	+/-	+/-	++/-
	CH3	+	+	++
Geology and Soils	GS1	+/-	+/-	++/-
	GS2	+/-	+/-	++/-

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Alternative 1: Measuring/reporting at national level	Alternative 2: Measuring/reporting at Business Area Unit level	Alternative 3: Measuring/reporting at both national and Business Area Unit level
	GS3	+/-	+/-	++/-
Land Use	LU1	+/-	+/-	++/-
Air Quality and Noise	AQN1	+/-	+/-	++/-
	AQN2	+/-	+/-	++/-
Water	W1	+/-	+/-	++/-
	W2	+/-	+/-	++/-
	W3	+	+	++
	W4	+/-	+/-	++/-
	W5	+/-	+/-	++/-
	W6	+/-	+/-	++/-
	W7	+/-	+/-	++/-
Material Assets	MAI1	++/-	++/-	++/-
	MAI2	++/-	++/-	++/-
	MAI3	++	++	++
	MAI4	++/-	++/-	++/-
	MAI5	++/-	++/-	++/-
Tourism & Recreation	TR1	++/-	++/-	++/-
Climate Change	CC1	+/-	+/-	++/-
	CC2	+	+	++
	CC3	+	+	++
	CC4	+/-	+/-	++/-

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Alternative 1: Measuring/reporting at national level	Alternative 2: Measuring/reporting at Business Area Unit level	Alternative 3: Measuring/reporting at both national and Business Area Unit level
	CC5	+/-	+/-	++/-
	CC6	+/-	+/-	++/-
	CC7	+/-	+/-	++/-

Preferred Alternative

Alternative 3: Measuring/reporting at both national and Business Area Unit level.

Reasons for Selecting the Preferred Alternative

Coillte considered measuring and reporting on defined Actions at national level and at BAU level. It was decided to measure/report on Actions at both levels depending on the nature and specifics of the Action. Coillte decided to report LUSIP actions at the BAU level where there is clearer visibility of targets and delivery pathways—such as in areas like Timber Production. This will ensure implementation is adapted to local context, enhancing effectiveness of the plan. However, for actions where target-setting or delivery mechanisms are still evolving, or where implementation is coordinated centrally, reporting is done at the national level. This mixed approach allows Coillte to balance local and national priorities, ensuring that reporting remains both practical and meaningful. Overall, the approach chosen is more likely to lead to effective delivery of the Plan, including Coillte's ambitions to deliver climate mitigation, nature restoration and appropriate environmental protection.

6.7 Data Gaps relating to the Identification and Evaluation of the Reasonable Alternatives

There were no data gaps that inhibited the ability of the project team to identify and evaluate Reasonable Alternatives considered during the Plan development process.

7. EVALUATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 Introduction

An evaluation of the potential effects of the Plan on the baseline environment, as characterised and described in Section 4 of this report, was carried out and is documented in this section of the report. This evaluation was carried out against the Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) established for the aspects of the baseline environment which are likely to be significantly affected by the Plan. These SEOs are documented in Section 5 of this report.

7.2 Evaluation of the Environmental Effects of Plan Implementation

A detailed evaluation of the potential effects of the Plan on the baseline environment was carried out in accordance with the SEA Directive and best practice guidelines. A standardised evaluation matrix was developed to facilitate the evaluation of the Plan on SEOs relevant to each Environmental Component. An explanation of the approach and methodology for this detailed evaluation and completed evaluation matrices presenting the detailed evaluation are contained in Appendix 3 of this report.

An overview of the main environmental effects the Plan may have on the receiving environment is presented below.[99]

Potential Positive Environmental Effects

- The plan defines a range of actions under the 'Forests for Climate' pillar that have the potential to generate positive effects for the climate environment. Several actions support the realisation of national afforestation ambitions. These actions have the potential to increase carbon sequestration levels nationally and decrease overall Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions associated with the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry sector, in line with the objectives of climate legislation and policy. Several actions will support, promote and drive peatland restoration/re-design projects,[100] which have the potential to contribute to increased GHG sequestration and reduced GHG emissions. These afforestation and peatland restoration/re-design actions have the potential to generate long-term, significant to profound positive effects on climate and inter-related environmental components (e.g., biodiversity, population and human health etc.).
- Plan actions promote climate adaptation through Coillte forestry/land use planning processes. This will support the prevention and reduction of the effects of climate change on forestry operations occurring on the Coillte estate (e.g., associated with extreme weather/storms, wildfire, flooding etc). This has the potential to generate long-term, significant to profound positive effects on population and human health and material assets (through promoting the protection of the forest estate and ensuring a reliable supply of wood product to the market), cultural heritage, biodiversity, soils, water quality and hydrology.

[99] Environmental effects of the Plan have been described in accordance with descriptive terminology defined in the Environmental Protection Agency's guidance document entitled 'Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports' (2022).
[100] Subject to carbon-related financing.

- Plan actions support the carrying out of renewable energy, grid infrastructure and energy storage development by FuturEnergy Ireland and other renewable energy developers on the Coillte estate. The development of this infrastructure has the potential to contribute substantially to Ireland's climate and renewable energy targets and may generate long-term, very significant to profound positive effects for climate and inter-related environmental components (e.g., biodiversity, population and human health etc.).
- Plan actions defined under the 'Forests for Wood' pillar promote, support and drive sustainable and indigenous forestry activity, afforestation and timber demand/production nationally. This has the potential to have a range of long-term, significant to profound positive environmental effects, including positive effects on climate (through increased afforestation and associated carbon sequestration), biodiversity, the water environment (through water regulation and filtration improving water quality), air quality, soils, material assets (through provision of wood product to the market for use in construction) and population and human health (through the creation of employment and increased economic activity).
- Various plan actions support the protection of commercial forestry assets on the Coillte estate (e.g., from storm damage, wildfire, disease etc.). The implementation of these actions has the potential to generate long-term, significant to profound positive effects on population and human and material assets (through the protection of commercial forestry, employment, livelihoods, timber production and supply).
- The plan defines a range of actions under the 'Forests for Nature' pillar that have the potential to generate long-term, significant to profound positive effects on biodiversity and inter-related environmental components (population and human health, water, soils etc.), including actions that support substantial nature restoration, effective and optimal biodiversity management/protection, sustainable forest management approaches, the protection of old and ancient woodland, water quality protection and improvement, enhancing the nitrogen cycle and invasive species management.
- The plan defines a range of actions under the 'Forests for People' pillar that support and drive the carrying out of tourism and recreation related development and activities on the Coillte estate, including strategic development. Tourism and recreation related development have the potential to generate long-term, positive environmental effects, including positive effects on population and human health (through increased economic activity, increased recreation/engagement with nature), cultural heritage (e.g. by creating synergies between the development and cultural heritage features) and tourism and recreation.
- Plan actions supporting the building of expertise and capacity in sustainable forest management, which has the potential to generate positive effects for population and human health (through the building expertise or mastery, the creation of livelihoods etc.) and materials assets (through the enhancement of the labour force that underpins and delivery sustainable forest and timber production and supply nationally).

Potential Negative Environmental Effects (in the absence of environmental mitigation)

- A range of plan actions across various Plan pillars support the expansion of forestry in Ireland. The range of activities associated with forestry, including road construction, afforestation, harvesting and reforestation may have temporary to long-term, slight to very significant, negative effects on population and human health (through visual impacts, nuisance etc.), biodiversity (habitat loss/fragmentation, species disturbance etc.), landscape/seascape (if forestry is not sited and designed appropriately), cultural heritage (potential interference with heritage features and their surrounding setting, or previously uncovered or unrecorded features of archaeological significance), soils (through compaction, sealing, erosion, loss of organic matter etc.), the air and noise environments, water quality and hydrology (through increase eutrophication, sedimentation, changes in hydrology etc.), material assets (e.g. impacts on or conflicts with existing or planned infrastructure), or tourism and recreation (through visual effects on scenic routes, for example).
- A range of actions defined in the Plan support and promote the carrying out of peatland restoration/re-design projects. Such projects, if improperly designed, implemented or maintained, have the potential to generate various negative effects on the environment, such as temporary to long-term, slight to very significant, negative effects on climate (through poor design negatively affecting greenhouse gas emission fluxes), biodiversity (e.g., habitat and species impacts associated with restoration works, aquatic species that may be affected by changes in hydrology), heritage features (including the physical integrity of existing and unrecorded features), soils, and water quality and hydrology (e.g., downstream alterations in water quality or hydrological conditions - if projects are not supported by appropriate hydrological assessment, for example).
- Plan actions support the carrying out of renewable energy, grid infrastructure and energy storage development by FuturEnergy Ireland and other renewable energy developers on the Coillte estate. The development of this infrastructure, which will include impactful projects such as wind farms or linear grid connection projects, has the potential to generate a wide range of negative environmental effects in the absence of appropriate site selection, design, planning or maintenance, including temporary to long-term, slight to very significant, negative effects on population and human health (through visual impacts, shadow flicker or noise, for example), biodiversity (e.g., through habitat loss, bird strikes etc.), landscape/seascape, visual amenity, heritage (including the physical integrity of heritage features and the settings surrounding such features), soils (through excavations to accommodate built development e.g., wind farm foundations), the noise environment, water quality and hydrology, material assets (through impacts on or conflicts with other existing or planned infrastructure) and tourism and recreation (via impacts on scenic routes or landscape/seascape, for example).There is also the potential for negative effects on land-use through competing objectives for sustainable management practices to promote biodiversity enhancement and objectives for renewable energy production.
- Plans actions support the carrying out a range of nature restoration and biodiversity management relates projects and activities. These projects/activities, if mis-designed or mismanaged, may result in inadvertent, temporary to long-term, slight to very significant, negative effects on biodiversity.

The plan defines a range of actions under the 'Forests for People' pillar that support and drive the carrying out of tourism and recreation related development and activities on the Coillte estate, including strategic development. Tourism and recreation related development have the potential to generate temporary to long-term, slight to very significant, negative effects on biodiversity (through increased human interaction with sensitive ecological receptors, noise, land-take, lighting etc.), population and human health (due to construction dust, noise, changes in traffic and transport dynamics), landscape, seascape and visual amenity (through the construction of sizeable built development at visually sensitive locations), cultural heritage (due to interactions between the development and the physical integrity and/or setting of unknown or recorded heritage features), soils, the air and noise environment, the water environment (due to construction phase run-off, changes in hydrology or additional wastewater loading in an wastewater catchment/agglomeration), material assets or climate (e.g., from construction embodied carbon, or due to the creation of unsustainable transport/travel patterns).

7.3 Potential Cumulative Effect of the Plan in combination with other Plans and Projects

The cumulative effects of a plan are an important consideration in SEA given that a plan may envisage the occurrence of many different measures taking place in parallel with each other in a particular location/geographic area over a particular time period. One benefit of SEA is being able to evaluate the in-combination environmental effects of multiple envisaged measures and projects.

The following types of cumulative effects can occur due to the implementation of a plan:

- Intra-plan Cumulative Effects - Individual environmental effects associated with a single plan interacting and combining to create a larger environmental effect.
- Inter-plan Cumulative Effects - The environment effects of a plan and the environmental effects of another plan interacting and combining to create a larger environmental effect.

7.3.1 Intra-plan Cumulative Effects

The evaluation of Plan intra-plan cumulative effects was embedded into the detailed evaluation of environmental effects presented in Appendix 3. Potential intra-plan cumulative effects are presented below:

- Plan actions may interact and combine to generate larger, more significant positive cumulative effect on climate and inter-related environmental components (i.e. climate co-benefits). This includes actions that support afforestation, peatland restoration/re-design, nature restoration, biodiversity management/protection and renewable development and related infrastructure.
- A wide range of plan actions under each of the Plan pillars may act in combination to drive the growth of forestry in Ireland, potentially resulting in larger, more significant positive or negative cumulative effects akin to the forestry related effects described in Section 7.2.
- Various plan actions supporting development on the Coillte estate (e.g., renewable energy development, tourism and recreation development) may interact to produce large, more significant negative cumulative effects on environmental receptors that may be found at, around or connected to areas used for forestry, including water quality, soils, landscape character and visual amenity, biodiversity and European and other designated sites.
- Increased access to natural amenity sites within the Coillte estate could be facilitated by the combination of tourism and recreation related actions in the Plan. This increased interaction between people and ecological receptors may result in a larger, more significant cumulative effect on biodiversity.

- The Plan provides for actions which support the delivery of development and infrastructure projects which could contribute - if incorrectly managed - to cumulative impacts through construction related environmental effects (site run-off, dust, noise pollution etc.).
- The Plan supports a variety of actions/developments that could introduce catchment level cumulative impacts on water quality, flow and hydrological regime/characteristics (e.g., forestry, peatland restoration/re-design, renewable energy development projects).
- The variety of positive effects associated with the implementation of Plan actions have the potential to combine and interact and have long-term and wide encompassing positive environmental effects on a variety of environmental components, including population and human health, climate, biodiversity, water quality and hydrology and material assets.
- The variety of positive climate related actions associated with the Plan have the potential to combine and create a larger and very significant to profound positive effect on climate - having regard to the share of GHG emission reductions that can be supported through the Plan relative to national GHG emission reduction targets and requirements.

The potential cumulative environmental effects listed above have the potential to extend beyond the boundary of the Plan area.

Plan actions that generate positive or negative environmental effects for one environmental component have the potential to indirectly generate positive or negative environmental effects for inter-related environmental components. For example, actions that support the protection of water quality can in turn result in positive effects on aquatic ecology.

An assessment of impact inter-relationships and interactions is embedded in the evaluation of environmental effects that was carried out in this report (which is detailed in full in Appendix 3). This ensures that there was adequate coverage of all potential environmental effects associated with the implementation of the Plan. A matrix showing the main potential inter-relationships between environmental components was developed and is presented in Table 7-1 to aid in the understanding of these relationships.

Table 7-1: Inter-relationships between Environmental Components

Inter- relationship Matrix	Population and Human Health	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	Water	Air Quality and Noise	Cultural Heritage	Geology and Soils	Landscape , Seascape and Visual Amenity	Material Assets	Tourism and Recreation	Climate
Population and Human Health		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Water	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Air Quality and Noise	✓	✓			✓				✓	✓
Cultural Heritage	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Geology and Soils	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓		✓
Landscape, Seascape and Visual Amenity	✓	✓			✓				✓	
Material Assets	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓
Tourism and Recreation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Climate	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

7.3.2 Inter-plan Cumulative Effects

Other legislation, plans and programmes that the Plan has a relationship with are presented and discussed in Appendix 1. Potential inter-plan cumulative effects are presented below:

- The Plan supports development and activities that may generate positive and negative cumulative environmental effects in combination with development and activities supported by other plans and programmes, including statutory land use plans (the national Planning Framework, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies, City/County Development Plans etc.) and other plans across all sectors of society, including renewable energy, transport and agricultural plans and plans relevant to Northern Ireland (e.g. Regional Development Strategy 2035). The cumulative effects that may be generated by the Plan in-combination with other plans and programmes is akin to the types of effects identified in Section 7.2.
- The Plan supports a variety of measures supporting forestry activity and peatland restoration/re-design projects - which could introduce catchment level cumulative impacts (positive or negative) on water quality, flow and hydrological regime/characteristics, in-combination with other plans and programmes (e.g., the Water Action Plan the Common Agriculture Policy Strategic Plan, Food Vision etc.).
- The variety of positive effects associated with the implementation of Plan actions have the potential to combine and interact with policy measures contained in other plans and programmes (the national Climate Action Plan, the National Biodiversity Plan, the Water Action Plan and have long-term and wide encompassing positive environmental effects on a variety of environmental components, including population and human health, climate, biodiversity, water quality and hydrology, and material assets.
- The variety of positive climate related measures defined in the Plan have the potential to generate a cumulative positive effect on climate – in combination with climate policy measures defined in other plans, including the national Climate Action Plan, Local Authority Climate Action Plans and the Northern Ireland Energy Strategy 2050.
- The variety of positive biodiversity related measures defined in the Plan have the potential to generate a cumulative positive effect on biodiversity – in combination with biodiversity policy measures defined in other plans, including the Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plans and the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023–2030.
- The range of measures in the Plan that support tourism and recreation development have the potential to generate cumulative positive effects for tourism and recreation, in combination with tourism, recreation and sport development related plans (being implemented by Fáilte Ireland or Local Authorities, for example).
- The variety of measures in the Plan which support the growth of the forestry sector have the potential to combine with measures in other economic development related plans to generate a larger, more significant positive cumulative effect on population and human health and materials (through the generation of employment, the reliable supply of timber for construction of housing etc.).
- Climate adaptation measures within the Plan have the potential to interact and combine climate adaptation measures defined under the National Adaptation Framework and the Agriculture, Forest and Seafood Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plans to generate larger, more significant positive cumulative effects on a variety of environmental components, through strengthening climate resilience.

The potential cumulative environmental effects listed above have the potential to extend beyond the boundary of the Plan area.

7.4 Potential Transboundary Environmental Effects

Transboundary Environmental Effects were a fundamental consideration during the carrying out of the environmental assessment and form an intrinsic part of the detailed environmental assessment presented in Appendix 3. In the absence of any mitigation, the identified effects, as presented in Section 7.2 and 7.3 have the potential to also impact Northern Irish receptors within the zone of influence of or connected to the Plan area.

8. MITIGATION MEASURES

Potential environmental effects that may occur as a result of the implementation of the Plan (without considering any mitigation) have been identified in Section 7 of this report. The SEA Directive requires that mitigation measures to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any potential significant negative environmental effects due to the implementation of a Plan are defined. This section of the report describes the measures to mitigate the potential negative environmental effects that may occur as a result of the implementation of the Plan.

Following the evaluation of the environmental effects of Plan implementation, the following forms of mitigation were adopted to mitigate the negative environments of the Plan:

- Mitigation through consideration of alternatives.
- Mitigation through integration of environmental considerations into the Plan.

The Plan-making process was carried out in parallel with the SEA and AA processes. Regular communication and interaction took place between the Environmental Assessment Team and the Plan-making Team. Environmental considerations that came to light during the SEA and AA processes, including consultation processes, were regularly communicated to the Plan-making Team during the Plan-making process.

A strong level of embedded environmental mitigation was found to be present in early drafts of the Plan. As necessary, additional environmental mitigation measures to mitigate the potential negative environmental effects of implementing the Plan were identified and then integrated into the Plan. The environmental assessment process was carried out in an iterative manner to ensure optimal Plan-making and environmental outcomes. Environmental considerations were also integrated into the Plan so as to facilitate maximising identified positive environmental effects of the Plan. Overall, three forms of environmental mitigation were integrated into the Plan, as follows:

1. Additional Actions relating to environmental protection were defined and integrated into the Plan.
2. Pre-existing Plan Actions were amended. Various initial Plan Actions have been amended to clarify environmental protection related obligations and environmental enhancement opportunities associated with the actions. The Actions have been better shaped to ensure that environmental considerations are appropriately taken into account during Plan implementation.
3. An Environmental Governance Framework (EGF) for the Plan was developed and integrated into the Plan. The environmental mitigation presented in this EGF is specific to the implementable actions defined in the LUSIP. The EGF has been developed cognisant of higher-order environmental mitigation defined in the FESLUP and inter-related plans and programmes, to ensure appropriate alignment between plans and programmes and avoid duplication of environmental mitigation requirements.

8.1 Mitigation through consideration of alternatives

A number of alternatives were considered at an early stage in the process. The environmental effects of these alternatives were evaluated during the SEA process. The preferred Plan was chosen over the other alternative options having due regard to the potential environmental effects (positive and negative) associated with alternatives considered.

8.2 Mitigation through integration of environmental considerations into the Plan

The Plan development process was carried out in parallel with the SEA and AA processes. Regular communication and interaction took place between the environmental assessment team and the Plan-making team. Environmental considerations that came to light during the SEA and processes, including consultation processes, were regularly communicated to the Plan-making team during the Plan-making process.

A strong level of embedded environmental mitigation/enhancement measures were found to be present in early drafts of the Plan. Examples of environmental mitigation/enhancement measures integrated into early iterations the Plan to prevent, reduce and fully offset potential significant negative environmental effects and to maximise potential environmental benefits and co-benefits of the Plan, are presented in Table 8-1[101]. Some of these Actions were subsequently amended or added to, to take account of environmental considerations during the Plan-making process.

Additional Environmental Mitigation Measures (additional Plan Actions) recommended to augment environmental protection and enhancement-related actions defined in earlier iterations of the Plan are presented in Table 8-2. These additional Actions have been fully integrated into the Plan by Coillte.

Various initial Plan Actions have been amended to clarify environmental protection related obligations and environmental enhancement opportunities associated with the actions. The Actions have been better shaped to ensure that environmental considerations are appropriately taken into account during Plan implementation. These Action amendments are presented in Table 8-3.

The Environmental Governance Framework for the Plan is presented in Table 8-4.

These mitigation measures were integrated into the Plan to avoid, prevent and minimise the environmental effects of the Plan on various environmental components (as identified and presented in Appendix 3 - Detailed Evaluation of Environmental Effects). Environmental components that each mitigation measure serves to avoid, prevent and minimise effects upon have been itemised in the tables below. The key for the Environmental Components is presented below:

- Population and Human Health - PHH
- Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna - BFF
- Landscape, Seascape and Visual Amenity - L
- Cultural Heritage - CH
- Soils - S
- Land Use - LU
- Air Quality and Noise - AQN
- Water - W
- Material Assets - MA
- Tourism and Recreation - TR
- Climate Change - CC

[101] Table 8-1 presents Embedded Environmental Mitigation as published in the Final Plan, inclusive of changes made over the Plan-making process and consultation submissions.

Table 8-1: Embedded Environmental Mitigation

Action Reference	Action	Related Environmental Components
CO1.A1	Outline the potential pathways for supporting the delivery of 100,000 ha by 2050.	CC, BFF, W, PHH, AQN, S, MA, LU
CO3.A1	Support and facilitate those public bodies who are committed to pursuing opportunities for afforestation on publicly owned land by supplying key afforestation management and planning services, at appropriate locations.	CC, BFF, W, PHH, AQN, S, MA, LU
CO4.A1	Consider proposals to help promote farmer-led afforestation at suitable locations and collaborate with key stakeholders.	CC, BFF, W, PHH, AQN, S, MA, LU
CO5.A1	Explore funding models to deliver nature and climate-based credits and create projects that will deliver new afforestation and continue to support investors in Irish forestry by providing afforestation, woodland management and other important services to investor funds that promote afforestation.	CC, BFF, W, PHH, AQN, S, MA, LU
CO7.A1	Engage with experts and practitioners undertaking large scale peatland rehabilitation programmes in Ireland and continue to review the international literature and develop best practices on the redesign of peatland at scale in an Irish context.	CC, BFF, W, PHH, AQN, S, MA, LU
CO9.A1	Update land-use planning model to generate Greenhouse Gas (GHG) profile using up-to-date inventory and harvest volume data and undertake analysis to ensure proposed management options implemented within the timeframe of this plan supports the delivery of the longer-term ambition.	CC, BFF, W, PHH, AQN, S, MA, LU
CO10.A1	Continually review and analyse forest management practices that can support climate mitigation, and where appropriate engage with scientific experts in the field to further understand the data and knowledge of carbon dynamics. Consider how they can be incorporated into reporting requirements such as Science Based Targets initiative (SBTI) and GHG protocol. In addition, engage with forest owners and industry to raise awareness regarding the implementation of forest management practices on climate regulation.	CC, BFF, W, PHH, AQN, S, MA, LU
CO11.A1	Develop a forest resilience strategy that considers the impacts of climate change, and identify mitigating measures to help our forests adapt to these climate risks. Evaluate how these findings can be incorporate into our planning models.	CC, BFF, W, PHH, AQN, S, MA, LU, CH
CO14.A1	Continue to enable FEI and non-FEI projects where appropriate through providing land agreements to facilitate renewable energy projects.	CC, BFF, W, PHH, AQN, S, MA, LU CH

Action Reference	Action	Related Environmental Components
NO1.A1	Coillte will identify an additional c.44,000 ha across the estate to be managed primarily for nature. The BioClass system will be used to rank the ecological value of these new biodiversity areas and to assign a target habitat, which indicates the overall management goal.	BFF, CC, W, S, PHH
NO2.A1	Scale up the management of biodiversity areas; increase the annual operational programme aiming to deliver, by 2029, biodiversity interventions on 2,000ha. The management actions will primarily include Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF), coupe felling, control of invasive species and re-wetting or maintaining ecologically important bog habitat and will be informed by BAMPlans (Biodiversity Area Management Plans) that are prepared jointly by foresters and ecologists.	BFF, CC, W, S, PHH
NO3.A1	Coillte will map ancient forests on the estate, assess their ecological value using BioClass procedure and develop appropriate management approach.	BFF, CC, W, S, PHH, CH
NO5.A4	Develop a process for recording and reporting species (flora and fauna), and for sharing data with relevant stakeholders, to build our knowledge of their occurrence across the estate and to better inform appropriate protection measures.	BFF, CC, W, S, PHH
NO13.A1	Maintain and update the existing protocols for protected species and habitats and develop action plans for key species on the estate (e.g. lesser horseshoe bat, freshwater pearl mussel, etc.) having due regard to existing and emerging best practice and relevant NPWS species plans, such as the following: • Hen Harrier Threat Response Plan • Lesser Horsehoe Bat Species Action Plan	BFF, CC, W, S, PHH
NO13.A2	Continue engagement and partnership projects with NPWS and other relevant agencies e.g. IFI to deliver management actions to enhance species and habitats, moving them towards more favourable conservation status.	BFF, CC, W, S, PHH
NO17.A1	Develop best practice for controlling invasive species on Coillte sites, through collaboration with staff, practitioners, contactors and other agencies who are engaged in this work, to share experiences and knowledge.	BFF, PHH
NO19.A1	Identify and create packages of work to enable delivery of biodiversity goals relevant to the Coillte estate, improving habitat quality in biodiversity areas and benefiting key species on the estate.	BFF, CC, W, S, PHH
PO4.A1	Develop sustainability plans at key destinations and report on the visitor numbers and associated sustainability factors annually.	All

Action Reference	Action	Related Environmental Components
PO8.A1	Create a community engagement model that facilitates public and local authority participation in the development and maintenance of Recreation Areas while providing opportunities for local communities to contribute and benefit.	PHH, TR, MA, CH
PO9.A1	Using industry expertise, measure and quantify the economic, social and wellbeing benefits of outdoor recreation.	PHH, TR
PO9.A2	Expand the Woodlands for Health programme, while promoting sustainable and environmentally responsible interaction with woodland areas.	PHH, TR
PO16.A1	Collaborate with industry forums, educators, and government stakeholders to design and deliver targeted training programs, enhance tertiary education curricula, and develop innovative initiatives, such as digital learning experiences for students, to attract new entrants and build skills in emerging areas. Additionally, advocate for the inclusion of forestry-related skills on the Critical Skills List, monitor annual updates, and address gaps in recognising essential forestry roles through partnerships and apprenticeships.	PHH, MA
PO19.A1	Continue to monitor H&S across the estate and provide updated guidance to all staff and contractors.	PHH

Table 8-2: Additional Actions

Action	Related Environmental Components
Coillte commit to delivering the Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan (LUSIP) actions in accordance with the Environmental Governance Framework (EGF) defined under the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) of the LUSIP. This EGF provides a policy-level framework for environmental protection and will inform decision-making and will guide lower-level plans, projects and activities being delivered under the LUSIP.	All
Coillte commit to adopting and implementing all recommendations relating to environmental protection defined under the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) of the LUSIP.	All

Table 8-3: Amendments to Pre-existing Plan Action

Action Reference	Action	Amendment (additional text in Red)	Related Environmental Components
CO1.A1	Outline the potential pathways for supporting the delivery of 100,000 ha by 2050.	Outline the potential pathways to support the sustainable delivery of 100,000 ha by 2050.	All
CO3.A1	Support and facilitate those public bodies who are committed to pursuing opportunities for afforestation on publicly owned land by supplying key afforestation management and planning services.	Support and facilitate those public bodies who are committed to pursuing opportunities for afforestation on publicly owned land by supplying key afforestation management and planning services, at appropriate locations.	All
CO4.A1	Consider proposals to help promote farmer-led afforestation and collaborate with key stakeholders.	Consider proposals to help promote sustainable farmer-led afforestation and collaborate with key stakeholders.	All
CO6.A1	Review existing in-house information to identify potential locations for the redesign of ca. 15,000 ha of peatlands and engage with external stakeholders. Redesign of Peatland Forests will ultimately be delivered over the longer term through a combination of rewetting/rehabilitation ("Forest-to-Bog" projects) and through transiting commercial forests to semi-natural forests with open spaces as appropriate.	Review existing in-house information to identify suitable potential locations for the redesign of ca. 15,000 ha of peatlands and engage with key external stakeholders as appropriate, ensuring environmental considerations and constraints inform this process where possible. Redesign of unproductive peatland forests will ultimately be delivered over the longer term and subject to carbon funding initiatives.	All
CO7.A1	Engage with experts and practitioners undertaking large scale peatland rehabilitation programmes in Ireland and continue to review the international literature and develop best practices on the redesign of peatland at scale.	Engage with experts and practitioners undertaking large scale peatland rehabilitation programmes in Ireland and continue to review the international literature and develop best practices on the redesign of peatland at scale in an Irish context.	PHH, BFF, S, LU, W, MA, TR, CC

Action Reference	Action	Amendment (additional text in Red)	Related Environmental Components
NO13.A1	Maintain and update the existing protocols for protected species and habitats adopted in Coillte appropriate assessment and develop action plans for key species on the estate (e.g. lesser horseshoe bat).	Maintain and update the existing protocols for protected species and habitats adopted in Coillte appropriate assessment and develop action plans for key species on the estate (e.g. lesser horseshoe bat, freshwater pearl mussel etc.) having due regard to existing and emerging best practice and relevant NPWS species plans, such as the following: • Hen Harrier Threat Response Plan • Lesser Horseshoe Bat Species Action Plan.	BFF, W
WO12.A1	Develop evidence-based reports to support initiatives aimed at increasing the use of timber in construction and disseminate key findings to effectively promote and highlight the benefits of increased timber usage.	Develop evidence-based reports to support initiatives aimed at increasing the use of sustainable timber in construction and disseminate key findings to effectively promote and highlight the benefits of increased sustainable timber usage.	All
PO5.A1	Develop bespoke partnerships to design and build new visitor destinations based on the requirements of each project.	Develop bespoke partnerships to design and build new visitor destinations based on the requirements of each project. Seek to secure the support of partners who are experts in developing sustainable visitor destinations.	All
PO9.A2	Expand the Woodlands for Health programme.	Expand the Woodlands for Health programme, while promoting sustainable and environmentally responsible interaction with woodland areas.	PHH, BFF, S, AQN, W, TR, MA, CC

Table 8-4: Environmental Governance Framework

Environmental Mitigation
Peatland Forest Redesign projects shall be science based and will be designed and implemented in accordance with identified best practice to ensure optimal environmental and climate outcomes, including minimal Greenhouse Gas (GHG) losses during works and optimal GHG sequestration over the duration of the project.
Forest-to-Bog projects will be for the purpose of delivering environmental, biodiversity and climate benefits above and beyond legal requirements. A fundamental consideration when designing Forest-to-Bog projects will also however be the need to avoid prevent/minimize unintended adverse effects on the environment, including biodiversity, European sites, soils or waters, which may occur due to works and physical/landscape changes associated with these projects. These project shall be carried out in accordance with relevant environmental legislation and in alignment with inter-related environmental policy supporting the protection of the environment (e.g., Water Action Plan 2024, 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan etc.).
Monitoring and management frameworks for redesigned peatlands will be developed by suitably qualified experts in accordance with best practices.

Environmental Mitigation
A multi-disciplinary team of geo-technical and environmental experts will be required to provide input into the framework development process to ensure environmental effects are properly measured, quantified and identified; including effects on ecological receptors, hydrology, ground conditions and GHG flux. The framework will include for example: 1) An environmental assessment process to identify environmental sensitivities and define necessary monitoring and remedial actions and environmental mitigations; and 2) Method statement for the carrying out of measurement techniques in accordance with relevant standards.
Archaeological Impact Assessment will be carried out to inform peatland redesign projects, as necessary. Such assessment shall have regard to potential impacts on both the physical integrity and setting of archaeological/architectural features. Appropriate 'avoidance by design' and mitigation measures will be integrated into Coillte projects where necessary to ensure complete protection/conservation of archaeological features/remains that may be encountered, in line with Planning Authority and National Monument Services requirements.
Land agreements to facilitate renewable energy development projects and associated grid infrastructure development projects shall require the consideration of the following by the third-party developer: • All projects shall be subject to EIA and AA Screening and/or full EIA and AA as necessary, having due regard to European sites and associated Qualifying Interests/Special Conservation Interests when designing, planning and operating projects in accordance with legislative requirements. • Appropriate regard shall be had for potential adverse effects on ecology when designing and planning projects. Projects will be obliged to adhere to mitigation measures as outlined in the EIA and conditions of planning. • All renewable energy development projects and associated grid infrastructure development projects carried out by third party developers within its estate are required to be compliant with planning and environmental legislation by the third-party developer.
Seek to augment forest planning processes and enhance forest management practices, as necessary, to support improvements in water quality, in line with emerging and future DAFM requirements and the objectives of the Water Action Plan 2024 (and any relevant future iterations of this Plan).
Continue to adopt, implement and promote measures to reduce chemical pesticide use in forestry in line with the EU Regulatory Framework for Pesticides.
Ensure Coillte operations, projects and activities do not result in or contribute to a net loss in biodiversity (if not Net Biodiversity gain), in alignment with the objectives of the 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (and any relevant future iterations of this Plan).
Ensure Coillte operations, projects and activities do not contribute to any loss of ecological coherence and connectivity in the surrounding landscapes.
Coillte shall seek to manage grazing levels in estate, as possible, with a view to maintaining habitat quality and condition.
Coillte shall ensure all forestry-related operations are undertaken in accordance with relevant environmental protection requirements and DAFM standards/guidelines, including but not limited the following: Forestry Standards Manual (DAFM, 2024) Environmental Requirements for Afforestation (DAFM, 2025) Conditions for Felling and Reforestation Standards for Felling & Reforestation (DAFM, v2019) Land Types for Afforestation Land Types for Afforestation: Soil & Fertility (DAFM, 2024) Forest Biodiversity Guidelines (DAFM, 2000) Forest Protection Guidelines (DECC, 2002)

Environmental Mitigation
Forestry and Kerry Slug Guidelines (DAFM, 2009) Forestry and Otter Guidelines (DAFM, 2009) Forests and Water: Achieving Objectives under Ireland's River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 (DAFM, 2018) Forestry and the Landscape Guidelines (DAFM, 2000) Aerial Fertilisation Requirements (DAFM, 2015) Forestry and Water Quality Guidelines (DAFM, 2000) Forestry and Archaeology Guidelines (DAFM, 2000) Forest Harvesting and Environmental Guidelines (DAFM, 2000) Forestry and Freshwater Pearl Mussel Requirements (DAFM, 2008) Forest Road Manual: Guidelines for the Design, Construction & Management of Forest Roads (COFORD, 2004) Code of Best Forest Practice – Ireland (DAFM, 2000) Irish National Forest Standard – Forestry Standards and Procedures Manual (DAFM, 2015) Code of Practice between Coillte and the Minister for the Environment and Local Government.
Biodiversity Area Management Plans (BAMPlans) will be developed for each new biodiversity area on the Coillte Estate in accordance with Coillte's BioClass procedure. Detailed BAMPlans will be developed for priority sites. Coillte will engage with the NPWS on BAMPlans and to source species data for sites, where necessary. BAMPlans will be developed by Senior Ecologists and Foresters collaboratively. Screening for Appropriate Assessment shall be completed as required by DAFM and in accordance with legislative requirements.
Protocols for habitat and species protection will be developed by competent ecologists and will have due regard for best practice and the most up-to-date scientific information and guidelines.
BAMPlans will be developed for all mature CCF forestry sites managed by Coillte within European sites which are designated for QI woodland or contain woodland as a supporting habitat (i.e. bog woodland and peatland habitats). Coillte will engage with the NPWS on BAMPlans and to source species data for sites, where necessary. BAMPlans will have due regard for the conservation objectives of the SAC and corresponding QI woodland. BAMPlans will be developed by Senior Ecologists and Foresters collaboratively. Screening for Appropriate Assessment shall be completed as required by DAFM and in accordance with legislative requirements.
The implications of forestry activities on European sites shall be considered as necessary during the preparation of any BAMPlans (in terms of alignment with conservation objectives) and during the DAFM licence application process. Where Appropriate Assessments/Natura Impact Statements are required for forestry operations, mitigation prescribed under the AA process shall accord with the requirements defined in relevant DAFM standards and guidelines and mitigation measures will be sufficiently robust to ensure the forestry projects will not have adverse effects on the integrity of Europeans sites, in accordance with Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). Where adverse effects cannot be ruled out for a forestry project, the forestry project will not go ahead.
Coillte will continue to develop and implement BAMPlans for areas of the estate that contain invasive species. BAMPlans will have due regard for best practice and the most up-to-date scientific information and guidelines for the treatment of invasive species.
Protocols for habitat and species protection will continue to be developed by competent ecologists and will have due regard for best practice and the most up-to-date scientific information and guidelines.
All forestry works will continue to be undertaken by suitable qualified professionals.

Environmental Mitigation
Coillte commit to continually improving forestry management practices, ensuring alignment with emerging and future forest related good practice guidelines and standards, as appropriate, in light of future trends and evidence-bases.
Proactively seek opportunities to plant native woodland in low-lying poorly drained riparian zones in support of biodiversity and water quality protection aims, having regard to DAFM's Woodland for Water document - in support of policy aims to protect and improve water quality in Ireland.
Have due regard to soil type and the location of acid sensitive headwater catchments when undertaking forestry planning processes - with a view to preventing afforestation occurring at unsuitable locations and resulting in adverse effects on water quality.
Ensure forestry planning processes and forest management practices are suitably informed by latest research on forestry's potential impact on water quality, including outputs from the EPA's HYDROFOR research project, for example.
Seek to inform, shape and adhere to all future DAFM requirements relating to water quality protection/enhancement, including requirements arising from the implementation of the Water Action Plan 2024 (and future iterations) and emerging and future environmental research.
Secure and resource multi-disciplinary teams to deliver forestry projects in accordance with relevant environmental protection requirements, including foresters, environmental scientists, ecologists, hydrologists, archaeologists and other specialists, as appropriate.
Appropriate consideration shall be given to potential impacts any Coillte project may have on environmental receptors in Northern Ireland, such ecological receptors (including migratory/mobile species, designated sites, important non-designated habitat etc.), water quality in cross-border water bodies, Northern Irish heritage assets etc. Coillte will seek to consult with Northern Irish environmental stakeholders in relation to projects that may give rise to transboundary environmental effects.
Coillte shall ensure due regard is had to potential impacts on landscape character and visual amenity when planning, designing and delivering forestry projects. All Coillte forestry projects shall be carried out in line with relevant landscape related guidelines/standards (e.g. DAFM's Forestry and the Landscape Guidelines) with a view to ensuring forestry projects are integrated into and complement existing landscape and do not have adverse effects on landscape (including seascape) character, protected/sensitivities views or prospects, or sensitive visual receptors.
The potential impact of recreational development on biodiversity, including protected flora species, will be considered, as necessary, when designing and planning such development. Appropriate ecological mitigation will be integrated into development projects that have the potential to generate significant adverse effects on sensitive ecological receptors.
Coillte shall continue to require third-party operators, who manage certain recreational activities within the Coillte Estate, to adhere to all relevant environmental protection requirements and an Environmental Code of Conduct.
Visitor destination developments will be sustainably managed in accordance with planning requirements. Where necessary and in locations where recreational access is formalized only, recreational activity will be appropriately managed by Coillte so as to ensure litter prevention, ecological protection, water quality, noise limitation and heritage protection.
Visitor destination development shall be designed, planned, and constructed in accordance with best practice, to ensure such development will not adversely affect the environment. Lighting design shall prevent adverse effects on light sensitive species. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) and Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) shall be incorporated into designs where feasible.

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Any visitor destination development taking place at sensitive locations should be designed in a manner that promotes positive effects on landscape character and visual amenity and uses natural and flowing forms (including biophilic design principles, where feasible) that integrate seamlessly with natural landscape elements. Materials best suited to that type of approach will be natural and robust giving a strong sense of permanence and integration. Green roofs and Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDs) principles should also be incorporated into projects, where feasible.
Built development within the Coillte Estate shall be designed and constructed in a manner that has appropriate regard to the setting surrounding heritage assets that may be present in an area. Archaeological and/or Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment shall be undertaken for development projects, as required under planning legislation. Such assessment shall have regard to potential impacts on both the physical integrity and setting of archeological/architectural features.
Appropriate Traffic and Transport Assessment shall be undertaken for visitor destination development that may give rise to significant traffic and transport related impacts, where required under planning legislation. Sustainable mobility measures should integrate into such projects in alignment with national sustainable mobility policy aims. Consultation with transport authorities and providers shall take place when planning such projects with a view to promoting the use of public transport to travel to and from visitor destinations.
Climate mitigation measures shall be embedded into the design of visitor destination developments, as necessary (e.g., electric vehicle charging points, rooftop solar panels, energy efficient design etc.).
The following themes shall be promoted when planning visitor destinations: Amenity and Recreation, Sustainability and Climate Change, Circularity, Biodiversity and Heritage, Education and Sustainable Practices, and Health and Well-being.
Visitor destination projects will be subject to EIA and AA Screening, and full EIA and AA, where required under planning legislation. Appropriate environmental mitigation will be integrated into developments, as necessary, to prevent adverse effects on the environment.
Coillte shall ensure that development projects supported or promoted by the LUSIP accord with flood risk planning requirements, avoiding inappropriate development in areas at risk to flooding and new developments increasing flood risk elsewhere.
Design habitat creation, restoration and enhancement into development projects occurring within the Coillte Estate, wherever feasible.
Continually improve the effectiveness of forestry related environmental mitigation measures and fill knowledge gaps, by reviewing environmental monitoring, and identifying any instances of mitigation failure, to inform remedial actions and/or revisions to future mitigation specifications.
Continue to maintain a Geographic Information System (GIS) of forestry activities and existing and proposed development - to support cumulative and transboundary environmental impact assessment. Continue to utilize GIS to optimise delivery of Coillte goals, activities and projects, and environmental objectives generally
Ensure all Coillte's operations, projects and activities fully comply with all applicable environmental legislation, including but not limited to the following: • Habitats Directive • Birds Directive • Wildlife Act 1976 (as amended) • Flora Protection Order (S.I. no. 235 of 2022) • European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended) • EIA Directive • Planning and Development Acts, as amended

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• Planning and Development Regulations, as amended • Water Framework Directive and transposing legislation • National Monuments Act (1930-2014) • Historic and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act • Forestry Act 2014 and Forestry Regulations 2017, as amended • Northern Irish Environmental Legislation, as it may apply to projects ad activities with cross-border components.
Coillte commit to preserving Ireland's natural and cultural heritage within zones of influence of projects and activities supported by the LUSIP, including all UNESCO World Heritage Sites (and tentative sites) in the country. Coillte will also seek opportunities to enhance cultural and natural heritage when designing, planning and delivering its projects and activities.
Coillte commit to continue ensuring its projects and activities do not result in adverse effects on the integrity of European sites (Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation), considering their conservation objectives, in accordance with the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and Birds Directive (2009/147/EC).
Coillte will continue to proactively support the achievement of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emission reductions required for the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) sector under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 and the national Climate Action Plan 2025 (and future iterations).
Coillte will continue to undertake forestry in accordance with Sustainable Forestry Management principles and in accordance with relevant Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC® C005714) and the Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC/17-23-042) standards.
Coillte will conduct its operations in accordance with an Environmental Management System certified to the ISO 14001 standard.
Coillte will continue to implement an Environmental Risk Assessment (ERA) process to ensure potential environmental impacts of operations are systematically assessed, managed, and mitigated 'on the ground.' Coillte aim to review, monitor, and enhance this ERA process in accordance with the principle of continual improvement and in light of emerging and future legislative requirements and research.
Coillte will continue to proactively enable and support access to cultural and natural heritage features, where safe and feasible, collaborating with the National Monument Services, as required.
Coillte will seek to ensure forestry planning process and forest management practices are carried out having appropriate regard to the unique environmental, geographic, meteorological, social, and cultural characteristics of its six Business Area Units (BAUs). Project-level mitigation will be shaped, adjusted and honed as appropriate to ensure Coillte's projects and activities do not adversely affect special environmental sensitivities associated with individual BAUs.
Coillte commit to continuing to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species through its ERA process in accordance with the European Union (Invasive Alien Species) Regulations 2024 and in support of Outcome 2H of the 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (and future iterations, as appropriate).
Coillte commit to proactively and robustly preventing/managing storm damage at its forestry sites, with a view to protecting commercial operations and the environment. The following mitigation measures will be implemented to prevent storm damage: • Thinning: Wind risk considered into thinning planning at Strategic level. Including avoiding delayed thinning and targeting thinning to stands with good wind firmness. • Clearfelling: Consideration of forest opening size into Tactical planning to avoid excessive openings that create unstable edges • Roading: Consideration of windthrow risk in the design and construction of new roads.

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• Species Selection: Establish mixed species and spacing to creation windfirm edges, e.g. riparian zones, external boundaries, road lines. • Normalisation of Forest: Over multiple rotations smooth out the forest age distribution, so the age profile of the forest is even. This reduces proportion of the forest at risk of windthrow at any one time.
Coillte commit to proactively and robustly preventing/managing wildfire at its forestry sites, with a view to protecting commercial operations and the environment. The following mitigation measures will be implemented to prevent wildfire: • Collaborate at a national level with the National Emergency Directorate and County Fire Chiefs. • Fire Management- Share digital Fire Plans with each of the county emergency services. • Fire Management- Roll out the National Fire Awareness and Training Days. • Fire Management- Coillte support the Interagency European Forest Fire MODEX Simulation exercise. • Estates Emergency Plan- Develop an operational emergency plan for the Estate.

8.3 Conclusions

The reasonable alternatives evaluation presented in Section 6 has resulted in the development of a Plan that achieves the best environmental outcomes in comparison to other reasonable alternatives considered.

The adoption of the environmental mitigation measures integrated into the Plan (as presented in Section 8) will prevent, reduce and fully offset potential significant negative environmental effects due to the implementation of the Plan (identified in Section 7), and will ensure the Plan suitably accords with and supports the achievement of the SEOs (defined in Section 5) and wider environmental protection objectives defined in inter-related plans and programmes (presented in Appendix 1).

No further mitigation measures are required for the Plan.

The adoption of the environmental mitigation measures integrated into the Plan will also serve to prevent, reduce and fully offset potential significant negative transboundary effects that may be transmitted from the Plan area to Northern Ireland.

9. SEA MONITORING

The SEA Directive requires that the environmental effects of the implementation of a plan are monitored in order *'to identify at an early-stage unforeseen effects, and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action.'*

A series of indicators and targets were established for identified SEOs to enable ongoing monitoring and measurement of Plan implementation performance, the environmental effects of the implementation of the Plan and the efficacy of environmental mitigation measures. Such monitoring will be carried out periodically to support Plan implementation.

SEO indicators are simple and effective quantifiable indicators used to measure the environmental effects of implementing the Plan and the progress of SEOs and related targets. SEO targets set focused, measurable aims and thresholds that the Plan can support the achievement of.

Coillte are responsible for the implementation of the SEA monitoring programme. The environmental effects (including positive, negative and cumulative effects) of Plan implementation will be monitored continuously utilising Coillte monitoring processes over the course of the Plan's lifetime. This monitoring will be carried out by Coillte's Forest Planning Team. Monitoring reports distilling Coillte's continuous monitoring will be produced periodically to document monitoring outcomes nationally and at BAU level. Comprehensive reporting of Plan performance will be undertaken every 5 years.

Where monitoring identifies that the implementation of the Plan is having significant negative environmental effects, an in-depth review of the Plan should take place and the Plan should be updated in a manner that satisfactorily mitigates these environmental effects (i.e., through the adoption of additional environmental mitigation measures).[102]

Similarly, where monitoring indicates that potential positive environmental effects associated with Plan implementation are not being adequately realised, the Plan should be reviewed and updated in a manner that supports the realisation of all potential positive environmental effects, having regard to the overall vision, ambitions and strategic objectives of the Plan.

The SEA Monitoring Programme established for the Plan is contained in Table 9-1. This monitoring programme has been developed in accordance with EPA guidelines entitled 'Guidance on SEA Statements and Monitoring' (2023). The monitoring programme includes detail on the indicators, targets and data sources used to monitor and measure progress. It has been developed to align with the higher-order FESLUP, augment/focus environmental monitoring processes, and to avoid duplication of monitoring processes.

Coillte is responsible for the ongoing review of indicators and targets, collating relevant monitoring data, the preparation of monitoring evaluation reports, the publication of these reports and, if necessary, the carrying out of remedial action.

[102] The threshold for 'significant' environmental effects shall be based on the definition of 'significant' environmental effects in EPA Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (2022) i.e. Plan-level effects that by their character, magnitude, duration or intensity, alter a sensitive aspect of the environment. The occurrence of a significant negative environmental effects due to Plan implementation will be the threshold for taking remedial action and updating the LUSIP accordingly.

Table 9-1: SEA Monitoring Programme

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources
Overall	O1	Ensure, where appropriate, that lower-level plans and projects contribute to overall environmental monitoring processes within the LUSIP.	• Alignment between lower-level plans and projects and LUSIP environmental monitoring processes.	• Complete alignment between lower-level plans and projects and LUSIP environmental monitoring processes.	• Coillte environmental monitoring systems/processes.
Population, Human Health & the Economy	PHH1	Minimise adverse impacts from development and operations on population and human health.	• Number of health and safety incidents among forest workers. • Number of valid complaints made in relation to environmental impacts / nuisance.	• Avoidance, prevention and minimisation of health and safety incidents among forest workers. • Avoidance, prevention and minimisation mitigation of impacts from development and operations on human receptors.	• Internal health and safety monitoring. • Internal complaint monitoring processes.
	PHH2	Minimise impacts from development and operations on economic activity and growth.	• Conflict with land use policies / objectives promoting economic activity / growth.	• No conflict with land use policies / objectives promoting economic activity / growth.	• Internal monitoring of non-compliance with planning legislation and statutory land use plans.
	PHH3	Engage with local communities and provide areas for amenity and recreational uses to promote wellbeing and human health.	• Number / quantum of areas for amenity. • Number of people utilising the Coillte estate for amenity and recreation purposes.	• Increase the number / quantum of areas for amenity and recreational use on the Coillte estate. • Increase the number of people utilising the Coillte estate for amenity and recreation purposes.	• Internal monitoring of visitor destination areas / activity.

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources
	PHH4	Contribute positively to the well-being of workers and local populations.	• See Targets for PHH1 and PHH3. • Employment and community benefit-related data / figures.	• See Indicators for PHH1 and PHH3. • Increase local employment and community benefits associated with Coillte activities and development.	• Internal monitoring of employee numbers and community benefits.
	PHH5	Promote economic growth within the forestry sector and contribute to job creation and business development in rural areas.	• Number of direct and indirect jobs created by Coillte. • Economic growth statistics for forestry operations.	• Increase local employment associated with Coillte activities and development. • Improvement in Economic growth statistics for forestry operations.	• Internal monitoring of local employment. • Economic statistics for forestry (including DAFM and Teagasc data).
	PHH6	Provide sustainable, high-quality timber products to the Irish market to meet demand and in support of housing development.	• Quantum of sustainable, high-quality timber products supplied to the Irish market.	• Increase quantum of sustainable, high-quality timber products supplied to the Irish market.	• Economic statistics for forestry (including DAFM and Teagasc data).
Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	B1	Avoid significant adverse effects on European Sites and protected habitats and species, and support compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives through Appropriate Assessment and implementation of mitigation measures.	• Number of instances of adverse effects on European Sites due to forestry operations supported by the LUSIP.	• No adverse effects on the integrity of European Sites due to implementation of the LUSIP.	• Internal monitoring of potential environmental effects of proposed development projects (i.e. through AA Screening/AA during the development planning process).

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources
					• Internal monitoring of effects of forestry operations (e.g. biodiversity monitoring, AA Screening/AA). • NPWS data on the Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. • EPA State of the Environment Report. • EPA National Ecosystem Monitoring Network. • * These national-scale datasets are provided for contextual reference and benchmarking purposes only.
	B2	Maintain and, where practicable, support ecological connectivity within the programme area through appropriate site design and management	• Status of landscape features (e.g., hedgerows, riparian buffers, or woodland edges) that are of major importance for wild fauna and flora and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.	• Retention of landscape features (e.g., hedgerows, riparian buffers, or woodland edges) that are of major importance for wild fauna and flora and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.	• Internal monitoring of potential environmental effects of proposed development projects (i.e. during the development planning process).

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources
				• Compliance with DAFM standards relating to ecological protection and buffer zones. • No significant fragmentation of ecological corridors attributable to LUSIP.	• Internal monitoring of effects of forestry operations (e.g. biodiversity monitoring, AA Screening/AA), and non-compliance with ecology protection-related provisions defined under DAFM standards. • EPA State of the Environment Report. • EPA National Ecosystem Monitoring Network. • * *These national-scale datasets are provided for contextual reference and benchmarking purposes only.*
	B3	To minimise adverse impacts on semi-natural habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated national sites, non-designated locally important sites, and sites proposed for designation; in compliance with wildlife and invasive species legislation.	• Instances of significant adverse effects on ecological receptors. • Quantum of forest managed primarily for nature. • Number and effectiveness of biodiversity interventions.	• No significant adverse effects on ecological receptors. • Increase quantum of forest effectively managed for nature. • Increase number of effective biodiversity interventions.	• Internal monitoring of non-compliance with ecology protection related provisions defined in the DAFM Forestry Standards Manual and Environmental Requirements for Afforestation document. • Internal monitoring of sustainable land use objectives.

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources
					• EPA State of the Environment Report. • EPA National Ecosystem Monitoring Network. • * *These national-scale datasets are provided for contextual reference and benchmarking purposes only.*
	B4	Achieve biodiversity protection and enhance (where feasible) and deliver forest management for nature - in response to the biodiversity emergency and in line with the National Biodiversity Plan and its targets.	• Quantum of forest managed primarily for nature. • Number of effective biodiversity interventions.	• Increase quantum of forest managed effectively for nature. • Increase number of effective biodiversity interventions.	• Internal monitoring.
	B5	Manage old and ancient woodlands to enhance their biodiversity value.	• Loss of or damage to old or ancient woodland.	• No loss of or damage to old or woodland due to Coillte activities within its control.	• Internal monitoring of effects of forestry operations and development. • Internal and NPWS spatial data on old and ancient woodlands.

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources
Landscape, Seascape & Visual Amenity	L1	Contribute to the conservation, protection, enhancement and management of the character and quality of Ireland's distinctive landscape and seascape.	• Number of biodiversity interventions that have the potential to result in positive landscape impacts. • Impact of activities and development on landscape and seascape policy defined under the land use planning framework.	• Increase biodiversity interventions that have the potential to result in positive landscape impacts. • Alignment with DAFM Guidelines relating to landscape protection and enhancement. • Alignment with landscape and seascape policy defined under the land use planning framework.	• Internal monitoring of forest design and planning processes. • Internal monitoring of non-compliance with DAFM Guidelines relating to landscape protection and enhancement. • Internal monitoring of development planning processes and non-compliance with statutory land use plans.
	L2	Minimise development impacts on sensitive and / or important landscapes / seascapes, including those designated under the land use planning framework.	• Number of developments that conflict with landscape and seascape related land use policies / objectives / protections.	• No developments conflicting with landscape and seascape related land use policies / objectives / protections.	• Internal monitoring of potential environmental effects of proposed development projects (during the development planning process). • Internal monitoring of non-compliance with DAFM Guidelines relating to landscape protection and enhancement. • Internal monitoring of development planning processes and non-compliance with statutory land use plans.

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources
	L3	Minimise adverse visual effects, including effects on sensitive visual receptors and views and prospects designated under the land use planning framework.	• Number of biodiversity interventions that have the potential to result in positive visual amenity impacts. • Impact of activities and development on visual amenity policy defined under the land use planning framework.	• Increase interventions that have the potential to result in positive landscape impacts. • Alignment with visual amenity policy defined under the land use planning framework.	• Internal monitoring of forest design and planning processes. • Internal monitoring of non-compliance with DAFM Guidelines relating to landscape protection and enhancement. • Internal monitoring of development planning processes and non-compliance with statutory land use plans.
Cultural Heritage	CH1	Protect and conserve archaeological heritage features, and the settings surrounding these features that are part of or contribute to the character and value of these features, including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), the prospective Register of Monuments and the Northern Ireland Sites and Monuments Record (NISMR).	• Status of archaeological heritage features (and, where relevant, the associated surrounding context) protected from significant adverse effects due to development and operations supported by the plan.	• No archaeological heritage features (nor the associated surrounding context, where relevant) significantly adversely affected due to development or operations supported by the plan.	• Internal monitoring of potential effects on archaeological heritage (during the development planning process). • Internal monitoring of forest design and planning processes, and non-compliance with DAFM Guidelines on archaeological conservation. • Consultation with the National Monuments Service and DAERA's Historic Environment Division, as necessary.

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources
	CH2	Protect and conserve architectural heritage features, and the settings surrounding these features that are part of or contribute to the character and value of these features, including entries to the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH), industrial heritage, Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) and features / conservation areas designated in Northern Ireland.	• Status of architectural heritage features.	• No architectural heritage features significantly adversely affected as a result of the implementation of this plan.	• Internal monitoring of potential effects on architectural heritage (during the development planning process). • Internal monitoring of forest design and planning processes, and non-compliance with provisions relating to architectural conservation in the DAFM Forestry Standards Manual. • Consultation with the National Monuments Service and DAERA's Historic Environment Division, as necessary.
	CH3	Promote opportunities to enhance or conserve places, features, buildings and landscapes of cultural, historical archaeological or architectural heritage through the LUSIP, where feasible.	• Number of archaeological or architectural heritage features enhanced. • Consideration of enhancement opportunities during visitor destination site development projects.	• Increased enhancement of archaeological or architectural heritage features enhanced. • Archaeological and architectural enhancement opportunities considered during all visitor destination site development projects.	• Internal monitoring of archaeological / architectural enhancement projects. • Consultation with the National Monuments Service and DAERA's Historic Environment Division, as necessary.

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources
Geology and Soils	GS1	Minimise adverse effects on soil functions and deliver soil enhancement.	• Soil erosion levels. • Number of instances of environmental damage due to impacts on soil function. • Quantum of peatland restored.	• Minimise soil erosion levels. • No instances of environmental damage due to impacts on soil function. • Increase quantum of peatland restored.	• Internal monitoring of non-compliance with the DAFM Forestry Standards Manual. • Internal monitoring of environmental effects of proposed development projects and operations.
	GS2	Minimise adverse effects on the physico-chemical properties of soil.	• Number of contamination events affecting the physico-chemical properties of soil.	• No contamination events affecting the physico-chemical properties of soil.	• Internal monitoring of environmental effects of proposed development projects. • Internal monitoring of environmental incidents occurring. • Internal monitoring of non-compliance with the DAFM Forestry Standards Manual.
	GS3	Increase uptake of sustainable soil management practices that contribute to the preservation of soil and peatlands, aiding in achieving good soil quality and stability.	• Number of effective sustainable soil management interventions. • Quantum of peatland properly restored.	• Increase number of effective sustainable soil management interventions. • Increase quantum of restored properly peatland.	• Internal monitoring of soil management interventions. • Internal monitoring of peatland restoration projects.

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources
Land use	LU1	Minimize effects on other land use activities / objectives and promote sustainable land use.	• Level of compliance with land use planning policy and objectives. • Quantum of forest managed for nature. • Quantum of peatland properly restored. • Quantum of afforestation (where possible).	• Compliance with land use planning policy and objectives. • Increase quantum of forest effectively managed for nature. • Increase quantum of peatland properly restored. • Increase afforestation levels (where possible).	• Internal monitoring of non-compliance with land use planning policy and objectives. • Internal monitoring of sustainable land use-related objectives.
Air Quality and Noise	AQN1	Minimise effects on local air quality.	• Number of developments consented that result in avoidable significant adverse air quality impacts on sensitive receptors. • Number of valid complaints received from members of the public regarding air quality impacts (e.g., dust).	• No significant development of air quality impacts on sensitive receptors. • No exceedances of ambient air quality standard exceedances due to development or operations supported by the Plan. • Avoid / minimise valid complaints received from members of the public regarding air quality impacts (e.g., dust).	• Monitoring of complaints. • Review of EPA national ambient air quality monitoring network data, DAERA air monitoring data for Northern Ireland, and consultation with the EPA and DAERA, as necessary.

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources
	AQN2	Minimise adverse noise impacts on sensitive receptors.	• Number of sensitive receptors exposed to noise nuisance. • Number of valid complaints received from members of the public regarding noise impacts.	• Avoid / minimise exposure of sensitive receptors to nuisance noise. • Minimise valid noise complaints.	• Monitoring of legitimate complaints. • Consultation with the EPA and DAERA, as necessary.
Water	W1	Maintain and / or improve, the quality and status of surface water bodies, in line with Water Framework Directive requirements.	• Number of surface water pollution incidents as a result of development or operations supported by the plan. • Surface Water Body Status, as reported by the Environmental Authorities.	• Avoid surface water pollution incidents as a result of development or operations supported by the plan. • Avoid deterioration in the status of any water or affect the ability of any water to achieve 'good status.'	• Internal monitoring of environmental effects of proposed development projects (during the development planning process) and operations. • Internal monitoring of non-compliance with water protection related provisions defined in the DAFM Forestry Standards Manual and Environmental Requirements for Afforestation document. • WFD Monitoring Programmes. • EPA State of the Environment Report. • Consultation with Environmental Authorities, as necessary. • Internal monitoring of environmental incidents

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources
					** These national-scale datasets are provided for contextual reference and benchmarking purposes only.*
	W2	Avoid deterioration and, where feasible, protect and improve groundwater quality within LUSIP-managed areas, applying best practice water protection measures.	• Number of groundwater pollution incidents as a result of development or operations supported by the plan. • Groundwater Body Status.	• Avoid groundwater pollution incidents as a result of development or operations supported by the plan. • No deterioration in the status of groundwater quality due to LUSIP supported activities or development, having appropriate regard to relevant Groundwater Quality Standards.	• Internal monitoring of environmental effects of proposed development projects (during the development planning process) and operations. • Internal monitoring of non-compliance with water protection related provisions defined in the DAFM Forestry Standards Manual and Environmental Requirements for Afforestation document. • WFD Monitoring Programmes. • EPA State of the Environment Report. • Consultation with the Environmental Authorities, as necessary. • Internal monitoring of environmental incidents.

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources
					** These national-scale datasets are provided for contextual reference and benchmarking purposes only.*
	W3	Comply as appropriate with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines.	• Number of developments / activities that fail to comply with the provision of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines.	• No developments / activities failing to comply with the provision of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines.	• Internal monitoring of environmental effects of proposed development projects (during the development planning process). • Internal monitoring of non-compliance with flood risk management provision in the DAFM Forestry Standards Manual.
	W4	Promote sustainable drainage practices in development projects to improve water quality and flow.	• Number of sustainable drainage interventions that contribute to improved water quality and flow. • Number of developments consented that have sustainable drainage system proposals.	• Increase number of sustainable drainage interventions that contribute to improved water quality and flow. • All developments consented to have sustainable drainage system proposals.	• Internal monitoring of peatland restoration projects. • Internal monitoring of environmental effects of proposed development projects (during the development planning process).

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources
	W5	Avoid significant adverse effects on drinking water quality arising from LUSIP implementation.	• Number of non-compliances with relevant water quality standards. • Number of significant adverse effects on drinking water quality.	• No non-compliances with relevant water quality standards. • Avoid significant adverse effects on drinking water quality.	• Internal monitoring of non-compliance with water protection related provisions defined in the DAFM Forestry Standards Manual and Environmental Requirements for Afforestation document. • EPA Drinking Water Quality Reports. • EPA State of the Environment Report. • Review of environmental quality data detailed in the EPA Maps Application. • Review of Environmental Authority Drinking Water Quality Reports. • Review of EPA Remedial Action List. • Internal monitoring of environmental incidents. * *These national-scale datasets are provided for contextual reference and benchmarking purposes only.*

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources
	W6	Avoid significant adverse effects on the status of transitional, coastal and marine waters arising from LUSIP implementation.	• Number of pollution incidents affecting transitional, coastal and marine waters as a result of development or operations supported by the plan. • Status of transitional, coastal and marine waters.	• No pollution incidents affecting transitional, coastal and marine water as a result of development or operations supported by the plan. • Not to cause deterioration in the status of any transitional, coastal or marine waters or affect the ability of any water to achieve 'good status.'	• Internal monitoring of non-compliance with water protection related provisions defined in the DAFM Forestry Standards Manual and Environmental Requirements for Afforestation document. • EPA environmental monitoring data. • EPA State of the Environment Report. • Environmental Authority environmental monitoring data. • Internal monitoring of environmental incidents.
	W7	Avoid significant adverse effects on bathing water quality arising from LUSIP implementation.	• Number of pollution incidents affecting bathing waters as a result of development or operations supported by the plan. • Status of bathing waters.	• No pollution incidents affecting bathing waters as a result of development or operations supported by the plan. • Not to cause deterioration in the status of any bathing waters or affect the ability of any water to achieve 'good status'.	• Internal monitoring of non-compliance with water protection related provisions defined in the DAFM Forestry Standards Manual and Environmental Requirements for Afforestation document. • EPA environmental monitoring data. • EPA State of the Environment Report.

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources
					• Environmental Authority environmental monitoring data.
Material Assets & Infrastructure	MA1	Minimise effects on or conflicts with local, regional and national material assets and infrastructure, including future, planned infrastructure.	• Instances of inappropriate development or operations on wayleaves for the development or maintenance of material assets. • Number of inappropriate developments that adversely affect existing or future material assets.	• No instances of inappropriate development or operations on wayleaves for the development or maintenance of material assets (unless otherwise agreed with a third-party). • No inappropriate developments impinging on existing or future material assets.	• Internal monitoring of environmental effects of proposed development projects (during the development planning process) and operations. • Internal monitoring of utility-related provisions defined in the Forestry Standards Manual. • Consultation with ESB Networks, Gas Networks Ireland, National Broadband Ireland and the ESB.
	MA2	Promote sustainable travel and transport	• Number of sustainable travel and transport initiates into visitor destination developments.	• Increase number of sustainable travel and transport initiates integrated into visitor destination developments.	• Internal monitoring of visitor destination developments.
	MA3	Promote the effective and sustainable use of forest products.	• Quantum of sustainable timber products supplied to the Irish market.	• Increase quantum of sustainable, high-quality timber products supplied to the Irish market.	• Internal monitoring of timber production. • Economic statistics for forestry (including DAFM and Teagasc data).

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources
	MA4	Enable the delivery of renewable energy projects for the benefit of national energy demands - through its joint venture FuturEnergy Ireland and via land agreements with other renewable energy developers.	• Number of renewable energy projects enabled by the Coillte estate. • Total energy output from renewable energy development on the Coillte estate.	• Number of renewable energy projects enabled by the Coillte estate. • Increase total energy output from renewable energy development on the Coillte estate.	• Internal monitoring of renewable energy projects in collaboration with FuturEnergy Ireland and other partners.
	MA5	Promote sustainable waste / material management and the circular economy.	• Number of developments that have sustainable material reuse proposals. • Quantum of sustainable timber products supplied to the Irish market. • Organisational waste levels.	• Increase number of developments that have sustainable reuse proposals for material generated during construction. • Increase quantum of sustainable timber products supplied to the Irish market. • Reduce organisational waste levels.	• Internal monitoring of proposed development projects (during the development planning process). • Internal monitoring of renewable energy projects in collaboration with FuturEnergy Ireland and other partners. • Internal monitoring of organisational waste.
Tourism & Recreation	TR1	Minimise adverse effects upon tourism and recreation amenities, and enhance tourism and recreation, where possible.	• Number of instances of significant adverse impacts on tourism and recreation amenities due to development or operations. • Number / quantum of areas for amenity and recreational use on the Coillte estate.	• Avoid / minimise instances of significant adverse impacts on tourism and recreation amenities due to development or operations. • Increase the number / quantum of areas for amenity and recreational use on the Coillte estate.	• Internal monitoring of likely, significant environmental effects of proposed development projects (during the development planning process) and operations. • Internal monitoring of visitor destination areas / activity.

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources
			• Number of people utilising the Coillte estate for amenity and recreation purposes.	• Increase the number of people utilising the Coillte estate for amenity and recreation purposes.	
Climate Change	CC1	Contribute towards the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the delivery of renewable energy projects in line with national objectives and targets.	• Level of organisational Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. • Energy usage. • LULUCF sector GHG emissions. • Energy sector GHG emissions. • Total energy output from renewable energy development on the Coillte estate.	• Reduce organisational GHG emissions. • Reduce energy usage. • Contribute to reduced LULUCF sector GHG emissions. • Contribute to reduced Energy sector GHG emissions. • Increase total energy output from renewable energy development on the Coillte estate.	• Internal GHG accounting and monitoring. • EPA National Emission Inventory (for benchmarking).
	CC2	Promote carbon sequestration in line with national objectives and targets.	• Level of organisational Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. • LULUCF GHG emissions. • Quantum of peatland restored.	• Reduce organisational GHG emissions. • Contribute to reduced LULUCF GHG emissions. • Increase quantum of peatland restored.	• Internal GHG accounting and monitoring. • EPA National Emission Inventory (for benchmarking).
	CC3	Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from forest related transport operations.	• Quantum of fossil fuel use and related GHG emissions. • Number of alternative fuel related initiatives.	• Fossil fuel use and related GHG emissions line with national climate objectives. • Increase number of alternative fuel related initiatives.	• Internal GHG accounting and monitoring.

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Sources
	CC4	Integrate sustainable and low / zero carbon design solutions into Coillte development projects, where possible.	• Number of sustainable and low / zero carbon design solutions integrated into Coillte development projects.	• Increase number of sustainable and low / zero carbon design solutions integrated into Coillte development projects.	• Internal monitoring of low/zero carbon design solutions.
	CC5	Contribute to sectoral adaptation to minimise the effects of climate change.	• Area of forests sustainably managed for nature, wood, people and climate. • Management of peatland redesign projects. • Afforestation and reforestation projects.	• Area of forest sustainably managed for nature, wood, people and climate. • Management of peatland redesign projects. • Afforestation and reforestation projects.	• Internal monitoring of forest estate as part of multi-source forest inventory strategy.
	CC7	Consider and appropriately manage the effects of climate change during development and forest planning processes.	• Climate resilience measures identified and adopted over time. Consideration of climate factors when designing and planning built development.	• Number of Climate resilience measures adopted • Climate factors to be considered when designing and planning all built development, in line with relevant design / planning standards	• Internal monitoring of climate resilience measures. • Internal monitoring of compliance with LUSIP measures relating to climate change resilience.

FEHILY TIMONEY

DESIGNING AND DELIVERING
A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

APPENDIX 1

Plan Inter-relationships

The purpose of this Appendix is to identify and examine the relationships the plan has with other legislation and plans/programmes. International/European, national and regional/local legislation, plans and programmes, which have an inter-relationship with the Plan, are itemised in the table below. A summary of the high and lower levels objectives associated with each and a description of their particular relevance to the Plan is provided. The information on legislation and plans/programmes presented below is not exhaustive and it is recommended to consult the relevant legislation or plan/programme to gain a full and comprehensive understanding of each, where necessary.

International/European Level			
Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2023/1804)	This Directive repealed the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure directive (2014/94/EU). The Regulation sets binding national targets for the development of adequate alternative fuel infrastructure. The Regulation sets out targets to be achieved by all member states with the purpose to establish a comprehensive and complete network of alternative fuel infrastructure across the EU. The aim of this is to boost production and uptake of sustainable infrastructure in domestic, road, rail, aviation and maritime transport.	The specific objectives of the regulation are as follows: • To ensure minimum infrastructure to support the required uptake of alternative fuel vehicles across all transport modes and in all EU Member States to meet the EU's climate objectives. • To ensure full interoperability of the infrastructure. • To ensure comprehensive user information and adequate payment options at alternative fuels infrastructure.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Bali Road Map (2007)	The overall goals of the project are twofold: • To increase national capacity to co-ordinate ministerial views, participate in the UNFCCC process, and negotiate positions within the timeframe of the Bali Action Plan; and • To assess investment and financial flows to address climate change for up to three key sectors and/or economic activities.	The Bali Action Plan is centred on four main building Blocks: • mitigation • adaptation • technology • financing	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

International/European Level			
Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
Bern Convention (Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats)	The convention has three main aims: • to conserve wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats • to promote cooperation between states • to give particular attention to endangered and vulnerable species including endangered and vulnerable migratory species	The Parties under the convention recognise the intrinsic value of nature, which needs to be preserved and passed to future generations, they also: • Seek to ensure the conservation of nature in their countries, paying particular attention to planning and development policies and pollution control. • Look at implementing the Bern Convention in central Eastern Europe and the Caucus. • Take account of the potential impact on natural heritage by other policies. • Promote education and information of the public, ensuring the need to conserve species is understood and acted upon. • Develop an extensive number of species action plans, codes of conducts, and guidelines, at their own initiative or in co-operation with other organisations. • Created the Emerald Network, an ecological network made up of Areas of Special Conservation Interest.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 - Bringing nature back into our lives (European Commission, 2020)	The EU's biodiversity strategy for 2030 is a comprehensive, ambitious and long-term plan to protect nature and reverse the degradation of ecosystems. The strategy aims to put Europe's biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030, and contains specific actions and commitments.	The Strategy contains specific commitments and actions to be delivered by 2030, including: • Establishing a larger EU-wide network of protected areas on land and at • sea, building upon existing Natura 2000 areas, with strict protection for areas of very high biodiversity and climate value. • An EU Nature Restoration Plan - a series of concrete commitments and actions to restore degraded ecosystems across the EU by 2030, and manage them sustainably, addressing the key drivers of biodiversity loss. • A set of measures to enable the necessary transformative change: setting in motion a new, strengthened governance framework to ensure better implementation and track progress, improving knowledge, financing and investments and better respecting nature in public and business decision making.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

International/European Level			
Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
		• Measures to tackle the global biodiversity challenge, demonstrating that the EU is ready to lead by example towards the successful adoption of an ambitious global biodiversity framework under the Convention on Biological Diversity.	
Birds Directive (79/409/EEC as amended by 2009/147/EC)	• Conserve all species of naturally occurring birds in the wild state including their eggs, nests and habitats. • Protect, manage and control these species and comply with regulations relating to their exploitation. • The species included in Annex I shall be the subject of special conservation measures concerning their habitat in order to ensure their survival and reproduction in their area of distribution.	• Preserve, maintain or re-establish a sufficient diversity and area of habitats for all the species of birds referred to in Annex 1. • Preserve, maintain and establish biotopes and habitats to include the creation of protected areas (Special Protection Areas). • Ensure the upkeep and management in accordance with the ecological needs of habitats inside and outside the protected zones, re-establish destroyed biotopes and creation of biotopes. • Measures for regularly occurring migratory species not listed in Annex I is required as regards their breeding, moulting and wintering areas and staging posts along their migration routes. The protection of wetlands and particularly wetlands of international importance. •	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Cancun Agreements (2010)	Set of decisions taken at the COP 16 Conference in Cancun in 2010 which addresses a series of key issues in the fight against climate change. Cancun Agreements' main objectives cover: • Mitigation • Transparency of actions • Technology • Finance • Adaptation • Forests • Capacity building	Among the most prominent agreements is the establishment of a Green Climate Fund to transfer money from the developed to developing world to tackle the impacts of climate change.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

International/European Level			
Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
Clean Energy for all Europeans Package (2019)	In 2016 the EU's energy policy framework was rewritten to facilitate a clean and fair energy transition, to work towards clean energy and a carbon-neutral economy. Through this new policy the EU aims to stimulate the necessary public and private investment by creating a modern, stable legal environment that sets a clear and common sense of direction. As a package, the new rules will reinforce consumer rights, putting them at the heart of the energy transition and creating growth and green jobs in a modern economy. They will enable the EU to show leadership with regards to climate change following the Paris Agreement. Member States will continue to choose their own energy mix but must meet new commitments to improve energy efficiency and the take-up of renewables in that mix by 2030. Member States are required to draft plans to prevent, prepare for and manage crisis situations in the supply of electricity in coordination with neighbouring Member States, and to enhance the role of the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators.	The energy package consists of eight legislative measures. These are: • Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EU) 2018/844 • Renewable Energy Directive (EU) 2018/2001 • Energy Efficiency Directive (EU) 2018/2002 • Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 • Electricity Regulation (EU) 2019/943 • Electricity Directive (EU) 2019/944 • Regulation on Risk-Preparedness in the Electricity Sector (EU) 2019/941 • Regulation on the European Union Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (EU) 2019/942	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Convention of the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada 1995)	The main purpose of the Convention is to reinforce and promote policies for the conservation and enhancement of Europe's heritage. It also affirms the need for European solidarity with regard to heritage conservation and is designed to foster practical co-operation among the Parties. It establishes the principles of "European co-ordination of conservation policies" including consultations regarding the thrust of the policies to be implemented.	• The reinforcement and promotion of policies for protecting and enhancing the heritage within the territories of the parties. • The affirmation of European solidarity with regard to the protection of the heritage and the fostering of practical co-operation between states and regions.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

International/European Level			
Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro 2005)	• Cultural heritage is a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time. • A heritage community consists of people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generations.	• Recognise that rights relating to cultural heritage are inherent in the right to participate in cultural life, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. • Recognise individual and collective responsibility towards cultural heritage. • Emphasise that the conservation of cultural heritage and its sustainable use have human development and quality of life as their goal. • Take the necessary steps to apply the provisions of this Convention concerning the role of cultural heritage in the construction of a peaceful and democratic society. Greater synergy of competencies among all the public, institutional and private actors concerned.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Council Regulation (EU) 2022/2577 (laying down a framework to accelerate the deployment of renewable energy)	This regulation introduces faster permitting processes for projects that have the highest potential for a quick roll-out of renewable energy and the least impact on the environment.	The regulation introduces urgent and targeted measures that address specific technologies and types of projects, which have the highest potential for quick deployment and the least impact on the environment.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Directive 2010/75/EU on Industrial Emissions (amended by Directive (EU) 2024/1785)	The purpose of this Directive is lay down rules to prevent or, where that is not practicable, to reduce industrial emissions into air, water and land and to prevent the generation of waste, in order to achieve a high level of environmental protection.	The legislation covers industrial activities in the following sectors: • energy; • metal production and processing; • minerals; • chemicals; • waste management; • and other sectors such as pulp and paper production, slaughterhouses and the intensive rearing of poultry and pigs. All installations covered by the directive must prevent and reduce pollution by applying the best available techniques (BATs)* and address efficient energy use, waste prevention and management and measures to prevent accidents and limit their consequences.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Doha Climate Gateway (2012)	Set of decisions taken at the COP 18 meeting in Doha in 2012 which pave the way for a new agreement in Paris in 2015.	The following actions were committed to by governments at this conference: • Set out a timetable to adopt a universal climate agreement by 2015 (to come into effect in 2020); • Complete the work under Bali Action Plan and to focus on new completing new targets; • Strengthen the aim to cut greenhouse gases and help vulnerable countries to adapt; • Amend Kyoto Protocol to include a new commitment period for cutting down the greenhouse gases emissions; and • Provide the financial and technology support and new institutions to allow clean energy investment and sustainable growth in developing countries.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Drinking Water Directive (2020/2184)	• The recast Drinking Water Directive is the EU's main law on drinking water. It concerns the access to and the quality of water intended for human consumption to protect human health. • The EU adopted the recast Drinking Water Directive in December 2020 and the Directive entered into force in January 2021. Member States have to transpose the Directive into national law and comply with its provisions by 12 January 2023. The recast Drinking Water Directive will further protect human health thanks to updated water quality standards, tackling pollutants of concern, such as endocrine disruptors and microplastics, and leading to even cleaner water from the tap for all.	Key features of the revised Directive are: • reinforced water quality standards, in line or, in some cases, even more stringent than the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommendations • tackling emerging pollutants, such as endocrine disruptors and PFAs, as well as microplastics • a preventive approach favouring actions to reduce pollution at source by introducing the risk-based approach • measures to ensure better access to water, particularly for vulnerable and marginalised groups • measures to promote tap water, including in public spaces and restaurants, to reduce (plastic) bottle consumption • harmonisation of the quality standards for materials and products in contact with water measures to reduce water leakages and to increase transparency of the sector	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
EIA Directive (2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU)	• Requires the assessment of the environmental effects of public and private projects which are likely to have significant effects on the environment. • Aims to assess and implement avoidance or mitigation measures to eliminate environmental effects, before consent is given of projects likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue, inter alia, of their nature, size or location are made subject to a requirement for development consent and an assessment with regard to their effects. Those projects are defined in Article 4.	• All projects listed in Annex I are considered as having significant effects on the environment and require an EIA. • For projects listed in Annex II, a "screening procedure" is required to determine the effects of projects on the basis of thresholds/criteria or a case by case examination. This should take into account Annex III. • The environmental impact assessment shall identify, describe and assess in an appropriate manner, in the light of each individual case and in accordance with Articles 4 to 12, the direct and indirect effects of a project on the following factors: human beings, fauna and flora, soil, water, air, climate and the landscape, material assets and the cultural heritage, the interaction between each factor. • Consult with relevant authorities, stakeholders and public allowing sufficient time to make a submission before a decision is made.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC) as amended by Directive 2006/21/EC, Directive 2009/31/EC, Directive 2013/30/EU and Regulation (EU) 2019/1010	Establish a framework of environmental liability based on the 'polluter-pays' principle, to prevent and remedy environmental damage.	• Relates to environmental damage caused by any of the occupational activities listed in Annex III, and to any imminent threat of such damage occurring by reason of any of those activities; damage to protected species and natural habitats caused by any occupational activities other than those listed in Annex III, and to any imminent threat of such damage occurring by reason of any of those activities, whenever the operator has been at fault or negligent. • Where environmental damage has not yet occurred but there is an imminent threat of such damage occurring, the operator shall, without delay, take the necessary preventive measures. • Where environmental damage has occurred the operator shall, without delay, inform the competent authority of all relevant aspects of the situation and take all practicable steps to immediately control, contain, remove or otherwise manage the relevant contaminants and/or any other damage factors in order to limit or to prevent further environmental damage and adverse effects on human health or further impairment of services and the necessary remedial measures, in accordance with Article 7. • The operator shall bear the costs for the preventive and remedial actions taken pursuant to this Directive. • The competent authority shall be entitled to initiate cost recovery proceedings against the operator. • The operator may be required to provide financial security guarantees to ensure their responsibilities under the directive are met. • The Environmental Liability Directive has been amended through a number of Directives that are not of significant relevance to the SEA for the Guidelines.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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		• Implementation of the Environmental Liability Directive is contributed towards by a Multi-Annual Work Programme (MAWP) 'Making the Environmental Liability Directive more fit for purpose' that is updated annually to changing developments, growing knowledge and new needs.	
EU (2018) Clean Air Policy Package	Aims to substantially reduce air pollution across the EU.	The proposed strategy sets out objectives for reducing the health and environmental impacts of air pollution by 2030, and contains legislative proposals to implement stricter standards for emissions and air pollution.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
EU 2030 Framework for Climate and Energy	• A 2030 Framework for climate and energy, including EU-wide targets and policy objectives for the period between 2020 and 2030 that has been agreed by European countries. • Targets include a 40% cut in greenhouse gas emissions compared to 1990 levels, at least a 27% eu actionshare of renewable energy consumption and at least 27% energy savings compared with the business-as- usual scenario.	• To meet the targets, the European Commission has proposed the following policies for 2030: • A reformed EU emissions trading scheme (ETS). • New indicators for the competitiveness and security of the energy system, such as price differences with major trading partners, diversification of supply, and interconnection capacity between EU countries. • First ideas for a new governance system based on national plans for competitive, secure, and sustainable energy. These plans will follow a common EU approach. They will ensure stronger investor certainty, greater transparency, enhanced policy coherence and improved coordination across the EU.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
EU Action Plan: 'Towards Zero Pollution for Air, Water and Soil' 2050	The Action Plan sets the key 2030 targets for reducing pollution at source and outlines a number of flagship initiatives. In addition, as pollution does not stop at borders and as the EU acknowledges that it is both the victim and the source of pollution, the Action Plan foresees reinforced external action. The EU in fact is committed to leading the global fight against pollution	Guided by the 9 Flagship Initiatives, the key actions include: • align the air quality standards to the latest recommendations of the World Health Organisation, • review the standards for the quality of water, including in EU rivers and seas, • reduce soil pollution and enhance restoration, • review the majority of EU waste laws to adapt them to clean and circular economy principles, • foster zero pollution from production and consumption (through the revision of the Industrial Emissions Directive, EU Ecolabel and other measures), • minimize EU external pollution footprint through export restriction of harmful products and wastes, • present a Scoreboard of EU regions' green performance to promote zero pollution across regions, • showcase zero pollution solutions for buildings, • launch Living Labs for green digital solutions and smart zero pollution, including by targeting the building and farming sectors, • consolidate the EU's Knowledge Centres for Zero Pollution and bringing stakeholders together in the Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform. • Stronger enforcement of zero pollution together with environmental and other authorities.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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EU Bathing Water Directive (revised) 2006 [2006/7/EC] (amended by 2013/64/EU)	The purpose of this Directive is to preserve, protect and improve the quality of the environment and to protect human health by complementing Directive 2000/60/EC	This Directive lays down provisions for: • the monitoring and classification of bathing water quality; • the management of bathing water quality; and • the provision of information to the public on bathing water quality	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
EU Climate Adaptation Strategy 2050	The Strategy sets out how the European Union can adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change and become climate resilient by 2050.	The Strategy has four principle objectives: to make adaptation smarter, swifter and more systemic, and to step up international action on adaptation to climate change.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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EU Common Agricultural Policy	• To improve agricultural productivity, so that consumers have a stable supply of affordable food; and • To ensure that EU farmers can make a reasonable living.	• Ensuring viable food production that will contribute to feeding the world's population, which is expected to rise considerably in the future; • Climate change and sustainable management of natural resources; • Looking after the countryside across the EU and keeping the rural economy alive.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
EU Energy Efficiency Directive 2023/1791	The new directive introduces a series of measures to help accelerate energy efficiency, including embracing the "energy efficiency first" principle in the energy and non-energy policies.	• Establishing an EU legally-binding target to reduce the EU's final energy consumption by 11.7% by 2030 (relative to the 2020 reference scenario). This includes for each Member State the requirement to set its indicative national contribution based on objective criteria reflecting national circumstances. If the national contributions do not add up to the EU target, an ambition gap mechanism is applied by the Commission. • Increasing annual energy savings from 0.8% (at present) to 1.3% (2024-2025), then 1.5% (2026-2027) and 1.9% from 2028 onwards. That's an average of 1.49% of new annual savings for the period from 2024-2030. • Obliging Member States to prioritise vulnerable customers and social housing within the scope of their energy savings measures. • Introducing an annual energy consumption reduction target of 1.9% for the public sector as a whole. • Extending the annual 3% buildings renovation obligation to all the levels of public administration.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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		• Introducing a different approach, based on energy consumption, for business to have an energy management system or to carry out an energy audit. • Bringing in a new obligation to monitor the energy performance of data centres, with an EU-level database collecting and publishing data. • Promoting local heating & cooling plans in larger municipalities. • Progressively increasing the efficient energy consumption in heat or cold supply, also in district heating.	
EU environment action programme to 2030 (EU 8th Environmental Action Programme)	The long-term priority objective is that, by 2050 at the latest, Europeans should live well, within planetary boundaries, in a healthy economy where nothing is wasted, growth is regenerative, climate neutrality is a reality and inequalities are significantly reduced. Building on the European Green Deal, the environmental action programme aims to speed up the transition to a climate-neutral, resource-efficient economy, recognising that human well-being and prosperity depend on a healthy ecosystem.	Six priority objectives: • Attain the 2030 greenhouse gas emission reduction target and achieve climate neutrality by 2050. • Enhance the ability to adapt by strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change. • Move towards a regenerative growth model, detaching economic growth from resource use and environmental degradation, while transitioning faster to a circular economy. • Aim for zero pollution of the air, water and soil and protect the health and well-being of Europeans. • Protect, preserve and restore biodiversity by improving the state of ecosystems and of the environment, as well as by combating desertification and soil degradation. • Reduce environmental and climate pressures from production and consumption, in particular energy, industrial development, buildings and infrastructure, mobility and food systems.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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EU Forestry Strategy for 2030	Sets out a vision and concrete actions to improve the quantity and quality of EU forests and strengthen their protection, restoration and resilience. It aims to adapt Europe's forests to the new conditions, weather extremes and high uncertainty brought about by climate change. This is a precondition for forests to continue delivering their socio -economic functions, and to ensure vibrant rural areas with thriving populations. The commitments and actions proposed in the Strategy will contribute to achieving the EU's greenhouse gas emission reduction target of at least 55% in 2030, as set out in the European Climate Law	The measures proposed in the strategy, to be reviewed in 2025, include: • Promoting sustainable forest management (SFM), including by encouraging the sustainable use of wood-based resources. • Providing financial incentives for forest owners and managers to adopt environmentally friendly practices, such as those linked to carbon storage and sequestration • Improving the size and biodiversity of forests, including by planting 3 billion new trees by 2030. • Promoting alternative forest industries, such as ecotourism, as well as non-wood products, such as cork, honey and medicinal plants. • Encouraging the take-up of financial support under the common agricultural policy (CAP), which can help forests and forest-based industries mitigate against climate change. • Providing education and training for people working in forest-based industries and making these industries more attractive to young people. Establishing a legally binding instrument for ecosystem restoration, and a new legislative proposal on EU forest observation, reporting and collection. • Protecting the EU's remaining primary and old-growth forests.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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EU Green Infrastructure Strategy	Aims to create a robust enabling framework in order to promote and facilitate Green Infrastructure (GI) projects.	• Promoting GI in the main EU policy areas. • Supporting EU-level GI projects. • Improving access to finance for GI projects. • Improving information and promoting innovation.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
EU Integrated Pollution Prevention Control Directive (2008/1/EC)	The purpose of this Directive is to achieve integrated prevention and control of pollution arising from the activities listed in Annex I. It lays down measures designed to prevent or, where that is not practicable, to reduce emissions in the air, water and land from the abovementioned activities, including measures concerning waste, in order to achieve a high level of protection of the environment taken as a whole, without prejudice to Directive 85/337/EEC and other relevant Community provisions.	The IPPC Directive is based on several principles: • an integrated approach • best available techniques, • flexibility; and public participation	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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EU Nitrates Directive (91/676/EC)	Reducing water pollution caused or induced by nitrates from agricultural sources and - preventing further such pollution.	Ireland's Nitrates Action Programme is designed to prevent pollution of surface waters and ground water from agricultural sources and to protect and improve water quality. Ireland's third NAP came into operation in 2014. Each Member State's NAP must include: • a limit on the amount of livestock manure applied to the land each year • set periods when land spreading is prohibited due to risk • set capacity levels for the storage of livestock manure	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
EU Plant Protection (products) Directive 2009/127/EC	The Directive aims at reducing the risks and impacts of pesticide use on human health and the environment by introducing different targets, tools and measures such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) or National Action Plans (NAPs).	• The Framework Directive applies to pesticides which are plant protection products. • Regarding pesticide application equipment already in professional use, the Framework Directive introduces requirements for the inspection and maintenance to be carried out on such equipment.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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EU REACH Regulation (EC 1907/2006) (as amended)	Aims to improve the protection of human health and the environment through the better and earlier identification of the intrinsic properties of chemical substances.	The aims are achieved by applying REACH, namely: • Registration, • Evaluation, • Authorisation; and • Restriction of chemicals. REACH also aims to enhance innovation and competitiveness of the EU chemicals industry.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
EU Renewables Directives (RED II & RED III)	The Renewable Energy Directive establishes an overall policy for the production and promotion of energy from renewable sources in the EU. The RED directive was first introduced in 2009 (2009/28/EC) and set an Eu-wide goal for 20% renewable energy use by 2020. This was replaced by RED II (2018/2001) which set a renewable energy target of 32% for the European Union for 2030. Following on from RED II, the EU adopted Red III (2023/2413) with the aim to further increase its renewable energy ambitions. sets a new binding target of c. 42.5% renewable energy in the EU's total energy consumption by 2030, with an aspirational target of 45%. The aim of RED III is to introduce sector-specific targets for transport, heating, cooling, and industry to ensure a balanced contribution from all parts of the economy and also included measures to streamline and accelerate the permitting process for renewable energy projects, addressing one of the major bottlenecks in the deployment of renewables.	• Building on the 2009 and 2018 directives, the RED III directive introduces stronger measures to ensure that all possibilities for the further development and uptake of renewables are fully utilised. • Strong policy framework to facilitate electrification in different sectors, with new increased sector-specific targets for renewables in heating and cooling, transport, industry, buildings and district heating/cooling, but also with a framework promoting electric vehicles and smart recharging. • Permitting procedures will also be easier and faster both for renewable energy projects (including through shorter approval periods and the creation of 'Renewables acceleration areas') and for the necessary infrastructure projects.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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EU Seveso Directive (2012/18/EU)	This Directive lays down rules for the prevention of major accidents which involve dangerous substances, and the limitation of their consequences for human health and the environment, with a view to ensuring a high level of protection throughout the Union in a consistent and effective manner.	• The Seveso Directive is well integrated with other EU policies, thus avoiding double regulation or other administrative burden. This includes the following related policy areas: • Classification, labelling and packaging of chemicals; • The Union's Civil Protection Mechanism; • The Security Union Agenda including CBRN-E and Protection of critical infrastructure; • Policy on environmental liability and on the protection of the environment through criminal law; • Safety of offshore oil and gas operations.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Valletta 1992)	The aim of this (revised) Convention is to protect the archaeological heritage as a source of the European collective memory and as an instrument for historical and scientific study.	The Valletta Convention makes the conservation and enhancement of the archaeological heritage one of the goals of urban and regional planning policies. The Convention sets guidelines for the funding of excavation and research work and publication of research findings. It also deals with public access, in particular to archaeological sites, and educational actions to be undertaken to develop public awareness of the value of the archaeological heritage. It also constitutes an institutional framework for pan-European co-operation on the archaeological heritage, entailing a systematic exchange of experience and experts among the various States.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
European Landscape Convention (Florence 2000)	The developments in agriculture, forestry, industrial and mineral production techniques, together with the practices followed in town and country planning, transport, networks, tourism and recreation, and at a more general level, changes in the world economy, have in many cases accelerated the transformation of landscapes. The Convention expresses a concern to achieve sustainable development based on a balanced and harmonious relationship between social needs, economic activity and the environment. It aims to respond to the public's wish to enjoy high quality landscapes.	• Promote protection, management and planning of landscapes. • Organise European co-operation on landscape issues.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
European Wind Power Action Plan (COM/2023/669)	The action plan will support the European wind manufacturing sector in overcoming the difficulties it faces and improve its competitiveness to ensure that this sector fully contributes to the ongoing energy transition. The action plan is an initiative established under the EU Wind Power Package in October 2023.	The Plan is based on six pillars, each of which have set actions: 1. Accelerating deployment through faster permitting and increased predictability. 2. Improved auction design. 3. Access to finance. 4. Creating a fair and competitive international environment. 5. Skills (investment in skills development). 6. Industry engagement and member state commitments.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

International/European Level			
Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
Floods Directive (2007/60/EC)	• Establishes a framework for the assessment and management of flood risks • Reduce adverse consequences for human health, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity associated with floods in the Community	• Assess all water courses and coastlines at risk from flooding through Flood Risk Assessment • Prepare flood hazard maps and flood risk maps outlining the extent or potential of flooding and assets and humans at risk in these areas at River Basin District level (Article 3(2) (b)) and areas covered by Article 5(1) and Article 13(1) (b) in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3. • Implement flood risk management plans and take adequate and coordinated measures to reduce flood risk for the areas covered by the Articles listed above. • Inform the public and allow the public to participate in planning process.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC)	• Protect, control and conserve groundwater. • Prevent the deterioration of the status of all bodies of groundwater. • Implements measures to prevent and control groundwater pollution, including criteria for assessing good groundwater chemical status and criteria for the identification of significant and sustained upward trends and for the definition of starting points for trend reversals.	• Meet minimum groundwater standards listed in Annex 1 of Directive. • Meet threshold values adopted by national legislation for the pollutants, groups of pollutants and indicators of pollution which have been identified as contributing to the characterisation of bodies or groups of bodies of groundwater as being at risk, also taking into account Part B of Annex II.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

International/European Level			
Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)	• Promote the preservation, protection and improvement of the quality of the environment, including the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. • Contribute towards ensuring biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. • Maintain or restore to favourable conservation status, natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora of community interest. • Promote the maintenance of biodiversity, taking account of economic, social, cultural and regional requirements.	• Propose and protect sites of importance to habitats, plant and animal species. • Establish a network of European sites hosting the natural habitat types listed in Annex I and habitats of the species listed in Annex II, to enable the natural habitat types and the species' habitats concerned to be maintained or, where appropriate, restored at a favourable conservation status in their natural range. • Carry out comprehensive assessment of habitat types and species present. • Establish a system of strict protection for the animal species and plant species listed in Annex IV.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
ICOMOS (2011) Principles for the Conservation of Industrial Heritage Sites, Structures, Areas and Landscapes ('Dublin Principles')	It is aimed to assist in the documentation, protection, conservation and appreciation of industrial heritage as part of the heritage of human societies around the World.	1. Document and understand industrial heritage structures, sites, areas and landscapes and their values; 2. Ensure effective protection and conservation of the industrial heritage structures, sites, areas and landscapes; 3. Conserve and maintain the industrial heritage structures, sites, areas and landscapes; and 4. Present and communicate the heritage dimensions and values of industrial structures, sites, areas and landscapes to raise public and corporate awareness, and support training and research.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC), as amended	European legislation which aims to achieve Good Environment Status (GES) for all marine waters in Europe and protect the resource base for marine related economic and social activities.	This was adopted on June 17th, 2008, establishing a framework for EU Community Action specifically regarding marine environmental policy. The MSFD is implemented in cycles of 6 years, with member state being obliged to report to the EU every 2 years. The third cycle of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2023 – 2028) for Ireland is underway. The MSFD is implemented through a national Marine Strategy.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Nature Restoration Law (Regulation (EU) 2024/1991)	The regulation sets binding targets to restore degraded ecosystems, particularly those with the most potential to capture and store carbon and to prevent and reduce the impact of natural disasters. It is also a key instrument to help the EU and its Member States meet international biodiversity commitments under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.	The law aims to restore ecosystems, habitats and species across the EU's land and sea areas in order to • enable the long-term and sustained recovery of biodiverse and resilient nature • contribute to achieving the EU's climate mitigation and climate adaptation objectives • meet international commitments	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Noise Directive (2002/49/EC)	The Noise Directive - Directive 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise - is part of an EU strategy setting out to reduce the number of people affected by noise in the longer term and to provide a framework for developing existing Community policy on noise reduction from source.	The Directive requires competent authorities in Member States to: • Draw up strategic noise maps for major roads, railways, airports and agglomerations, using harmonised noise indicators and use these maps to assess the number of people which may be impacted upon as a result of excessive noise levels; • Draw up action plans to reduce noise where necessary and maintain environmental noise quality where it is good; and • Inform and consult the public about noise exposure, its effects, and the measures considered to address noise. The Directive does not set any limit value, nor does it prescribe the measures to be used in the action plans, which remain at the discretion of the competent authorities.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
OSPAR Convention	The mission of OSPAR is to conserve marine ecosystems and safeguard human health in the North-East Atlantic by preventing and eliminating pollution; by protecting the marine environment from the adverse effects of human activities; and by contributing to the sustainable use of the seas.	OSPAR's work is organised under six strategies: • Biodiversity and Ecosystem Strategy • Eutrophication Strategy • Hazardous Substances Strategy • Offshore Industry Strategy • Radioactive Substances Strategy • Strategy for the Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme These six strategies fit together to underpin the ecosystem approach. For each strategy a programme of work is designed and implemented annually.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Public Participation Directive (2003/35/EC)	The objective of this Directive is to contribute to the implementation of the obligations arising under the Aarhus Convention, in particular by: (a) providing for public participation in respect of the drawing up of certain plans and programmes relating to the environment; (b) improving the public participation and providing for provisions on access to justice within Council Directives 85/337/EEC and 96/61/EC.	Not applicable.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Ramsar Convention	The Convention's mission is "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world".	Under the "three pillars" of the Convention, the Contracting Parties commit to: • Work towards the wise use of all their wetlands; • Designate suitable wetlands for the list of Wetlands of International Importance (the "Ramsar List") and ensure their effective management; • Cooperate internationally on transboundary wetlands, shared wetland systems and shared species.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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RePower EU Plan (2022)	This plan was launched as a response to global energy market disruption caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The overarching aim of this plan is to reduce the reliance on Russian fossil fuels and enhance energy security within the EU. The plan specifies that Member States should speed up the green transition and spur massive investment in renewable energy.	The main measures introduced under this plan are concerned with the following: • Save Energy • Diversify supplies • Quickly substitute fossil fuels by accelerating Europe's clean energy transition • Smartly combine investments and reforms.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
SEA Directive (2001/42/EC)	• Contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development. • Provide for a high level of protection of the environment by carrying out an environmental assessment of plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.	• Carry out and environmental assessment for plans or programmes referred to in Articles 2 to 4 of the Directive. • Prepare an environmental report which identifies, describes and evaluates the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme and reasonable alternatives that consider the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme. • Consult with relevant authorities, stakeholders and public allowing sufficient time to make a submission. • Consult other Member States where the implementation of a plan or programme is likely to have transboundary environmental effects. • Inform relevant authorities and stakeholders on the decision to implement the plan or programme. • Issue a statement to include requirements detailed in Article 9 of the Directive. • Monitor and mitigate significant environmental effects identified by the assessment.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
Soil monitoring law: EU on the pathway to healthy soils by 2050	According to the EU soil strategy, presented by the Commission in 2021, the lack of a dedicated EU legislation was singled out as a major cause for the alarming state of EU soils. To ensure the same level of protection to soil that exists for water, the marine environment and air in the EU, the Commission put forward the soil monitoring directive on 5 July 2023. The law provides a legal framework to help achieve healthy soils by 2050 and aims to address key soil threats in the EU, such as erosion, floods and landslides, loss of soil organic matter, salinisation, contamination, compaction, sealing, as well as loss of soil biodiversity.	The general approach reached by the Council aims to make soil health monitoring obligatory, provides guiding principles for sustainable soil management and addresses situations where soil contamination poses unacceptable health and environment risks. The law aims to help achieve healthy soil by: • Putting in place a solid and coherent monitoring framework for all soils across the EU so Member States can take measures to regenerate degraded soils. • Making sustainable soil management the norm in the EU. Member States will have to define which practices should be implemented by soil managers and which should be banned because they cause soil degradation • Requesting Member States to identify potentially contaminated sites, investigate these sites and address unacceptable risks for human health and the environment, thereby contributing to a toxic-free environment by 2050.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Stockholm Convention	The objective of the Stockholm Convention is to protect human health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants.	• Prohibit and/or eliminate the production and use, as well as the import and export, of the intentionally produced POPs that are listed in Annex A to the Convention • Restrict the production and use, as well as the import and export, of the intentionally produced POPs that are listed in Annex B to the Convention • Reduce or eliminate releases from unintentionally produced POPs that are listed in Annex C to the Convention • Ensure that stockpiles and wastes consisting of, containing or contaminated with POPs are managed safely and in an environmentally sound manner • To target additional POPs	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
		• Other provisions of the Convention relate to the development of implementation plans, information exchange, public information, awareness and education, research, development and monitoring, technical assistance, financial resources and mechanisms, reporting, effectiveness evaluation and non-compliance	
The Clean Air for Europe Directive (2008/50/EC) (EU Air Framework Directive) **Fourth Daughter Directive (2004/107/EC)**	• The CAFE Directive merges existing legislation into a single directive (except for the fourth daughter directive). • Sets new air quality objectives for $PM_{2.5}$ (fine particles) including the limit value and exposure related objectives. • Accounts for the possibility to discount natural sources of pollution when assessing compliance against limit values. • Allows the possibility for time extensions of three years (PM_{10}) or up to five years (NO_2, benzene) for complying with limit values, based on conditions and the assessment by the European Commission. • The Fourth Daughter Directive lists pollutants, target values and monitoring requirements for the following: arsenic, cadmium, mercury, nickel and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in ambient air.	• Sets objectives for ambient air quality designed to avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole. • Aims to assess the ambient air quality in Member States on the basis of common methods and criteria. • Obtains information on ambient air quality in order to help combat air pollution and nuisance and to monitor long-term trends and improvements resulting from national and community measures. • Ensures that such information on ambient air quality is made available to the public. • Aims to maintain air quality where it is good and improving it in other cases. • Aims to promote increased cooperation between the Member States in reducing air pollution.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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The Eighth Environmental Action Programme (EAP) of the European Community	• Obligation for the Commission to present a monitoring framework, based on a limited number of headline indicators. • These should include, where available, systemic indicators that address interlinkages between environment-social and environmental-economic policy considerations, respectively.	The 8th EAP aims at accelerating the green transition in a just and inclusive way, with the 2050 long-term objective of 'Living well, within planetary boundaries', already established in the 7th programme (2014-2020).	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
The EU LULUCF Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2018/841)	The LULUCF (Land Use, Land Change and Forestry) Regulation addresses greenhouse gas emissions and carbon removals in the land use and forestry sector from the period of 2021-2030, establishing an emissions target for the sector. The regulation entered into force in 2018. It was recently updated in 2023 to	This regulation was revised in 2023 with a new set of rules introduced to address the carbon footprint of activities related to the conversion, use and management of land and forests for both human and environmental benefits. These activities can occur in areas such as grasslands, agricultural land and forests. Previous rules (the 'no debt' rule) required that EU member states ensure that emissions from land and forestry are compensated by an equivalent removal of CO2 within the sector for the period of 2021-2030. This has been replaced by a more ambitious new rule that sets the EU-wide net target of 310 million tonnes of CO2 equivalent carbon removals in the LULUCF sector by 2030. Each member state has a specific target under this regulation which they must meet to contribute towards the EU-wide net target. The national targets are based on the recent level of removals or emissions with the member state and on the potential to further increase removals, taking into account the principles of cost-effectiveness, fairness and environmental integrity. Ireland's binding target is to achieve a reduction of 0.6 Mt CO_2 equivalent LULUCF emissions by 2030, relative to average levels in 2016-2018.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
The European Green Deal (EGD) 2019	The deal sets out how to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050, boosting the economy, improving people's quality of life, caring for nature and leaving no one behind.	• It sets out a roadmap with actions to boost the efficient use of resources by moving to a clean, circular economy, restore biodiversity and cut pollution. • It outlines investments required, financing tools available and explains how to ensure a just and inclusive transition. • In order to meet the goal to become climate neutral by 2050 as part of the European Green Deal, the European Union (EU) Commission entered into force the European Climate Law in July 2021. This writes into law the goal set out in the European Green Deal for Europe's economy and society to become climate-neutral by 2050.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
UN (1992) Framework Convention on Climate Change	It is aimed at stabilising greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.	The Convention acknowledges the vulnerability of all countries to the effects of climate change and calls for special efforts to ease the consequences, especially in developing countries which lack the resources to do so on their own.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

International/European Level			
Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
UN (1992) The Convention on Biological Diversity	An overall objective is to develop national strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.	The Convention has three main goals: • the conservation of biological diversity (or biodiversity); • the sustainable use of its components; and • the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
UN Kyoto Protocol (2nd Kyoto Period), the Second European Climate Change Programme (ECCP II), Paris climate conference (COP21) 2015 (Paris Agreement)	The UN Kyoto Protocol set of policy measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Second European Climate Change Programme (ECCP II) aims to identify and develop all the necessary elements of an EU strategy to implement the Kyoto Protocol. At the Paris climate conference (COP21) in December 2015, 195 countries adopted the first-ever universal, legally binding global climate deal. The agreement sets out a global action plan to put the world on track to avoid dangerous climate change by limiting global warming to well below 2°C.	• The Kyoto Protocol is implemented through the European Climate Change Programme (ECCP II). • EU member states implement measures to improve on or compliment the specified measures and policies arising from the ECCP. • Under COP21, governments agreed to come together every 5 years to set more ambitious targets as required by science; report to each other and the public on how well they are doing to implement their targets; track progress towards the long-term goal through a robust transparency and accountability system.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
UNESCO (1972) The Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage	• Links concepts of nature conservation and the preservation of cultural properties; and • Recognizes the way in which people interact with nature, and the fundamental need to preserve the balance between the two.	• Sets out the duties of States Parties in identifying potential sites and their role in protecting and preserving them; • Each country pledges to conserve not only the World Heritage sites situated on its territory, but also to protect its national heritage; • Encourages to integrate the protection of the cultural and natural heritage into regional planning programmes, set up staff and services at their sites, undertake scientific and technical conservation research and adopt measures which give this heritage a function in the day-to-day life of the community.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC)	• This Directive concerns the collection, treatment and discharge of urban waste water and the treatment and discharge of waste water from certain industrial sectors. • The objective of the Directive is to protect the environment from the adverse effects of waste water discharges.	• Urban waste water entering collecting systems shall before discharge, be subject to secondary treatment. • Annex II requires the designation of areas sensitive to eutrophication which receive water discharges. • Establishes minimum requirements for urban waste water collection and treatment systems in specified agglomerations to include special requirements for sensitive areas and certain industrial sectors.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)	• Establish a framework for the protection of water bodies to include inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater and their dependent wildlife and habitats. • Preserve and prevent the deterioration of water status and where necessary improve and maintain “good status” of water bodies. • Promote sustainable water usage. • The Water Framework Directive repealed the following Directives: • The Drinking Water Abstraction Directive • Sampling Drinking Water Directive • Exchange of Information on Quality of Surface Freshwater Directive • Shellfish Directive • Freshwater Fish Directive • Groundwater Directive • Dangerous Substances Directive	• Protect, enhance and restore all water bodies and meet the environmental objectives outlined in Article 4 of the Directive. • Achieve "good status" for all waters. • Manage water bodies based on identifying and establishing river basins districts. • Involve the public and streamline legislation. • Prepare and implement a River Basin Management Plan for each river basin districts identified and a Register of Protected Areas. • Establish a programme of monitoring for surface water status, groundwater status and protected areas. • Recover costs for water services.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

National Level			
Legislation, Plans, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower-level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance of the Plan**
Afforestation Scheme 2023 - 2027	This scheme aims to increase the current land area of Ireland under forest cover (11% vs. EU average of 38%) whilst ensuring these climate resilient and healthy forests are managed according to the principles of sustainable forest management. The scheme aligns with the Forestry Strategy goals on Forest for Climate, Nature, Wood, People, and Forest for the Economy and Rural Development.	The objectives of the scheme are as follows: i. Increase Ireland's forest cover to 18%; ii. Establishment of 8,000 ha of new diverse, multifunctional and climate resilient forests per annum (subject to the availability of funding and land); iii. Provide at least 50% of the national area afforested with broadleaved species and a require minimum per-application broadleaved species component (20% by area) during the programme period; iv. Encourage forest management practices in newly planted forests that result in CCF management and forest retention, enhancing and supporting natural systems by linking existing habitats and new, dedicated forest biodiversity areas within established forests; v. Expand and encourage appropriate management of new emergent native scrub forest with attendant biodiversity, habitat and ecosystem service enhancements; vi. Increase the area of new forest area used by members of the public for forest recreation, amenity, health and wellbeing by providing dedicated "open forests" and specific forest recreational and amenity facilities; vii. Increase the uptake of agroforestry systems for biodiversity, carbon sequestration, animal welfare and the production of high-quality hardwood timber; viii. Develop forest-based biomass resources to support the circular and green economy in commercial and domestic markets; ix. Support carbon sequestration, climate change mitigation and forest resilience through appropriate species selection and sustainable forest management;	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

National Level			
Legislation, Plans, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower-level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance of the Plan**
		x. Provide a forest resource to support economic viability and sustainability of rural communities through increased use of wood and wood products in construction and energy production.	
Ag Climatise - A Roadmap towards Climate Neutrality	This roadmap has been developed by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) on foot of extensive engagement with industry, research, policy, farmer and environmental stakeholders. It is a roadmap designed to help all stakeholders to work together to tackle climate change and air pollution	The roadmap proposes 29 actions across two strands of activity: • **Actions that can be implemented now:** to ensure farmers act immediately on the changes necessary to address climate change. This is made up of three parts, the mitigation measures in the next section, the removals from the landscape measures, and the sustainable energy measures that follow. • **The development of cross cutting enabling actions into the future:** This will focus on a number of actions, including further research and innovation. Where appropriate, it will require the establishment of consultative groups to assist with the development and delivery of the actions	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
All Island Grid Study 2008	• The All Island Grid Study is the first comprehensive assessment of the ability of the electrical power system and, as part of that, the transmission network ("the grid") on the island of Ireland to absorb large amounts of electricity produced from renewable energy sources. • The objective of this five-part study is to assess the technical feasibility and the relative costs and benefits associated with various scenarios for increased shares of electricity sourced from renewable energy in the all island power system.	Key conclusions of the study: • The presented results indicate that the differences in cost between the highest cost and the lowest cost portfolios are low (7%), given the assumptions made and costs included in the Study. • All but the high coal-based portfolio lead to significant reductions of CO2 emissions compared to portfolio 1 • All but the high coal-based portfolio lead to reductions on the dependency of the all island system on fuel and electricity imports. • The limitations of the study may overstate the technical feasibility of the portfolios analysed and could impact the costs and benefits resulting. Further work is required to understand the extent of such impact. • Timely development of the transmission networks, requiring means to address the planning challenge, is a precondition for implementation of the portfolios considered.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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		• Market mechanisms must facilitate the installation of complementary, i.e. flexible, dispatchable plant, so as to maintain adequate levels of system security.	
All-Ireland Pollinator Plans: **All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025 (latest)**	The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan is a framework bringing together different sectors across the island of Ireland to create a landscape where pollinators can survive and thrive. Implementation is coordinated by the National Biodiversity Data Centre.	The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan for 2021-2025 is a five-year road map that aims to help bees, other pollinating insects and our wider biodiversity. The AIPP 2021-2025 has 186 actions spread across six objectives. Objective 1: Making farmland pollinator friendly Objective 2: Making public land pollinator friendly Objective 3: Making private land pollinator friendly Objective 4: All-Ireland Honeybee Strategy Objective 5: Conserving rare pollinators Objective 6: Strategic coordination of the Plan	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
All-Island Strategic Rail Review	The Review aims to inform policy and future strategy for the railways in both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland.	The Review sets out six high-level goals which aim to use rail as effectively as possible to: • contribute to decarbonisation; • improve All Island connectivity between major cities; • enhance regional accessibility; • stimulate economic activity; encourage sustainable mobility; and achieve economic and financial feasibility.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Bioeconomy Action Plan 2023-2025	The first national action plan for an Irish bioeconomy. The purpose of this plan is to further develop Ireland's bioeconomy in delivering the vision of the 2018 National Policy Statement on the Bioeconomy; for Ireland "to be a global leader for the bioeconomy through a coordinated approach that harnesses Ireland's natural resources and competitive advantage and that fully exploits the opportunities available while monitoring and avoiding unintended consequences".	This action plan approaches the bioeconomy using seven pillars: • Governance & Awareness • Research, Development & Innovation • Nature, Climate, Energy & Circular Economy • Agriculture, Food, Forestry, And The Marine • Communities, Regions & Cities • Industry & Enterprise • Knowledge & Skills The Action Plan is aligned with the implementation of the National Policy Statement on the Bioeconomy.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Building Regulations	The aim of the building regulations is to provide for the safety and welfare of people in and about buildings.	The building regulations apply to the design and construction of a new building (including a dwelling) or an extension to an existing building.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Clean Air Strategy for Ireland (2023)	The Clean Air Strategy provides the strategic policy framework necessary to identify and promote integrated measures across government policy that are required to reduce air pollution and promote cleaner air while delivering on wider national objectives.	• Through this document Ireland can develop the necessary policies and measures to comply with new and emerging EU legislation. • The Strategy should also help tackle climate change. • The Strategy considers a wider range of national policies that are relevant to clean air policy such as transport, energy, home heating and agriculture. • In any discussion relating to clean air policy, the issue of people's health is paramount, this is a strong theme of the Strategy.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 **Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021**	An Act to provide for the approval of plans by the Government in relation to climate change for the purpose of pursuing the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy.	When considering a plan or framework, for approval, the Government shall endeavour to achieve the national transition objective within the period to which the objective relates and shall, in endeavouring to achieve that objective, ensure that such objective is achieved by the implementation of measures that are cost effective and shall, for that purpose, have regard to: • The ultimate objective specified in Article 2 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change done at New York on 9 May 1992 and any mitigation commitment entered into by the European Union in response or otherwise in relation to that objective, • The policy of the Government on climate change, • Climate justice, • Any existing obligation of the State under the law of the European Union or any international agreement referred to in section 2; and • The most recent national greenhouse gas emissions inventory and projection of future greenhouse gas emissions, prepared by the Agency.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Climate Action Plan 2025	The Climate Action Plan 2025 (CAP25) is the third annual update to Ireland's Climate Action Plan. The purpose of the Climate Action Plan is to lay out a roadmap of actions which will ultimately lead Ireland to meeting its national climate objective of pursuing and achieving, by no later than the end of the year 2050. Aiding the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy. It aligns with the legally binding economy-wide carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings that were agreed by Government in July 2022.	Climate Action Plan 2025 builds upon CAP24 by refining and updating the measures and actions required to deliver the carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings and it should be read in conjunction with Climate Action Plan 2024. The Plan provides a roadmap for taking decisive action to halve Ireland's emissions by 2030 and achieve climate neutrality by no later than 2050, as committed to in the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan for Built and Archaeological Heritage (2019)	• Heritage in Ireland ranges from private homes, commercial and public buildings, national monuments, underwater and buried archaeology and the physical and cultural settings of all of these. • This plan considers not only those structures and sites that have been statutorily listed, but all man-made assets that have historical, aesthetic and cultural value, but does not consider natural heritage. Aims to: • Build adaptive capacity within the sector • Reduce the vulnerability of built and archaeological heritage to climate change • Identify and capitalise on the various potential opportunities for the sector.	The five adaptation goals for built and archaeological heritage in Ireland are: 1. To improve understanding of each heritage resource and its vulnerability to climate change 2. To develop and mainstream sustainable policies and plans for climate-change adaptation of built and archaeological heritage 3. To conserve Ireland's heritage for future generations 4. To communicate and transfer knowledge 5. To exploit the opportunities for built and archaeological heritage to demonstrate value and secure resources	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan (2022-2025)	• The Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan is a major public transport initiative developed by the National Transport Authority (NTA) with the aim of increasing connectivity, particularly for people living outside our major towns and cities. The plan aims to improve mobility in rural areas by providing frequent and affordable transport services that offer freedom to travel and sustainable transport connections.	The Plan focuses on: • Adding new high-frequency services; • Enhancing existing services; and Providing improved connectivity to the wider transport network	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Construction 2020, A Strategy for a Renewed Construction Sector	• Construction 2020 sets out a package of measures agreed by the Government and is aimed at stimulating activity in the building industry. • The Strategy aims both to increase the capacity of the sector to create and maintain jobs, and to deliver a sustainable sector, operating at an appropriate level. It seeks to learn the lessons of the past and to ensure that the right structures and mechanisms are in place so that they are not repeated.	This Strategy therefore addresses issues including: • A strategic approach to the provision of housing, based on real and measured needs, with mechanisms in place to detect and act when things are going wrong; • Continuing improvement of the planning process, striking the right balance between current and future requirements; • The availability of financing for viable and worthwhile projects; • Access to mortgage finance on reasonable and sustainable terms; • Ensuring we have the tools we need to monitor and regulate the sector in a way that underpins public confidence and worker safety; • Ensuring a fit for purpose sector supported by a highly skilled workforce achieving high quality and standards; and • Ensuring opportunities are provided to unemployed former construction workers to contribute to the recovery of the sector.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Electricity Storage Policy Framework (2024)	This Framework aims to o clarify the role of electricity storage systems (ESS) in Ireland's climate objectives and energy transition. This will support Ireland's 2030 climate targets as grid scale electricity storage is vital in securing an electricity grid capable in supporting Ireland's renewable generation programme and the future growth of industrial sectors. The Electricity Storage Policy Framework refers, in the main, to front of meter electricity storage, outlining its present roles, technical processes, market positions and regulatory structures in Ireland. The framework addresses the grids immediate and near-term needs by supporting the incorporation of electricity storage from the immediate up until 2040 and presents 10 government actions to support the role of electricity storage systems in Ireland's energy transition, identifying the key stakeholders and timelines for these actions.	Under this framework there are ten government actions to support the role of electricity storage systems in Ireland's energy transition: 1. Maintain a technology neutral approach to all electricity storage systems. 2. Creation of a 'sandbox' project to advance both System Operators' technological knowledge of emerging electricity storage technologies. 3. Convene an electricity storage and system services working group as part of the Accelerating Renewable Electricity Taskforce. 4. Convene a forum for an expanded group of stakeholders including statutory bodies, leading industry representatives and academic or interest groups. 5. Support access to the wholesale electricity markets, arbitrage and revenue stacking for electricity storage systems. 6. Support the immediate procurement of Demand Flexibility products and of (long duration) electricity storage to meet specific network needs, on the Distribution and Transmission systems respectively. 7. Initiate a 'Quantity' consultation to establish the optimal (long duration) electricity storage requirements to meet climate targets and electricity grid network expansion between 2030-2040. 8. Initiate a 'Financial' consultation to establish if the expected market mechanisms due between 2025-2028 will provide sufficient service provider certainty to meet the optimum (long duration) electricity storage systems requirements of 2030-2040. 9. If required and pending the outcome of the 'Financial' consultation, develop a market framework to further incentivise the incorporation of (long duration) electricity storage system technologies to the grid to meet projected 2030-2040 requirements.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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		10. Ensure a route to market for the identified optimum (long duration) electricity storage requirements for 2030-2040 is in place before end of 2028.	
Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2019	These Guidelines offer advice to planning authorities on planning for wind energy through the development plan process and in determining applications for planning permission.	The guidelines are intended to ensure a consistency of approach throughout the country in the identification of suitable locations for wind energy development and the treatment of planning applications for wind energy developments.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Energy Security in Ireland to 2030	Energy Security in Ireland to 2030 outlines a new strategy to ensure energy security in Ireland for this decade, while ensuring a sustainable transition to a carbon neutral energy system by 2050. This report is being published as part of an Energy Security Package, containing a range of supplementary analyses, consultations, and reviews, which have informed the recommendations and actions related to energy security.	The Energy Security Package states that we must ensure energy security is prioritised, monitored, and reviewed regularly, and includes a range of measures to implement this approach in the short and medium term by prioritising: • Reduced and Responsive Demand • A Renewables-Led System • More Resilient Systems • Robust Risk Governance Under each of these four areas of actions, the report sets out a range of mitigation measures, including the need for additional capacity of indigenous renewable energy, but also energy imports, energy storage, fuel diversification, demand side response, and renewable gases. The governance structures supporting the energy system, including oversight and accountability reforms, were also examined.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477 of 2011, as amended)	These Regulations provide a new for the implementation in Ireland of Council Directive 92/43/EEC on habitats and protection of wild fauna and flora (as amended) and for the implementation of Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of wild birds.	• They provide, among other things, for: the appointment and functions of authorized officers; identification, classification and other procedures relative to the designation of Community sites. • The Regulations have been prepared to address several judgments of the CJEU against Ireland, notably cases C-418/04 and C-183/05, in respect of failure to transpose elements of the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive into Irish law.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
European Communities (Environmental Noise) Regulations of 2003 (as amended, latest S.I. No. 663/2021)	The purpose of these Regulations is to transpose into Irish law EU Directive 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise. The Directive aims to provide a common framework to avoid, prevent or reduce, on a prioritised basis, the harmful effects of exposure to environmental noise.	• The Regulations set out a two-stage process for addressing environmental noise (preparation of strategic noise maps and preparation of noise action plans for each area concerned. • The Regulations designate noise-mapping bodies and action planning authorities for the making and reviewing of strategic noise maps and action plans. • The Regulations designate the Environmental Protection Agency as the National Authority for the purposes of the Regulations. • The Regulations provide for strategic noise maps and action plans and revised noise maps and action plans to be made available to the general public.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations (as amended) **European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface**	• Transpose the Water Framework Directive into legislation. • Outlines the general duty of public authorities in relation to water.	• Implements River basin districts and characterisation of RBDs and River Basin Management Plans. • Requires the public to be informed and consulted on the Plan and for progress reports to be published on RBDs. • Implements a Register of protected areas, Classification systems and Monitoring programmes for water bodies.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in

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waters) Regulations (as amended)	• Identifies the competent authorities in charge of water policy (amended to Irish Water (now Uisce Eireann) in 2013) and gives EPA and the CER the authority to regulate and supervise their actions.	• Allows the competent authority to recover the cost of damage/destruction of status of water body. • Outlines environmental objectives and programme of measures and environmental quality standards for priority substances. • Outlines criteria for assessment of groundwater. • Outlines environmental objectives to be achieved for surface water bodies. • Outlines surface water quality standards. • Establishes threshold values for the classification and protection of surface waters against pollution and deterioration in quality.	combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Flood Risk Management Plans arising from National Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Programme	The national Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) programme commenced in Ireland in 2011 and is being overseen by the Office of Public Works. The CFRAM Programme is intended to deliver on core components of the National Flood Policy, adopted in 2004, and on the requirements of the EU Floods Directive.	CFRAM Studies have been undertaken for all River Basin Districts. The studies are focusing on areas known to have experienced flooding in the past and areas that may be subject to flooding in the future either due to development pressures or climate change. Flood Risk and Hazard mapping, including Flood Extent Mapping, was finalised in 2017. The final outputs from the studies are the CFRAM Plans, finalised in 2018. The Plans define the current and future flood risk in the River Basin Districts and set out how this risk can be managed.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Food Harvest 2020	Food Harvest 2020 is a roadmap for the Irish food industry, as it seeks to innovate and expand in response to increased global demand for quality foods. It sets out a vision for the potential growth in agricultural output after the removal of milk quotas.	Seeks for the improvement of all agricultural sectors at all levels in terms of sustainability, environmental consideration and marketing development.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Food Vision 2030	The Food Vision 2030 Strategy is a new ten-year Strategy for the Irish agri-food sector (taken to include primary agriculture, food and drink processing and manufacturing, fisheries, aquaculture and fish processing, forestry and forestry processing and the equine sector). The strategy has an aim of delivering a climate-neutral food system by 2050, with verifiable progress by 2030.	The Strategy consists of 22 Goals, grouped into four high-level Missions for the sector to work toward: 1. A Climate Smart, Environmentally Sustainable Agri-Food Sector 2. Viable and Resilient Primary Producers with Enhanced Well-Being 3. Food Which is Safe, Nutritious And Appealing, Trusted And Valued at Home and Abroad 4. An Innovative, Competitive and Resilient Agri-Food Sector, Driven by Technology And Talent	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Food Wise 2025 (DAFM)	Food Wise 2025 sets out a ten year plan for the agri-food sector. It underlines the sector's unique and special position within the Irish economy, and it illustrates the potential which exists for this sector to grow even further.	Food Wise 2025 identifies ambitious and challenging growth projections for the industry over the next ten years including: • 85% increase in exports to €19 billion. • 70% increase in value added to €13 billion. • 60% increase in primary production to €10 billion. The creation of 23,000 additional jobs all along the supply chain from producer level to high end value added product development.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Governments White Paper 'Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future' (2015 – 2030)	The White Paper sets out a vision and a framework to guide Irish energy policy between now and 2030. A complete energy policy update informed by the vision to transform Ireland into a low carbon society and economy by 2050.	2030 will represent a significant milestone, meaning: • Reduced GHG emissions from the energy sector by between 80% and 95% • Ensuring that secure supplies of competitive and affordable energy remain available to citizens and businesses.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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GRID25 Implementation Programme and associated Grid Implementation Plan 2023-2028 for the Electricity Transmission System in Ireland	Grid25 is a high-level strategy outlining how EirGrid intends to undertake the development of the electricity transmission grid in the short-, medium- and longer-terms, to support a long-term sustainable and reliable electricity supply. This Grid25 Implementation Programme (IP) is a practical strategic overview of how the early stages of Grid25 are intended to be implemented. The IP identifies the best current understanding of those parts of the transmission system that are envisaged as likely to be developed over the next five years. The IP identifies the issues, objectives and associated processes that will need to be adopted when making decisions about how and where developments will occur. This Grid Implementation Plan 2023-2028 supersedes the Grid Implementation Plan 2017-2022. It is focused on the Transmission Development Plan (TDP) 2023-2032.	Grid25, EirGrid's roadmap to upgrade the electricity transmission grid by 2025, continues to be implemented so as to increase the capacity of the grid, to satisfy future demand, and to help Ireland meet its target of 40 per cent of electricity from renewable energy by 2020. • The EirGrid Shaping Our Electricity Future Version 1.1 (SOEF - published in June 2023) is a core context for grid development as part of this Plan. The SOEF addresses matters such as why EirGrid develops the electricity transmission network, Government policy context that underpins this, and the importance of an efficient and economical grid network. • The Transmission Development Plan (TDP) 2023 also forms a core context for this Plan. The TDP lists the committed projects and projects under development for the enhancement of the Irish transmission network over the coming ten years.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Healthy Ireland Implementation Plan 2023-2027	This plan sets out the direction for the HSE to deliver its national *Healthy Ireland Strategic Action Plan 2021-2025*. The HSE aims to support a healthy Ireland, where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone's responsibility.	This Health Services Healthy Ireland Implementation Plan 2023-2027 has four mail goals: 1. Increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life. 2. Reduce health inequalities. 3. Protect the public from threats to health and wellbeing. 4. Create an environment where every individual and sector of society can play their part in achieving a Healthy Ireland.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Heritage related legislation and guidelines: • National Monuments Act 1930 as amended; • Historic and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act (2023) • Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1999; and • The Heritage Act 2018. • Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities	Irish Heritage regulations that are relevant to the CDP. Broadly, this legislation is designed to conserve and enhance heritage. The *National Monuments Act 1930*, which provides national legislation for the protection of monuments, historical wrecks and archaeological objects, has been replaced by the *Historic and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act (2023).* This new Act will provide for the protection of historic and archaeological heritage. A new 'Register of Monuments' will be established, replacing several overlapping designation and registration systems currently in operation. Newly discovered archaeological sites will be afforded immediate legal protection, mirroring the existing system for archaeological objects and historic wrecks that are automatically protected without a need for formal designation or registration. This will be reinforced by a statutory reporting scheme for finds of monuments. Subject to certain exceptions, archaeological objects with no known owner will automatically become the property of the State. A new civil enforcement procedure can be used as an alternative to, or to supplement, criminal proceedings. The new Act also makes explicit provision for the protection of World Heritage Sites.	Irish Heritage regulations that are relevant to the CDP. Broadly, this legislation is designed to conserve and enhance heritage.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Housing for All (2021)	Housing for All (2021) is the Government's housing plan to 2030. The overall aim of the housing plan for Ireland is that everyone in the State should have access to a home to purchase or rent at an affordable price, built to a high standard and in the right place, offering a high quality of life. The plan's vision is to have a steady supply of housing in the correct locations with economic, social, and environmental sustainability built into the system.	Housing for All provides four pathways to achieving its overarching objectives: • Supporting Homeownership and Increasing Affordability. • Eradicating Homelessness, Increasing Social Housing Delivery and Supporting Social Inclusion. • Increasing New Housing Supply. • Addressing Vacancy and Efficient Use of Existing Stock.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
HSE Healthy Ireland Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2025	The vision is: "*A Healthy Ireland, where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone's responsibility.*"	These four goals are interlinked, interdependent and mutually supportive: • Goal 1: Increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life • Goal 2: Reduce health inequalities • Goal 3: Protect the public from threats to health and wellbeing • Goal 4: Create an environment where every individual and sector of society can play their part in achieving a healthy Ireland	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

National Level			
Legislation, Plans, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower-level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance of the Plan**
Ireland 2040: The National Development Plan (2021 - 2030)	The National Development Plan 2021-2030 (NDP) sets out the Government's over-arching investment strategy and budget for the period 2021-2030. It sets out the investment priorities that will underpin the successful implementation of the new National Planning Framework. This will guide national, regional and local planning and investment decisions in Ireland over the next two decades, to cater for an expected population increase of over 1 million people.	The key role of the NDP is to set out the updated configuration for public capital investment over the next 10 years in order to achieve the National Strategic Outcomes (NSO), as set out within the NPF. These ten National Strategic Outcomes are as follows: 1. Compact Growth 2. Enhanced Regional Accessibility 3. Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities 4. Sustainable Mobility 5. A Strong Economy, supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills 6. High-Quality International Connectivity 7. Enhanced Amenity and Heritage 8. Transition to a Low-Carbon and Climate-Resilient Society 9. Sustainable Management of Water and other Environmental Resources 10. Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Planning Framework (First Revision) 2025	The revised National Planning Framework (NPF) published in April 2025 replaced the National Planning Framework (2018) and now informs the wider Government Policy agenda, the actions of a broad range of public and private bodies, including homebuilders, the renewable energy sector, infrastructure agencies and domestic and international investors. • The focus of the revised NPF have been the following key drivers of change in Ireland: • Population growth and associated housing requirements • Infrastructure delivery • Climate and Environment	The revised NPF's ambition is expressed in a set of goals, termed National Strategic Outcomes: 1. Compact Growth 2. Enhanced Regional Accessibility 3. Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities 4. High-Quality International Connectivity 5. Sustainable Mobility 6. A Strong Economy 7. Enhanced Amenities and Heritage 8. Transition to a Carbon Neutral and Climate Resilient Society 9. Sustainable Management of Environmental Resources	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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	• The revised NPF now provides the basis of review and updating of regional strategies and local authority development plans to reflect matters such as updated housing figures, projected jobs growth, renewable energy capacity allocations, including through the zoning of land for residential, employment and a range of other purposes. The implementation of the Planning and Development Act 2024 will also be closely aligned with the implementation of the revised NPF, with updated regional strategies and new 10-year development plans required to reflect the revised NPF as they are prepared.	10. Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services	
Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023 - 2030	Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) sets the national biodiversity agenda for the period 2023-2030 and aims to deliver the transformative changes required to the ways in which we value and protect nature.	It will continue to implement actions within the framework of five strategic objectives, while addressing new and emerging issues: • Objective 1 - Adopt a Whole of Government, Whole of Society Approach to Biodiversity. • Objective 2 - Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs. • Objective 3 - Secure Nature's Contribution to People. • Objective 4 - Enhance the Evidence Base for Action on Biodiversity. • Objective 5 - Strengthen Ireland's Contribution to International Biodiversity Initiatives.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plans, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower-level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance of the Plan**
Ireland's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Projections 2023-2050	This EPA report provides an assessment of Ireland's total projected greenhouse gas emissions out to 2050 which includes an assessment of progress towards achieving its National ambitions under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 and EU emission reduction targets for 2030 as set under the EU Effort Sharing Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2018/842).	The focus of the assessment is out to 2030 given current national and EU 2030 climate targets. Extended projections out to 2050 are provided in the Appendix and as a separate download accompanying this report.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Ireland's Long-term Strategy on Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction 2024	This long-term strategy aims to build on the targets, policies, measures and actions that Ireland has committed to in the period to 2030 (as set out in success annual national Climate Action Plans and the EU National Energy and Climate Plans.	The Strategy sets out Ireland's 2050 climate action targets and describes sector-specific pathways to reaching those targets. These sectors include: • Electricity • Industry • Built Environment • Transport • Agriculture, Forestry and Land-Use	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Ireland's Second National Implementation Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals (2022 - 2024)	• National Implementation Plan 2022 - 2024 is in direct response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and provides a whole-of-government approach to implement the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). • The first version of the Plan (2018 – 2020) provided a 'SDG Matrix' which identifies the responsible Government Departments for each of the • 169 targets. It also included a 'SDG Policy Map' indicating the relevant national policies for each of the targets.	The Plan identifies five strategic objectives to guide implementation: • To embed the SDG framework into the work of Government Departments to achieve greater Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development; • To integrate the SDGs into Local Authority work to better support the localisation of the SDGs; • Greater partnerships for the Goals; • To further incorporate the principle of Leave No One Behind into Ireland's Agenda 2030 implementation and reporting mechanisms; and • Strong reporting mechanisms	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Land Use Review – Phase 1 (2023)	This review provides an evidence base to determine the environmental, ecological and economic characteristics of land types across Ireland. It gives a holistic understanding of current land use patterns to shape future polices and measures. This review aids in ensuring optimal land use options inform all relevant Government decisions.	The primary objective of this report is to inform phase 2 of the Land Use Review, which will build on the evidence gathered. Phase 2 will, in consultation with all stakeholders and land users, go on to consider the policies, measures, and actions which will need to be taken — in the context of the Government's wider economic, social and climate objectives.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 (as amended)	This act is designed to regulate the maritime area within Ireland. This regulation will be achieved by means of the National Marine Planning Framework. • The Act provides the legislative framework for a new streamlined development consent process for activities in the maritime area including offshore renewable energy projects. The Bill will also establish a new body, the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority to undertake certain consenting and enforcement functions in the new regime. Enactment and implementation of the Bill will help Ireland to reach its climate action and renewable energy targets.	The key features of the plan are as follows: • Provision of Maritime Area Consents (MACs) for permission to occupy a maritime area over undefined or relatively long periods of time. • It is required that projects obtain a MAC as a pre-requisite before seeking planning permission for developments which fall under the Planning and Development Act 2000. • Provision of licenses for certain maritime usages which do not require planning permission or an EIA. Establishment of a Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) which will grant MACs, license specified maritime usages, ensure compliance with MACs, licenses and offshore planning permissions.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Ministerial Guidelines such as Strategic Environmental Assessment Guidelines and Flood Risk Management Guidelines	The Department produces a range of guidelines designed to help planning authorities, An Bord Pleanála, developers and the general public and cover a wide range of issues amongst others, architectural heritage, wind energy, childcare facilities, landscape, quarries and residential density.	The Minister issues statutory guidelines under Section 28 of the Act which planning authorities and An Bord Pleanála are obliged to have regard to in the performance of their planning functions.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plans, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower-level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance of the Plan**
National Adaptation Framework: Planning for a Climate Resilient Ireland 2024, and Sectoral Adaptation Plans	This framework specifies the national strategy for the application of adaptation measures in different sectors and by local authorities to reduce the vulnerability of Ireland to the negative effects of climate change and to avail of any positive effects that may occur. It sets out an extended suite of guiding principles that underscore the need for smarter, faster and transformative adaptation actions, which demand a pathway planning approach to account for a range of future warming and impact scenarios. It acts as a roadmap for governments, organisations, and communities to plan and implement adaptation strategies. The Framework helps coordinate efforts, allocate resources, and prioritise actions that reduce vulnerability and enhance resilience. A robust framework not only enables more effective responses to immediate climate related challenges but also fosters long-term sustainability by ensuring that adaptation measures are integrated into policymaking, infrastructure development, and local planning.	Key actions under the framework: • Putting in place revised governance and reporting arrangements • Formalising the status of existing guidelines • Formalising long term operational support for key sectors • Facilitating the establishment of regional local authority climate action offices • Increasing awareness around climate adaptation and resilience • Integrating climate adaptation into key national plans and policies	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Air Pollution Control Programme (NAPCP)	The National Air Pollution Control Programme (NAPCP) is a technical document which outlines the pathway Ireland will follow to achieve compliance with its commitments under the National Emission Ceilings Directive (NEC Directive). The National Emissions Ceilings Directive (NEC Directive) establishes emission ceilings for 2020 and 2030 for five specified pollutants: nitrogen oxides (NOx), non-methane volatile organic compounds (NMVOCs), sulphur dioxide (SO2), ammonia (NH3) and fine particulate matter (PM2.5). It also mandates the development of a National Air Pollution Control Programme (NAPCP) for each Member State.	The programme includes: • An overview of sectors and national policy frameworks in Ireland that impact on emissions of the five NEC pollutants • An overview of the current outlook for compliance with NEC targets for each pollutant • Projections of relevant pollutant emissions to 2030 • Policy options, measures and actions across sectors but in particular in the residential, transport agricultural and energy sectors aimed at reducing emissions of the five specified air pollutants	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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National Broadband Plan (2019)	The National Broadband Plan (NBP) is the government's initiative to deliver high speed broadband services to all premises in Ireland. This will be delivered through investment by commercial enterprises coupled with intervention by the State in those parts of the country where private companies have no plans to invest.	The Plan sets out: • A clear statement of Government policy on the delivery of High Speed Broadband. • Specific targets for the delivery and rollout of high speed broadband and the speeds to be delivered. • The strategy and interventions that will underpin the successful implementation of these targets. • A series of specific complementary measures to promote implementation of Government policy in this area.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Demand Management Strategy - Moving Together: A Strategic Approach to Improving the Efficiency of Ireland's Transport System	The Strategy encourages an urban first approach to rolling out measures, where other travel options exist, and aims to improve journey times for car drivers, public transport users, business and freight, leading to improvements in local air quality and reduced stress with associated health benefits for drivers and non-drivers alike.	The Strategy does not contain a prescriptive series of actions. Instead, it provides a firm policy direction and suite of options - such as road space reallocation, progressive taxation, freight efficiency, or behavioural incentives - that can be taken at national, regional and local levels to bring about the systems changed needed. It is also intended that the Strategy will provide guidance needed for local authorities and local council representatives to develop plans for their own areas that suit their own communities' needs best.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030	The NECP outlines Ireland's energy and climate policies in detail for the period from 2021 to 2030 and looks onwards to 2050. The NECP is a consolidated plan which brings together energy and climate planning into a single process for the first time.	The NECP facilitates the ongoing analysis at EU level. It will be revised to bring it in line with the 7% trajectory and to include policies and measures currently being developed to achieve the 7% trajectory.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Energy Security Framework	The Framework outlines the structures which are in place within Government to monitor and manage our energy supplies. It sets out the plans which are in place to deal with energy security emergencies should they arise, and outlines out how these plans will be tested in light of the war in Ukraine. The Framework also sets out how Government can support households and businesses, with a particular focus on protecting those most at risk of fuel poverty, how it is already ensuring Ireland's energy security, how it will speed up the country's shift to increased energy efficiency and indigenous renewable energy systems. It also sets out how consumers and businesses can be supported to save energy and save money.	The Framework sets out the government's action in response to these issues across three key themes: • managing the impact on consumers and businesses, with a specific focus on financially vulnerable residential consumers in the short-term • ensuring security of energy supply in the near term, with a focus on the period up to and including winter 2022/23 • reducing our dependency on imported fossil fuels, in the context of the phasing out of Russian energy imports across the EU	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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National Forestry Programme 2023 – 2027	The national Forestry Programme 2023-2027 came into force in 2023, as soon as State Aid approval by the European Commission has been received. The new Programme sets out increased support for a number of schemes.	The Forestry Programme 2023-2027 contains a series of eight different interventions: • Forest creation; • Agroforestry; • Infrastructure and technology investments; • Sustainable forest management; • Developing skills and empowering the forest sector for sustainable forest management; • Open forests - social, cultural and heritage forests; • Climate resilient reforestation; • Reconstruction.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Hazardous Waste Management Plan (EPA) 2021 - 2027	This Plan sets out the priorities to be pursued over the next six years and beyond to improve the management of hazardous waste, taking into account the progress made since the previous plan and the waste policy and legislative changes that have occurred since the previous plan was published. Section 26 of the Waste Management Act 1996, as amended, sets out the overarching objectives for the National Hazardous Waste Management Plan. In this context, the following objectives are included as priorities for the revised Plan period: • To prevent and reduce the generation of hazardous waste by industry and society generally; • To maximise the collection of hazardous waste with a • view to reducing the environmental and health impacts of any unregulated waste;	The revised Plan makes 20 recommendations under the following topics: • Policy and Regulation • Prevention • Collection and Treatment • Implementation	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plans, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower-level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance of the Plan**
	• To strive for increased self-sufficiency in the management of hazardous waste and to minimise hazardous waste export; • To minimise the environmental, health, social and economic impacts of hazardous waste generation and management.		
National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI) 2021	• NIFTI is the Department of Transport's framework for prioritising future investment in the land transport network to support the delivery of the National Strategic Outcomes. The NIFTI will guide transport investment in the years ahead to enable the National Planning Framework, support the Climate Action Plan, and promote social, environmental and economic outcomes throughout Ireland.	The four investment priorities stated in NIFTI are: • Mobility of people and goods in urban areas. • Protection and renewal. • Enhanced regional and rural connectivity. • Decarbonisation.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025 and National Landscape Character	• The National Landscape Strategy will be used to ensure compliance with the European Landscape Convention and to establish principles for protecting and enhancing the landscape while positively managing its change. It will provide a high level policy framework to achieve balance between the protection, management and planning of the landscape by way of supporting actions.	The objectives of the National Landscape Strategy are to: • Implement the European Landscape Convention by integrating landscape into the approach to sustainable development; • Establish and embed a public process of gathering, sharing and interpreting scientific, technical and cultural information in order to carry out evidence-based identification and description of the character, resources and processes of the landscape;	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plans, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower-level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance of the Plan**
	• Landscape Strategy Vision: "Our landscape reflects and embodies our cultural values and our shared natural heritage and contributes to the well-being of our society, environment and economy. We have an obligation to ourselves and to future generations to promote its sustainable protection, management and planning."	• Provide a policy framework, which will put in place measures at national, sectoral - including agriculture, tourism, energy, transport and marine - and local level, together with civil society, to protect, manage and properly plan through high quality design for the sustainable stewardship of the landscape; • Ensure that we take advantage of opportunities to implement policies relating to landscape use that are complementary and mutually reinforcing and that conflicting policy objectives are avoided in as far as possible.	
National legislation transposing the Industrial Emissions Directive, including: • Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992, amended by the Protection of the Environment Act 2003; and • Environmental Protection Agency (Integrated Pollution Control) (Licensing) Regulations 2013. • European Union (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992)(Amendment) Regulations 2020	The purpose of this Directive is to lay down rules to prevent or, where that is not practicable, to reduce industrial emissions into air, water and land and to prevent the generation of waste, in order to achieve a high level of environmental protection. This legislation transposes the provisions of the Directive.	The legislation covers industrial activities in the following sectors: • energy; • metal production and processing; • minerals; • chemicals; • waste management; • and other sectors such as pulp and paper production, slaughterhouses and the intensive rearing of poultry and pigs. All installations covered by the directive must prevent and reduce pollution by applying the best available techniques (BATs)* and address efficient energy use, waste prevention and management and measures to prevent accidents and limit their consequences.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plans, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower-level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance of the Plan**
• Environmental Protection Agency (Industrial Emissions)(Licensing) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. • European Union (Industrial Emissions) Regulations 2013 • Environmental Protection Agency (Industrial Emissions) (Licensing) Regulations 2013. • Environmental Protection Agency (Licensing Fees) Regulations 2013			
National Marine Planning Framework 2021	The NMPF is a key consideration for decision makers on all marine authorisations. The NMPF creates the overarching framework for decision making that is consistent, evidence based, and secures a sustainable future for the maritime area.	The National Marine Planning Framework is a succinct strategic document that will deal with, inter alia, the following environmental, social and economic issues: • Key marine activities such as fisheries, tourism, transport, offshore renewable energy generation, oil and gas exploration and production, aquaculture, and how they interact; • Climate change and related impacts; • Communities and health; • Cultural heritage; • Marine environment and biodiversity; Transboundary interactions with other jurisdictions.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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National Mitigation Plan 2017	The National Mitigation Plan represents an initial step in transitioning Ireland to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050. This whole-of-government Plan draws on the perspectives and responsibilities of a range of government departments, and reflects the central roles of key ministers responsible for electricity generation, the built environment, transport and agriculture.	The Plan includes over 100 individual actions for ministers and public bodies to implement and began the process of developing medium to long term mitigation choices for the next and future decades. The Plan is structured across several key themes: • Climate Action Policy Framework • Decarbonising Electricity Generation • Decarbonising the Built Environment • Decarbonising Transport An Approach to Carbon Neutrality for Agriculture, Forest and Land Use Sectors	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Peatlands Strategy (2015-2025)	This Strategy aims to provide a long-term framework within which all of the peatlands within the State can be managed responsibly in order to optimise their social, environmental and economic contribution to the well-being of this and future generations.	Objectives of the Strategy: • To give direction to Ireland's approach to peatland • management. • To apply to all peatlands, including peat soils. • To ensure that the relevant State authorities and state owned companies that influence such decisions contribute to meeting cross-cutting objectives and obligations in their policies and actions. • To ensure that Ireland's peatlands are sustainably managed so that their benefits can be enjoyed responsible. • To inform appropriate regulatory systems to facilitate good decision making in support of responsible use. • To inform the provision of appropriate incentives, financial supports and disincentives where required. • To provide a framework for determining and ensuring the most appropriate future use of cutover and cutaway bogs.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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		To ensure that specific actions necessary for the achievement of its objectives are clearly identified and delivered by those involved in or responsible for peatlands management or for decisions affecting their management.	
National Policy Framework on Alternative Fuels Infrastructure for Transport in Ireland 2017 to 2030	• This National Policy Framework on Alternative Fuels Infrastructure for Transport represents the first step in communicating our longer term national vision for decarbonising transport by 2050, the cornerstone of which is our ambition that by 2030 all new cars and vans sold in Ireland will be zero-emissions capable. • By 2030 it is envisaged that the movement in Ireland to electrically-fuelled cars and commuter rail will be well underway, with natural gas and biofuels developing as major alternatives in the freight and bus sectors. • This Framework sets targets to achieve an appropriate level of alternative fuels infrastructure for transport, which is relative to national policy and Irish market needs. Non-infrastructure-based incentives to support the use of the infrastructure and the uptake of alternative fuels are also included within the scope of the Framework.	This policy set out to achieve five key goals in transport: • Reduce overall travel demand • Maximise the efficiency of the transport network • Reduce reliance on fossil fuels • Reduce transport emissions • Improve accessibility to transport These goals remain the cornerstone of transport policy and are fully aligned to the objectives of this National Policy Framework. Targets for alternative fuel infrastructure include the following: • AFV forecasts • Electricity targets • Natural gas (CNG, LNG) targets • Hydrogen targets • Biofuels targets • LPG targets • Synthetic and paraffinic fuels targets	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plans, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower-level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance of the Plan**
National Ports Policy 2013	The core objective of National Ports Policy is to facilitate a competitive and effective market for maritime transport services.	National Ports Policy introduces clear categorisation of the ports sector into Ports of National Significance (Tier 1), Ports of National Significance (Tier 2) and Ports of Regional Significance.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Retrofit Plan	The National Retrofit Plan sets out how the Government will deliver on the Climate Action Plan targets of retrofitting the equivalent of 500,000 homes to a BER of B2/cost-optimal and installing 400,000 heat pumps in existing homes to replace older, less efficient heating systems by the end of 2030.	The Plan is designed to address barriers to retrofit across four key pillars: driving demand and activity; financing and funding; supply chain, skills and standards; and governance. For each pillar, barriers were identified and time-bound policies, measures and actions were put in place to address them. The initiatives in the Plan were guided by a number of key principles.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plans, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower-level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance of the Plan**
National Roads 2040	NR2040 sets out TII's long-term strategy for the maintenance, development, and management of Ireland's National Roads network. NR2040 is fully aligned with NIFTI and Project Ireland 2040 and focuses on strategic issues for National Roads identified by TII.	The following objectives have been defined. • Safe and efficient transport network for people and goods • Environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable • Tailored for different customers in different places Managed and improved as a key public asset	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Rural Development Programme	The National Rural Development Programme, prepared by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, sets out a national programme based on the EU framework for rural development and prioritises improving the competitiveness of agriculture, improving the environment and improving the quality of life in rural areas	At a more detailed level, the programme also: • Supports structural change at farm level including training young farmers and encouraging early retirement, support for restructuring, development and innovation; • Aims to improve the environment, biodiversity and the amenity value of the countryside by support for land management through funds such as Natura 2000 payments etc.; and • Aims to improve quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of economic activity through the implementation of local development strategies such as non-agricultural activities	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plans, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower-level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance of the Plan**
National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development 2030	Article 34 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Common Fisheries Policy ('the CFP'), on the promotion of sustainable aquaculture, calls for the establishment of multiannual national strategic aquaculture plans. The NSPSA 2030 is the second such plan under the current CFP.	This Plan proposes 58 actions to be implemented over the period up to 2030. The purpose is as follows: • To align and mainstream the recently updated but non-binding guidance for the sustainable development of EU aquaculture (2021 – 2030) with national aquaculture sector planning. • To help inform the investment priorities for aquaculture in Ireland's new Seafood Development Programme 2021-2027 (EMFAF). To provide a framework so that strategic planning for the aquaculture sector in Ireland responds to the latest thinking in terms of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for Irish aquaculture in order to promote the development of a sustainable and forward-looking sector.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Sustainable Mobility Policy and the Sustainable Mobility Policy Action Plan 2022 - 2025	The National Sustainable Mobility Policy sets out a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport journeys to help Ireland meet its climate obligations. It is accompanied by an action plan to 2025 which contains actions to improve and expand sustainable mobility options across the country by providing safe, green, accessible and efficient alternatives to car journeys. It also includes demand management and behavioural change measures to manage daily travel demand more efficiently and to reduce the journeys taken by private car.	The policy aims to deliver at least 500,000 additional daily active travel and public transport journeys by 2030 and a 10% reduction in the number of kilometres driven by fossil fuelled cars. It will make it easier for people to choose walking, cycling and use public transport daily instead of having to use a petrol or diesel car.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plans, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower-level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance of the Plan**
National Transport Authority's Integrated Implementation Plan 2019-2024	Section 13(1) of the Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008 (the DTA Act) requires the NTA to prepare an integrated implementation plan covering a six year period.	In accordance with the DTA Act, the Plan comprises the following: • An infrastructure investment programme, identifying the key objectives and outputs to be pursued by the Authority over the period of the Plan; • The actions to be taken by the Authority to ensure the effective integration of public transport infrastructure over the period of the Plan; • An integrated service plan, identifying the key objectives and outputs to be pursued by the Authority in relation to the procurement of public passenger transport services over the period of the Plan; • The actions to be taken by the Authority in relation to small public service vehicles; • The actions to be taken by the Authority to ensure the effective integration of public passenger transport services over the period of the Plan; and Such other matters as the Authority considers appropriate or as may be prescribed by the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy 2024-2030	The National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy 2024-2030 has been published and replaces the Regional Waste Management Plans. The Plan sets out a framework for the prevention and management of waste in Ireland for the period 2024 to 2030.	The ambition of this Plan is 0% total waste growth per person over the life of the Plan with an emphasis on non-household wastes including waste from commercial activities and the construction and demolition sector. This ambition is underpinned with a comprehensive series of targets, policies, actions and a suite of key deliverables. The Plan is presented in 5 Volumes. • VOLUME I Sets out the current situation including policy, the existing waste landscape and financial, human and market resources deployed. It also identifies the key waste management challenges facing the State.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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		• VOLUME II Sets out the responses to the waste management challenges identified including the Plan ambition, targets, policies and priority actions. Targeted policies and priority actions are identified for a range of focus areas chosen to align with the challenges. • VOLUME III Sets out the delivery roadmap for the responses contained in Volume II and contains key deliverables required to enable the ambition, targets, policies, and actions identified. • VOLUME IV Provides the supporting information for the Plan in a series of technical appendices. • VOLUME V Contains the Strategic Environmental Assessment Statement and Natura Impact Statement. Key challenges identified in the Plan include resources, organisational capability, policy requirements, specific material stream targets, the provision of infrastructure and waste generation.	
A Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy Ireland's National Waste Policy 2020-2025	The Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy is an action-focused plan that will place Ireland at the vanguard of EU efforts. It will act as a roadmap for Ireland to embrace the opportunities in becoming a circular economy in the upcoming decade.	The overarching objectives of this action plan are to: • Shift the focus away from waste disposal and treatment to ensure that materials and products remain in productive use for longer thereby preventing waste and supporting reuse through a policy framework that discourages the wasting of resources and rewards circularity • Make producers who manufacture and sell disposable goods for profit environmentally accountable for the products they place on the market; • Ensure that measures support sustainable economic models (for example by supporting the use of recycled over virgin materials); • Harness the reach and influence of all sectors including the voluntary sector, R&D, producers / manufacturers, regulatory bodies, civic society; and	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plans, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower-level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance of the Plan**
		Support clear and robust institutional arrangements for the waste sector, including through a strengthened role for Local Authorities (LAs).	
National Water Resources Plan (2021)	• The NWRP is a plan on how to provide a safe, secure and reliable water supply to customers for the next 25 years, without causing adverse impact on the environment. The objective of the NWRP is to set out how we intend to maintain the supply and demand for drinking water over the short, medium and long term whilst minimising the impact on the environment.	The key objectives of the plan are to: • Identify areas where there are current and future potential water supply shortfalls, taking into account normal and extreme weather conditions • Assess the current and future water demand from homes, businesses, farms, and industry • Consider the impacts of climate change on Ireland's water resources • Develop a drought plan advising measures to be taken before and during drought events • Develop a plan detailing how we deal with the material that is produced as a result of treating drinking water • Identify, develop and assess options to help meet potential shortfalls in water supplies Assess the water resources available at a national level including lakes, rivers and groundwater	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025	The policy provides a framework for the development of rural Ireland over the next five years.	The policy focuses on the following thematic objectives: • Optimising the opportunities for rural communities from high speed broadband. • Supporting improved quality employment and career opportunities in rural areas. • Assisting the regeneration, repopulation and development of rural towns and villages. • Enhancing the participation, leadership and resilience of rural communities. • Enhancing public services in rural areas • Supporting a Just Transition to a climate neutral economy. • Supporting the sustainability of Agriculture, the	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plans, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower-level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance of the Plan**
		• Marine and Forestry. • Supporting the sustainability of our island and coastal communities. • Nurturing our culture and heritage	
Our Sustainable Future: A framework for Sustainable Development for Ireland 2012	A medium to long term framework for advancing sustainable development and the green economy in Ireland. It identifies spatial planning as a key challenge for sustainable development and sets a series of measures to address these challenges.	Sets out the challenges facing us and how we might address them in making sure that quality of life and general wellbeing can be improved and sustained in the decades to come.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Planning and Development Acts	The principal objectives of these are to provide a framework for land use planning and development control – with a view to promoting proper planning and sustainable development	• Development, with certain exceptions, is subject to development control under the Planning and Development Acts and the local authorities grant or refuse planning permission for development, including ones within protected areas. • There are, however, a range of exemptions from the planning system. Use of land for agriculture, peat extraction and afforestation, subject to certain thresholds, is generally exempt from the requirement to obtain planning permission. • Additionally, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required for a range of classes and large scale projects.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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		• Under planning legislation, Development Plans must include mandatory objectives for the conservation of the natural heritage and for the conservation of European sites and any other sites which may be prescribed. There are also discretionary powers to set objectives for the conservation of a variety of other elements of the natural heritage.	
Planning, Land Use and Transport Outlook 2040 (PLUTO)	PLUTO's objective is to develop a transport investment framework which delivers a land transport network that meets the travel needs of the population in the coming decades and which supports the National Strategic Outcomes of Project Ireland 2040.	The PLUTO will take account of forecasted future economic and demographic scenarios, affordability considerations and relevant Government policies and will: • Quantify in broad terms the appropriate scale of financial investment in land transport over the long term; • Consider how fiscal, environmental and technological developments might impact on this investment; and, • Identify strategic priorities for future investment to ensure land transport infrastructure provision facilitates the objectives of Project Ireland 2040.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Raised Bog SAC Management Plan and Review of Raised Bog Natural Heritage Areas 2017 - 2022	Aims to meet nature conservation obligations while having regard to national and local economic, social and cultural needs	• Ensure that the implications of management choices for water levels, quantity and quality are fully explored, understood and factored into policy making and land use planning. • Review the current raised bog NHA network in terms of its contribution to the national conservation objective for raised bog habitats and determine the most suitable sites to replace the losses of active raised bog habitat and high bog areas within the SAC network and to enhance the national network of NHAs.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Renewable Electricity Spatial Policy Framework (RESPF)	Under Action EL/23/2 of CAP23, the Renewable Electricity Spatial Policy Framework (RESPF) is currently being prepared. In effect, this will be the national policy for onshore renewable electricity and will inform and reshape the development and distribution of onshore renewables in order to enable the delivery of Ireland's renewable electricity targets, as set out in CAP23. The RESPF will promote a plan-led and evidence-based approach to the allocation of renewable electricity spatial and generation targets across the three Regional Assemblies, to facilitate the achievement of the national target of 80% RES-E by 2030.	• The objective of this spatial policy framework is to effectively translate renewable electricity objectives, as those outlined in Climate Action Plan 2023, to the regional level and allocate regional spatial and renewable generation capacity targets.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Renewable Energy Ireland Strategy (2023)	The vision of the Strategy is to ensure by 2050 that Ireland will be energy independent through using indigenous, clean, carbon-free renewable energy supported by, and supporting, communities across the country.	Priority actions for the Strategy include: • Use the Planning and Development Acts to instruct An Bord Pleanála to prioritise planning applications for renewable energy and associated grid infrastructure. • Delivery of grid is a necessary foundation for decarbonisation of the economy. Market designs must include system services, flexibility, and capacity markets and fully exploit demand side resources. • Simplify administrative & regulatory requirements for renewable heat, energy efficiency, flexible demand, and storage technologies • Encourage EVs, enhanced public mobility and cycling infrastructure while harnessing Ireland's strengths for the appropriate use of sustainable biofuels and green hydrogen. • Bring together industry, Government and other key stakeholders to identify ways to cut the price of renewable energy in Ireland so that we can deliver clean energy at the lowest possible price for Irish consumers.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Rural Environmental Protection Scheme (REPS) **Agri-Environmental Options Scheme (AEOS)** **Green, Low-Carbon, Agri-environment Scheme (GLAS)**	• Agri-environmental funding schemes aimed at rural development for the environmental enhancement and protection. • GLAS is the new replacement for REPS and AEOS which are both expiring.	• Establish best practice farming methods and production methods in order to protect landscapes and maximise conservation. • Protect biodiversity, endangered species of flora and fauna and wildlife habitats. • Ensure food is produced with the highest regard to the environment. • Implement nutrient management plans and grassland management plans. • Protect and maintain water bodies, wetlands and cultural heritage.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
S.I. No. 435 of 2004 (European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011 (European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011)	• The purpose of these Regulations is to transpose into Irish law Directive 2001/42/EC of 27 June 2001 (O.J. No. L 197, 21 July 2001) on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment — commonly known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive.	• The Regulations cover plans and programmes in all of the sectors listed in article 3(2) of the Directive except land-use planning. • These Regulations also amend certain provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 to provide the statutory basis for the transposition of the Directive in respect of land-use planning. • Transposition in respect of the land-use planning sector is contained in the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 436 of 2004).	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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S.I. No. 436 of 2004 (Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011 (Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011).	• The purpose of these Regulations is to transpose into Irish law Directive 2001/42/EC of 27 June 2001 (O.J. No. L 197, 21 July 2001) on the assessment of the effects of sstatutory land use plan on the environment — commonly known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive.	• The Regulations cover statutory land use plans, including Development Plans, Local Area Plans, Regional Planning Guidelines etc. •	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
S.I. 79 of 2008 - Bathing Water Quality Regulations 2008, as amended (latest S.I. No. 322/2024)	• These Regulations provide for transposition of the EU Bathing Water Directive 2006 (Directive 2006/7/EC of 15 February 2006) which aims: • To improve health protection for bathers • To establish a more pro-active approach to management of bathing waters, and • To promote increased public involvement and dissemination of information to the public.	• The Regulations establish a new classification system for bathing water quality based on four classifications “poor”, “sufficient”, “good” and “excellent” and generally require that a classification of at least “sufficient” be achieved by 2015 for all bathing waters. • Local authorities must take appropriate measures with a view to improving waters which are classified as “poor” and increasing the number of bathing waters classified as “good” or “excellent”. • A permanent advice against bathing must be issued in a case where a bathing water is classified as “poor” for five consecutive years. • Local authorities are required annually to identify bathing waters, establish a monitoring calendar, carry out the specified monitoring, report the results to the EPA, carry out appropriate management measures where necessary and provide information to the public. • There must be public participation in the identification of waters and the general implementation of the Regulations.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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		• The EPA is required by the Regulations to classify bathing waters, generally on the basis of the monitoring results for the four preceding bathing seasons, and to publish an annual report in relation to bathing water quality. • Monitoring by local authorities is to commence not later than 2011 with a view to ensuring that a classification is assigned to bathing waters not later than 2015. • Private controllers of access lands may be required to contribute towards the costs incurred by a local authority or the EPA.	
S.I. No. 113/2022 - European Union (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2022, as amended	The purpose of the Regulations is to provide a basic set of measures to ensure the protection of waters, including drinking water sources, against pollution caused by nitrogen and phosphorus from agricultural sources, with the primary emphasis on the management of livestock manures and other fertilisers. The set of measures also provide some basic safeguards against possible harmful impacts on water quality arising from agricultural expansion. This basic set of measures has been strengthened over the last two reviews and this new programme provides a further strengthened set of measures to help reduce nitrogen and phosphorus losses from agriculture and contribute to improvements in water quality.	The Regulations include measures such as: • Periods when land application of fertilisers is prohibited • Limits on the land application of fertilisers • Storage requirements for livestock manure; and • Monitoring of the effectiveness of the measures in terms of agricultural practice and impact on water quality.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
S.I. No. 296/2009 - European Communities Environmental Objectives (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) Regulations 2009, as amended (latest S.I 355/2018)	The purpose of these Regulations is to support the achievement of favourable conservation status for freshwater pearl mussels	Actions: • Set environmental quality objectives for the habitats of the freshwater pearl mussel populations named in the First Schedule to these Regulations that are within the boundaries of a site notified in a candidate list of European sites, or designated as a Special Area of Conservation, under the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997 (S.I. No. 94/1997).	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their

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		• Require the production of sub-basin management plans with programmes of measures to achieve these objectives. • Set out the duties of public authorities in respect of the sub-basin management plans and programmes of measure	plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
S.I. No. 9/2010 - European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations 2010, as amended (latest S.I. No. 287/2022)	These Regulations are made to give effect to the measures needed to achieve the environmental objectives established for groundwater by Article 4(1)(b) of the Water Framework Directive (Directive 2000/60/EC) and to give effect to the requirements of the Groundwater Directive (Directive 2006/118/EC) on the protection of groundwater against pollution and deterioration.	The Regulations establish clear environmental objectives to be achieved in groundwater bodies within specified timeframes and introduce the legal basis for a more flexible, proportionate and risk-based approach to implementing the legal obligation to prevent or limit inputs of pollutants into groundwater, which already exists under Directive 80/68/EEC. Measures include: • measures to prevent or limit the input of pollutants into groundwater and to prevent the deterioration of the status of all bodies of groundwater • measures to protect, enhance and restore all bodies of groundwater and to ensure a balance between abstraction and recharge of groundwater, with the aim of achieving good groundwater within a particular timeframe • measures requiring the reversal of any significant and sustained upward trend in the concentration of any pollutant resulting from the impact of human activity in order to progressively reduce pollution of groundwater • measures for determining groundwater quantitative and chemical status • measures establishing procedures for the identification of significant and sustained upward trends and the definition of the starting point for trend reversal • the laying down of rules for the presentation and reporting of groundwater monitoring results, trend assessments and the classification of quantitative status and chemical status of groundwater bodies	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Spatial Planning and National Roads: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012)	These guidelines have been prepared in the context of the delivery of the National Spatial Strategy and the actions identified in Smarter Travel, A Sustainable Transport Future, A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020. The guidelines set out planning policy considerations relating to development affecting national roads (including motorways, national primary and national secondary roads) outside the 50/60 kmh speed limit zones for cities, towns and villages These guidelines have been developed by following a number of key principles and aim to facilitate a well-informed, integrated and consistent approach that affords maximum support for the goal of achieving and maintaining a safe and efficient network of national roads in the broader context of sustainable development strategies, thereby facilitating continued economic growth and development throughout the country.	The following key principles have guided the development of these guidelines: • Land-use and transportation policies are highly interdependent • Proper planning is central to ensuring road safety • Development should be plan-led • Development Management is key to Plan Implementation Planning Authorities and the National roads Authority and other public transport bodies must work closely together	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
State of the Environment Report – Ireland's Environment 2024	The EPA produces state of the environment reports on a four-yearly cycle. These reports provide timely information and knowledge to the public, policymakers and key economic sectors in support of action to protect and manage the environment. The EPA will be publishing the next iteration of our State of the Environment Report later in 2024.	Not applicable.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways (2018)	• The objective of this Strategy is to assist in the strategic development of nationally and regionally significant Greenways in appropriate locations constructed to an appropriate standard in order to deliver a quality experience for all Greenways users. It also aims to increase the number and geographical spread of Greenways of scale and quality around the country over the next 10 years with a consequent significant increase in the number of people using Greenways as a visitor experience and as a recreational amenity.	• A Strategic Greenway network of national and regional routes, with a number of high capacity flagship routes that can be extended and/or link with local Greenways and other cycling and walking infrastructure; • Greenways of scale and appropriate standard that have significant potential to deliver an increase in activity tourism • to Ireland and are regularly used by overseas visitors, • domestic visitors and locals thereby contributing to a healthier society through increased physical activity; • Greenways that provide a substantially segregated offroad experience linking places of interest, recreation and leisure in areas with beautiful scenery of different types with plenty to see and do; • Greenways that provide opportunities for the development of local businesses and economies, and, • Greenways that are developed with all relevant stakeholders in line with an agreed code of practice.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
The Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFE) Directive (2008/50/EC) as transposed into Irish legislation by the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 180 of 2011 as amended)	The Directive sets air quality standards for European Union member states.	Limit values for air quality parameters are set in this Directive.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

National Level			
Legislation, Plans, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower-level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance of the Plan**
The CAP Strategic Plan 2023-2027	Ireland's CAP Strategic Plan provides a framework for the application of the Common Agricultural Policy in Ireland. It aims to promote the agricultural sector and the provision of safe and sustainable food in the county. Ireland as an EU member state is responsible for the running of our own CAP Strategic Plan, in close co-operation with the European Commission, and the EU Court of Auditors as the guardian of EU finances. The CAP is divided into two pillars. Pillar 1 covers direct support and market supports, and rural development is in Pillar 2.	The Irish CAP Strategic Plan aims to: 1. Protect farm family incomes 2. Recognise the hard work of our farm families as food producers regardless of where they are in the country 3. Play a meaningful role in supporting our climate ambitions. It provides for the following: • Pillar 1 agri-environment schemes, including direct support consisting of payments granted directly to farmers and provides baseline income support and operates as a safety net in cases of market disturbances, and market measures to manage and control the agricultural economy. • Pillar 2 direct payments supporting rural development. Ireland's CAP Strategic Plan has a strong emphasis on achievement of a higher level of climate and environment ambition that will be achieved through the CAP's new green architecture. It contains measures that will help to achieve significant improvements in the areas of biodiversity and water quality, as well as contributing to national and EU climate and environmental targets, including through increased sequestration and carbon removal. There are three key areas in the new green architecture: 1. Conditionality 2. Pillar 1 Eco-schemes 3. Pillar 2 climate and environment-related interventions	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plans, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower-level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance of the Plan**
The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009)	• Sets out comprehensive mechanisms for the incorporation of flood risk identification, assessment and management into the planning process. • Ensures flood risk is a key consideration in preparing land use plans and in the assessment of planning applications. • Implementation of the Guidelines is through actions at national, regional, local authority and site-specific levels. • Planning authorities and An Bord Pleanála are required to have regard to the Guidelines in carrying out their functions under the Planning Acts.	• Avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding. • Avoid new developments increasing flood risk elsewhere, including that which may arise from surface water run-off. • Ensure effective management of residual risks for development permitted in floodplains. • Avoid unnecessary restriction of national, regional or local economic and social growth. • Improve the understanding of flood risk among relevant stakeholders. • Ensure that the requirements of EU and national law in relation to the natural environment and nature conservation are complied with at all stages of flood risk management. The 2009 Flood Risk Management Guidelines were amended by Circular PL 2/2014 (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government) that provides advice on the use of OPW flood mapping in assessing planning applications and clarifies some advice from the 2009 Guidelines.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Tourism Policy Statement: People, Place and Policy – Growing Tourism to 2025	The main goal of this policy statement is to have a vibrant, attractive tourism sector that makes a significant contribution to employment across the country; is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable; helps promote a positive image of Ireland overseas, and is a sector in which people want to work.	The Tourism Policy Statement sets three headline targets to be achieved by 2025: • Overseas tourism revenue of €5 billion per year net of inflation excluding carrier receipts; • 250,000 people employed in tourism; and • 10 million overseas visitors to Ireland per year.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plans, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower-level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance of the Plan**
Uisce Eireann Water Services Strategic Plan 2015, Water Services Strategic Plan 2050, and associated Proposed Capital Investment Plan (2020 - 2024)	The Water Services Strategic Plan (WSSP) presents Uisce Éireann's objectives for the next 25 years and the means by which we will achieve them. It aligns to requirements set out in the Water Services (No. 2) Act 2013. The first Water Services Strategic Plan was published in 2015 and are the draft Water Services Strategic Plan 2050 (WSSP 2050) is in the process of consultation which will replace the current plan.	The new Water Services Strategic Plan 2050 will be an important strategic document that will focus on the provision of safe drinking water and ensure that the environment is protected from the impacts of wastewater discharges.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Waste Management Act 1996, as amended	To make provision in relation to the prevention, management and control of waste; to give effect to provisions of certain acts adopted by institutions of the European communities in respect of those matters; to amend the Environmental Protection Agency Act, 1992, and to repeal certain enactments and to provide for related matters.	The Waste Management Act contains a number of key legal obligations, including requirements for waste management planning, waste collection and movement, the authorisation of waste facilities, measures to reduce the production of waste and/or promote its recovery.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plans, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/purpose/objective**	**Summary of lower-level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance of the Plan**
Water Action Plan 2024 - A River Basin Management Plan for Ireland	The Water Action Plan 2024 is Ireland's third River Basin Management Plan and it outlines the measures the Government and other sectors are taking to improve water quality in Ireland's groundwater, rivers, lakes, estuarine and coastal waters, and provide sustainable management of our water resources (as specified under SDG 6). This Water Action Plan enhances and builds upon the work of the first and second cycle plans. Where necessary, this plan addresses the shortcomings experienced during the implementation of previous plans.	The objectives of the Water Framework Directive are (i) To prevent the deterioration of water bodies and to protect, enhance and restore them with the aim of achieving at least good status. (ii) To achieve compliance with the water standards and objectives for designated protected areas.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Water Pollution Acts 1977 to 1990	The Water Pollution Acts allow Local Authorities the authority regulate and supervise actions relating to water in their division.	The Water Pollution Acts enable local authorities to: • Prosecute for water pollution offences. • Attach appropriate pollution control conditions in the licensing of effluent discharges from industry, etc., made to waters. • Issue notices ("section 12 notices") to farmers, etc., specifying measures to be taken within a prescribed period to prevent water pollution. • Issue notices requiring a person to cease the pollution of waters and requiring the mitigation or remedying of any effects of the pollution in the manner and within the period specified in such notices; • Seek court orders, including High Court injunctions, to prevent, terminate, mitigate or remedy pollution/its effects. • Prepare water quality management plans for any waters in or adjoining their functional areas.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Water Services Act 2007, and amendments in 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2022	• Provides the water services infrastructure. • Outlines the responsibilities involved in delivering and managing water services. • Identifies the authority in charge of provision of water and wastewater supply. • Irish Water was given the responsibility of the provision of water and wastewater services in the amendment act during 2013, therefore these services are no longer the responsibility of the 34 Local Authorities in Ireland.	Key strategic objectives include: • Ensuring Irish Water delivers infrastructural projects that meet key public health, environmental and economic objectives in the water services sector. • Ensuring the provision of adequate water and sewerage services. • Ensuring good quality drinking water is available to all consumers of public and group water supplies, in compliance with national and EU drinking water standards • Ensuring the provision of the remaining infrastructure needed to provide secondary wastewater treatment, for compliance with the requirements of the EU Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive. • Promoting water conservation through Irish Water's Capital Investment Plan, the Rural Water Programme and other measures. • Monitoring the on-going implementation of septic tanks inspection regime and the National Inspection Plan for Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems. • Ensuring a fair funding model to deliver water services. Overseeing the establishment of an economic regulation function under the CER.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Wildlife Act of 1976 **Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000** **Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2023**	The act provides protection and conservation of wild flora and fauna.	• Provides protection for certain species, their habitats and important ecosystems • Give statutory protection to NHAs • Enhances wildlife species and their habitats • Includes more species for protection	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

Northern Ireland			
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Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/ objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
Biodiversity Strategy for NI to 2020	A strategy for Northern Ireland to meet its international obligations and local targets to protect biodiversity and ensure that the environment can continue to support our people and economy.	The objectives of the Biodiversity Strategy are to: i) maintain healthy ecosystems, ii) address adverse pressure, iii) increase prosperity and well-being, and engage society in biodiversity conservation and develop partnerships.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Circular Economy Strategy	The draft strategy sets out NI's vision to create an innovative, inclusive and competitive economy, with responsible production and consumption at its core.	The strategy outlines twelve proposals for change which will create more sustainable production and consumption patterns in Northern Ireland. The proposals have been framed around the five universal Circular Economy policy goals developed by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation (EMF) which provide a blueprint to align ambition and create a common direction of travel.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Draft Environment Strategy	The Environment Strategy is intended to be an overarching document setting out Northern Ireland's environmental priorities for the coming decades and will form part of the Green Growth agenda.	This Strategy focuses on several Strategic Context/Drivers: i) Sustainability ii) Global Climate & Biodiversity Action iii) Green Growth Strategy iv) Environmental Governance & Co-operation v) Agriculture & Environment vi) Marine Environment Built & Historic Environment	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Environmental Improvement Plan for Northern Ireland (2024)	The plan aims to deliver real improvements to the quality of the environment within Northern Ireland. This will lead to the improvement of health and well-being of all who live and work there, aid in creating opportunities to improve the economy, the elevation of Northern Ireland as an environmental leader, and will enable NI to play their part in protecting the global environment in future decades. The key strategic drivers underpinning the plan are as follows: • Sustainability. • Global Climate and Biodiversity action • Green growth strategy. • Northern Ireland Climate Action Plan 2023-2027. • Environmental governance and co-operation. • Agriculture, food & environment • Marine environment. • Built and historic environment.	The plan consists of six strategic environmental outcomes: 1. Excellent air, water & land quality. 2. Healthy & accessible environment & landscape everyone can connect with & enjoy. 3. Thriving, resilient & connected nature and wildlife. 4. Sustainable production & consumption on land and at sea. 5. Zero waste & highly developed circular economy. 6. Net zero greenhouse gas emissions & improved climate resilience and adaptability.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Hen Harrier Threat Response Plan 2024-2028	The plan aims to improve the long-term prospects of the species by addressing the threats faced by the Hen Harrier through a series of coordinated actions across sectors, including agriculture, forestry and wind energy.	This plan aims to: • Synthesis the key scientific evidence for the Hen Harrier population decline. • Outline the views and concerns presented by the relevant sectors. • Lay out a coordinated set of targeted actions and measures to cease, avoid, reverse, reduce, eliminate or prevent the identified threats, pressures and hazards.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (Northern Ireland) Order 1995	The Order was introduced to protect and manage Northern Ireland's cultural heritage by focusing on monuments and objects of archaeological and historical significance.	The key provisions of the Order include: • Protection of historic monuments by extending legal protection • Designating and scheduling of monuments that are considered to possess special historic or archaeological value Requiring consent for any development that could affect a scheduled monument and ensuring that these works do not harm the historic value of the monument	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Lesser Horseshoe Bat Species Action Plan 2022-2026	The aim of the plan is to guide, inform and provide structure for the conservation management of this important species over the next five years (2022-2026).	The Plan established practical conservation measure for the conservation of this species. The measures are divided into four broad categories: – Roosts, Habitat, Connectivity, Outreach, with each category having specific actions to be carried out.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Memorandum of Understanding between Coillte and NPWS (2024)	The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishes the framework and process for partnership, collaboration, and enhanced cooperation in areas of collective responsibility and shared interest, leading to greater efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of nature projects and the respective work programmes of both organisations. The aim of the MOU is to create benefits biodiversity in Ireland by empowering the parties to address shared challenges and maximise shared opportunities in relation to nature restoration on the Coillte estate.	The objectives of the MOU are: • Establish a collaborative framework covering activities to the benefit of biodiversity in Ireland by promoting conservation principles and collaborative working between Coillte and NPWS. • Identify partnerships in areas of mutual interest and responsibility of the parties in the context of relevant legislative frameworks. • Establish a platform for professional exchange to share information and best practice and foster co-operation, co-ordination and collaboration on specific projects and initiatives. • Establish clear working groups and governance structures which facilitate further partnership and cooperation and allow for regular reviews of the effectiveness of the MOU.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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		• The parties commit to the co-development and co-implementation of agreed site management plans, for nature restoration projects, supported by costed operational plans with clearly identified sources of funds. Further, the development of scientific best practice and best practice implementation in the management of sites will be documented and, where appropriate, shared externally.	
Northern Ireland's draft Climate Action Plan 2023-2027	The draft Climate Action Plan sets out 52 policies and proposals designed to reduce emissions across nine sectors: energy production and supply; transport; business and industrial processes; residential buildings; public buildings; waste management; agriculture; land use, land-use change and forestry; and fisheries. These policies and proposals set a roadmap of action needed to reduce emissions and keep NI on track for future targets and will keep the country on tract to meet the carbon budget set across sectors.	Each sector within the plan has a set of policies and proposals set out that will enable Northern Ireland to achieve its first carbon budget and meet its emission reduction targets. The policies are a committed course of action to which a policy outcome can be attributed with a reasonable level of confidence. The proposals are a suggested course of action or exploratory action, the details of which might change as this course of action is explored further. Proposals are generally at an earlier stage of development than policies and more work will be needed to determine what they entail, how they might be delivered and how they could be funded	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Northern Ireland Energy Strategy 2050 **(Northern Ireland Energy Strategy 'Path to Net Zero Energy')**	The Strategy sets a long-term vision of net zero carbon and affordable energy for Northern Ireland. It is also about growing the economy and supporting the 10X Economic Vision.	The energy strategy sets a target of 70% of local electricity supplies coming from renewable sources by 2030 and includes a plan to fully decarbonise by 2050. The Energy Strategy is centred around delivering on five key principles: • Placing you at the heart of our energy future • Grow the green economy • Do more with less • Replace fossil fuels with renewable energy • Create a flexible, resilient and integrated energy system	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Northern Ireland Peatland Strategy 2021-2040	The strategy identifies the ecosystem services provided by healthy peatlands, including climate regulation and adaptation, specialised biodiversity, good water quality, flood alleviation and a historical archive. The strategy also highlights the role peatlands play as a unique landscape for recreation and education.	The document outlines six strategic objectives: i) Conserve peatlands & prevent degradation ii) Restoration of degraded areas to functioning peatland ecosystems (designated & non-designated sites) iii) Supporting Sustainable Peatland Management iv) Knowledge Sharing & Research v) Communication, Education & Access vi) Governance, Implementation & Funding	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Northern Ireland Third Cycle River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) 2021-2027	Under The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) Regulations (Northern Ireland 2017, integrated catchment planning through the preparation and implementation of a river basin management plan is required. These regulations apply to groundwater and all surface waters and take an integrated approach to the protection, improvement and sustainable use of the water environment. There have been three sets of RBMPs published for NI. The first cycle was published in 2009, the second in 2015, and the third currently runs from the period 2021-2027. Unlike its predecessors, where each River Basin District had an individual RBMP, the third cycle RBMP is just a single plan that covers all three River Basin Districts within Northern Ireland.	The Plans identified where Northern Ireland's water environment is in good or excellent condition and set out objectives for improvement or prevention of deterioration.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Northern Irish Local Development Plans for Northern Irish local authorities bordering Ireland	These Northern Ireland plans make sure there is enough land available for each area's housing, employment and community facilities, while protecting important landscape and environmental features.	Northern Irish Local Development Plans for Northern Irish local authorities bordering Ireland include: • Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council's Local Development Plan 2030 • Mid Ulster District Council's Local Development Plan 2030 • Derry City and Strabane District Council's Local Development Plan 2032 • Fermanagh and Omagh District Council's Local Development Plan 2030 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Local Development Plan 2030	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011	The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 provides the legislative basis for the reform of the Northern Ireland planning system. It is the principal piece of planning legislation in Northern Ireland, receiving assent on 4th May 2011. It underpins the reformed two-tier planning system which commenced with the transfer of responsibility for the majority of planning functions from central government to district councils.	The act streamlines the planning process, improves decision-making and ensures greater public involvement in planning decisions. The Planning Act creates a more efficient, transparent and locally-focused planning system in NI which balances economic development, environmental protection and public interests by: • Transferring planning functions to the planning authorities to decentralise decision-making and allowing local authorities more control over the planning decisions • Introducing a requirement for local development plans for council areas, which outline land-use, regulates development and identifies what infrastructure is required • Simplifying the planning procedure for applicants and planning authorities and allowing for more flexibility in the application process • Creating a Planning Appeals Commission to handle appeals and reviews of planning decisions to consider appeals against planning refusals, conditions or enforcement decisions. Integrating sustainability and environmental considerations into proposed development through the planning process	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 2: Natural Heritage (2013)	Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 2 sets out the Department of the Environment's planning policies for the conservation, protection and enhancement of Northern Ireland's natural heritage. PPS 2 replaces 'Planning and Nature Conservation (1997)' and supersedes Policies SP16 and DES4 in 'A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (1993).	Objectives of PPS2 include: • to seek to further the conservation, enhancement and restoration of the abundance, quality, diversity and distinctiveness of the region's natural heritage. • to contribute to rural renewal and urban regeneration by ensuring developments take account of the role and value of biodiversity in supporting economic diversification and contributing to a high-quality environment.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 3: Access, Movement and Parking	Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 3 sets out the Department's planning policies for vehicular and pedestrian access, transport assessment, the protection of transport routes and parking. It forms an important element in the integration of transport and land use planning. It embodies the Government's commitments to the provision of a modern, safe, sustainable transport system, the improvement of mobility for those who are socially excluded or whose mobility is impaired, the promotion of healthier living and improved road safety.	Objectives of PPS3 include: • Ensure that new development offers a realistic choice of access by walking, cycling and public transport, recognising that this may be less achievable in some rural areas. • Ensure the needs of people with disabilities and others whose mobility is impaired, are taken into account in relation to accessibility to buildings and parking provision. • Protect routes required for new transport schemes including disused transport routes with potential for future reuse.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 6: Planning, Archaeology and Built Heritage	Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 6 sets out the Department's planning policies for the protection and conservation of archaeological remains and features of the built heritage. It embodies the Government's commitment to sustainable development and environmental stewardship.	PPS6 aims to: • Protect and conserve archaeological remains and their settings. • Protect World Heritage Sites. • Protect historical parks, gardens and demesnes. • Manage and preserve listed buildings. • Manage and enhance conservation areas.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7: (addendum) Safeguarding the character of established residential areas	Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7 (addendum) provides additional planning policies on the protection of local character, environmental quality and residential amenity within established residential areas, villages and smaller settlements. It also sets out regional policy on the conversion of existing buildings to flats or apartments. In addition, the addendum contains policy to promote greater use of permeable paving within new residential developments to reduce the risk of flooding from surface water run-off.	With regards to the protection of areas of established residential character, environmental quality, and local amenity, this policy aims to: • Prevent unacceptable damage to the local character, environmental quality, or residential amenity of established residential areas. • Maintain or enhance the quality of established residential areas. • To safeguard the privacy of existing residents.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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National Level			
Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/ objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 8: Open Sace, Sport and Outdoor Recreation	Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 8 sets out the Department's planning policies for the protection of open space, the provision of new areas of open space in association with residential development and the use of land for sport and outdoor recreation, and advises on the treatment of these issues in development plans. It embodies the Government's commitment to sustainable development, to the promotion of a more active and healthy lifestyle and to the conservation of biodiversity.	The objectives for PPS 8 include: • To facilitate appropriate outdoor recreational activities in the countryside. • To safeguard existing open space and sites identified for future such provision. • To ensure that the provision of new open space areas and sporting facilities is in keeping with the principles of environmental conservation and helps sustain and enhance biodiversity.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 13: Transportation and Land Use	Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 13 aims to integrate land use planning and transport by promoting sustainable transport choices, promoting accessibility for all, and reducing the need to travel, especially by private car.	Secondary objectives for PPS 13 include: • ensure that new development offers a realistic choice of access by walking, cycling and public transport, recognizing that this may be less achievable in some rural areas. • ensure the needs of people with disabilities and others whose mobility is impaired are taken into account in relation to accessibility to buildings and parking provision. • protect routes required for new transport schemes including disused transport routes with potential for future reuse.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

Northern Ireland			
National Level			
Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/ objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 15: Planning and Flood Risk	Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 15 sets out the Department's draft planning policies to minimise and manage flood risk to people, property and the environment. It embodies the government's commitment to sustainable development and the conservation of biodiversity. It adopts a precautionary approach to development and the use of land that takes account of climate change and emerging information relating to flood risk through the implementation of the EU Floods Directive in Northern Ireland and the implementation of sustainable drainage systems. The revised PPS is supportive to the safety and wellbeing of people.	Objectives of PPS15 include: • seek to prevent inappropriate new development in areas known to be at risk of flooding, or that may increase the flood risk elsewhere. • ensure that the most up to date information on flood risk is taken into account when determining planning applications and zoning / designating land for development in development plans. • adopt a precautionary approach to the identification of land for development through the development plan process and the determination of development proposals, in those areas susceptible to flooding where there is a lack of precise information on present day flood risk or future uncertainties associated with flood estimation, climate change predictions and scientific evidence. • support the retention and restoration of natural flood plains and natural watercourses as a form of flood alleviation and an important environmental and social resource, and ensure that this is recognised in the decision-making process. • promote an integrated and sustainable approach, both locally and at catchment scale, to the management of development and flood risk which contributes to: o the safety and wellbeing of everyone. o the prudent and efficient use of economic resources. o the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment and biodiversity. o the conservation of archaeology and the built heritage.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

Northern Ireland			
National Level			
Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/ objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 16: Tourism	Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 16 sets out the Department's planning policy for tourism development, including the main forms of tourist accommodation and tourist amenities. In addition the PPS provides policy for the safeguarding of tourism assets from development likely to adversely impact upon the tourism value of the environmental asset.	Objectives of PPS16 include: • facilitate sustainable tourism development in an environmentally sensitive manner. • contribute to the growth of the regional economy by facilitating tourism growth. • safeguard tourism assets from inappropriate development. • utilise and develop the tourism potential of settlements by facilitating tourism development of an appropriate nature, location and scale. • sustain a vibrant rural community by supporting tourism development of an appropriate nature, location and scale in rural areas. • ensure a high standard of quality and design for all tourism development.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside	Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 21 sets out planning policies for development in the countryside. For the purpose of this document the countryside is defined as land lying outside of settlement limits as identified in development plans. The provisions of this document will apply to all areas of Northern Ireland's countryside.	PPS21 aims to manage development in the countryside in a manner consistent with achieving the strategic objectives of the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025 and which strikes a balance between the need to protect the countryside from unnecessary or inappropriate development, while supporting rural communities. Its objectives are: • to manage growth in the countryside to achieve appropriate and sustainable patterns of development that meet the essential needs of a vibrant rural community. • to conserve the landscape and natural resources of the rural area and to protect it from excessive, inappropriate or obtrusive development and from the actual or potential effects of pollution.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

Northern Ireland			
National Level			
Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/ objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
		• to facilitate development necessary to achieve a sustainable rural economy; including appropriate farm diversification and other economic activity. • to promote high standards in the design, siting and landscaping of development in the countryside.	
Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 18: Renewable Energy	Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 18 sets out the Department's planning policy for development that generates energy from renewable resources and that requires the submission of a planning application. In addition, the PPS encourages the integration of renewable energy technology and greater application of the principles of Passive Solar Design in the design, siting and layout of new development.	The aim of this Statement is to facilitate the siting of renewable energy generating facilities in appropriate locations within the built and natural environment in order to achieve Northern Ireland's renewable energy targets and to realise the benefits of renewable energy. The objectives of the Statement are: • to ensure that the environmental, landscape, visual and amenity impacts associated with or arising from renewable energy development are adequately addressed; • to ensure adequate protection of the Region's built and natural, and cultural heritage features; and • to facilitate the integration of renewable energy technology into the design, siting and layout of new development and promote greater application of the principles of Passive Solar Design.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

Northern Ireland			
National Level			
Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/ objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
Regional Development Strategy 2035 (Northern Ireland)	• Spatial strategy for the future development of Northern Ireland. Strategic planning framework to facilitate and guide public and private sectors.	Aims to provide long-term policy direction with a strategic spatial perspective.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
The Climate Change (Northern Ireland) Act 2022	The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 (Act) sets a target of an at least 100% reduction in net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050. The Act also sets other sectoral targets including 2030 targets at least 80% of electricity consumption from renewable sources (DfE) and 70% of waste is recycled (DAERA) as well as a target for a minimum spend of 10% of overall transport budgets on active travel (DfI).	Section 23 of the Act requires DAERA to make regulations that set carbon budgets. Sections 13-22 place requirements on Northern Ireland departments to produce and publish various sectoral plans setting out how specific sectors will contribute to meeting the 2030, 2040 and 2050 emissions reduction targets. DAERA is required to produce 5-year climate action plans (CAP) to set out the policies and proposals that Northern Ireland departments will implement to meet the corresponding carbon budget as well as set out how the emissions reduction targets will be achieved. The Act places a duty on DAERA to prepare and publish a series of interim and final reports setting out what progress has been made in implementing the proposals and policies set out in the CAPs and the progress made in achieving carbon budgets and emissions reduction targets. There are also reporting requirements placed on the UK Climate Change Committee (CCC). Section 37 of the Act places a duty on DAERA to establish a Just Transition Commission for Northern Ireland.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/ objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
		Section 31 places a requirement on DAERA to establish a Just Transition Fund for Agriculture in order to provide advice and financial assistance to the agricultural sector to help deliver its contribution under policies and proposals within CAPs. Section 42 of the Act requires regulations to be made in regard to climate change reporting by public bodies. Section 50 of the Act requires The Executive Office (TEO) to establish an independent office to be known as the "Northern Ireland Climate Commissioner".	
The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended)	These regulations transpose the requirements of the EC 'Habitats' Directive and aspects of the 'Wild Birds' Directive in relation to Northern Ireland. Provide for the protection of sites in the UK that support habitats and species in need of conservation across Europe and full protection of species of European importance whether occurring within designated sites or not.	Protects certain birds, plants, animals, marine life and their habitats, including Natura 2000 sites, through creating criminal offences and changing planning requirements.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

Northern Ireland			
National Level			
Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/ objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
The Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002	The Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 is the primary piece of environmental legislation in Northern Ireland. The order sets out a range of requirements for the protection and management of the environment, including the prevention and control of pollution, the conservation of natural habitats and biodiversity, and the regulation of waste management. The order applies to a wide range of activities, including industrial and commercial activities, waste management, agriculture, and construction. It also establishes the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), which is responsible for enforcing the order and regulating activities that may have an impact on the environment. The NIEA has the power to investigate environmental incidents, issue enforcement notices, and prosecute individuals and organisations that breach environmental regulations.	The Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 places a range of obligations on individuals and organisations to protect and manage the environment. These obligations include reporting environmental incidents, obtaining permits, and complying with environmental standards. Evidence requirements under the order may include: 1. Reporting requirements 2. Permit requirements 3. Compliance monitoring 4. Enforcement action	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
The Green Growth Strategy	The Strategy establishes Northern Ireland's Green Growth vision and principles and sets out commitments to tackling the climate crisis.	One of the key commitments of the Green Growth Strategy is to develop Northern Ireland's first Climate Action Plan. 10 Executive Commitments have been set out in the Strategy. Green Growth considers climate targets but also the wider environment and green jobs.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

Northern Ireland			
National Level			
Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/ objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
The Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013 (as amended)	This Act establish a legal framework for the management, planning, and conservation of Northern Ireland's marine resources. It seeks to balance economic development with environmental protection, ensuring the sustainable use of marine resources and the protection of marine biodiversity and ecosystems. The Act, alongside the Marine & Coastal Access Act 2009, sets forth actions to deliver the UK government's vision for "clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas."	This Act establishes a strategic system of marine planning in Northern Ireland's inshore region (out to 12 nautical miles) that will: • be proactive, co-ordinated and responsive; • assists in the delivery of a modernised licensing and enforcement regime that is streamlined, consistent and promotes integrated decision making; • and contributes to the delivery of the United Kingdom's aim of establishing an "ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas", so that marine biodiversity is protected and international and European commitments are met.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
The Marine & Coastal Access Act 2009	This Act, alongside the Marine Act 2013, sets forth actions to deliver the UK government's vision for "clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas." The act established a framework or marine management that aims to balance conservation and sustainable development. Under this act the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) was created and tasked with functions to aid in the realisation of the aims of the Act.	Key areas of the Marine & Coastal Access Act include: • Setting up the MMO in order to centralise many of the existing, diverse areas of marine regulation. • Streamline the existing marine licensing system and provide powers to create a joined-up marine planning policy. • Introduce new measures to reform fisheries management. • Provide a framework for establishing marine conservation zones. • Enable the creation of a walkable route around the English coast.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/ objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
The Marine Plan for Northern Ireland 2018	The Plan informs and guides the regulation, management, use and protection of Northern Ireland's marine area. It is a single document made up of two plans, one for the inshore region and one for the offshore region.	Marine Plan Objectives • To promote the sustainable development of productive activities, which support employment at all skill levels while fully considering the requirements of other marine interests. • To help realise the potential of energy resources and energy storage within the marine area, while fully considering the requirements of other marine interests. • To promote the development of vibrant, accessible and sustainable coastal communities. • To promote the marine resource, its recreational value and its wider economic, environmental and social benefits to all. • To promote the preservation and enjoyment of marine related heritage assets. • To promote a healthy, resilient and adaptable marine ecosystem and an ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas. • To contribute towards climate change mitigation and adaptation measures. • To continue to develop a sound marine evidence base in a co-ordinated manner, to increase understanding and to support the development, monitoring and review of marine plans.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/ objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
The Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017	The purpose of these regulations is to promote sustainable development by considering and mitigating the potential environmental effects of projects before they are approved. The regulations require a systematic and transparent assessment process, enabling decision-makers to make informed choices based on the environmental implications of proposed developments.	The regulations apply to a wide range of projects, including infrastructure developments, industrial facilities, energy projects, and certain agricultural and waste management activities. The regulations mandate that developers or project proponents carry out an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) as part of the planning process. The EIA involves the identification, prediction, and evaluation of potential environmental effects, such as impacts on air, water, biodiversity, human health, and cultural heritage. The assessment also considers alternative options and potential mitigation measures. Additionally, the regulations emphasize public participation, ensuring that affected individuals and organizations have the opportunity to provide input and express their concerns during the assessment process.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
The Regional Development Strategy 2035	The strategy aims to take account of the economic ambitions and needs of the Northern Ireland Region, and put in place spatial planning, transport and housing priorities that will support and enable the aspirations of the Region to be met.	The Strategy sets out a spatial framework and guidance specific to each NI area.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

Northern Ireland			
National Level			
Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/ objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
The Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) for Northern Ireland	The SPPS is a statement, consolidating some twenty separate policy publications into one document of the Department's policy on important planning matters that should be addressed across Northern Ireland. It also provides the core planning principles to underpin delivery of the two-tier planning system with the aim of furthering sustainable development. It sets the strategic direction for councils to bring forward detailed operational policies within their new Local Development Plans.	The provisions of the SPPS must be taken into account in the preparation of Local Development Plans, and are also material to all decisions on individual planning applications and appeals. The SPPS has a policy objective to "seek to further the conservation, enhancement and restoration of the abundance, quality, diversity and distinctiveness of the region's natural heritage".	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
The UK Marine Policy Statement 2011	The MPS was prepared and adopted under section 44 of the Marine & Coastal Act 2009. The MPS is the framework for marine planning systems. It provides the high-level policy context within which national and sub-national Marine Plans will be developed, implemented, monitored, amended and will ensure appropriate consistency in marine planning across the UK marine area. The MPS will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom marine area.	The MPS will facilitate and support the formulation of Marine Plans, ensuring that marine resources are used in a sustainable way in line with the high level marine objectives and thereby: • Promote sustainable economic development. • Enable the UK's move towards a low-carbon economy, in order to mitigate the causes of climate change and ocean acidification and adapt to their effects. • Ensure a sustainable marine environment which promotes healthy, functioning marine ecosystems and protects marine habitats, species and our heritage assets. • Contribute to the societal benefits of the marine area, including the sustainable use of marine resources to address local social and economic issues.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

Northern Ireland			
National Level			
Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/ objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
The Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011	This Act requires every public body to promote the conservation of biodiversity and defines functions of public bodies in Northern Ireland with respect to the conservation of biodiversity. It also contains provisions for the conservation of wild fauna and flora and habitats. The Act amends the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 and the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002.	• To make provision about biodiversity. • To amend the wildlife (Northern Ireland) order 1985 and part 4 of the environment (Northern Ireland) order 2002. • To abolish game licences and game dealers' licences. • To prohibit hare coursing events. • To amend the game preservation act (Northern Ireland) 1928; and for connected purposes.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
The Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 (as amended)	Prohibits the intentional killing, taking or injuring of certain wild birds and wild animals or the intentional destruction, uprooting or picking of certain wild plants.	• Protection of wild birds, their nests and eggs, the prohibition of certain methods of killing or taking wild birds and the sale of live or dead wild birds or eggs. • Protection of captive birds. • Prohibition of certain methods of killing or taking wild animals, the use of spring traps, and the sale of live or dead wild animals as well as providing protection for wild plants and prohibiting the sale of invasive, non-native species. • Also covers: the protection of deer, the sales and purchases of venison and the prevention of poaching; the possession of pesticides harmful to wildlife; wildlife refuges; and the possession of articles for purposes of committing certain offences. With regard to enforcement, it includes details regarding the power of wildlife inspector to enter premises and to examine specimens and take samples, false statements made for obtaining registration or licence and penalties and forfeitures.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

Northern Ireland			
National Level			
Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/ objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland: 10 Year Plan	• The plan sets out a 10-year plan for the growth of the tourism sector in Northern Ireland., with an aim to increase the value of tourism to the economy by 50-75% compared to 2019. • Vision is to "Establish Northern Ireland as a year-round world class destination which is renowned for its authentic experiences, landscape, heritage and culture and which benefits communities, the economy and the environment, with sustainability at its core."	The strategic goals and core themes of the Strategy are: • Innovative • Inclusive • Sustainable • Attractive • Collaborative The document identifies the key challenges and drivers for growth.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Towards an Integrated Coastal Zone Management Strategy for Northern Ireland 2006 - 2026	Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) aims to establish sustainable levels of economic and social activity in our coastal areas while protecting the coastal environment. ICZM seeks to reconcile the different policies that have an effect on the coast and to establish a framework that facilitates the integration of the interests and responsibilities of those involved in the development, management and use of the coast.	The Strategy is based on the several key principles: • Sustainable development • Precautionary principle Ecosystem approach	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

Northern Ireland			
National Level			
Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/ objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
Local Level			
Local Development Plans for Northern Ireland district councils	Under Part 2 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, district councils are required to prepare a local development plan for their area. These plans aim to make sure there is enough land available for the area's housing, employment and community facilities, while protecting important landscape and environmental features. The plans comprise two development plan documents: **The Plan Strategy -** The strategic policy framework for the plan area as a whole across a range of topics. It sets out the vision for that area, and the objectives and strategic policies required to deliver that vision. **The Local Policies Plan -** The council's local policies and site-specific proposals in relation to the development and use of land in the plan area. It contains the local policies, including site specific proposals, designations and land use zonings required to deliver the council's vision, objectives and strategic policies, as set out in the Plan Strategy.	At present the following district councils have been published: • Fermanagh and Omagh Local Development Plan Strategy • Derry City and Strabane Local Development Plan Strategy • Banbridge and Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015 The following districts have Local Development Plans that are forthcoming: • Mid Ulster • Newry, Mourne and Down • Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

Regional/Local Level			
Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/ objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
Biodiversity Action Plans	Aims to protect, conserve, enhance and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services across all spectrums.	• Outlines the status of biodiversity and identifies species of importance. • Outlines objectives and targets to be met to maintain and improve biodiversity. • Aims to increase awareness.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Local Authority Climate Action Plans	Each Local Authority has a statutory requirement to create a climate action plan under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment Act 2021. These plans are required to take into consideration wider national climate and energy targets and must address both mitigation and adaptation measures.	These action Plans will develop and implement specific, action-focused, time-bound and measurable actions. Through this, it will allow plans which: • Provide a strong emphasis on a place-based approach to climate action, delivering a better understanding of greenhouse gas emissions and climate-related risks at a local level, while addressing context-specific conditions and support for locally tailored policy making. • Deliver and promote evidence-based and integrated climate action by way of adaptation and mitigation measures, centred around a strong understanding of the role and remit of the local authority on climate action. • Translate and provide strategic direction at local and community levels on the delivery of the national climate objective which is seeking to curb further global warming and to transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy by no later than the end of 2050.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

Regional/Local Level			
Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/ objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
County Landscape Character Assessments	Characterises the geographical dimension of the landscape.	• Identifies the quality, value, sensitivity and capacity of the landscape area. • Guides strategies and guidelines for the future development of the landscape.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Development Plans, Local Area Plans and other land use plans	• Outline planning objectives for land use development (including transport objectives). • Strategic frameworks for planning and sustainable development including those set out in National Planning Framework and Regional Economic and Spatial Strategies. • Sets out the policies and proposals to guide development in the bordering and connected Local Authority areas.	• Identify future infrastructure, development and zoning required. • Protect and enhance amenities and environment. • Guides neighbouring planning authority in assessing proposals. • Aim to guide development in neighbouring areas • Aim to promote sustainable development in neighbouring and connected areas. • Provide for economic development and protect natural environmental, heritage.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

Regional/Local Level			
Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/ objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
Dublin to Galway Greenway Plan	• Develop a segregated cycling and walking trail to international standards, extending from Dublin City to Galway which is of a scale that will allow Ireland to harness the potential of an identified growing tourism market for cycling. • This route forms part of an interconnected National Cycle Network of high quality, traffic free, inter urban routes, which will establish Ireland as a quality international tourism destination for a broad range of associated recreational activities and pursuits.	To provide a segregated, substantially off road cycle route from Dublin City to Clifden via Galway City, maximising the use of – where feasible – existing and approved routes and disused railway line corridors and to also use existing plans and/or permitted projects where these have been subject to a consent process that has previously included the carrying out or screening for SEA, EIA and AA.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Freshwater Pearl Mussel Sub- Basin Management Plans	• Identifies the current status of the species and the reason for loss or decline. • Identifies measure required to improve or restore current status.	• Identifies pressures on Freshwater Pearl Mussels for each of the designated populations in Ireland. • Outlines restoration measures required to ensure favourable conservation status.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

Regional/Local Level			
Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/ objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan	• Sets out a ten year cycling strategy for Counties Dublin, Kildare, Meath and Wicklow • Plan to increase regions cycle network dramatically • The Plan refers to the EuroVelo International Cycle Route Network of the European Cyclists Federation is a network of 15 long distance cycle routes connecting and uniting the whole European continent. Two of these routes are in Ireland including EV2 from Galway through Dublin to London, Berlin, Warsaw and Moscow.	Aims to identify and determine: • The Urban Cycle Network at the Primary, Secondary and Feeder level • The Inter-Urban Cycle Network linking the relevant sections of the Urban Network including the elements of the National Cycle Network within the Greater Dublin Area including linkages to key transport locations outside of urban areas such as airports and ports • The Green Route Network being cycle routes for development of tourist, recreational and leisure purposes.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Greater Dublin Area (GDA) Transport Strategy (2016-2035)	• It sets out how transport will be developed across the region, covering Dublin, Meath, Wicklow and Kildare, over the period of the strategy and has been approved by the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport in accordance with the relevant legislation. • The Vision Statement: *"The GDA by 2022 is an economically vibrant, active and sustainable international Gateway Region, with strong connectivity across the GDA Region, nationally and worldwide; a region which fosters communities living in attractive, accessible places well supported by community infrastructure and enjoying high quality leisure facilities; and promotes and protects across the GDA green corridors, active agricultural lands and protected natural areas."* Full SEA and Stage 2 AA have been undertaken on this Strategy	They set out a number of core principles deriving from the strategic vision, which are: • Dublin as the capital city of Ireland and a major European centre shall grow and progress, competing with other cities in the EU, and serving a wide range of international, national, regional and local needs. • The Dublin and Mid-East Regions will be attractive, vibrant locations for industry, commerce, recreation and tourism and will be a major focus for economic growth within the Country. • The GDA, through its ports and airport connections will continue to be the most important entry/exit point for the country as a whole, and as a Gateway between the European Union and the rest of the World. Access to and through the GDA will continue to be a matter of national importance. • Development in the GDA shall be directly related to investment in integrated high quality public transport services and focused on compact urban form. • Development within the existing urban footprint of the Metropolitan Area will be consolidated to achieve a more compact urban form	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

Regional/Local Level			
Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/ objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
		• Development in the Hinterland Area will be focused on the high quality integrated growth and consolidation of development in key identified towns, separated from each other by extensive areas of strategic green belt land devoted to agriculture and similar uses.	
Green Infrastructure Plans/Strategies	• Promotes the maintenance and improvement of green infrastructure in an area. • Aims to protect and enhance biodiversity and habitats.	Not applicable	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Groundwater Protection Schemes	A Groundwater Protection Scheme provides guidelines for the planning and licensing authorities in carrying out their functions, and a framework to assist in decision-making on the location, nature and control of developments and activities in order to protect groundwater.	A Groundwater Protection Scheme aims to maintain the quantity and quality of groundwater, and in some cases improve it, by applying a risk assessment-based approach to groundwater protection and sustainable development.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

Regional/Local Level			
Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/ objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
Heritage Plans	Aims to highlight the importance of heritage at a strategic level.	• Manage and promote heritage as well as increase awareness. • Aim to conserve and protect heritage.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Local Economic and Community Plans (LECP)	The overarching vision for each LECP is: "to promote the well-being and quality of life of citizens and communities"	The purpose of the LECP, as provided for in the Local Government Reform Act 2014, is to set out, for a six-year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of the relevant local authority area, both by itself directly and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

Regional/Local Level			
Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/ objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
Local Catchment Flood Risk Management Plans	• Produced by Local Authorities. • Outlines areas local flood risk. • Sets out measures to manage and prevent flood risk at a local level.	Not applicable.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Local Transport Plans and Strategies	Local Transport Plans and Strategies relevant to a particular local authority functional area provide a more granular framework for the delivery of sustainable transport systems in accordance with higher-level plans.	• To promote sustainable transport. • To promote integrated and proper transport planning. • To promote safe travel. • To promote active travel infrastructural development. • To encourage modal shift.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

Regional/Local Level			
Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/ objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
Noise Action Plans	The Noise Action Plans are prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Noise Regulations 2006, Statutory Instrument 140 of 2006. These Regulations give effect to the EU Directive 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise. This Directive sets out a process for managing environmental noise in a consistent manner across the EU and the Noise Regulations set out the approach to meeting the requirements of the Directive in Ireland.	The main purpose of the Noise Action Plan is to: • Inform and consult the public about noise exposure, its effects and the measures which may be considered to address noise problems • Address strategic noise issues by requiring competent authorities to draw up action plans to manage noise issues and their effects • Reduce noise, where possible, and maintain the environmental acoustic quality where it is good	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
NPWS Conservation Plans and/or Conservation Objectives for SACs and SPAs	Management planning for nature conservation sites has a number of aims. These include: • To identify and evaluate the features of interest for a site • To set clear objectives for the conservation of the features of interest • To describe the site and its management • To identify issues (both positive and negative) that might influence the site To set out appropriate strategies/management actions to achieve the objectives	• Conservation objectives for SACs and SPAs (i.e. sites within the Natura 2000 network) have to be set for the habitats and species for which the sites are selected. These objectives are used when carrying out appropriate assessments for plans and projects that might impact on these sites.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

Regional/Local Level			
Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/ objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
Regional Economic and Spatial Strategies	The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSESs) provide a long-term regional level strategic planning and economic framework in support of the implementation of the National Planning Framework. The current RSESs will be undergoing a review following the adoption of the revised National Planning Framework. The Plan will be considered in relation to the superseding RSESs for each region once implemented.	The Eastern and Midland Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy includes provisions for its 12 constituent local authorities: Fingal County Council; Dublin City Council; South Dublin County Council; Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council; Louth County Council; Kildare County Council; Meath County Council; Wicklow County Council; Longford County Council; Laois County Council; Offaly County Council; and Westmeath County Council. The Southern Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy includes provisions for its nine constituent local authorities: Waterford City and County Council, Cork City Council, Cork County Council, Tipperary County Council, Wexford County Council, Kerry County Council, Clare County Council, Limerick City and County Council, Kilkenny County Council and Carlow County Council. The Northern and Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy includes provisions for its eight constituent local authorities: Donegal County Council, Leitrim County Council, Sligo County Council, Cavan County Council, Monaghan County Council, Mayo County Council, Roscommon County Council; and Galway County Council.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Shellfish Pollution Reduction Programmes	Aims to improve water quality and ensure the protection or improvement of designated shellfish waters in order to support shellfish life and growth and contribute to the high quality of shellfish products directly edible by man.	• Identifies key and secondary pressures on water quality in designated shellfish areas. • Outlines specific measures to address identified key and secondary pressures on water quality. • Addresses the specific pressures acting on water quality in each area.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

Regional/Local Level			
Legislation, Plan, etc.	**Summary of high level aim/ purpose/ objective**	**Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.**	**Relevance to the Plan**
Transport Strategy for the Cork Metropolitan Area 2040	• The Strategy addresses all transport modes and its objective will be to provide a long-term strategic planning framework for the integrated development of transport infrastructure and services in the Cork Metropolitan Area, over the next two decades	It will be used to inform transport investment levels and investment prioritisation over both the longer and shorter terms and will be able to inform sustainable integrated land use and transport policy formulation at the strategic (Metropolitan Area) level and at the local level.	The Plan shall be in harmony with all interrelated legislation, plans, and programmes relevant to planning and environmental matters, such as this. The implementation of the Plan will be required to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards, in combination with other bodies and their plans or policies, the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

FEHILY TIMONEY

DESIGNING AND DELIVERING
A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

APPENDIX 2

SEA Scoping Consultation Submissions

The table itemises shows a list of all SEA Scoping submissions received from the statutory Environmental Authorities as part of the SEA Scoping process for the LUSIP

Ref.	Environmental Authority	Date Received
1	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) - Department for Communities Historic Environmental Division (HED).	06/05/2025.
2	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) - Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA).	07/05/2025.
3	Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) - (now termed Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment).	12/05/2025.
4	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).	15/05/2025.
5	Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) – Development Applications Unit.	16/05/2025.
6	Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine (DAFM).	06/06/2025 - Updated 12/06/2025.

These submissions are presented in order overleaf.

Department for Communities
An Roinn Pobal
Depairtment fur Commonities
www.communities-ni.gov.uk

Historic Environment Division
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Belfast,
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Date: 06/05/2025

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT DIVISION (SEA TEAM) COMMENTS RE: SEA SCOPING REPORT FOR COILLTE STRATEGIC LAND USE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

DfC Historic Environment Division (HED) team operate via a Service Level Agreement with colleagues in DAERA in relation to SEA, whereby we provide authoritative comment and advice in relation to matters of Cultural Heritage including archaeological and architectural heritage. We make the following comments in respect of the documentation received by our office on 15/04/2025.

HED welcome the consideration afforded to potential for transboundary environmental effects in respect of cultural heritage assets in Northern Ireland. We note the articulation of archaeological assets in Northern Ireland on the mapping in Fig. 3-13, and the recognition of the wider portfolio of Historic Environment Records in Table 3-8. This wider suite of datasets will merit appropriate consideration at the project specific level. (NB HED advise that some of the figures here are significantly out of date (e.g. Defence Heritage) and revision of these would therefore be merited. This can be done through utilisation of our datasets which can be found at Historic Environment Digital Datasets | Department for Communities (communities-ni.gov.uk))

HED would normally expect to see consideration of inter-relationships between topic themes in the content of scoping reports, but would for the progression of environmental reporting, advise that the historic environment has relationships across several topic areas, inclusive of, but not confined to, landscape and biodiversity. We note the reference to World Heritage Sites and advise that it may be pertinent to further consider the Royal Sites of Ireland, which as referenced is presently on the tentative list, and which has a transboundary context in itself. Also of relevance on landscape scale, and particularly in respect of transboundary considerations would be UNESCO Geoparks such as the Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark incorporating parts of Fermanagh and Cavan, and the Mourne Gullion Strangford Geopark which contain an array of geological and natural and cultural heritage features.

HED note and welcome that the proposed SEA objectives (CH1 and CH2, Table 4.1) factor in consideration of Northern Ireland's cultural heritage. We suggest that these objectives could incorporate conservation and enhancement(e.g. *Protect, conserve and enhance archaeological/architectural heritage and related settings, including entries to* …….).
We consider that the potential impact on setting of heritage assets could be more clearly recognised as a key consideration in 3.7.3. and in Table 3.9) Impacts on setting/understanding are possibly one of the most likely types of transboundary environmental effect in respect of cultural heritage, alongside impacts on assets which are transboundary in their physical makeup (ancient earthworks, routeways, canals etc).
HED would also note the opportunity to consider the potential for environmental effects in respect of heritage landscapes such as entries on the Register of Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes.

Finally in respect of Plans and Programmes with which the strategy may interact, HED advise the following plans and programmes with respect to international, Northern Ireland and locally specific concerns on Cultural Heritage.

International Level.
Convention for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage of Europe (Valletta 1992)
Convention for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage of Europe (Granda 1985)
The European Landscape Convention (Florence 2000)

Northern Ireland

Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1995

Planning Act (NI) 2011

Strategic Planning Policy Statement 2015

Regional Development Strategy 2035

Local Level

Fermanagh and Omagh Local Development Plan Strategy

Derry City and Strabane Local Development Plan Strategy

Banbridge and Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015

HED note that LDP plan strategies will also be in due course forthcoming from:

Mid Ulster

Newry, Mourne and Down

Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon.

If there are any queries about the content of this response we can be contacted via the address above.

Yours sincerely,

Liam McQuillan MCIfA
Senior Archaeologist

Naoimh Quinn RIBA
Senior Architect

HERITAGE RECORDS AND DESIGNATIONS BRANCH

Strategic Environmental
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YES
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7th May 2025

Larissa Delazeri
Strategic Planning Manager
Coillte Forest
Corrin
Fermoy
Co. Cork

Re: Coillte's Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan - Consultation on SEA Scoping

Dear Larissa Delazeri,

Thank-you for your email dated 14th April 2025 regarding the SEA Scoping exercise in respect of Coillte's Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan.

The consultation body comprising of The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Northern Ireland (DAERA) and (supported with a service level agreement) DfC Historic Environment Division (HED), has considered the consultation and associated report and our opinions are set out below and on the attached HED document.

DAERA notes that under Section 2.3 that within the Environmental Report other plans and programmes will be considered. Please note a non-exhaustive list at the bottom of the NED response which lists a number of plans programmes etc that should be considered for Northern Ireland. DAERA advise that details on any relevant conflicts and/or synergies between this plans objectives and the objectives of other plans and programs should be identified and described within the Environmental Report.

DAERA notes that regarding the Strategic Environmental Objectives no targets or indicators have been provided. DAERA note that these will be provided in the SEA Environmental Report as detailed within Section 4.2, DAERA look forward to reviewing this.

DAERA would like the SEA Environmental Report to contain a clear statement indicating the opinion about whether or not the implementation of this plan is likely to have a significant effect on Northern Ireland, in combination with any identified measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment.

Natural Environment Division Comments

NIEA Natural Environment Division works to ensure that Northern Ireland's special natural environment, including its flora and fauna and landscapes, is conserved, enhanced and managed for the benefit of this and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

NED advise that impacts can occur at a distance and note that a Zone of Influence is detailed within the report, NED welcomes this. However, NED advise that impacts can occur outwith the Zone of influence for sites and environmental features which have hydrological links, NED advise that hydrological links should also be considered between the plan area and sites and environmental features within the SEA Environmental Report.

NED would recommend that the SEA Environmental Report is afforded as much detail to transboundary environmental topics as for the Republic of Ireland. This should include but not be limited to maps to hydrologically linked environmental features. Furthermore, details should be provided on the existing environment without the plan, any gaps in baseline data and if used alternative/ proxy data, any technical deficiencies or lack of know-how, please note this list is not exhaustive.

NED notes that reasonable alternatives will be detailed within the Environmental Report, NED look forward to reviewing these.

NED notes that an AA (Appropriate Assessment) screening will be carried out and dependent on the outcome a full AA. NED would welcome the opportunity to review the completed AA, screening or full should it be required when this has been completed. Note comments in relation to the zone of influence and hydrological links above.

Please note following the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union, the collective term of "Natura 2000" sites the network of European protected sites are now known as "National Site Network" sites within the United Kingdom, and is including Northern Ireland.

It may be worth including in your considerations the following:

- **The Wildlife (NI) Order 1985 (as amended)**
- **Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (NI) 2011**

- The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended)
- The Environment (NI) Order 2002
- The Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017
- The Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) for Northern Ireland
- Planning Policy Statements (PPS – in particular PPS2 and PPS18). It should be noted that the PPS's will be superseded by Local Development Plans when they are adopted.
- Biodiversity Strategy for NI to 2020 https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/biodiversity-strategy-northern-ireland-2020-0
- Draft Environment Strategy https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/esni-public-discussion-document
- The Draft NI peatland policy: https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/ni-peatland-strategy-consultation.
- The Draft Green Growth Strategy Consultation on the draft Green Growth Strategy for Northern Ireland | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (daera-ni.gov.uk)
- Northern Ireland Energy Strategy 2050 Northern Ireland Energy Strategy 2050 | Department for the Economy (economy-ni.gov.uk)

DAERA have a map browser for NI protected sites and known priority habitat:
www.daera-ni.gov.uk/services/natural-environment-map-viewer

A number of useful information sources that highlight the current state of the environment in Northern Ireland at a regional level and which could be referenced are:

Northern Ireland State of the Environment Reports: https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/state-environment-report-2013

Northern Ireland Environmental Statistics Reports: https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/northern-ireland-environmental-statistics-report

Other relevant web-links are;
Designated Scientific Sites: www.daera-ni.gov.uk/landing-pages/protected-areas

Regional Landscape Character Map viewer: https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/services/regional-landscape-character-areas-map-viewer

DAERA have a map browser for NI protected sites and known priority habitat:
www.daera-ni.gov.uk/services/natural-environment-map-viewer

Our natural environment datasets are available at the link below:
www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/download-digital-datasets

Appropriate Assessments should refer to the status of habitats and species in the relevant reports available on the JNCC website as follows: UK Article 17 report for the Habitats Directive https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/article-17-habitats-directive-report-2019/ and the UK Article 12 report for the Birds Directive https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/european-reporting/#birds-directive-reporting

Air Quality and Biodiversity Unit Comments

- Happy to see that air quality impacts on biodiversity are considered, in particular ammonia from agricultural activities;
- We note that transboundary issues will be considered for the SEA topics scoped in;
- Regarding baseline information:
    - Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna – (p80) – Note that Areas of Special Scientifc Interest are also protected in Northern Ireland. A map showing the location of protected sites is available at: https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/services/natural-environment-map-viewer
    - Details of protected areas in Northern Ireland can be found at: https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/protected-areas

Landscape Team Comments

The Landscape team are content with the scope of the report, highlighting the potential of transboundary impacts on the landscape.

Water Management Unit Comments

The SEA should consider all issues in relation to the aquatic environment during all aspects / phases in relation to the implementation of the Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan (LUSIP). Impacts that should be considered include, (but may not limited to), those relating to water quality, water quantity, hydromorphology, and in addition any impact on NI/RoI migratory/mobile species such as salmon. Assessment should consider all potential impacts both direct and indirect.

It is important that cross border river basins are given special attention as ecological functionality cross jurisdictional boundaries.

After consideration, the SEA should clearly state whether, or not, any potential impacts to the aquatic environment in Northern Ireland have been identified and the nature of those impacts.

Plans and Programmes

River Basin Management Plans are the key tools for implementing the Water Framework Directive and to achieving its objectives. If the potential for transboundary impacts to Northern Ireland are identified, then the NI River Basin Management Plans must be considered during the SEA process.

DAERA has published the Draft River Basin Management Plan for the 3rd cycle period which runs from 2021-2027. The draft plan provides an update on the health of Northern Ireland's water environment (the status of water bodies) and sets out our targets (objectives) and actions (programme of measures) on how we want to improve our water environment in the next six years. The draft plan covers the North Western, Neagh Bann and North Eastern river basin districts (RBD) and includes detailed status updates on each RBD.

The Draft River Basin Management Plan for the 3rd cycle contains information relating to Existing Plans & Projects (which are key for 3rd cycle RBMP), Links to new and forthcoming plans, policies and strategies and the Draft Programme of Measures for the 3rd cycle relevant to the aquatic environment.

The document can be downloaded from the consultation webpage: https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-draft-3rd-cycle-river-basin-management-plan-2021-2027

Legislation

There are several key pieces of environmental legislation relating to the Water Environment and its protection in Northern Ireland.

A list of this environmental legislation including links to each individual piece of legislation is available at

Water | NetRegs | Environmental guidance for your business in Northern Ireland & Scotland

Baseline Information.

Several useful information sources are available that highlight the current state of the environment in Northern Ireland at a regional level which could be referenced including the Northern Ireland Environmental Statistics Report the latest of which (at the time of this response) is dated May 2024.

Northern Ireland Environmental Statistics Reports: https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/northern-ireland-environmental-statistics-report

DAERA issued a consultation document on Significant Water Management Issues to inform the development of the third cycle River Basin Management Plan (2021-2027). This gives further consideration of the pressures and their sources on water quality in Northern Ireland

Further details on these issues can be found at Planning for the third cycle River Basin Management Plan 2021-2027 - Consultation on Significant Water Management Issues December 2019 | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (daera-ni.gov.uk)

Also with regard to Northern Ireland Baseline Information and Data Sources DAERA have two map viewers in relation to the aquatic environment that may be of use, Water Information Request Web Viewer and NIEA Catchment Data Map Viewer both of which can be found at https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/daera-map-viewers

It is important that he most up to date information available is used in the formulation of the SEA.

Mitigation

Where adverse impacts on the aquatic environment are identified during the SEA process, and the nature of those potential impacts clearly identified, relevant and appropriate mitigation measures should be proposed. Mitigation measures must be proportionate to those risks identified.

Monitoring

Monitoring regimes should be identified (including where feasible, consideration of the monitoring body, frequency of monitoring, appropriate analysis, and reporting) to ensure both the efficacy of those mitigation measures and identify any unforeseen impacts to the aquatic environment that may arise from implementation of the LUSIP.

Monitoring should be subject to review at each reporting stage to reflect new data. The SEA should contain a commitment to actions should the monitoring regime identify adverse impacts during plan implementation despite the mitigation measures proposed.

Marine and Fisheries Division Comments

Marine Plan Team

Other Plans/Programmes that may influence or impact on the LUSIP (Section 2.3) and Relationship with Other Relevant Plans, Programmes and Legislation – Cumulative Effects (Section 5.1)

Given this Scoping document and the forthcoming Environmental Report will give consideration to impacts on the marine area and its environment, it is suggested

that consideration should be given to including marine policy, legislation, plans and programmes within these sections.

From a transboundary perspective this includes the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, The Marine (Northern Ireland) Act 2013, the UK Marine Policy Statement 2011, the draft Marine Plan for Northern Ireland and the Towards an Integrated Coastal Zone Management Strategy for Northern Ireland 2006-2026. Links to these documents can be found via the following links:

Towards an Integrated Coastal Zone Management Strategy for Northern Ireland 2006 - 2026 | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (daera-ni.gov.uk)

Marine policy – UK Marine Policy Statement | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (daera-ni.gov.uk)

Marine Plan for Northern Ireland | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (daera-ni.gov.uk)

Scope of Environmental Baseline to be used in the assessment

Under Landscape, Seascape and Visual Amenity (Section 3.6) it is suggested the Mourne AONB is considered as part of any transboundary effects. In addition, consideration should also be given to those Northern Ireland Regional Seascape Character Areas within the 12nm scope of the SEA, such as, Foyle Estuary, Lough Foyle, Carlingford Lough and Mourne Coast being included in transboundary effects. Information on Northern Ireland's Regional Seascape Character Assessment can be found at Northern Ireland Regional Seascape Character Assessment | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (daera-ni.gov.uk). It is recommended that potential negative impacts on seascapes should be clearly recognised within the Key Considerations Relating to the Draft LUSIP section.

Under Water (Section 3.11) it is recommended consideration is given to the inclusion and consideration of bathing water quality and good environmental

status of coastal and marine waters in relation to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, given the SEA study area. In Northern Ireland, GES legislation and baseline information is included in the Marine Strategy Regulations 2010 and the UK Marine Strategy. Further information can be found at Marine Strategy | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs and About bathing water quality | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs. In coastal waters both MSFD and WFD apply. Some issues addressed by MSFD are not addressed by WFD, such as impacts on marine noise, litter, certain aspects of biodiversity and ensuring concentrations and effects of contaminants are kept within acceptable levels. Consequently, there may be potential pressures and impacts on bathing water quality and GES of coastal and marine waters, as a key consideration.

Strategic Environmental Objectives

It is suggested the environmental component column of Table 4.1 is amended from ‘landscape and visual amenity’ to ‘landscape, seascape and visual amenity’ to reflect the environmental baseline heading. In addition, it is unclear where the consideration of seascapes is captured within the SEO for landscape and visual amenity.

In relation to the Water SEOs, it is suggested (1) prevent impact upon the good environmental status of coastal and marine waters in line with the requirements of MSFD; and (2) maintain and/or improve of bathing water quality are also included within Table 4.1.

Conclusion

This will enable the SEA Environmental Report to take account of potential transboundary aspects in relation to Northern Ireland’s marine environment.

Please contact the SEA Team at seateam@daera-ni.gov.uk should you have any queries or require clarification.

Yours sincerely,

Donna Whelan

Donna Whelan
Senior Scientific Officer
Countryside, Coast and Landscape
Northern Ireland Environment Agency
Donna.Whelan@daera-ni.gov.uk

An Roinn Comhshaoil,
Aeráide agus Cumarsáide
Department of the Environment,
Climate and Communications

Coillte,
Corrin,
Fermoy,
Co. Cork

12th May 2025

RE: SEA Scoping for Coillte's Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (**DECC**) welcomes the opportunity to input into the scoping stage of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (**SEA**) process relating to Coillte's Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan (**the Plan**).

Relevant Plans and Programmes

It is of critical importance that the analysis of climatic factors in the SEA process incorporates the latest quantitative data and analysis against which the proposed Plan can be assessed, in order to ensure that the Plan appropriately supports the State's climate ambition and legally binding target.

As such, we welcome the inclusion of the following relevant plans, programmes and policies and associated environmental assessments in the assessment of the Plan, which our Department has considered during previous SEAs of plans and programmes:

- Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Plan 2023-2030 which sets the national biodiversity agenda for the period 2023-2030 and aims to deliver the transformative changes required to the ways in which we value and protect nature.
- The Clean Air Strategy for Ireland provides the high-level strategic policy framework necessary to identify and promote the integrated measures across government that are required to reduce air pollution and promote cleaner ambient air, while delivering on wider national objectives. It outlines how we will enhance and protect the quality of the air that we breathe and realise the full environmental and health benefits of cleaner air.
- Water Action Plan 2024 – A River Basin Management Plan for Ireland which is committed to protecting and restoring Ireland's natural waters by complying fully with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.

This, soon to be published (early September 2024), Water Action Plan will accelerate the identification and implementation of the right measures in the right places to both restore and protect all waterbodies.

We further encourage consideration of the following relevant plans, programmes and policies and associated environmental assessments in the assessment of the Plan:

- The recently approved Climate Action Plan 2025 (**CAP25**), which is the third statutory annual update to Ireland's Climate Action Plan. The CAP25 lays out the roadmap of actions to meet our national climate objective of pursuing and achieving the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy by 2050.
- The Government's new National Adaptation Framework, which was approved in June 2024.
- The National Peatlands Strategy
- The Land Use Review–Phase 1, published in 2023, which provides an evidence base to determine the environmental, ecological and economic characteristics of land types across Ireland. Phase 2 is due for completion and will go on to consider the policies, measures, and actions which will need to be taken in the context of the Government's wider economic, social and climate objectives.

The further suite of documents set out in the list below, can also provide useful and relevant baseline and benchmarks for quantitively assessing the climate and environmental impacts of the proposed Plan.

- SEAI's report on the National Energy Projections 2023 and associated article
- The Government's Draft Updated National Energy & Climate Plan 2021-2023 (which will be finalised in the coming months)
- Sectoral Emissions Ceilings
- Sectoral Adaptation Plans made under the NAF
- The outputs from the National Dialogue on Climate Action (NDCA)
- EPA's reports Climate Change in the Irish Minds (CCIM)
- The EPA's report on Ireland's Provisional Greenhouse Gas Emissions 1990-2022
- Action 5.1 of the Bioeconomy Action Plan 2023 – 2025
- The Sustainable Development Goals Implementation Plan 2022- 2024
- The Government of Ireland's Land Use Review.

- The EPA's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Projections 2023-2050.
- The EPA's Air Quality data, which details the locations of all monitoring stations currently in operation, along with real-time and historic data from each station.

Finally, the list of documents from Inland Fisheries Ireland set out in the list below, can also provide useful and relevant guidelines, baseline, benchmarks as a source of information for quantitively assessing the climate and environmental impacts of the proposed Plan.

- IUCN River Restoration and biodiversity
- IFISH River Restoration Guidance in an era of Climate Change
- Guidelines on protection of fisheries during construction works in and adjacent to waters
- IFI Urban Watercourses Planning Guide
- IFI's Open Data Portal

We encourage the inclusion of the above listed reports as data sources and suggest they be included in the assessments to be set out in the Environmental Report. It is suggested that the Plan should be assessed in terms of its effects on the achievement of the objectives in the plans, policies and strategies in as detailed a manner as possible, by quantifying the impact of the Plan and its effects on the environment and climate objectives set out in them.

EU Legislation

In terms of EU Legislation, we recommend including reference to:

- The Directive (EU) 2023/2413 (the latest recast Renewable Energy Directive), Council Regulation (EU) 2022/2577 (laying down a framework to accelerate the deployment of renewable energy)
- The EIA Directive 2014/52/EU (assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment)
- The Public Participation Directive 2003/35/EC (public participation in the process of drawing up certain plans and programs related to the environment).
- The Soil Monitoring Law
- The recently enacted Nature Restoration Law

We trust the above is of assistance in the scoping of the SEA process for the Plan.

Yours sincerely,
Planning Advisory Division
Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications

Encl. Specific Comments on the SEA Scoping Report

Specific Comments on the SEA Scoping Report

Commenting on	Comment
List of other plans / programmes that may influence LUSIP on 9	Climate Action Plan 2025 has now been published. Consider including: • National Peatland Strategy • Land Use Review – phase 1 published 2023, phase 2 due for completion
P27 – second last paragraph re "threats to forest habitats" – also relevant for section 3.5.2, "Future trends (Evolution of the baseline)"	Windfall and storm damage presents a threat, given recent significant damage from storm Éowyn and threat of climate change
Re main threats to peatland areas, section 3.8.1.2, page 43	Drainage is not explicitly listed as a threat.
3.9.3 Key considerations relating to the draft LUSIP – in relation to achieving GHG emissions reductions under CAP 24	While our emission reductions targets and approach to the LULUCF sector is outlined in CAP 24, these are aligned with our requirements under the EU LULUCF Regulation.
3.12.1.1 – Forestry and Forestry Products and elsewhere there it references Coillte owning and manging 440,000 ha of lands	It would be useful in the document to state the proportion of this land that is forested, and for the area not forested, the relevant land use category
Page 75 section 3.12.2 – Line "It is expected that the forest land cover in Ireland will increase by approximately 8,000 ha per annum to meet the current targets"	Would consider changing to reflect that there is a target for 8,000 ha per annum, however, in recent years, less than 2,000 ha per annum has been afforested. Something along lines of: "To achieve this, there is a target for 8,000 hectares of afforestation per annum"
Page 78, section 3.14.1 – CAP 24 actions	This section should be updated to also refer to the recently published CAP 25 and the relevant actions threin (in addition to those listed from CAP 24): • Undertake a midterm review of the Forestry Programme 2023-2027.

	• Prepare a Land-Use Strategic Implementation Plan to deliver the Coillte Forest Estate Strategic Land-Use Plan. • Raise awareness among forest owners of the impact of timing when deciding to harvest their forest
Page 78, section 3.14.1 re "redesign of 30,000 ha of peatland forestry"	While there are numerous benefits, it is also important to bear in mind that in so far as forest to bog rewetting is concerned, there can be an initial spike in emissions, and it is also important to take into consideration the loss of the forest C sink.
Key Considerations relating to the draft LUSIP P 79	A key consideration also ought to be overall expected GHG flux from peatland forest redesign, considering both short term and long term impacts of both deforestation and peatland rewetting.
Page 9, section 2.3 re "other plans/programmes that may influence or impact on LUSIP"	Bioeconomy Action Plan 2023-2025 to be included in this list of plans.

Environmental Protection Agency
An Ghníomhaireacht um Chaomhnú Comhshaoil

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Strategic Planning Manager
Coillte
Corrin
Fermoy
Co. Cork

15th May 2025 Our Ref: SCP250402.1

Re. SEA Scoping for Coillte's Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan

Dear Ms Delazari,

We acknowledge your notice, dated 14th April 2025, in relation to the Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan (the 'LUSIP') and associated SEA Scoping Report.

The EPA is one of the statutory environmental authorities under the SEA Regulations. In our role as an SEA environmental authority, we focus on promoting the full and transparent integration of the findings of the Environmental Assessment into the LUSIP and advocating that the key environmental challenges for Ireland are addressed as relevant and appropriate to the LUSIP. Our functions as an SEA environmental authority do not include approving or enforcing SEAs or plans.

Where we provide specific comments on plans and programmes, our comments will focus on the EPA's remit and areas of expertise (in particular water, air, climate change, waste, resource efficiency, noise, radon and the inter-relationships between these and other relevant topics e.g. biodiversity), as appropriate and relevant to the particular plan or programme.

This submission comprises two parts, this cover letter which highlights some key environmental issues relating to forestry and the SEA process and Appendix I provides additional comments regarding the SEA process and resources available to support the SEA. The EPA may also provide further comments upon receipt of the SEA Environmental Report and draft LUSIP at the next stage of the SEA process.

Business Area Unit Scale assessments
We note the six Business Area Units (BAU) set out in scoping report. We suggest that, while the Plan is a national plan, the maps (and assessments) in the SEA could focus more on the BAU scale. This would help focus on what key sensitivities in those areas, such as habitats/species, or water quality. These maps would also be useful to inform specific relevant mitigation and monitoring information in the SEA, that may be required in the respective BAU areas.

Utilising forest management at a BAU level could promote wider sustainable forestry practices and better coordinate, manage, and monitor activities and help target measures in those areas. To better assess and manage forestry and related activities within each BAU, it may be more appropriate to establish separate BAU-level plans. This would allow greater detail of the resources (and constraints) in those areas to be provided, and also consider any specific mitigation and monitoring measures required for forestry management and environmental protection.

Water Quality

The main issue which impacts on the quality of our waters and their biological health is increased concentrations of nutrients, such as phosphorus and nitrogen. Human activities, such as agriculture, wastewater (domestic and urban) and forestry, are the primary cause of nutrient loss to our waters.

The EPA has developed a series of 'papers' which provide a summary of the impacts of a number of different pressures on water quality, including one on forestry. These may be useful in preparing the SEA.

Despite there being significant rules, regulations and codes of practice available to prevent significant environmental impacts from occurring, additional focus is needed to ensure the effectiveness of the mitigation actions during operations. While this is especially important in sensitive High-status sites, it is important in all waterbodies.

The EPA's State of the Environment Report for 2024, describes that nearly half (46%) of our surface waters are not ecologically healthy, and this is primarily due to human activities. The latest EPA water quality report *Water Quality in 2023 – An indicators Report* (EPA, 2024) shows that water quality is not as good as it should be, and that any improvements made in recent years are being offset by declines elsewhere. Some summary highlights of the report are shown below.

- The proportion of rivers in satisfactory biological condition is relatively unchanged since 2018 and there is no indication yet of an improvement.
- Of the 1,459 river water bodies monitored in 2022 and 2023 there has been a further small net decline in biological quality of 45, with the number of declines (232) exceeding the number of improvements (187).
  There has been a slight decline in the proportion of lakes with satisfactory (high and good) biological quality, driven by a reduction in the number of lakes with high biological quality.

Water quality impacts can arise due to acidification, nutrient and sediment mobilisation, and modifications to the physical habitat conditions of water courses through drainage. These impacts occur during forestry activities such as planting, thinning and clear-felling can cause a substantial decline in water quality, by as much as two or sometimes three status classes. Once the forests become stable, the water bodies can recover within a few years.

The LUSIP should emphasise how forestry can achieve multiple environmental benefits in a river basin catchment or sub-catchment context. For example, planting native woodland in low-lying poorly drained riparian zones can provide multiple environmental benefits.

Coillte has made progress in forest management by establishing policies and standards designed to address the impacts on water quality from forestry operations. However, forestry operations, particularly in legacy forestry sites, continue to impact on water quality. The LUSIP should focus on preventing water-related impacts from forestry activities, particularly in highly sensitive areas. Implementing '*the right tree in the right place*' approach, will be a key measure to mitigate against inappropriately sited forests.

High status waters are particularly sensitive to the impacts that can arise from forestry operations. Sediment losses from forestry operations in upland catchments is the most significant pressure impacting on our high-status waters. These water bodies are also impacted by nutrients and chemicals, and by alteration of the physical habitat conditions (hydromorphology) of streams. These impacts occur during afforestation, deforestation, and thinning operations, when ground conditions are disturbed, especially when the soils are organic as they are typically less stable than mineral soils. Drained organic soils also give rise to high ammonium in these waterbodies which is harmful to aquatic habitats and species. The potential impacts from forestry should also address the impacts of herbicides and pesticides (such as cypermethrin and acetamiprid) on both water quality and biodiversity.

Emissions

Current low afforestation rates (~2000 ha/annum) are well below the planned 8,000 ha foreseen annually, and as specified in *Ag-Climatise – A Roadmap towards Climate Neutrality* and the Forest Strategy. This, combined with increased timber harvest, will lead to further reductions in the ability of our national forests to contribute to removals of CO_2 emissions going forward. This is due to decreased afforestation rates and the maturity of the forest stand. The LUSIP must be explicit in how its interventions will contribute towards achieving a position of carbon neutrality for Ireland by 2050.

While the forestry sector plays an important role as a source of CO_2 removal from the atmosphere, there has been a noticeable reduction in the absolute value of this sink / removal activity due to the current age profile of our national forest stock.

Quantifying the extent of forestry that will be needed, to be consistent with Ireland's climate commitments, to help deliver a 51% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 is important. The 8,000 hectares per annum afforestation goal set out in the Irelands Forestry Strategy Implementation Plan does not appear to be consistent with supporting achievement of the climate neutrality goal based on EPA-funded research[1]. This research found that between 13,000 hectares and 40,000 hectares per annum of afforestation would be needed from 2025 to 2050 to offset projected CO_2 and N_2O emissions from the agriculture sector. This should also be considered, as appropriate in the LUSIP.

The LUSIP should ensure the full implementation and enforcement of the relevant environmental requirements for afforestation, and increasing the level of oversight where operations may potentially be considered in high status catchment areas. The *Forests & Water – Achieving Objectives under Ireland's River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021* (DAFM, 2018), and any relevant measures in the Water Action Plan 2024 – Ireland's Third River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027 (DHLGH) should be considered and integrated as appropriate.

[1] https://www.plantagbiosciences.org/project/sequester/homepage/

If you have any queries or need further information in relation to this submission, please contact me directly. I would be grateful if you could send an email confirming receipt of this submission to: sea@epa.ie.

Yours Sincerely,



Tadhg O'Mahony
Senior Scientific Officer
Office of Radiation Protection and Environmental Monitoring

Appendix I – Specific Comments on the SEA Scoping Report

Data & Knowledge Gaps

The LUSIP should identify any significant data and knowledge gaps, and include commitments to address these on a priority basis and where relevant, in association with other government departments/ organisations, during the implementation phase of the LUSIP. This is with a view to strengthening the evidence base for future reviews and iterations of the LUSIP.

Ireland's State of the Environment Report 2024

In October 2024, we published the latest iteration of our 4-yearly State of the Environment Report. This report should be considered, and relevant aspects integrated where appropriate, in implementing the LUSIP outputs/ recommendations. Specific chapters Chapter 4 (Climate), Chapter 5 (Land), Chapter 6 (Soil), Chapter 7 (Nature), Chapter 8 (Water), Chapter 10 (Environment and agriculture) and Chapter 14 (Environment, health and wellbeing) might be useful to review for any relevant recommendations.

Relationship with other plans and programmes

Consider also referring to the Water Action Plan 2024 – Ireland's Third River Basin Management Plan, Food Vision 2030, Revision to the National Planning Framework, CAP Strategic Plan 2023-2027 as well as any local authority landscape characterisation assessments.

We recommend including schematics in the LUSIP and SEA Environmental Report, showing the links and inter-relationships with other key relevant national, regional, sectoral and environmental plans.

Consultation

There is merit also in pointing to Article 13 of the SEA regulations (S.I. 435 of 2004, as amended) which relates to the consultations. The SEA regulations require that the draft LUSIP is sent to the statutory environmental authorities inviting written submissions. Coillte is required to publish a newspaper notice inviting submissions/observations from the public on both the LUSIP and the SEA environmental report. The SEA regulations refer to a public consultation period of not less than 4 weeks, however, given that the LUSIP is a key national plan, consideration should be given to undertaking a more appropriate consultation period in the order of 8-12 weeks. Submissions and observations received should be taken into consideration in finalising the LUSIP.

Transboundary consultation

Transboundary consultation should be undertaken with environmental authorities in Northern Ireland where the potential for likely significant transboundary effects have been identified. In this regard, the relevant requirements of the SEA protocol[2] under the ESPOO Convention should be considered, for any possible transboundary consultations with non-EU Member States.

Governance

We acknowledge that the vision and objectives of the LUSIP is to implement the measures/actions set out in the Forest Estate Land Use Plan (FESLUP), to develop and support commercial forestry activities while also delivering environmental benefits.

[2] UNECE Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context.

Collaborating with key stakeholders (government departments, state agencies and forestry contractors) will help align the LUSIP with other national level environmental commitments set out in plans including the First Revision to the National Planning Framework, Climate Action Plan 2025, Water Action Plan 2024, CAP Strategic Plan and relevant forestry related plans/strategies. Coordinating national land use decision making should help minimise potential policy and environmental conflicts and maximise environmental co-benefits (water, air, climate, biodiversity) while also supporting sectoral and economic growth.

Scope of the SEA

The SEA should clearly set out the scope, remit and implementation related elements of the LUSIP. These will have implications for the SEA, in terms of guiding the level of assessment applicable at the appropriate level for the LUSIP. Where it is envisaged that measures proposed in the LUSIP will be implemented via other plans, which themselves have been or will be subject to SEA, this should be explained in the Environmental Report and considered in the assessment.

Where specific measures will be implemented directly, further detail should be provided in the Environmental Report and LUSIP on the relevant environmental assessments to be carried out at the project stage and relevant mitigation measures to be applied, as appropriate. There may be merit in exploring this issue further with the relevant Environmental Authorities during the LUSIP preparation and SEA processes.

There would be merit in including a matrix in the SEA environmental report to show the interrelationships between the various environmental topics. This should be accompanied by relevant explanatory text.

In *Section 3.2 Plan Boundary and Wider Study area*, while we note the LUSIP is of national importance, the scale of the maps is too large to show many of the environmental sensitivities easily. Consider splitting the national maps up into BAU level maps to provide for greater detail of the terrestrial areas covered by the LUSIP. Where potential significant effects on the marine environment are identified however, these should be discussed in greater detail. For example, where marine, coastal or transitional water quality might be impacted by forestry related activity arising from implementing the LUSIP, these aspects should be discussed in the SEA.

BAU maps areas should identify high conservation value forests (for example), to assist conservation management, as well as indicating areas considered for potential as possible forestry activity within or adjacent to those areas. The LUSIP should also take account of protected species such as freshwater pearl mussels, salmonids, hen harriers etc and their associated habitats, which may be more straightforward at BAU level.

Section 3.6 Landscape, Seascape and Visual Amenity, we suggest the EPA's *Good practice guidance on SEA and Landscape* (EPA, 2023) might be useful to refer to and take into account. Also, in this section, we suggest removing the reference to the ESM Sensitivity Mapping, as this project has now ceased. However, the spatial data inventory associated with this project is still being updated in 2025.

Section 3.8.2.2 Soils, it is advised to update the reference to the Seventh Environment Action Programme (EAP), to refer to the Eighth EAP, which looks to guide environmental policy until the end of the decade.

Section 3.9.2 Future trends (Evolution of Baseline) - Consider updating the reference to Food Harvest 2020 to Food Vision 2030.

Section 3.13 Tourism- The locations of Failte Ireland's Visitor Experience Development Plan areas, could be included in maps at a BAU scale. This could help promote the co-benefits of sustainable forestry and tourism/recreation activities.

Section 3.14 - Climate Change - This section states that Coillte has an ambition to redesign 30,000ha peatland forests by 2050 through rewetting or rewilding. It would also be useful to outline how this will be achieved and over what timeframe.

Where a specific plan or programme is proposed for this purpose, the requirements of the SEA and Habitats Directives should be considered. Additionally, this section should update references to the latest Climate Action Plan 2025.

Range of Effects

The SEA Environmental Report should refer to the full range of effects and of the area likely to be affected. This assessment should consider the duration and frequency of effects as well as short, medium and long-term, cumulative and synergistic effects of the LUSIP. The EPA's *Good Practice Guidance on Cumulative Effects Assessment in Strategic Environmental Assessment* (EPA, 2020).

Sensitivity Mapping

The SEA and LUSIP would benefit from preparing a series environmental sensitivity maps for the different BAU areas. This would help identify areas of greater environmental sensitivity, which may limit the future use of lands or which may require specific mitigation/monitoring measures and arrangements for forestry applications in those areas. Sensitivity mapping can help indicate areas open to consideration for development/afforestation, or areas not suitable for development/afforestation etc., these will, however, rely largely on greater detailed maps and assessments lower in the forestry planning hierarchy. County level wind energy strategies (such as in Clare or Kerry for example) use this approach to guide wind energy development to preferred areas (avoiding environmentally sensitive areas).

Carrying out an opportunity / constraint mapping exercise, as done for plans such as the first Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan, could be useful. This would help inform which broad land types or areas may be best suited to certain types or scales of development covered under the LUSIP.

Landcover Mapping

While that the resolution of the new detailed EPA/Taillte Eireann land cover mapping information may be too detailed for the LUSIP, we suggest that a recommendation is included promoting its use within each BAU area for example.

Implementation, training and resources

The LUSIP should promote compliance with existing forestry guidelines and policies, including those relating to protection of water quality and biodiversity. The LUSIP should also support training/awareness activities of stakeholders to effectively implement the relevant guidelines and policies.

Integration of the SEA and the LUSIP

The integration of the SEA process into the LUSIP should reflect the overall objective of the SEA Directive "*to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes*.". The recommendations from the SEA, including mitigation measures, should be fully integrated and reflected in the LUSIP. This is key to strengthening the LUSIPs environmental commitments, while ensuring that any significant adverse effects of implementing the LUSIP are mitigated. The EPA has recently published a *Good practice guidance note on SEA and Integration* (EPA, 2025) that may help in this regard.

The SEA ER should include a chapter outlining how the recommendations and mitigation measures from the SEA have been incorporated into the LUSIP. A similar section should be included in the LUSIP. We recommend that the SEA ER includes relevant summary tables outlining the key findings of the SEA and linking the significant environmental effects identified to the proposed mitigation measures, monitoring measures and recommendations.

Monitoring, Implementation & Reporting

The existing SEA monitoring programme associated with the FESLUP, should be used to inform the preparation of a SEA monitoring programme for the LUSIP. The SEA could refer to the existing monitoring programme when discussing monitoring considerations.

The LUSIP should include a commitment to implement the SEA environmental monitoring programme and associated reporting. We suggest including a separate section on '*Environmental Monitoring, Implementation and Reporting*' in the LUSIP, setting out the provisions for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the LUSIP. There may be merits, as appropriate, in aligning the periodic reviews of the LUSIP with existing cyclical reporting e.g. *Ireland's Environment*, *National Planning Framework*, *Water Framework Directive,* etc.

In between review periods for the LUSIP, we recommend that progress-related implementation reports are published annually, or biennially, as appropriate. We recommend aligning LUSIP implementation monitoring/reporting with the associated environmental monitoring required under the SEA legislation. This will enable the environmental performance of the LUSIP to be evaluated on an ongoing basis and would also provide for increased transparency during implementation.

The SEA-related monitoring should address positive, negative and cumulative effects where they are likely to occur and should include provision for on-going review to facilitate an early response and the adoption of remedial action(s) to address any significant environmental issues that may arise. The Environmental Report should set out the monitoring frequency and responsibilities and include provisions for reporting on the monitoring.

The EPA has prepared *EPA guidance on SEA Statements and Monitoring (EPA, 2023) that might be useful to consider in preparing a monitoring programme.* The high-level monitoring indicators proposed in Table 1 on page 23, could be helpful to consider.

Establishing an Environmental Working Subgroup would provide for oversight of the environmental monitoring and reporting and could be considered. The arrangements in place previously for the implementation stages of plans such as the Grid 25 Implementation Plan, Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (OREDP), Wild Atlantic Way Operational Programme and Food Vision 2030 may be worth considering, as appropriate.

Available Guidance & Resources

The EPA has published guidance notes that may be of assistance in preparing the SEA environmental report.

Guidance on the SEA Scoping Process is included in the Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland (EPA, 2003).

You can access our SEA process guidance and topic and sector specific guidance documents along with other resources listed below.

- SEA process guidance and checklists;
- Inventory of spatial datasets relevant to SEA;
- Topic and sector specific SEA guidance (including *SEA and Integration Guidance* (EPA, 2025), *Good practice guidance on SEA and Landscape* (EPA, 2023) *Good practice note on Cumulative Effects Assessment* (EPA, 2020), *Developing and Assessing Alternatives in SEA* (EPA, 2015), and *Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment* (EPA, 2012)).

EPA SEA GIS Search and Reporting Webtool

Our SEA WebGIS Tool has been updated and is now available at https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/SEA. It allows an indicative report on key aspects of the environment in a specific geographic area to be produced. It is intended to assist public authorities in SEA screening and scoping exercises.

Catchments.ie

Our https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/Water website provides a single point of access to water quality and catchment data from the National WFD monitoring programme.

EPA Appropriate Assessment GeoTool

Our AA GeoTool application has been developed in partnership with the NPWS. It allows users to a select a location, specify a search area and gather available information for each European Site within the area.

SEA Statement (Information on the Decision)

The final stage of the SEA process relates to the publication of an SEA Statement when the LUSIP is adopted. This statement will include information on how submissions and observations and consultation feedback made to Coillte during the SEA process have been incorporated into the LUSIP. The EPA has prepared *EPA guidance on SEA Statements and Monitoring (EPA, 2023)* that might be useful to consider in preparing the SEA Statement.

Environmental Authorities

Under the SEA Regulations, you should consult with:

- Environmental Protection Agency;
- Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage;
- Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications;
- Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage

Your Ref: **: Coillte's Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan**
Our Ref: **Plan02382/2025**
(Please quote in all related correspondence)

16th May 2025

Larissa Delazari
Strategic Planning Manager
Coillte
Corrin
Fermoy
County Cork

Via email to lusip_sea@coillte.ie

Re: Coillte's Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan - Consultation on SEA Scoping

A chara,

I refer to correspondence received in connection with the above. Outlined below are heritage related observations/recommendations of the Department co-ordinated by the Development Applications Unit under the stated heading(s).

Archaeology

The National Monuments Service of the Department welcomes the opportunity to comment on Coillte's Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan: SEA Scoping Report. The Department has the following advice in relation to the SEA.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

2.3 Other Plans/Programmes that may influence or impact on the LUSIP

The SEA Environmental Report should consider:

Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan for Built and Archaeological Heritage 2019

This plan was prepared as part of the National Adaptation Framework (NAF) and followed the methodology set out in the Sectoral Planning Guidelines for Climate Change Adaptation published by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment in 2018. The guidelines proposed a staged and proportionate approach to adaptation planning structured around a six-step planning cycle including: 1) preparing the ground; 2) climate impact screening; 3) prioritisation; 4) priority impact assessment; 5) develop the plan; and 6)

implement, evaluate and review. A public consultation process was held in the preparation of the CCSAP B&AH, details of which are published in a separate volume. The final plan underwent screening for SEA and AA. The plan consists of 48 actions arranged under five goals and includes illustrative case studies of the impacts of climate change on built and archaeological heritage. The goals include to improve understanding of each heritage resource and its vulnerability to climate-change impacts; develop and mainstream sustainable policies and plans for climate-change adaptation of built and archaeological heritage; conserve Ireland's heritage for future generations; communicate and transfer knowledge; and exploit opportunities for built and archaeological heritage to demonstrate value and secure resources. Implementation of the CCSAP B&AH is underway. An expert Advisory Group meets twice yearly and a series of six Working Groups of stakeholders focus on different work packages of actions. It is an action of CAP 2024 to develop a new NAF. It is anticipated that a number of sectors, including Built and Archaeological Heritage, will be instructed to draw up a new or revised CCSAP on foot of the publication of the new NAF.

3.7 Cultural Heritage - Archaeological and Architectural

4.4.10 Landscape and Cultural Heritage

The *Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Government of Ireland 1999)* sets out national policy on the protection of the archaeological heritage in the course of development and in accordance with the aims and requirements of the 'Valletta Convention'—1992 Council of Europe European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage—to which Ireland is a party.

The specific national legislative code for protection of monuments, historic wrecks and archaeological objects is the *National Monuments Acts* 1930 to 2014 (as noted in the scoping reports). However, the *Historic and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act* (2023) will replace *the National Monuments Acts* (1930–2014). This new Act will provide for the protection of historic and archaeological heritage. A new 'Register of Monuments' will be established, replacing several overlapping designation and registration systems currently in operation. Newly discovered archaeological sites will be afforded immediate legal protection, mirroring the existing system for archaeological objects and historic wrecks that are automatically protected without a need for formal designation or registration. This will be reinforced by a statutory reporting scheme for finds of monuments. Subject to certain exceptions, archaeological objects with no known owner will automatically become the property of the State. A new civil enforcement procedure can be used as an alternative to, or to supplement, criminal proceedings.

The Act makes explicit provision for the protection of World Heritage sites, including, for the first time, a definition in Irish law for "World Heritage Property". The new legislation enables the State to ratify or accede to certain international conventions, notably the 2001 *UNESCO*

Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, the 1970 *UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property* and the 1995 *UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects*. The Act gives further effect to the 1992 *Council of Europe European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage* (the "Valletta Convention").

The Act introduces a new integrated licensing system whereby one licence can authorise a range of activities and, for the first time, a statutory appeals process will be established to review licensing decisions.

Note while this new legislation has been signed into law, most of the provisions of the Act have not yet been commenced. However, it is expected that substantive implementation will occur within the lifetime of this plan. For more detailed information on what sections of the new Act have been implemented and for future updates, please see our website: https://www.archaeology.ie/advice-and-support/legislation/

Chapter 5 Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment

5.3.8 Cultural Heritage

The Department notes that this section of the draft SEA does include *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage Sites (WHS).* However, the provided information is inaccurate and out of date. It is true that currently there only two World Heritage properties within the state—Brú na Bóinne in County Meath and Skellig Michael in County Kerry. The Tentative List was updated in 2022 and now includes only the following sites:

- The Passage Tomb Landscape of County Sligo
- Royal Sites of Ireland: Ancient Irish Sites of Royal Inauguration
- Transatlantic Cable Ensemble

Further information on UNESCO World Heritage properties within Ireland and those on the current tentative list can be found here: https://worldheritageireland.ie/

The Department notes that this section of the draft SEA does include a summary of the legal provisions for the protection of underwater and maritime archaeology and cultural heritage, it has not included the National Monuments Service's *Wreck Inventory of Ireland Database* (WIID). The WIID includes 18,000 records of known wrecks, though only 4,000 have precise locations, these encompass sites located within Ireland's inshore waterways (lakes, rivers, etc) as well as its territorial waters. The WIID can be accessed here: https://www.archaeology.ie/underwater-archaeology/wreck-viewer

Under existing environmental pressures/problems relating to Cultural Heritage, the SEA notes that 'a National Adaptation Framework (NAF) and its sectoral plan for built and archaeological heritage is urgently required'. The Department notes that the National Adaptation Framework was published in 2018, followed by a Built & Archaeological Heritage: Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan (published in 2019). Should this instead reference a need for new/updated NAF and Sectoral Adaptation Plans (while acknowledging the work already completed)?

Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan for Built and Archaeological Heritage 2019

This plan was prepared as part of the National Adaptation Framework (NAF) and followed the methodology set out in the Sectoral Planning Guidelines for Climate Change Adaptation published by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment in 2018. The guidelines proposed a staged and proportionate approach to adaptation planning structured around a six-step planning cycle including: 1) preparing the ground; 2) climate impact screening; 3) prioritisation; 4) priority impact assessment; 5) develop the plan; and 6) implement, evaluate and review. A public consultation process was held in the preparation of the CCSAP B&AH, details of which are published in a separate volume. The final plan underwent screening for SEA and AA. The plan consists of 48 actions arranged under five goals and includes illustrative case studies of the impacts of climate change on built and archaeological heritage. The goals include to improve understanding of each heritage resource and its vulnerability to climate-change impacts; develop and mainstream sustainable policies and plans for climate-change adaptation of built and archaeological heritage; conserve Ireland's heritage for future generations; communicate and transfer knowledge; and exploit opportunities for built and archaeological heritage to demonstrate value and secure resources. Implementation of the CCSAP B&AH is underway. An expert Advisory Group meets twice yearly and a series of six Working Groups of stakeholders focus on different work packages of actions. It is an action of CAP 2024 to develop and new NAF. It is anticipated that a number of sectors, including Built and Archaeological Heritage, will be instructed to draw up a new or revised CCSAP on foot of the publication of the new NAF.

4.2 Proposed SEA Objectives

The Department notes the inclusion of a specific objective—Objective CH1—for the protection of archaeological heritage. Given the character of the LUSIP we strongly advise that an additional objective is included to:

> *(i) Promote opportunities to enhance or conserve places, features, buildings and landscapes of cultural, historical archaeological or architectural heritage where they arise*

It is important that a requirement to protect the setting and amenity of archaeological and cultural heritage sites is clearly articulated, in addition to protecting the physical integrity of

the sites themselves. The Department takes the view that appropriately deployed land use management measures may (in some instances) serve to enhance the setting of cultural heritage sites or assist in their conservation, so it is important to include this positive objective.

Architectural Heritage

The National Built Heritage Service (NBHS) of the Department has reviewed the "Strategic Environmental Assessment Report of the Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan", and has the following observations:

1. The SEA Report should have regard to Ministerial Guidelines 'Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities' issued under Sections 28 and 52 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The Ministerial Guidelines are a practical guide for planning authorities and all others who must comply with Part IV (Architectural Heritage) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

2. The Department draws particular attention to "Chapter 13 Curtilage and Attendant Grounds" of the Ministerial Guidelines which is likely to be relevant to this plan in terms of identifying and addressing curtilage, attendant grounds and designed landscapes associated with protected structures.

3. The National Inventory of the Architectural Heritage also includes over 6,000 records of historic gardens and designed landscapes. These are principally demesnes but also included are garden cemeteries and urban parks, all of which are available at www.buildingsofireland.ie

4. The relevant policies and development management objectives relating to protected structures and their curtilage, architectural conservation areas, designed landscapes and non-structural architectural features will be contained in the relevant built heritage chapter of each local authority Development Plan.

5. The curtilage of a protected structure (particularly country houses) can be expansive and therefore consultation with respective local authorities will be beneficial in establishing such boundaries, as these are not available within Development Plan maps.

Nature Conservation

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) of the department note that the scoping conclusion for the biodiversity section (3.5) is that biodiversity resources have the potential to be impacted by the Draft LUSIP and therefore scoped into the SEA assessment.

As validation, the key considerations in relation to Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna within the draft LUSIP scoping report are as follows:

- The potential effects of forestry activities (e.g. afforestation) on non-designated biodiversity features e.g. important habitats and species outside designated sites - particularly with regard to barriers to movement and displacement.
- The potential for effects on designated areas.
- The potential to spread invasive species.
- Potential impact of recreational development on flora species listed under the Flora (Protection) Order, 2022 (S.I. No. 235 of 2022).
- Potential impact of renewable energy development on biodiversity.
- Opportunities to promote green infrastructure, ecological connectivity nature-based solutions, and biodiversity net gain through the LUSIP.
- Nature conservation and restoration will be an intrinsic component of the Plan. The Plan has the potential to support biodiversity protection and enhancement in alignment with nature legislation and policy (e.g., the Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan)

The Department notes and welcomes the consideration of the National Biodiversity Action Plan (2023-2030) along with other plans and programmes that may influence or impact on the LUSIP.

The Department notes and welcomes the list of designated ecological sites and protected species as listed in Table 3-3. The definition of High Conservation Value Forests within the Coillte estate is supported as they lie within statutory designated sites across the country. These areas along with the suite of old woodland sites within the Coillte estate are of great importance. The Department requests that such areas are afforded ongoing protection within current statutory requirements.

In addition, it is stated in section 3.5.2 that conservation objectives developed by the NPWS for European sites will contribute to the critical change needed to revive biodiversity decline. This is very much supported.

Table 3-4 of the draft scoping report lists categories of non-designated habitat relevant to the plan, such as ecological connectivity and networks, and sites of high biodiversity value or ecological importance. The Department would ask how are ecological connectivity and networks to be considered in the plan?

Other non-designated sites with high biodiversity value are also stated as being of key consideration for Coillte. The Department agrees with this statement but would ask how such areas are being considered in the plan?

The Department welcomes and supports the ongoing use of available data sources for bird monitoring, especially for red and amber list species across all habitats. Furthermore, the indication of consideration outside of European sites on protected species such as bats, birds and badgers, as well as species listed within the Flora (Protection) Order 2022 is very welcome.

The Department supports the proposals for documenting the distribution of invasive alien species, especially as they can transform habitats, making them unsuitable for native species.

The Department also notes that the scoping conclusion for the water environment (3.11) is that the Draft LUSIP has the potential to impact on water resources. Therefore, Water is scoped into the SEA assessment.

As validation the key considerations in relation to Water within the draft LUSIP scoping report include the following:

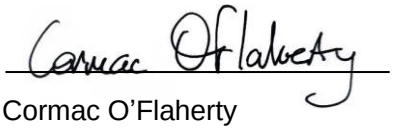
- Potential pressures and impacts on water body status from forestry and renewable energy development works (i.e. increased use of fertilisers, potential sedimentation (during afforestation and felling in particular) and accidental spillage/run-off).

The Department welcomes the consideration of High Ecological Status waterbodies in the SEA scoping report. This is especially important in terms of good water quality for qualifying interest species within designated sites, including fish, molluscs and mammals. Furthermore, the scope of the SEA Environmental Report should outline a strategy for containing deleterious matter from entering surface waterbodies.

You are requested to send any further communications to this Department's Development Applications Unit (DAU) at manager.dau@npws.gov.ie, or to the following address:

The Manager
Development Applications Unit (DAU)
Government Offices
Newtown Road
Wexford
Y35 AP90

Is mise, le meas



Cormac O'Flaherty
Development Applications Unit
Administration
Tel: 01-2376003

An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

Larissa Delazari
lusip_sea@coillte.ie

06th June 2025

Coillte's draft SEA Scoping report for their Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan (LUSIP)

Dear Larissa,

Following your request for submissions and observations in relation to the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the SEA Environmental Report for the Coillte Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan (LUSIP), please find the submission from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine as follows.

The Department has made observations under three headings – Environment, Archaeology and Climate which are detailed below.

Environment

DAFM is of the opinion that Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna must be screened in for consideration in the SEA. Furthermore, the SEA should consider but is not limited to the following in relation to Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna:

- The potential effects of forestry activities on non-designated biodiversity features must consider all forestry operations not just afforestation – felling, reforestation and roading are key activities that can impact habitats and species both within and outside of designated areas. Recreation is also likely to impact on these habitats and species and must be considered.
- It is important to consider under potential for effects on designated areas
    - Approximately 96,000 ha of Coillte land is designated as SACs, SPAs, NHAs or pNHAs. The Nature objective in the 6 BAUs ranges from 23.73% (southern BAU with Kerry and part of Limerick and Cork) to 33.91% (counties Laois, Offaly, Roscommon, Longford, Westmeath, Louth, Cavan, Monaghan and part of Leitrim). The scoping document states "Coillte currently have 70,000 ha have space within its lands that is assigned for nature conservation". The SEA needs to consider is this sufficient or will it have a negative impact on designated sites in Ireland. The Site Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCOs) for the European Sites outlines how the conservation objectives of the European sites will be maintained or restored. Is the LUSIP ensuring that the objective for the forests within European sites reflects this - timber production may still be compatible

within some designated areas, but the overall objective must be the achievement of the SSCOs.

- Potential effects on European sites must take into account supporting habitats which may not be within the European site. This is particularly key for some bird species.

- Freshwater Pearl Mussel is a species under threat and is classified as critically endangered in Ireland The Freshwater Pearl Mussel | National Parks & Wildlife Service. Does the LUSIP support measures to protect and restore this species including the development of plans for the Coillte estate on a catchment basis for the top 8 freshwater pearl mussel catchments?
- Invasive species are a key threat to biodiversity in Ireland. The SEA should not just be confined to consideration of the plan in relation to the spread of invasive species but whether the plan will contribute to the achievement of objectives of the National Biodiversity Action Plan (Outcome 2H).
- Impacts on Flora Protection Order species is not just confined to recreational development, changes in forest management practices may impact on some of these species e.g. Killarney fern.
- The SEA should consider whether the plan addresses other threats to biodiversity such as fire and deer. Does the plan support the objectives of the National Biodiversity Action Plan in relation to these areas e.g. work of the Irish Deer Management Strategy Group and the development of a national fire management strategy.
- There is a reference in the scoping document to other management plans for declining species under future trends. However, the SEA must consider does the LUSIP support plans already in place
  - Hen Harrier Threat Response Plan (HHRTP) was launched on the 10th of September 2024. Coillte are key to the delivery of the HHTRP and this must be recognised and supported.
  - Lesser Horseshoe Bat Species Action Plan
- The SEA must consider does the LUSIP support the Memorandum of Understanding between Coillte and NPWS (signed 17/09/2024).
- The SEA must consider does the LUSIP support the Nature Restoration Regulations and the targets and objectives that Ireland must achieve.
- Coillte's road network (existing and future) does not appear to be considered as a potential pressure / threat in the themes listed, apart from Soils and Geology.
- The Scoping document refers to afforestation, but it is not clear from the document that reforestation is considered in conjunction with felling.

- The interactions of themes must also be considered in particular Water and Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna. Potential negative impacts on water are likely to affect the achievement of SSCOs for many European sites.

Archaeology

DAFM concurs with the conclusion on Page 40 that archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage has the potential to be impacted by the draft LUSIP and therefore should be scoped into the SEA assessment.

It has the following specific comments to make:

- **Page 39:** References 50 and 53 need to be updated in light of the commencement of certain provisions of the Historic and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023

  See: https://www.archaeology.ie/advice-and-support/legislation/

- **Page 40:** Reference 58 probably should now read The National Built Heritage Service (NBHS).

  See: https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/about-us/

- **Page 40:**

  Subsection 3.7.2

  > *There are also a number of sites on the UNESCO tentative list that may be designated in the near future.*

  The SEA should give greater consideration to the Irish Government's stated vision for fostering World Heritage in Ireland, which involves the exemplary protection and management of World Heritage Properties, empowered local communities and stakeholders, enhanced awareness and understanding of World Heritage generally, and the inscription of further Irish properties on the World Heritage List.

  In respect of the latter, specific consideration should be given to the current Tentative List of sites that Ireland has identified as demonstrating potential Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) to humanity and therefore suitable for nomination to the World Heritage List and which actions proposed in the LUSIP, if any, have the potential to result in impacts (negative or positive) on these sites (in particular their OUV and any aspects that contribute to their authenticity, integrity, and/or distinctiveness) and any indicative / working core or buffer zones relating thereto.

  See: Tentative Property Archives - World Heritage Ireland

- **Page 40:**

  Subsection 3.7.3

The potential effects of Coillte afforestation/renewable energy projects on existing and unknown archaeological sites, architectural heritage sites, and protected structures.

All licensable forestry activities undertaken by Coillte and private forest owners have the potential to impact on existing and unknown archaeological sites, architectural heritage sites, and protected structures, namely initial afforestation, felling (and reforestation), forest road construction, and aerial fertilisation. Potential impacts include both direct (physical destruction, damage, disturbance) and indirect (dewatering, changes in soil chemistry, overshadowing, increasing the scope for burrowing animals, changes to access, setting and amenity).

New or enhanced recreational facilities are also likely to impact on these sites and structures and must be considered.

- **Page 84:**

  Theme - Cultural Heritage - Archaeological & Architectural

  The potential impact of the changing land use on existing and unknown archaeological sites, architectural heritage sites, and protected structures.

  It is not just land use change that has potential impacts on existing and unknown archaeological sites, architectural heritage sites, and protected structures. Management interventions, such as thinning or felling (and reforestation) of existing forests (which is not land use change per se) can equally have potential impacts.

Climate

DAFM welcomes Coillte's SEA scoping report for the Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan (LUSIP) in terms of its ambition in relation to Forests for Climate. The LUSIP highlights how the Coillte forest estate can contribute to the mitigation of the impacts of climate change through the sequestration of greenhouse gases. We are pleased to see that the LUSIP recognises the need to deliver afforestation and forest management practices that protect and capture carbon in line with national targets.

The LUSIP is on the right track, and it aligns with the goals and objectives of Irelands Forest Strategy in relation to emission reductions in the LULUCF sector, as per the EU LULUCF Regulation (EU 2023/839) and the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021.

The LUSIP takes account of the need to manage forests for a number of objectives in a way that best delivers multiple benefits to society. The LUSIP also acknowledges the Climate Action Plan (CAP) 2024, which outlines the range of forest management options available to Coillte to deliver on Ireland's climate commitments.

DAFM would also encourage the use of and reference to LULUCF actions in CAP25 as part of the LUSIP, as well as the Teagasc Marginal Abatement Cost Curve (2023). These resources outline a number of potential forestry contributions to climate change mitigation and the Coillte estate can help to deliver on some of these pathways. Their inclusion can add to the content and robustness of the SEA process.

In addition, DAFM welcomes the emphasis of the LUSIP on Forest Products and Forest based Bioenergy. It acknowledges the role that wood products can play in the construction industry and the need to deliver the sustainable wood supply needed to meet housing requirements of local populations. A greater use of these harvested wood products (HWP) will make a significant contribution to carbon removal in the LULUCF sector. Thus, this objective aligns with the objective of Irelands Forest Strategy in terms of expanding the forest estate to deliver lasting benefits for wood production and climate change.

DAFM Forestry is committed to working constructively and collaboratively with Coillte to assist in the implementation of plans and objectives that will maximise the Coillte estates contribution to Ireland's climate change targets.

Yours sincerely,

Barry Delany

Director of Forestry

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

Larissa Delazari
lusip_sea@coillte.ie

12th June 2025

Coillte's draft SEA Scoping report for their Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan (LUSIP)

Dear Larissa,

Following your request for submissions and observations in relation to the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the SEA Environmental Report for the Coillte Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan (LUSIP), please find the submission from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine as follows.

The Department has made observations under three headings – Environment, Archaeology and Climate which are detailed below.

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  - Hen Harrier Threat Response Plan (HHRTP) was launched on the 10th of September 2024. Coillte are key to the delivery of the HHTRP and this must be recognised and supported.
  - Lesser Horseshoe Bat Species Action Plan
- The SEA must consider does the LUSIP support the Memorandum of Understanding between Coillte and NPWS (signed 17/09/2024).
- The SEA must consider does the LUSIP support the Nature Restoration Regulations and the targets and objectives that Ireland must achieve.
- The SEA must consider does the LUSIP support Ireland in achieving its obligations under the Water Framework Directive. Additionally, it must consider if it supports the achievement of the ten forestry actions set out in the recently published Water Action Plan 2024.
- Regarding MA3 on page 88, in the section dealing with ‘Material Assets & Infrastructure’, greater emphasis should be placed on the need to liaise closely with

consenting authorities (including the 1st Authority and the 2nd Authority, where these arise) in relation to the specific regulatory requirements involved in the assessment of infrastructural developments.

- Coillte's road network (existing and future) does not appear to be considered as a potential pressure / threat in the themes listed, apart from Soils and Geology.
- The Scoping document refers to afforestation, but it is not clear from the document that reforestation is considered in conjunction with felling.
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It has the following specific comments to make:

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- **Page 40:**

  Subsection 3.7.2

  > *There are also a number of sites on the UNESCO tentative list that may be designated in the near future.*

  The SEA should give greater consideration to the Irish Government's stated vision for fostering World Heritage in Ireland, which involves the exemplary protection and management of World Heritage Properties, empowered local communities and stakeholders, enhanced awareness and understanding of World Heritage generally, and the inscription of further Irish properties on the World Heritage List.

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The LUSIP is on the right track, and it aligns with the goals and objectives of Irelands Forest Strategy in relation to emission reductions in the LULUCF sector, as per the EU

LULUCF Regulation (EU 2023/839) and the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021.

The LUSIP takes account of the need to manage forests for a number of objectives in a way that best delivers multiple benefits to society. The LUSIP also acknowledges the Climate Action Plan (CAP) 2024, which outlines the range of forest management options available to Coillte to deliver on Ireland's climate commitments.

DAFM would also encourage the use of and reference to LULUCF actions in CAP25 as part of the LUSIP, as well as the Teagasc Marginal Abatement Cost Curve (2023). These resources outline a number of potential forestry contributions to climate change mitigation and the Coillte estate can help to deliver on some of these pathways. Their inclusion can add to the content and robustness of the SEA process.

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DAFM Forestry is committed to working constructively and collaboratively with Coillte to assist in the implementation of plans and objectives that will maximise the Coillte estates contribution to Ireland's climate change targets.

Yours sincerely,

Barry Delany

Director of Forestry

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

FEHILY TIMONEY

DESIGNING AND DELIVERING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

APPENDIX 3

Detailed Evaluation of the Environmental Effects of Plan Implementation

Approach and Methodology for the Detailed Evaluation of Environmental Effects of Plan Implementation

A detailed evaluation of the potential effects of the Plan on the baseline environment has been carried out in accordance with best practice guidelines. An evaluation matrix template has been developed to facilitate the evaluation of the Plan on Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) relevant to each Environmental Component.

A dedicated evaluation matrix has been prepared for each Pillar in the Plan. Plan Actions are listed on one axis of this matrix. The corresponding potential environmental effects of the actions are then described. An evaluation of the environmental effects of Actions on Environmental Components, having regard to the SEOs relevant to each Environment Component, was then carried out in accordance with the requirements of the SEA Directive and best practice guidelines. Potential effects of the Plan on Environmental Components/SEOs have been categorised as follows:

- Potential Positive Environmental Impact (indicated in the matrix by a '+').[103]
- Potential Negative Environmental Impact (indicated in the matrix by a '-').[104]
- Potential Positive and Negative Environmental Impacts (indicated in the matrix by a '+/-').
- Uncertain Environmental Impact ((indicated in the matrix by a '?').
- Neutral, No or Insignificant Environmental Impact (indicated in the matrix by a '0').

The following should be noted in relation to the evaluation undertaken:

- Environmental effects of the Plan have been described in accordance with descriptive terminology defined in the Environmental Protection Agency's guidance document entitled *'Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports'* (2022).
- The evaluation considers all potential direct, indirect/secondary, cumulative,[105] synergistic,[106] short, medium and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative environmental effects.
- The evaluation considers inter-relationships and interactions between one Environmental Component and another which can result in an environmental impact.
- The evaluation considers all potential environmental effects arising from unforeseen abnormal events.
- The evaluation considers potential transboundary effects.
- The potential environmental effects described are the potential effects that could occur without the adoption of any environmental mitigation measures.

Detail on the SEOs associated with Environmental Components which the environmental effects of the Plan have been measured against is provided in Table 1.

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[103] Potential Positive Environmental Impacts are defined as having the potential to support the achievement of an SEO.

[104] Potential Negative Environmental Impacts are defined as having the potential to hinder the achievement of an SEO.

[105] The addition of many minor or insignificant effects, including effects of other projects, to create larger, more significant effects.

[106] The addition of effects to create a total effect greater than the sum of the individual effects so that the nature of the final impact is different to the nature of the individual impact.

Completed Evaluation Matrices are then presented.

Transboundary environmental effects were a fundamental and intrinsic consideration during the carrying out of the environmental assessment.

Table 1: Strategic Environmental Objectives

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
Overall	O1	Ensure, where appropriate, that lower-level plans and projects contribute to overall environmental monitoring processes within the LUSIP.
Population, Human Health & the Economy	PHH1	Minimise adverse impacts from development and operations on population and human health.
	PHH2	Minimise impacts from development and operations on economic activity and growth.
	PHH3	Engage with local communities and provide areas for amenity and recreational uses to promote wellbeing and human health.
	PHH4	Contribute positively to the well-being of workers and local populations
	PHH5	Promote economic growth within the forestry sector and contribute to job creation and business development in rural areas.
	PHH6	Provide sustainable, high-quality timber products to the Irish market to meet demand and in support of housing development.
Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	B1	Avoid significant adverse effects on European Sites and protected habitats and species, and support compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives through Appropriate Assessment and implementation of mitigation measures.
	B2	Maintain and, where practicable, support ecological connectivity within the programme area through appropriate site design and management
	B3	To minimise adverse impacts on semi-natural habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated national sites, non-designated locally important sites, and sites proposed for designation; in compliance with wildlife and invasive species legislation.
	B4	Achieve biodiversity protection and enhance (where feasible) and deliver forest management for nature - in response to the biodiversity emergency and in line with the National Biodiversity Plan and its targets.
	B5	Manage old and ancient woodlands to enhance their biodiversity value.
Landscape, Seascape & Visual Amenity	L1	Contribute to the conservation, protection, enhancement and management of the character and quality of Ireland's distinctive landscape and seascape.

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
	L2	Minimise development impacts on sensitive and / or important landscapes / seascapes, including those designated under the land use planning framework.
	L3	Minimise adverse visual effects, including effects on sensitive visual receptors and views and prospects designated under the land use planning framework.
Cultural Heritage	CH1	Protect and conserve archaeological heritage features, and the settings surrounding these features that are part of or contribute to the character and value of these features, including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), the prospective Register of Monuments and the Northern Ireland Sites and Monuments Record (NISMR).
	CH2	Protect and conserve architectural heritage features, and the settings surrounding these features that are part of or contribute to the character and value of these features, including entries to the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH), industrial heritage, Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) and features / conservation areas designated in Northern Ireland.
	CH3	Promote opportunities to enhance or conserve places, features, buildings and landscapes of cultural, historical archaeological or architectural heritage through the LUSIP, where feasible.
Geology and Soils	GS1	Minimise adverse effects on soil functions and deliver soil enhancement.
	GS2	Minimise adverse effects on the physico-chemical properties of soil.
	GS3	Increase uptake of sustainable soil management practices that contribute to the preservation of soil and peatlands, aiding in achieving good soil quality and stability.
Land use	LU1	Minimize effects on other land use activities / objectives and promote sustainable land use.
Air Quality and Noise	AQN1	Minimise effects on local air quality.
	AQN2	Minimise adverse noise impacts on sensitive receptors.
Water	W1	Maintain and / or improve, the quality and status of surface water bodies, in line with Water Framework Directive requirements.
	W2	Avoid deterioration and, where feasible, protect and improve groundwater quality within LUSIP-managed areas, applying best practice water protection measures.
	W3	Comply as appropriate with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines.
	W4	Promote sustainable drainage practices in development projects to improve water quality and flow.
	W5	Avoid significant adverse effects on drinking water quality arising from LUSIP implementation.

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
	W6	Avoid significant adverse effects on the status of transitional, coastal and marine waters arising from LUSIP implementation.
	W7	Avoid significant adverse effects on bathing water quality arising from LUSIP implementation.
Material Assets & Infrastructure	MA1	Minimise effects on or conflicts with local, regional and national material assets and infrastructure, including future, planned infrastructure.
	MA2	Minimise effects on or conflicts with local, regional and national material assets and infrastructure, including future, planned infrastructure.
	MA3	Promote sustainable travel and transport
	MA4	Promote the effective and sustainable use of forest products.
	MA5	Enable the delivery of renewable energy projects for the benefit of national energy demands - through its joint venture FuturEnergy Ireland and via land agreements with other renewable energy developers.
Tourism & Recreation	TR1	Promote sustainable waste / material management and the circular economy.
Climate Change	CC1	Minimise adverse effects upon tourism and recreation amenities, and enhance tourism and recreation, where possible.
	CC2	Contribute towards the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the delivery of renewable energy projects in line with national objectives and targets.
	CC3	Promote carbon sequestration in line with national objectives and targets.
	CC4	Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from forest related transport operations.
	CC5	Integrate sustainable and low / zero carbon design solutions into Coillte development projects, where possible.
	CC7	Contribute to sectoral adaptation to minimise the effects of climate change.

Detailed Evaluation of Environmental Effects of Plan Implementation

The detailed evaluation of the environmental effects of Plan implementation is presented overleaf.

Ambition	Ref.	Objective/Action	Geographic Reporting Scale	Target	Time Frame	Monitoring Indicator	Assessment of Likely, Significant Effects on the Environment (in the absence of Environmental Mitigation) - including Cumulative and Transboundary Environmental Effects	Likely, Significant Environmental Effect/s Requiring Mitigation Identified?	Relationship with SEA Environmental Components and SEOs (prior to mitigation)											
									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
Ambition 1: Enable the creation of 100,000 hectares of new forests, half of which will be native woodlands, which will sink 18m tonnes CO2 by 2050.	CO1	**Undertake a review to understand Land Use policy implications for Commercial & Native afforestation and assess land resource availability and the impact of alternative agricultural schemes.**																		
	CO1.A1	Outline the potential pathways and phasing for supporting the delivery of 100,000 ha by 2050.	National	NA	2026-2030	Afforestation pathway report produced.	This action is broadly planning-based in nature. It will not create any environmental interactions, in and off itself. The action supports enhanced planning to achieve afforestation goals. Ambition 1 which this action sits under aims that half this new forest consists of native woodland. It has the potential to generate a range of positive effects on various environmental components. The creation of new forest will benefit population and human health - through ensuring a secure supply of wood product for society and the economy, including construction. Ensuring a substantial quantum of this new forestry is native woodland has the potential to create benefits for biodiversity, climate, population and human health, landscape and visual amenity, air quality and soils.	No	+	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	0	+
	CO2	**Engage with government and other key stakeholders to ensure that the policy and regulatory framework support Coillte's ambitions.**																		
	CO2.A1	Develop and implement a Stakeholder Engagement Plan to raise awareness of the Afforestation Ambition.	National	NA	2026-2030	Stakeholder engagement plan developed.	This action supports the development of a Stakeholder Engagement Plan that will aid in raising awareness of Coillte's afforestation ambition. This action will help create and foster a collaborative approach that supports Coillte's afforestation ambition. By engaging with stakeholders on whether policy and regulatory framework support Coillte's ambition this will allow for any	No	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							potential obstacles to be identified early on in the process, facilitating a more successful implementation of this ambition. Developing a plan for this engagement will maximise the potential benefits that can be derived from this engagement. This action is engagement in nature and will not directly interact with environmental components. This action will not result in the occurrence of a real, significant adverse environmental effects in and of itself.												
	CO3	**Support Local and National Government to develop afforestation opportunities on suitable publicly owned lands.**																	

Forest for Climate

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
	CO3.A1	Support and facilitate those public bodies who are committed to pursuing opportunities for afforestation on publicly owned land by supplying key afforestation management and planning services.	National	NA	2026-2035	Afforestation hectares enabled on Public Land.	This action supports the carrying out of afforestation by public bodies. Afforestation will increase forest cover in the country and generated a wide range of positive environmental effects - on climate (through carbon sequestration), biodiversity, the water environment (through water regulation and filtration improving water quality), air quality, soils, material assets (through provision of wood product to the market for use in construction) and population and human health. These potential positive effects may combine with the effects of other plans and programmes promoting environmental protection and enhancement (e.g., the Water Action Plan, the National Biodiversity Action plan) to create more significant, cumulative, positive effects on the environment. However, afforestation has the potential to also negatively affect environmental components where poor forest development approaches/practices and management techniques are used. The range of activities associated with forestry, including road construction, afforestation, harvesting and reforestation may negatively effect population and human health (through visual impacts, nuisance etc.), biodiversity (habitat loss/fragmentation, species disturbance, changes in environmental features/quality essential for ecological functions etc.), landscape/seascape (if	Yes	+/-	+/-	-	-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	-	+

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							forestry is not sited and designed appropriately), cultural heritage (potential interference with heritage features and their surrounding setting, or previously uncovered or unrecorded features of archaeological significance), soils (through compaction, sealing, erosion, loss of organic matter etc.), the air and noise environments, water quality and hydrology (through increase eutrophication, sedimentation, changes in hydrology etc.), material assets (e.g., existing or planned infrastructure), or tourism and recreation (through visual effects on scenic routes, for example). These potential negative effects may combine with the effects of other plans and programmes driving development and economic activity (e.g., Local Planning Authority Land Use Plans, the CAP Strategic Plan, Food Vision etc.) to exacerbate existing pressures on and risks to environmental components. Where improperly managed forestry activities occur in proximity to the border, these effects may be transmitted to Northern Irish environmental receptors (e.g., air quality, ecology, shared water bodies, landscape/seascape).												
	CO4	**Collaborate with key stakeholders to explore options for farmer led afforestation.**																	

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
	CO4.A1	Consider proposals to help promote farmer-led afforestation and collaborate with key stakeholders.	National	NA	2026-2030	Proposal(s) developed.	This action will create and foster a collaborative approach to farmer-led afforestation. It will contribute to the effective delivery of the national aim under The Afforestation Scheme 2023-2027 to increase the current area of land under forest cover in Ireland. This action supports the carrying out of afforestation by farmers. Afforestation will increase forest cover in the country and generated a wide range of positive environmental effects - on climate (through carbon sequestration), biodiversity, the water environment (through water regulation and filtration improving water quality), air quality, soils, material assets (through provision of wood product to the market for use in construction) and population and human health. These potential positive effects may combine with the effects of other plans and programmes promoting environmental protection and enhancement (e.g., the Water Action Plan, the National Biodiversity Action plan) to create more significant, cumulative, positive effects on the environment. However, afforestation has the potential to also negatively affect environmental components where poor forest development approaches/practices and management techniques are used. The range of activities associated with forestry, including road construction, afforestation, harvesting and	Yes	+/-	+/-	-	-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	-	+

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							reforestation may negatively effect population and human health (through visual impacts, nuisance etc.), biodiversity (habitat loss/fragmentation, species disturbance, changes in environmental features/quality essential for ecological functions etc.), landscape/seascape (if forestry is not sited and designed appropriately), cultural heritage (potential interference with heritage features and their surrounding setting, or previously uncovered or unrecorded features of archaeological significance), soils (through compaction, sealing, erosion, loss of organic matter etc.), the air and noise environments, water quality and hydrology (through increase eutrophication, sedimentation, changes in hydrology etc.), material assets (e.g., existing or planned infrastructure), or tourism and recreation (through visual effects on scenic routes, for example). These potential negative effects may combine with the effects of other plans and programmes driving development and economic activity (e.g., the CAP Strategic Plan, Food Vision etc.) to exacerbate existing pressures on and risks to environmental components. Where improperly managed forestry activities occur in proximity to the border, these effects may be transmitted to Northern Irish environmental receptors (e.g., air quality, ecology, shared water bodies, landscape/seascape).										

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							By collaborating and engaging with farmers and key stakeholders, Coillte can provide best practice guidance for farmers, allowing for better knowledge and skill sharing. Owning to Ireland's mosaic nature of farmlands, afforestation on these properties will contribute towards reducing fragmentation of forest habitats, increasing green corridors within the landscape which will have a positive effect on biodiversity, particularly farmlands birds which are in serious decline in Ireland and the EU. There are, however, potentially negative impacts on the landscape and visual amenity from Coillte encouraging this afforestation as it may disturb the traditional composition of the Irish agricultural landscape (if no appropriate sited or designed.													
	CO5	**Secure the necessary investment to achieve this ambition by exploring all sources of available funding.**																	

Forest for Climate

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
	CO5.A1	Develop new funding models to deliver nature and climate-based credits and create projects that will deliver new afforestation and continue to support investors in Irish forestry by providing afforestation, woodland management and other important services to investor funds that promote afforestation.	National	NA	2026-2035	Funding model developed.	This action will support and drive nature and climate positive afforestation. The knowledge sharing proposed under this action will result in more effective and appropriately planned afforestation. This action supports the carrying out of afforestation. Afforestation will increase forest cover in the country and generated a wide range of positive environmental effects - on climate (through carbon sequestration), biodiversity, the water environment (through water regulation and filtration improving water quality), air quality, soils, material assets (through provision of wood product to the market for use in construction) and population and human health. These potential positive effects may combine with the effects of other plans and programmes promoting environmental protection and enhancement (e.g., the Water Action Plan, the National Biodiversity Action plan) to create more significant, cumulative, positive effects on the environment. However, afforestation has the potential to also negatively affect environmental components where poor forest development approaches/practices and management techniques are used. The range of activities associated with forestry, including road construction, afforestation, harvesting and reforestation may negatively effect population and human health (through visual	Yes	+/-	+/-	-	-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	-	+

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							impacts, nuisance etc.), biodiversity (habitat loss/fragmentation, species disturbance, changes in environmental features/quality essential for ecological functions etc.), landscape/seascape (if forestry is not sited and designed appropriately), cultural heritage (potential interference with heritage features and their surrounding setting, or previously uncovered or unrecorded features of archaeological significance), soils (through compaction, sealing, erosion, loss of organic matter etc.), the air and noise environments, water quality and hydrology (through increase eutrophication, sedimentation, changes in hydrology etc.), material assets (e.g., existing or planned infrastructure), or tourism and recreation (through visual effects on scenic routes, for example). These potential negative effects may combine with the effects of other plans and programmes driving development and economic activity (e.g., the CAP Strategic Plan, Food Vision etc.) to exacerbate existing pressures on and risks to environmental components. Where improperly managed forestry activities occur in proximity to the border, these effects may be transmitted to Northern Irish environmental receptors (e.g., air quality, ecology, shared water bodies, landscape/seascape).												
Ambition 2: Redesign 30,000	CO6	**Synthesise existing information that identifies potential location(s) for the redesign of peatlands at scale.**																	

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
hectares of Peatland Forests for climate and ecological benefits by 2050.	CO6.A1	Review existing in-house information to identify potential locations for the redesign of ca. 15,000 ha of peatlands and engage with external stakeholders. Redesign of Peatland Forests will ultimately be delivered over the longer term through a combination of rewetting/rehabilitation ("Forest-to-Bog" projects) and through transiting commercial forests to semi-natural forests with open spaces as appropriate.	National	15,000 ha	2026-2030	Ha identified for redesign.	This action supports the carrying out of peatland forest restoration projects nationally. Peatland restoration projects have the potential to generate a positive effects on climate (through increasing carbon sequestration and reducing LULUCF sectoral emissions), biodiversity (through the restoration of peatland habitat), landscape/seascape, soils (through enhanced soil structure and stability), land use, water quality and hydrology (through reduced nutrient run-off, better filtration, improved water retention), cultural heritage (given the cultural value associated with peatlands in Ireland) and tourism and recreation. This action aims to identify suitable areas for peatland forest redesign. The site-selection process supported by this action will better ensure that the most appropriate sites are selected for peatland restoration. This will contribute to maximising positive effects associated with these projects. These potential positive effects may combine with the effects of other plans and programmes promoting environmental protection and enhancement (e.g., the National Peatlands Strategy, the Water Action Plan, the National Biodiversity Action plan) to create more significant, cumulative, positive effects on the environment. Peatland restoration projects	Yes	+/-	+/-	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	+	+/-

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							also have the potential to generate negative environmental effects (if improperly designed, managed or maintained), such as negative effects on climate (through poor design negatively affecting greenhouse gas emission fluxes), biodiversity (e.g., habitat and species impacts associated with restoration works, aquatic species that may be affected by changes in hydrology), heritage features (including the physical integrity of existing and unrecorded features), soils, and water quality and hydrology (e.g., downstream alterations in water quality or hydrological conditions - if projects are not support by appropriate hydrological assessment, for example). These potential negative effects may combine with negative effects from other plans, programmes and projects (including other peatland restoration projects) to generate more significant, cumulative negative effects on environmental receptors (e.g. entire water catchments, ecological receptors at peatlands, aquatic habitats and species). Where improperly designed, managed or maintained peatland restoration projects occur in proximity to the border, these effects may be transmitted to Northern Irish environmental receptors (via transboundary environmental pathways and affecting transboundary environmental receptors e.g., shared or connected water bodies, mobile species etc.).													

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							This action will create and foster a collaborative approach to implementing the objective of peatland forest restoration. This action promotes increased engagement with the external stakeholders, and the enhancement of peatland related expertise within Coillte. This will maximise the potential positive effects that may occur due to the implementation of this and minimise the likelihood of negative effects occurring due to these projects.												
	CO7	**Continuously develop guidelines for the redesign of peatlands based on best Irish and international practice informed by suitably qualified professionals.**																	
	CO7.A1	Engage with experts and practitioners undertaking large scale peatland rehabilitation programmes in Ireland and continue to review the international literature and develop best practices on the redesign of peatland at scale.	National	NA	2026-2035	Peatland Rehabilitation Guidelines developed.	This action supports the development and implementation of best practices in peatland restoration projects. this process will be informed by engagement with experts and practitioners currently undertaking peatland restoration projects. This action promotes increased the enhancement of peatland	Yes	+/-	+/-	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	+	+/-

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							related expertise within Coillte. This will maximise the potential positive effects that may occur due to the implementation of peatland restoration projects nationally, and minimise the likelihood of negative effects occurring due to these projects. This action will also drive Coillte carrying out peatland restoration projects. Peatland restoration projects have the potential to generate a positive effects on climate (through increasing carbon sequestration and reducing LULUCF sectoral emissions), biodiversity (through the restoration of peatland habitat), landscape/seascape, soils (through enhanced soil structure and stability), land use, water quality and hydrology (through reduced nutrient run-off, better filtration, improved water retention), cultural heritage (given the cultural value associated with peatlands in Ireland) and tourism and recreation. These potential positive effects may combine with the effects of other plans and programmes promoting environmental protection and enhancement (e.g., the National Peatlands Strategy, the Water Action Plan, the National Biodiversity Action plan) to create more significant, cumulative, positive effects on the environment. Peatland restoration projects also have the potential to generate negative environmental effects (if														

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							improperly designed, managed or maintained), such as negative effects on climate (through poor design negatively affecting greenhouse gas emission fluxes), biodiversity (e.g., habitat and species impacts associated with restoration works, aquatic species that may be affected by changes in hydrology), heritage features (including the physical integrity of existing and unrecorded features), soils, and water quality and hydrology (e.g., downstream alterations in water quality or hydrological conditions - if projects are not support by appropriate hydrological assessment, for example). These potential negative effects may combine with negative effects from other plans, programmes and projects (including other peatland restoration projects) to generate more significant, cumulative negative effects on environmental receptors (e.g. entire water catchments, ecological receptors at peatlands, aquatic habitats and species). Where improperly designed, managed or maintained peatland restoration projects occur in proximity to the border, these effects may be transmitted to Northern Irish environmental receptors (via transboundary environmental pathways and affecting transboundary environmental receptors e.g., shared or connected water bodies, mobile species etc.).												

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
	CO8	**Establish and implement monitoring and management frameworks for redesigned peatlands. Such monitoring and management frameworks shall be designed by suitably qualified, multidisciplinary professionals.**																	
	CO8.A1	Develop monitoring and management frameworks for redesigned peatlands using earth observation and on-site measurement techniques.	National	NA	2026-2030	Framework developed.	This action supports the development of monitoring and management frameworks for peatland redesign. This will have a positive effect on peatland restoration processes as it allows for increased knowledge on the current state of the environment and allows for the effectiveness of current management actions to be assessed and improved. This will improve peatland restoration processes and contribute to maximising positive effects associated with these projects and minimising the likelihood of negative effects occurring due to these projects. However, if on-site measurements are mis-managed this could inadvertently lead to negative effects on biodiversity, water or soil environments at or connected to peatlands. These effects have the potential to be transmitted across borders and combine with the effects of other plans, programmes or projects to create more significant, negative cumulative effects.	No	0	+/-	0	0	+/-	0	0	+/-	0	0	0
Ambition 3: Manage the existing Forest Estate to increase	CO09	**Utilise land use planning models to deliver balanced carbon mitigation management options to achieve the 10m tonnes of CO2 storage target.**																	

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
the carbon store by 10m tonnes of CO2 by 2050.	CO9.A1	Update land-use planning model to generate GHG profile using up-to-date inventory and harvest volume data and undertake analysis to ensure proposed management options implemented within the timeframe of this plan supports the delivery of the longer-term ambition.	National	c.3M tonnes CO2 sequestered.	2026-2035	Planning models updated and reporting GHG profile.	This action will facilitate increased knowledge on the current state of the GHG profile of Coillte and will analyse the effects of the proposed management options within this plan to be implemented on this profile. This action will help in understanding the expected effects of future management practices within Coillte and evaluating how they will contribution to the ambition of CO2 storage. This will lead to more effective action towards achieving this ambition and will thus have a positive effect on climate (also resulting in various co-benefits to other environmental components). This action in and of itself will not cause the occurrence of a real, significant adverse environmental effects.	No	+	+	0	+	+	0	+	+	0	0	+
	CO10	**Undertake continued refinement and analysis of the impact of forest management and mitigation measures to improve forest productivity, including, managing the age profile to improve the estate's carbon efficiency.**																	
	CO10.A1	Continually review and analyse forest management practices that can support climate mitigation, and where appropriate engage with scientific experts in the field to further understand the data and knowledge of carbon dynamics. Consider how they can be incorporated into reporting requirements such as SBTI and GHG protocol.	National	NA	2031-2035	Planning models updated and reporting GHG profile.	The continued review and analysis of forest management practices that support climate mitigation will have a positive effect on climate change. A constant review and analysis process allows for the most update to date knowledge and principals to be applied and provides an iterative feedback process wherein current management practices can be improved upon. By engaging with scientific experts, Coillte are fostering a collaborative approach to climate mitigation, taking under advisement the best applicable expertise and guidance. This expertise will help better inform Coillte's	No	+	+	0	+	+	0	+	+	0	0	+

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							management approach and by working with experts in their field it allows for a transfer of skills and knowledge to the Coillte team. This engagement will have a positive effect on forestry management practices related to climate mitigation and thus will have a positive effect on climate (also resulting in various co-benefits to other environmental components). This action in and of itself will not cause the occurrence of a real, significant adverse environmental effects.												
	CO11	**Identify and quantify the impacts of climate change and develop measures to make Coillte's estate more climate resilient.**																	
	CO11.A1	Develop a forest resilience strategy that considers the impacts of climate change, identifies risks and mitigations as well as the risk of pests and diseases and evaluate how these findings can be incorporated into our planning models.	National	NA	2026-2030	Strategy developed.	This actions promotes the adoption of appropriate climate adaptation measures for the Coillte estate. This will prevent and reduce the effects of climate change on the Coillte estate (e.g., from extreme weather events, flooding, wildfire etc.). Promoting appropriate climate adaptation will result in positive effects for population and human health and material assets (through ensuring the forest estate is protected and a reliable supply of wood product to the market), cultural heritage, biodiversity, soils, water quality and hydrology. This action will not in and of itself cause the occurrence of a real, significant adverse environmental effect.	No	+	+	0	+	+	0	+	+	0	0	+
	CO12	**Develop evidence and understanding of carbon management within the forest and across the forestry supply chain, and pilot new decision-making tools.**																	
		Refer to CO10 Actions																	

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	CO13	**Deepen our understanding of the potential of product substitution from harvested wood and undertake additional analysis related to fossil fuel displacement and value chain emissions.**																	
	CO13.A1	Review and update analysis on product substitution based on up-to-date wood supply and usage figures to produce new displacement factors.	National	NA	2030	Product substitution analysis updated. Report generated.	This action will result in the production of new displacement factors through the review and updated analysis of product substitution. This action will provide enhanced knowledge on the value of wood products and fuels in reducing GHG emissions by replacing fossil fuels. By having this knowledge at hand it enables a greater understanding of the carbon value of Coillte's products. This will have a positive effect on climate change (also contributing to multiple co-benefits). This action will not in and of itself cause the occurrence of a real, significant adverse environmental effect.	No	+	+	0	+	+	0	+	+	0	0	+
Ambition 4: Generate an additional 1 Gigawatt of renewable wind energy to power 500,000 homes by 2030.	CO14	**Support FuturEnergy Ireland and third-party renewable energy developers in their current and future renewable energy endeavours, in full consideration of protection of the environment including Appropriate Assessment screening where necessary.**																	
	CO14.A1	Continue to enable FEI and non-FEI projects where appropriate through providing land agreements to facilitate renewable energy projects.	BAU	NA	2026-2035	Number of new renewable energy projects.	This action will support the carrying out of renewable energy development projects at the Coillte estate (which would be undertaken by FuturEnergy Ireland, which Coillte are part owner off, or other renewable energy developers). The carrying out of renewable energy development may generate a variety of positive environmental effects, including positive effects on climate (through reductions in greenhouse gas emissions associated with the Energy sector), air quality, materials	Yes	+/-	+/-	-	+/-	+/-	-	+/-	-	+/-	-	+

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							assets and population and human health (through the provision of reliable and renewable energy supply). Such development will contribute to the generation of multiple climate co-benefits across a range of environmental components (i.e. minimising the effects of climate change will have positive effects for people, biodiversity, the water environment etc.). The action will support the national goal of net-zero emissions by 2050. These potential positive effects may combine with the effects of other plans and programmes promoting environmental protection and enhancement (e.g., the Climate Action Plan,) to create more significant, cumulative, positive effects on the environment. This action however, supports the carrying out of renewable energy development (i.e. wind farms), which, in the absence of appropriate mitigaiton, has the potential to generate negative construction and operational phase effects on a range of environmental receptors, including population and human health (through visual impacts, shadow flicker or noise, for example), biodiversity (e.g., through habitat loss, bird strikes etc.), landscape/seascape, visual amenity, heritage (including the physical integrity of heritage features and the settings surrounding such features), soils (through excavations to accommodate built development e.g., wind farm foundations), the noise environment, water quality													

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							and hydrology, material assets (through impacts on other existing or planned infrastructure) and tourism and recreation (via impacts on scenic routes or landscape/seascape, for example).There is also the potential for negative effects on land-use through competing objectives for sustainable management practices to promote biodiversity enhancement and objectives for renewable energy production. These potential negative effects may combine with negative effects from other plans, programmes and projects (including other renewable energy projects) to generate more significant, cumulative negative effects on environmental receptors (e.g. entire water catchments, ecological receptors at peatlands, aquatic habitats and species). Where improperly designed, managed or maintained renewable energy projects occur in proximity to the border, these effects may be transmitted to Northern Irish environmental receptors (via transboundary environmental pathways and affecting transboundary environmental receptors e.g., shared or connected water bodies, mobile species etc.)												
	CO15	**Engage with Government and other key stakeholders to ensure that the policy and regulatory framework can effectively deliver the approval and granting of permissions for renewable energy projects including a correctly structured, timely and well-resourced planning process.**																	

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	CO15.A1	Coillte will support FEI and third-party developers in seeking improvements in the planning process by actively engaging in relevant public consultations and making submissions as opportunities arise throughout the duration of the plan.	National	NA	2026-2035	Number of planning permissions approved.	This action promotes Coillte engaging in public consultation processes with a view to enhancing the planning process for renewable energy development. It has the potential to support, to some degree, to the streamlined delivery of renewable energy projects nationally, in line with national climate objectives and energy needs. This action has the potential to contribute to and drive the carrying out renewable energy development. The carrying out of renewable energy development may generate a variety of positive environmental effects, including positive effects on climate (through reductions in greenhouse gas emissions associated with the Energy sector), air quality, materials assets and population and human health (through the provision of reliable and renewable energy supply). Such development will contribute to the generation of multiple climate co-benefits across a range of environmental components (i.e. minimising the effects of climate change will have positive effects for people, biodiversity, the water environment etc.). The action will support the national goal of net-zero emissions by 2050. These potential positive effects may combine with the effects of other plans and programmes promoting environmental protection and enhancement (e.g., the Climate Action Plan,) to create more significant, cumulative, positive effects on the environment.	Yes	+/-	+/-	-	+/-	+/-	-	+/-	-	+/-	-	+

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							This action however, supports the carrying out of renewable energy development (e.g. wind farms), which, in the absence of appropriate mitigaiton, has the potential to generate negative construction and operational phase effects on a range of environmental receptors, including population and human health (through visual impacts, shadow flicker or noise, for example), biodiversity (e.g., through habitat loss, bird strikes etc.), landscape/seascape, visual amenity, heritage (including the physical integrity of heritage features and the settings surrounding such features), soils (through excavations to accommodate built development e.g., wind farm foundations), the noise environment, water quality and hydrology, material assets (through impacts on other existing or planned infrastructure) and tourism and recreation (via impacts on scenic routes or landscape/seascape, for example).There is also the potential for negative effects on land-use through competing objectives for sustainable management practices to promote biodiversity enhancement and objectives for renewable energy production. These potential negative effects may combine with negative effects from other plans, programmes and projects (including other renewable energy projects) to generate more significant, cumulative negative effects on environmental receptors (e.g. entire water catchments,																

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							ecological receptors at peatlands, aquatic habitats and species). Where improperly designed, managed or maintained renewable energy projects occur in proximity to the border, these effects may be transmitted to Northern Irish environmental receptors (via transboundary environmental pathways and affecting transboundary environmental receptors e.g., shared or connected water bodies, mobile species etc.).										
	CO16	**Develop a clear policy and explore opportunities for both onshore and offshore grid infrastructure, rollout and services to support ongoing development, in full consideration of protection of the environment including Appropriate Assessment screening where necessary.**																	

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
	CO16.A1	Coillte will develop a policy outlining Coillte's role as a Landowner in the facilitation of grid infrastructure.	National	NA	2026-2030	Policy developed.	This action has the potential to support, to some degree, to the streamlined delivery of renewable energy projects at Coillte's estate, in line with national climate objectives and energy needs. This action has the potential to contribute to and drive the carrying out renewable energy development. The carrying out of renewable energy development may generate a variety of positive environmental effects, including positive effects on climate (through reductions in greenhouse gas emissions associated with the Energy sector), air quality, materials assets and population and human health (through the provision of reliable and renewable energy supply). Such development will contribute to the generation of multiple climate co-benefits across a range of environmental components (i.e. minimising the effects of climate change will have positive effects for people, biodiversity, the water environment etc.). The action will support the national goal of net-zero emissions by 2050. These potential positive effects may combine with the effects of other plans and programmes promoting environmental protection and enhancement (e.g., the Climate Action Plan,) to create more significant, cumulative, positive effects on the environment. This action however, supports the carrying out of renewable energy development (e.g. wind farms), which, in the absence of appropriate	Yes	+/-	+/-	-	+/-	+/-	-	+/-	-	+/-	-	+

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							mitigaiton, has the potential to generate negative construction and operational phase effects on a range of environmental receptors, including population and human health (through visual impacts, shadow flicker or noise, for example), biodiversity (e.g., through habitat loss, bird strikes etc.), landscape/seascape, visual amenity, heritage (including the physical integrity of heritage features and the settings surrounding such features), soils (through excavations to accommodate built development e.g., wind farm foundations), the noise environment, water quality and hydrology, material assets (through impacts on other existing or planned infrastructure) and tourism and recreation (via impacts on scenic routes or landscape/seascape, for example).There is also the potential for negative effects on land-use through competing objectives for sustainable management practices to promote biodiversity enhancement and objectives for renewable energy production. These potential negative effects may combine with negative effects from other plans, programmes and projects (including other renewable energy projects) to generate more significant, cumulative negative effects on environmental receptors (e.g. entire water catchments, ecological receptors at peatlands, aquatic habitats and species). Where improperly designed, managed or maintained														

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							renewable energy projects occur in proximity to the border, these effects may be transmitted to Northern Irish environmental receptors (via transboundary environmental pathways and affecting transboundary environmental receptors e.g., shared or connected water bodies, mobile species etc.).											

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	CO16.A2	Consider proposals in relation to grid solutions (such as long duration energy storage) received from FEI and third-party developers as they relate to Coillte property for the timeframe of the plan.	National	NA	2026-2031		This action has the potential to contribute to and drive the carrying out grid infrastructure development. The carrying out of grid infrastructure development, which renewable energy development is reliant on, may generate a variety of positive environmental effects, including positive effects on climate (through reductions in greenhouse gas emissions associated with the Energy sector), air quality, materials assets and population and human health (through the provision of reliable and renewable energy supply). Such development will contribute to the generation of multiple climate co-benefits across a range of environmental components (i.e. minimising the effects of climate change will have positive effects for people, biodiversity, the water environment etc.). The action will support the national goal of net-zero emissions by 2050. These potential positive effects may combine with the effects of other plans and programmes promoting environmental protection and enhancement (e.g., the Climate Action Plan,) to create more significant, cumulative, positive effects on the environment. This action however, supports the carrying out of grid infrastructure (such as BESS projects), which, in the absence of appropriate mitigaiton, has the potential to generate negative construction and operational phase effects on a range of environmental receptors,	Yes	+/-	+/-	-	+/-	+/-	-	+/-	-	+/-	-	+

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							including population and human health (through visual impacts, shadow flicker or noise, for example), biodiversity (e.g., through habitat loss, bird strikes etc.), landscape/seascape, visual amenity, heritage (including the physical integrity of heritage features and the settings surrounding such features), soils (through excavations to accommodate built development e.g., wind farm foundations), the noise environment, water quality and hydrology, material assets (through impacts on other existing or planned infrastructure) and tourism and recreation (via impacts on scenic routes or landscape/seascape, for example).There is also the potential for negative effects on land-use through competing objectives for sustainable management practices to promote biodiversity enhancement and objectives for renewable energy production. This action may also support the carrying out of linear grid infrastructure projects that have the potential to generate a specific range of negative on certain ecological receptors (e.g., land take and associated disruption, habitat fragmentations/reduction in ecological connectivity). These potential negative effects may combine with negative effects from other plans, programmes and projects (including other renewable energy projects) to generate more significant, cumulative negative effects on environmental receptors (e.g. entire water catchments, ecological receptors at															

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							peatlands, aquatic habitats and species). Where improperly designed, managed or maintained renewable energy projects occur in proximity to the border, these effects may be transmitted to Northern Irish environmental receptors (via transboundary environmental pathways and affecting transboundary environmental receptors e.g., shared or connected water bodies, mobile species etc.).										

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Ambition 5: Enhance and restore biodiversity by increasing the area of our estate managed primarily for nature from 20% to 30% by 2025.	NO1	**Classify additional biodiversity areas on the estate, focusing on habitats of the best ecological quality, and/or which have the best habitat restoration potential.**																	
	NO1.A1	Coillte will identify an additional c.44,000ha across the estate to be managed primarily for nature. The BioClass system will be used to rank the ecological value of these new biodiversity areas and to assign a target habitat, which indicates the overall management goal.	National	44,000 ha	2026-2030	Ha new biodiversity areas.	This action supports the mapping and identification of biodiversity areas within Coillte's estate. This will have a positive effect on biodiversity as it facilitates increased knowledge on the current state of biodiversity on Coillte lands. By using the BioClass system it allows for the identified biodiversity areas to be classes in categories from those of the highest ecological value (BioClass 1) to those that are currently of moderate/low value but have the potential to be developed to habitat of high ecological value (BioClass 4). By doing this, certain areas can be prioritised and more effective, focused management can occur as a result. This action supports biodiversity enhancement which has indirect positive effects such as human induced benefits from biodiversity, improvements to water quality, soil quality, air quality and climate, as well as improvements to tourism offerings in terms of nature-based tourism products. There is potential for significant effects on biodiversity should management practices be mis-designed or poorly implemented.	No	+	+/-	0	0	+	+	+	+	0	+	+
	NO2	**Continue the process of producing and implementing management plans for biodiversity areas, combining both ecological and forestry perspectives and expertise in the effort to improve biodiversity found within the Coillte estate, subject to Appropriate Assessment screening, as necessary.**																	

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
	NO2.A1	Scale up the management of biodiversity areas; increase the annual operational programme to deliver, by 2029, biodiversity interventions on 2,000ha. The management actions will primarily include CCF, coupe felling, control of invasive species and re-wetting or maintaining ecologically important bog habitat and will be informed by Biodiversity Area Management (BAM) Plans that are prepared jointly by foresters and ecologists.	National	2,000 ha	2026-2030	Ha of biodiversity interventions implemented per year.	This action has the potential to generate positive effects for various environmental receptors, including biodiversity, water quality and hydrology, population and human health, climate and tourism and recreation. Peatland restoration projects have the potential to generate a positive effects on climate (through increasing carbon sequestration and reducing LULUCF sectoral emissions), biodiversity (through the restoration of peatland habitat), landscape/seascape, soils (through enhanced soil structure and stability), land use, water quality and hydrology (through reduced nutrient run-off, better filtration, improved water retention), cultural heritage (given the cultural value associated with peatlands in Ireland) and tourism and recreation. These potential positive effects may combine with the effects of other plans and programmes promoting environmental protection and enhancement (e.g., the National Peatlands Strategy, the Water Action Plan, the National Biodiversity Action plan) to create more significant, cumulative, positive effects on the environment. Peatland restoration projects also have the potential to generate negative environmental effects (if improperly designed, managed or maintained), such as negative effects on climate (through poor design negatively affecting greenhouse gas emission fluxes), biodiversity (e.g., habitat and species impacts associated with restoration works, aquatic species that may	Yes	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	+	+/-

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							be affected by changes in hydrology), heritage features (including the physical integrity of existing and unrecorded features), soils, and water quality and hydrology (e.g., downstream alterations in water quality or hydrological conditions - if projects are not support by appropriate hydrological assessment, for example). These potential negative effects may combine with negative effects from other plans, programmes and projects (including other peatland restoration projects) to generate more significant, cumulative negative effects on environmental receptors (e.g. entire water catchments, ecological receptors at peatlands, aquatic habitats and species). Where improperly designed, managed or maintained peatland restoration projects occur in proximity to the border, these effects may be transmitted to Northern Irish environmental receptors (via transboundary environmental pathways and affecting transboundary environmental receptors e.g., shared or connected water bodies, mobile species etc.). This action has the potential to inadvertently lead to the carrying out of inappropriate biodiversity management practice (as a result of a lack of appropriate resourcing and/or expertise), which can result in negative effects on biodiversity.												

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	NO2.A2	Develop markets and supply chain to optimise timber produced from CCF management actions. Diversifying end markets will support CCF implementation.	BAU	NA	2026-2030	M3 timber produced.	This action promotes using CFF to produce timber. The promotion of CCF has the potential to generate positive environmental effects on a range of environmental components, as biodiversity, the soils environment, water quality and hydrology, climate (through increased carbon sequestration, and the displacement of more carbon intensive timber products from the market, such as imported timber), and population and human health/material assets (through the reliable provision of sustainable timber product to support construction of housing). This action acts as a driver for growth in forestry. Afforestation will increase forest cover in the country and generated a wide range of positive environmental effects - on climate (through carbon sequestration), biodiversity, the water environment (through water regulation and filtration improving water quality), air quality, soils, material assets (through provision of wood product to the market for use in construction) and population and human health. These potential positive effects may combine with the effects of other plans and programmes promoting environmental protection and enhancement (e.g., the Water Action Plan, the National Biodiversity Action plan) to create more significant, cumulative, positive effects on the environment. However, afforestation has the potential to also negatively affect environmental components where poor forest development approaches/practices and	Yes	+/-	+/-	-	-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	-	+

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							management techniques are used. The range of activities associated with forestry, including road construction, afforestation, harvesting and reforestation may negatively affect population and human health (through visual impacts, nuisance etc.), biodiversity (habitat loss/fragmentation, species disturbance, changes in environmental features/quality essential for ecological functions etc.), landscape/seascape (if forestry is not sited and designed appropriately), cultural heritage (potential interference with heritage features and their surrounding setting, or previously uncovered or unrecorded features of archaeological significance), soils (through compaction, sealing, erosion, loss of organic matter etc.), the air and noise environments, water quality and hydrology (through increase eutrophication, sedimentation, changes in hydrology etc.), material assets (e.g., existing or planned infrastructure), or tourism and recreation (through visual effects on scenic routes, for example). These potential negative effects may combine with the effects of other plans and programmes driving development and economic activity (e.g., Local Planning Authority Land Use Plans, the CAP Strategic Plan, Food Vision etc.) to exacerbate existing pressures on and risks to environmental components. Where improperly managed forestry activities occur in proximity to the border, these effects may be transmitted to Northern Irish environmental receptors (e.g., air quality, ecology, shared water bodies, landscape/seascape).												

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	NO2.A3	Innovate and explore ways of leveraging Coillte's forest management planning systems and capability to incorporate biodiversity objectives and prioritise sites of highest ecological value.	National	NA	2026-2030	Bio Planning model developed.	This action will have a positive effect on biodiversity by exploring ways in which to incorporate biodiversity objectives into Coillte's forest management planning. This will have an indirect positive effect on other environmental components such as water, air and soil quality, population and human health, tourism and recreation, and climate. There is potential for significant effects on biodiversity should management practices be mis-designed or poorly implemented.	Yes	+	+/-	0	0	+	0	+	+	0	+	+
	NO3	**Create a framework for the selection, appropriate restoration and conservation of ancient and long-established woodland, and engage with key regulatory bodies to promote the approach.**																	
	NO3.A1	Coillte will map ancient forests on the estate, assess their ecological value using BioClass procedure and develop appropriate management approach.	National	NA	2026-2030	Ha ancient forests mapped.	This action supports the mapping and identification of ancient forests within Coillte's estate. Ancient forests in Ireland are key habitats as they are areas of high biodiversity value that provide many ecosystem services. Mapping and subsequently managing these forests will have a positive effect on biodiversity as it facilitates increased knowledge on the current state of these ancient forests on Coillte lands. By using the BioClass system it allows for the identified biodiversity areas to be classes in categories from those of the highest ecological value (BioClass 1) to those that are currently of moderate/low value but have the potential to be developed to habitat of high ecological value (BioClass 4). By doing this, certain areas can be prioritised and more effective, focused management can occur as a result. This action supports biodiversity enhancement and protection which has indirect	Yes	+	+/-	0	+	+	0	+	+	0	+	+

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							positive effects such as human induced benefits from biodiversity, improvements to water quality, soil quality, air quality and climate, as well as improvements to tourism offerings in terms of nature-based tourism products. Ancient forests are important cultural and heritage features within Ireland. There is potential for significant effects on biodiversity should management practices be mis-designed or poorly implemented.										
	NO3.A2	Lead engagement with relevant stakeholders to demonstrate and promote our management approach.	National	NA	2026-2030	N/A	This action will create and foster a collaborative approach to implementing the objective of restoration and conservation of ancient and long-established woodlands in Coillte's estate, having a positive effect on biodiversity and cultural heritage. This action promotes increased engagement with relevant stakeholders, allowing for enhanced expertise and knowledge on Coillte's management approach. This action will not result in the occurrence of a real, significant adverse environmental effects in and of itself. There is potential for significant effects on biodiversity should management practices be mis-designed or poorly implemented.	Yes	0	+/-	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
Ambition 6: Transform areas of our forests so that 50% of our estate is managed primarily for nature in the long-term.	NO4	**Continue to increase the implementation of alternative silvicultural systems including continuous cover forestry (CCF) in forests of ecological value. Any plan or project arising shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment screening, as necessary.**																	
		Refer to NO2, N03, and N06 Actions																	
	NO5	**Develop metrics, set targets and develop an effective regime to monitor and report on key environmental parameters on the Coillte estate; including valuable habitats / species and the ecological benefits of biodiversity management actions.**																	
	NO5.A1	Review and update existing biodiversity monitoring procedures, to ensure that the management actions are effective in protecting and enhancing the habitats present.	BAU	NA	2026-2030	Biodiversity monitoring procedure updated.	This action calls for the review and update of existing monitoring procedures to ensure management actions are effective in protecting and enhancing habitats. This will have a positive effect on biodiversity as it increases the knowledge on the current state of the environment and allows for the effectiveness of current management actions to be assessed and improved. The facilitation of habitat protection and enhancement provides a wide range of ecosystem benefits, having a positive effect on other environmental components. Habitat enhancement also has a positive effect on recreation and tourism as it improvement tourism offerings in terms of nature-based tourism products.	No	+	+	0	0	+	+	+	+	0	+	+
	NO5.A2	Develop a methodology for recording and reporting habitats at scale across the estate, combining Coillte's inventory skillsets and capability with available ecological data.	National	NA	2031-2035	Methodology developed.	This action will have a positive effect on biodiversity through the development of a process for reporting and recording habitats across the Coillte estate to better understand their occurrence. This action increase knowledge on the current state of habitats which will underpin and support effective implementation of the plan and potentially lead to more focused and targeted biodiversity improvements. This action will not result in the occurrence of a real, significant	No	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Ambition	Ref.	Objective/Action	Geographic Reporting Scale	Target	Time Frame	Monitoring Indicator	Assessment of Likely, Significant Effects on the Environment (in the absence of Environmental Mitigation) - including Cumulative and Transboundary Environmental Effects	Likely, Significant Environmental Effect/s Requiring Mitigation Identified?	Relationship with SEA Environmental Components and SEOs (prior to mitigation)										
									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							adverse environmental effects in and of itself.												
	NO5.A3	Explore approaches to mapping change in sites of high ecological value/sensitivity.	National	NA	2031-2036		This action will allow for changes within sites of high ecological value/sensitivity to be mapped. This will provide a metric against which management practices of these habitats can be compared to evaluate the effectiveness of these practices. This will have a positive effect on biodiversity and this action in and of itself will not results in the occurrence of real, significant adverse environmental effects.	No	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	NO5.A4	Develop a process for recording and reporting species (flora and fauna) to build our knowledge of their occurrence across the estate and to better inform appropriate protection measures.	BAU	NA	2031-2037	Process developed.	This action will have a positive effect on biodiversity through the development of a process for reporting and recording species across the Coillte estate to better understand their occurrence. This action increase knowledge on the current state of flora and fauna which will underpin and support effective implementation of the plan and potentially lead to more focused and targeted biodiversity improvements. This action will not result in the occurrence of a real, significant adverse environmental effects in and of itself. By improving protection measures for these species, there is an indirect positive effect on other environmental components.	No	+	+	0	0	+	0	+	+	0	0	+
	NO6	**Continue to identify portions of the estate with potential to make a greater contribution to biodiversity and explore opportunities to transform them to improve their nature conservation value.**																	

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
	NO6.A1	Develop criteria for defining the target habitat of forests managed primarily for climate (forest re-design) and develop protocols to define the silvicultural systems and management approaches that will improve their value for nature.	National	NA	2026-2030	Criteria developed.	This action will have a positive effect on both climate change and biodiversity. By developing a criteria to define the target forest habitats to be managed primarily for climate, it ensures the right management approaches are being taken for this habitat to best carry out its intended function. By developing protocols for management of these habitats that improve their value for nature, it will facilitate focused procedures that take biodiversity into account. This action will give rise to more focused action with regards to climate change and biodiversity improvement. There is potential for significant effects on biodiversity should management practices be mis-designed or poorly implemented. There is potential for a conflict between biodiversity and climate objectives. Approaches taken to promote carbon sequestration may conflict with the best approaches for protecting and enhancing biodiversity.	Yes	0	+/-	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	+
	NO6.A2	Continue to engage with DAFM, NPWS, IFI and other bodies in a process of knowledge exchange to agree protocols for managing forest re-design sites for the benefit of habitats and species.	National	NA	2026-2030	Number of engagements	This action will create and foster a collaborative approach to implementing the objective to improve the nature conservation value of portions of the estate that have the potential to contribute to biodiversity. This action promotes increased engagement with relevant bodies with in-depth biodiversity related knowledge, allowing for enhanced expertise on Coillte's management approach. Engaging with qualified specialists ensures greater knowledge sharing and aids in the transfer of nature management skills to employees within Coillte. This action will not result in the	No	+	+	0	0	+	+	+	+	0	0	+

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							occurrence of a real, significant adverse environmental effects in and of itself. By engaging with these specialists, there is greater potential for effective forest management and re-design which will have indirect positive benefits on other environmental components.													
	NO7	**Engage with key regulatory and other bodies to develop a common vision for how these sites (ref NO6) should be managed.**																	
		Refer to NO6 Actions.																	
	NO8	**Develop protocols for managing these sites (ref NO6), appropriate to their scale, habitat connectivity and site type, that will improve their nature conservation value.**																	
		Refer to NO6 Actions.																	
Additional Nature Objectives	NO9	**Review and update, as appropriate, Environmental Risk Assessment (ERA) standards and procedures to inform planning and operations, in line with ongoing and emerging best practice.**																	
	NO9.A1	Review existing ERA procedures, implement changes as required, and integrate into planning and operations.	National	NA	2026-2030	ERA procedure updated.	This action will have a positive effect on environmental systems as it will enforce procedures that encourage the protection of the environment. This will reduce the impacts of planning and operations within Coillte on the environmental components within their estate.	No	0	+	0	0	+	0	+	+	0	0	0
	NO10	**Identify and implement ways of improving the advance planning of biodiversity management actions and integration into business planning, where appropriate and feasible.**																	
		Refer to NO2 Actions.																	
	NO11	**Identify and implement methods to improve inventory processes and data-gathering, to expand our knowledge of nature on the estate and our reporting capacity.**																	
		Refer NO5 Actions.																	

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
	NO12	**Review and improve methods for how biodiversity features and other important environmental features are recorded across the estate. Methods shall be informed by the input of suitable specialists in ecology.**																	
		Refer to NO9 Actions.																	
	NO13	**Enhance guidance for the management of habitats and species relevant to Coillte's estate and activities, with the input of suitably qualified specialists.**																	
	NO13.A1	Maintain and update the existing protocols for protected species and habitats adopted in Coillte appropriate assessment and develop action plans for key species on the estate (e.g. lesser horseshoe bat).	National	NA	2026-2030	Protocol updated. Action plans developed.	This action calls for the maintenance and update of existing protected species and habitats procedures adopted in Coillte's appropriate assessment and develop action plans for key species on the estate. This action will have a positive effect on biodiversity, specifically protected species and habitats, as it promotes enhanced and focused management. The review of these protocols should be done with the input of a suitably qualified specialist to ensure the best possible management actions are being utilised. This action makes no mention of this specifically but there are other actions and objectives with the plan that mitigate for this.	Yes	0	+/-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	NO13.A2	Continue engagement and partnership projects with NPWS and other relevant agencies e.g. IFI, to deliver management actions to enhance species and habitats, moving them towards more favourable conservation status.	National	NA	2026-2031	NA	This action will create and foster a collaborative approach to implementing the objective related to the management of habitats and species relevant to Coillte's estate and activities. This action promotes increased engagement with relevant agencies with in-depth biodiversity related knowledge, allowing for enhanced expertise on Coillte's management approach. Engaging with qualified specialists ensures greater knowledge sharing and aids in the transfer of nature management skills to employees within Coillte. This will have a positive effect on biodiversity and PHH. This action will not result in the	No	+	+	0	0	+	+	+	+	0	0	+

Ambition	Ref.	Objective/Action	Geographic Reporting Scale	Target	Time Frame	Monitoring Indicator	Assessment of Likely, Significant Effects on the Environment (in the absence of Environmental Mitigation) - including Cumulative and Transboundary Environmental Effects	Likely, Significant Environmental Effect/s Requiring Mitigation Identified?	Relationship with SEA Environmental Components and SEOs (prior to mitigation)										
									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							occurrence of a real, significant adverse environmental effects in and of itself.												
	NO14	**Engage with the relevant regulatory agencies on the measures required to move statutory designated sites to favourable conservation status.**																	
		Refer to NO13 Actions.																	
	NO15	**Engage with relevant agencies to improve a science-based understanding of the interaction between forests and water.**																	
	NO15.A1	Continue engagement with relevant agencies and stakeholders to explore how forest management can play a role in enhancing water quality and catchment status.	National	NA	2026-2030	NA	This action will create and foster a collaborative approach to implementing the objective related to improving the science-based understanding of the interactions between forests and water. This action promotes increased engagement with relevant agencies and stakeholders with more in-depth knowledge within the area of interest, allowing for enhanced expertise on Coillte's management approach. Engaging with relevant agencies and stakeholders ensures greater knowledge sharing and aids in the transfer of nature management skills to employees within Coillte. This will have a positive effect on biodiversity and PHH. This action will not result in the occurrence of a real, significant adverse environmental effects in and of itself. this action will have positive effects on water quality and thus also biodiversity.	No	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
	NO15.A2	Participate in projects such as Blue Dot, EU Waters for Life and HydroSed, to deliver and promote positive forest management actions.	National	NA	2026-2031	NA	Participation in projects that promote positive forest management actions with relation to water quality are positive in nature and will have a positive effect on water quality. The participation in these projects will have an indirect positive effect on biodiversity through improved water quality. There is an element of public engagement in the projects mentioned under this action. This engagement will add in increasing public awareness in nature and has the potential to increase engagement with local communities. This will contribute positively to PHH.	No	+	+	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	0	0
	NO16	**Engage with relevant agencies and stakeholders to explore how Coillte can play a role in delivering programmes and measures aimed at enhancing water quality in catchments.**																	
		Refer to NO15 Actions.																	
	NO17	**Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to develop national strategies towards the management of invasive species.**																	

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
	NO17.A1	Develop best practice for controlling invasive species on Coillte sites and engage with other agencies to share experiences and knowledge.	National	NA	2026-2030	Best practice developed.	This action will prevent and minimise the spread of invasive species in the plan area by developing best practice guidance. This action has the potential to have positive effects for biodiversity, such as native species and habitats, that are at risk due to invasive species spread. The management of invasive species within Irish landscapes is a key requirement going forward with regards to biodiversity protection as under climate change predictions it is expected that invasive species will have more opportunities to outgrow and out-compete native Irish wildlife. By better protecting native Irish fauna and flora, this action contributes positively towards maintain the character of Ireland's landscape. This action will create and foster a collaborative approach to implementing the objective of invasive species management. This action promotes increased engagement with relevant agencies with more in-depth knowledge about invasive species, allowing for enhanced expertise on Coillte's management approach. Engaging with relevant agencies ensures greater knowledge sharing and aids in the transfer of invasive species management skills to employees within Coillte. This will have a positive effect on biodiversity and PHH. This action will not result in the occurrence of a real, significant adverse environmental effects in and of itself. There is potential for significant effects on biodiversity should management practices be mis-designed or poorly implemented.	Yes	+	+/-	+	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
	NO18	**Collaborate and engage as a key partner with the ongoing preparation of the Deer Management Strategy and seek to implement once published, in so far as possible and appropriate.**																	
	NO18.A1	Through the Deer Management Forum, assist in the development of Irish Deer Management Strategy and once developed, update processes to implement the recommended measures.	National	NA	2026-2030	Update internal processes when strategy is developed.	The development of an Irish Deer Management Strategy will have a positive effect on biodiversity as it will lead to a decrease in environmental damage and degradation within Coillte's estate as a result of deer grazing. Better management of deer will contribute towards better economic outlooks within the forestry sector as unmanaged grazing by deer can cause biotic damage that negatively effects the natural regeneration of stock within forest lands. This action will create and foster a collaborative approach to implementing the objective of deer management. This action promotes increased engagement with the Deer Management Forum, allowing for enhanced expertise on Coillte's management approach. Engaging with relevant agencies ensures greater knowledge sharing and aids in the transfer of deer management skills to employees within Coillte. This will have a positive effect on biodiversity and PHH. Collaboration with other agencies mitigates against the development of poor management practices that can be harmful to deer populations. This action will not result in the occurrence of a real, significant adverse environmental effects in and of itself. There is potential for significant effects on biodiversity should management practices be mis-designed or poorly implemented.	Yes	+	+/-	0	0	0	+	0	0	+	0	0

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
	NO19	**Identify and target appropriate funding mechanisms that will enable the implementation of conservation and protection measures at scale.**																	
	NO19.A1	Identify and create packages of work to enable delivery of biodiversity goals relevant to the Coillte estate, improving habitat quality in biodiversity areas and benefiting key species on the estate.	National	NA	2026-2030	Number of projects.	This action relates to the creation of packages of work to deliver biodiversity goals within Coillte's estate. The creation of these packages will aid in biodiversity enhancement, thus having a positive effect. Biodiversity enhancement has an indirect positive effect on other environmental components. Habitat enhancement also has a positive effect on recreation and tourism as it improvement tourism offerings in terms of nature-based tourism products. This action in and of itself will not result in the occurrence of real, significant environmental effects. There is potential for significant effects on biodiversity should management practices be mis-designed or poorly implemented.	Yes	0	+/-	0	0	+	0	+	+	0	+	+
	NO19.A2	Develop partnerships with appropriate funding partners.	National	NA	2026-2031	Projects funded.	This action relates to the development of funding partnership to aid in the creation packages of work to deliver biodiversity goals within Coillte's estate. Funding will enable these packages to be delivered which will have a positive effect on biodiversity through enhancement and better management. Biodiversity enhancement has an indirect positive effect on other environmental components. Habitat enhancement also has a positive effect on recreation and tourism as it improvement tourism offerings in terms of nature-based tourism products. This action in and of itself will not result in the occurrence of real, significant environmental effects.	No	0	+	0	0	+	0	+	+	0	+	+

Forest for Wood

Ambition	Ref.	Objective/Action	Geographic Reporting Scale	Target	Time Frame	Monitoring Indicator	Assessment of Likely, Significant Effects on the Environment (in the absence of Environmental Mitigation) - including Cumulative and Transboundary Environmental Effects	Likely, Significant Environmental Effect/s Requiring Mitigation Identified?	Relationship with SEA Environmental Components and SEOs (prior to mitigation)										
									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
	WO1	**Maintain production capacity to harvest and supply certified roundwood to support the wood processing industry.**																	
Ambition 7: Produce 25m cubic metres of certified Irish timber, to support the construction of 300,000 homes by 2030.	WO1.A1	To produce c.30 - 33 million m3 of certified timber between 2026 - 2035, of which c.26 - 28 million from clear fell, c.3 - 4 million m3 from thinning's and c.0.5 - 1 million m3 from Continuous Cover Forestry. Restocking of approximately 55 - 60 thousand hectares, and the construction of approximately 800km of new roads.	BAU	Between 30-33M m3 certified timber. c.800 km new roads	2026-2035	M3 timber harvested. Ha planted. M3 Standing volume. Km roads.	This action promotes the production of timber and all associated forestry activities, including land clearance, road construction afforestation, harvesting and reforestation. It has the potential to generate positive effects on population and human health and material assets (through employment creation, the provision of sustainable timber to the market etc.). The promotion of CCF has the potential to generate positive effects on various environmental components (e.g., climate, biodiversity, water, soils etc.) This action supports the carrying out of afforestation. Afforestation will increase forest cover in the country and generated a wide range of positive environmental effects - on climate (through carbon sequestration), biodiversity, the water environment (through water regulation and filtration improving water quality), air quality, soils, material assets (through provision of wood product to the market for use in construction) and population and	Yes	+/-	+/-	-	-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	-	+

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							human health. These potential positive effects may combine with the effects of other plans and programmes promoting environmental protection and enhancement (e.g., the Water Action Plan, the National Biodiversity Action plan) to create more significant, cumulative, positive effects on the environment. However, forestry activities also have the potential to also negatively affect environmental components where poor forest development approaches/practices and management techniques are used. The range of activities associated with forestry, including road construction, afforestation, harvesting and reforestation may negatively effect population and human health (through visual impacts, nuisance, limiting public access to areas etc.), biodiversity (habitat loss/fragmentation, species disturbance, changes in environmental features/quality essential for ecological functions etc.), landscape/seascape (if forestry is not sited and designed appropriately), cultural heritage (potential interference with heritage features														

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							and their surrounding setting, or previously uncovered or unrecorded features of archaeological significance), soils (through compaction, sealing, erosion, loss of organic matter etc.), the air and noise environments, water quality and hydrology (through increase eutrophication, sedimentation, changes in hydrology etc.), material assets (e.g., existing or planned infrastructure), or tourism and recreation (through visual effects on scenic routes, for example). These potential negative effects may combine with the effects of other plans and programmes driving development and economic activity (e.g., Local Planning Authority Land Use Plans, the CAP Strategic Plan, Food Vision etc.) to exacerbate existing pressures on and risks to environmental components. Where improperly managed forestry activities occur in proximity to the border, these effects may be transmitted to Northern Irish environmental receptors (e.g., air quality, ecology, shared water bodies, landscape/seascape).												
	WO2	**Maintain independent environmental certification of Coillte-managed forests.**																	

Forest for Wood

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
	WO2.A1	Undertake surveillance and compliance audits and address any non-compliances as necessary to maintain forest certification.	National & BAU	NA	2026-2035	Audit report produced.	This action calls for investigating compliances to environmental certification of Coillte-managed forests. By addressing non-compliances this will have a positive effect on environmental receptors as a results of more effective management. Better management practices also have a positive effect on land-use. This action will not result in the occurrence of a real, significant adverse environmental effects in and of itself.	No	0	+	0	0	+	+	0	+	0	0	0
	WO3	**Work with other contributors to produce a medium-term all-Ireland roundwood forecast on a regular basis.**																	
	WO3.A1	To continue Coillte's contribution to the All-Ireland Roundwood Production Forecast.	National	NA	2026-2030	COFORD forecast published.	This action will result in increased knowledge on the future of Roundwood Production in Ireland. This will allow for a better understanding in future trends, thus allowing for enhanced planning and more efficient management of roundwood supply. This will have a positive effect on material assets. This action will not result in the occurrence of a real, significant adverse environmental effects in and of itself.	No	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0
	WO4	**Introduce a three-year rolling plan for roundwood supply that addresses all the short-term and medium planning requirements to make roundwood available in each planned year of operations.**																	

Forest for Wood

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
	WO4.A1	To produce a set of Harvest Blocks on an annual basis at least three years in advance of planned year of harvest to enable timely environmental risk assessment, Appropriate Assessment, and regulatory approval for felling, replanting and roading.	National & BAU	NA	2026-2035	3-year Rolling Plan in place.	This action requires the production of a set of Harvest blocks three years before harvest, therefore enabling timely environmental risk assessment, Appropriate Assessment, and regulatory approval for this harvest process. This will have a positive effect on environmental receptors as it will ensure enough time is given to properly determine and mitigate any potential negative effects from the harvesting process. A 3 year rolling plan for felling, tending clearfelling and reforestation has the potential to result in felling works being done at such a scale in any one year that it has a significant effect on European sites via changes to water quality or in large areas being unusable to breeding hen harrier.	Yes	+/-	+/-	0	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	0	+
	WO5	**Report annually to the wood processing sector on the available supply of roundwood for the year ahead and the actual supply that materialised in the previous year.**																	
	WO5.A1	To produce annual reports on both available supply for the forthcoming year and actual supply for the previous year.	National	NA	2026-2035	Report published.	This action will result in increased knowledge on the future of Roundwood Production in Ireland. This will allow for a better understanding in future trends, thus allowing for enhanced planning. This will have a positive effect on material assets. This action will not result in the	No	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							occurrence of a real, significant adverse environmental effects in and of itself.												
	WO6	**Ensure that access to the forest estate for the purpose of Roundwood removals is maintained through Forest Industry Transport Group collaboration with partners and stakeholders.**																	
	WO6.A1	The Forest Industry Transport Group will collaborate with relevant stakeholders to optimise haulage routes, schedules and highlight the importance of maintaining access to the forest estate.	National	NA	2026-2035	NA	This action will create and foster a collaborative approach to implementing the objective related to the maintenance of forest estate access for Roundwood removal. This action promotes increased engagement with relevant stakeholders who can aid in the optimisation of Roundwood removals, thus allowing for greater knowledge and skill sharing. This will have a allow for more efficient harvesting of Roundwood, thus having a positive effect on material assets. As this action calls for the maintenance of access and not the development of new access, no negative effects on environmental receptors are predicted. This action will not result in the occurrence of a real, significant adverse environmental effects in and of itself.	No	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0
	WO7	**Monitor forest health and condition to detect and mitigate against the potential impact of pests and diseases and guide management interventions to ensure that the estate can continue to deliver under the pillars of Climate, Nature, Wood and People.**																	

Forest for Wood

Ambition	Ref.	Objective/Action	Geographic Reporting Scale	Target	Time Frame	Monitoring Indicator	Assessment of Likely, Significant Effects on the Environment (in the absence of Environmental Mitigation) - including Cumulative and Transboundary Environmental Effects	Likely, Significant Environmental Effect/s Requiring Mitigation Identified?	Relationship with SEA Environmental Components and SEOs (prior to mitigation)										
									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
	WO7.A1	Continue annual forest health monitoring across the estate, engage with DAFM and other Irish, UK and EU counterparts, to update and review contingency planning in response to any evolving abiotic or biotic threats.	National	NA	2026-2035	Forest Health report produced.	The annual monitoring of forest health across Coillte's estate increases the knowledge on the current state of the environment, allows potential problems identified to be dealt with early on, and allows for the effectiveness of current management actions to be assessed and improved. This increases understanding on the state of Coillte's forest estate health and provides a wide range of ecosystem benefits, having a positive effect on other environmental components. Healthier forests have a positive effect on climate change as less trees are lost to disease and a healthy ecosystem can work together more effectively leading to increased carbon sequestration. This action will also have a positive effect on recreation and tourism as it improvement tourism offerings as healthy forests provide more appealing nature-based tourism products. This action also has a positive effect on material assets as less trees are lost and healthy trees experience greater growth. By engaging with relevant agencies on contingency plans this allows for a collaborative approach that fosters enhanced planning protocols when responding to any threats identified. This will have a positive effect on forest	No	0	+	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							management and environmental components.												
	WO8	**Maintain timber security measures including the geofencing of all forests and tracking of roundwood removals from the Coillte Estate.**																	
	WO8.A1	Maintain and enhance existing physical infrastructure and apply geo fencing technology to ensure that timber removals are conducted in line with Coillte's code of practice for timber removals.	National	NA	2026-2030	Number of barriers, locks, and HU geo fences.	This action promotes the use of geo-fencing within the Coillte estate. Geofencing technology is used to create virtual fencing within areas of land to better facilitate the management of that land. It can be used to map sensitive habitats and the movement of protected species. This allows for enhanced knowledge relating to the interaction between anthropogenic activities and sensitive habitats and wildlife. This has a positive effect on biodiversity as it prevents undesired interaction with areas of importance to biodiversity. It can be used during timber removals to avoid negative effects on key habitats and species. It also has a positive effect for population and human health and materials (through the	Yes	+/-	+/-	0	0	0	0	-	0	+	0	0

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							protection of timber production and supply). This action also supports the development of physical infrastructure - in the form of forest barriers (which prevent vehicle access but allow for mammal passing). The construction of such infrastructure may result in environmental effects, such as effects on biodiversity (through vegetation clearance, noise etc.) or population and human health (by preventing/limiting access to areas).												
	WO9	**Support innovation and the adoption of new technologies and practices to enhance the efficiency of the roundwood supply chain, including mechanisms for monitoring roundwood stocks in the forest.**																	
	WO9.A1	Continue to adopt new technological solutions and work with industry partners to enhance the efficiency of the roundwood supply chain.	National	NA	2026-2035	NA	The adoption of new technological improvements to enhance the efficiency roundwood supply chain has the potential to generate positive environmental effects, including positive effects on population and human/material assets (through the provision of an efficient roundwood supply chain to the market) and climate (increased efficiency may reduce the carbon intensity of forestry operations and the supply chain). Certain emerging	Yes	+/-	-	0	0	-	0	-	-	+	0	+

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							technologies may pose an environmental risk and result in unintended consequences if inappropriately adopted, designed or used, potentially leading to negative effects on environmental components.												
	WO10	**Support government and other stakeholders to expedite the approval and granting of forestry licences to ensure that sufficient and consistent volumes of roundwood supply are available.**																	

Forest for Wood

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
	WO10.A1	Continue to engage with DAFM, Forestry Appeals Committee, and relevant stakeholders to make the licencing application, approvals, and appeals process more efficient.	National	NA	2026-2030	Number of approvals outside standard approval time. Length of time for FAC to decide appeals.	This action promotes engagement with relevant bodies and stakeholders on increasing the efficiency of licencing applications, approvals and appeals processes. This will support the efficient delivery of forestry projects, potentially creating positive effects for population and human health and material assets. This action supports the carrying out of afforestation. Afforestation will increase forest cover in the country and generated a wide range of positive environmental effects - on climate (through carbon sequestration), biodiversity, the water environment (through water regulation and filtration improving water quality), air quality, soils, material assets (through provision of wood product to the market for use in construction) and population and human health. These potential positive effects may combine with the effects of other plans and programmes promoting environmental protection and enhancement (e.g., the Water Action Plan, the National Biodiversity Action plan) to create more significant, cumulative, positive effects on the	Yes	+/-	+/-	-	-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	-	+

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							environment. However, forestry activities also have the potential to also negatively affect environmental components where poor forest development approaches/practices and management techniques are used. The range of activities associated with forestry, including road construction, afforestation, harvesting and reforestation may negatively effect population and human health (through visual impacts, nuisance, limiting public access to areas etc.), biodiversity (habitat loss/fragmentation, species disturbance, changes in environmental features/quality essential for ecological functions etc.), landscape/seascape (if forestry is not sited and designed appropriately), cultural heritage (potential interference with heritage features and their surrounding setting, or previously uncovered or unrecorded features of archaeological significance), soils (through compaction, sealing, erosion, loss of organic matter etc.), the air and noise environments, water quality and hydrology (through increase eutrophication, sedimentation, changes in hydrology etc.),												

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							material assets (e.g., existing or planned infrastructure), or tourism and recreation (through visual effects on scenic routes, for example). These potential negative effects may combine with the effects of other plans and programmes driving development and economic activity (e.g., Local Planning Authority Land Use Plans, the CAP Strategic Plan, Food Vision etc.) to exacerbate existing pressures on and risks to environmental components. Where improperly managed forestry activities occur in proximity to the border, these effects may be transmitted to Northern Irish environmental receptors (e.g., air quality, ecology, shared water bodies, landscape/seascape).														
	WO11	**Promote initiatives aimed at increasing public awareness regarding the importance of forests in delivering the wood supply needed to meet Irish housing demand.**																	

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
	WO11.A1	Communicate and engage with the public through a variety of channels to create the link between productive forestry and need for Irish wood products.	National	NA	2026-2030	Coillte reputation score.	This action supports greater engagement with the public in regards to the link between productive forestry and the need for Irish wood products. This will raise awareness of the importance of the forestry sector in providing key deliverable housing targets within Ireland through more sustainable material use. This has the potential to lead to increased use of sustainable timber products, potentially creating positive effects for population and human health, material assets and climate. This action, in combination with various other actions and measures supporting timber production/forestry activity, can lead to the increased demand for timber which can drive increased forestry/harvesting, resulting in negative environmental effects (if forestry activity is not planned and managed appropriately). This increased demand may also reduce the total quantum of forestry providing carbon sequestration and biodiversity related services.	Yes	+/-	+/-	-	-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	-	+/-
Ambition 8: Promote the use and	WO12	**Develop comprehensive evidence on the benefits delivered by the forestry sector and on the benefits of using home grown sawnwood in construction.**																	

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
benefits of wood products to increase the level of timber homes from 20% to 80% by 2050.	WO12.A1	Develop evidence-based reports to support initiatives aimed at increasing the use of timber in construction and disseminate key findings to effectively promote and highlight the benefits of increased timber usage.	National	NA	2026-2030	Report published.	This action supports developing evidence-based reports that communicate the benefits of increased timber use and that support initiatives aimed at increasing the use of timber in construction. This will raise awareness of the importance of the forestry sector in providing a more sustainable material for construction within Ireland. This has the potential to lead to increased use of sustainable timber products, potentially creating positive effects for population and human health, material assets and climate. This action, in combination with various other actions and measures supporting timber production/forestry activity, can lead to the increased demand for timber which can drive increased forestry/harvesting, resulting in negative environmental effects (if forestry activity is not planned and managed appropriately). This increased demand may also reduce the total quantum of forestry providing carbon sequestration and biodiversity related services.	Yes	+/-	+/-	-	-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	-	+/-
	WO13	**Engage with government and relevant bodies to revise regulations concerning the use of wood in construction.**																	

Forest for Wood

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
	WO13.A1	Conduct a comprehensive analysis of current wood construction regulations to identify barriers and opportunities, develop evidence-based proposals for regulatory change.	National	NA	2026-2030	Completion of analysis of current wood construction regulations.	Better understanding the barriers and drivers of wood construction regulations allows for evidence-based proposals for regulatory change. This enhanced knowledge will lead to regulations that better allow for the increased use of timber in construction. This has the potential to lead to increased use of sustainable timber products, potentially creating positive effects for population and human health, material assets and climate. This action, in combination with various other actions and measures supporting timber production/forestry activity, can lead to the increased demand for timber which can drive increased forestry/harvesting, resulting in negative environmental effects (if forestry activity is not planned and managed appropriately). This increased demand may also reduce the total quantum of forestry providing carbon sequestration and biodiversity related services.	Yes	+/-	+/-	-	-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	-	+/-

Forest for Wood

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
	WO13.A2	Collaborate with industry associations, environmental groups, and academic experts to advocate for these changes through strategic communication while monitoring progress with government bodies.	National	NA	2026-2031		This action will create and foster a collaborative approach to revising current regulations for wood-use in construction. This action promotes increased engagement with relevant agencies and stakeholders that will facilitate enhanced knowledge sharing that will allow for new regulations which are based on the best available advice. Collaboration with experts will allow for updated regulations which take into account many potential impacts related to the use of wood products in construction, therefore mitigating against some potential negative effects. This collaboration will strengthen the case for revising current regulations. This has the potential to lead to increased use of sustainable timber products, potentially creating positive effects for population and human health, material assets and climate. This action, in combination with various other actions and measures supporting timber production/forestry activity, can lead to the increased demand for timber which can drive increased forestry/harvesting, resulting in negative environmental effects (if forestry activity is not	Yes	+/-	+/-	-	-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	-	+/-

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							planned and managed appropriately). This increased demand may also reduce the total quantum of forestry providing carbon sequestration and biodiversity related services.												
	WO14	**Engage with government and relevant bodies to introduce green procurement guidelines for new public buildings and to introduce sustainability mechanisms in construction to reduce the carbon footprint of new builds.**																	

Forest for Wood

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
	WO14.A1	Research and compile best practices on green procurement policies and collaborate with government, industry experts to promote procurement and sustainable construction practices.	National	NA	2026-2030	Completion of research on best practice.	This action is related to the promotion of wood product use in construction as a form of green procurement and the development of policies for this procurement. By promoting wood-product use in such a way it will aid in the increased uptake of this more sustainable material. This has the potential to lead to increased use of sustainable timber products, potentially creating positive effects for population and human health, material assets and climate. This action, in combination with various other actions and measures supporting timber production/forestry activity, can lead to the increased demand for timber which can drive increased forestry/harvesting, resulting in negative environmental effects (if forestry activity is not planned and managed appropriately). This increased demand may also reduce the total quantum of forestry providing carbon sequestration and biodiversity related services.	Yes	+/-	+/-	-	-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	-	+/-
	WO15	**Support the demonstration of new forms of timber-based construction in Ireland.**																	

Forest for Wood

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
	WO15.A1	Collaborate with industry and academia to establish partnerships for high-impact pilot projects that demonstrate sustainable timber construction techniques and effectively promote the outcomes to target stakeholders.	National	NA	2026-2030	Number of projects implemented.	This action will create and foster a collaborative approach to establishing projects that demonstrate sustainable timber construction techniques. This action promotes increased engagement with experts that will facilitate enhanced knowledge and skill sharing that will allow for the demonstration of techniques that follow best practices. By having projects to demonstrate timber construction techniques that are informed by expert advice, it will aid in not only increasing the use of timber in construction but will ensure that this increased use is complimented with people having appropriate skills and knowledge to apply construction techniques relating to sustainable timber. This has the potential to lead to increased use of sustainable timber products, potentially creating positive effects for population and human health, material assets and climate. This action, in combination with various other actions and measures supporting timber production/forestry activity, can lead to the increased demand for timber which can drive increased forestry/harvesting, resulting in negative environmental effects (if	Yes	+	-	0	0	-	0	-	-	+	0	+/-

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							forestry activity is not planned and managed appropriately). This increased demand may also reduce the total quantum of forestry providing carbon sequestration and biodiversity related services.												
	WO16	**Assist in the development of design guidance for practitioners and educational courses in timber building systems including the use of mass timber and timber frame construction in Ireland.**																	
	WO16.A1	Conduct a comprehensive review of design guidelines and educational materials to identify gaps and best practices.	National	NA	2026-2030	Review completed.	This action aims to conduct a review of timber building system design guidelines and educational materials to identify gaps and best practices. This will facilitate enhanced learning that will lead to more in-depth knowledge on timber design within buildings. This ultimately leads to more informed guidelines and education material that will ensure best practice is followed, which will	No	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	+

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							aid in the prevention of negative impacts associated with improper use of timber as a construction material. This will also aid in the upskilling of individuals which has a positive effect on PHH. This action will aid in the production of design guidelines which will make the timber-use in construction more accessible and thus potentially lead to an increase in the use of this material which will have a positive effect on material assets and climate change.											
	WO16.A2	Create a centralised training resource repository and partner with educational institutions to integrate timber into third-level curricula as a core module.	National	NA	2026-2031	Creation of training resource repository.	This action will create and foster enhanced education and training related to timber building systems. This will strengthen critical skills related to the use of timber in construction and lead to an increase in expertise, allowing for best practice to be followed. This will have a positive effect on PHH. This action will not result in the occurrence of a real, significant adverse environmental effects in and of itself.	No	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
	PO1	**Identify priority site locations and develop masterplans for future Visitor Destinations, in full consideration of the protection of the environment and subject to Appropriate Assessment screening where necessary.**																	
Ambition 9: Enable the investment of €100 million in world-class Visitor Destinations to support growth in tourism and recreation by 2030.	PO1.A1	Assess potential new visitor destinations sites. Select 3 sites for Strategic Development Planning (SDP).	National	3 sites	2026-2030	Framework to assess and classify destination sites developed. SDP produced.	This action promotes the development of visitor destination sites within the Coillte estate. The development of such sites has the potential to generate positive environmental effects, including positive effects on population and human health (through increased economic activity, increased recreation/engagement with nature), cultural heritage (by creating synergies between the development and cultural heritage features) and tourism and recreation. The site-selection process will support the development of such sites at appropriate locations, potential maximising positive environmental effects. The action does however support visitor destination development that may have negative construction or operational phase environmental effects in the absence of appropriate design/mitigation, such as effects on biodiversity (through increased human interaction with sensitive ecological receptors, noise, land-take, lighting etc.), population and human health (due to construction dust, noise, changes in traffic and transport dynamics), landscape and visual amenity (through the construction of sizeable built development at visually sensitive locations), cultural heritage (due to interactions between the development and the physical integrity and/or setting of unknown or recorded heritage features), soils, the air and noise environment, the water environment (due to construction phase run-off,	Yes	+/-	-	-	+/-	-	0	-	-	0	+	0

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							changes in hydrology or additional wastewater loading in an wastewater catchment/agglomeration), material assets or climate (e.g., from construction embodied carbon, or due to the creation of unsustainable transport/travel patterns). Such effects (positive and negative) may be transmitted to Northern Ireland, in the case of development occurring in proximity to the border. These effects may also combine with effects from other plans, programmes or projects (such as Faillte Ireland or Local Authority plans) to create more significant cumulative effects.												
	PO2	**Strengthen our strategic partnership for the delivery of Visitor Destinations with Fáilte Ireland to support shared objectives.**																	
	PO2.A1	Agree and sign a new Partnership agreement with Failte Ireland for the period of 2030 to 2035.	National	NA	2026-2030	Agreement signed.	This action calls for a partnership agreement with Failte Ireland for the delivery of Visitor Destinations. This action will create and foster a collaborative approach to providing more recreation facilities and tourism areas within Coillte's estate. This collaboration with tourism experts will enable knowledge and skill sharing in regards to the expansion of recreation and tourist facilities within the	No	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							estate. This action will not result in the occurrence of a real, significant adverse environmental effects in and of itself.												
	PO3	**Engage with Local Authorities to identify opportunities to create recreational projects of scale, in line with local and national development plans.**																	
	PO3.A1	Work with Local Authorities to identify projects of scale and to source funding.	BAU	NA	2026-2030	Number of projects identified.	This action promotes engagement with local authorities to identify recreational projects and to source funding for these projects. This action will create and foster a collaborative approach to providing more recreation facilities. By collaborating with local authorities, it allows for more in-depth knowledge of local areas and communities. This leads to the selection of projects that will be of the most benefit to these communities, ensuring effective use of time and resources to deliver the most positive results. This action has the potential to generate positive environmental effects, including positive effects on population and human health (through increased economic activity, increased recreation/engagement with nature), cultural heritage (by creating synergies between the development and cultural heritage features) and tourism and recreation. The action does however support tourism and recreation related development that may have negative construction or operational phase environmental effects in the absence of appropriate design/mitigation, such as effects on biodiversity (through	Yes	+/-	-	-	+/-	-	0	-	-	0	+	0

Ambition	Ref.	Objective/Action	Geographic Reporting Scale	Target	Time Frame	Monitoring Indicator	Assessment of Likely, Significant Effects on the Environment (in the absence of Environmental Mitigation) - including Cumulative and Transboundary Environmental Effects	Likely, Significant Environmental Effect/s Requiring Mitigation Identified?	Relationship with SEA Environmental Components and SEOs (prior to mitigation)										
									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							increased human interaction with sensitive ecological receptors, noise, land-take, lighting etc.), population and human health (due to construction dust, noise, changes in traffic and transport dynamics), landscape and visual amenity (through the construction of sizeable built development at visually sensitive locations), cultural heritage (due to interactions between the development and the physical integrity and/or setting of unknown or recorded heritage features), soils, the air and noise environment, the water environment (due to construction phase run-off, changes in hydrology or additional wastewater loading in an wastewater catchment/agglomeration), material assets or climate (e.g., from construction embodied carbon, or due to the creation of unsustainable transport/travel patterns). Such effects (positive and negative) may be transmitted to Northern Ireland, in the case of development occurring in proximity to the border. These effects may also combine with effects from other plans, programmes or projects (such as Faillte Ireland or Local Authority plans) to create more significant cumulative effects.											
	PO4	**Monitor visitor numbers and measure impact, to protect the environment and enhance customer experience.**																	
	PO4.A1	Develop sustainability plan at key destinations and report on the visitor numbers and associated sustainability factors annually.	BAU & National	NA	2026-2030	Recreation report produced.	This action requires the development of a sustainability plan for key destinations and the annual reporting of visitor numbers and sustainability factors. The creation of a plan aids in increasing the effectiveness of management practices by providing actionable goals and targets. Annual reporting allows for the	No	0	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	0	+	0

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									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							current state of matters to be assessed and provides an iterative process against which management strategies under the sustainability plan can be improved upon. This will have an overall positive effect on tourism and recreation as well as environmental receptors which may be affected by tourism and recreation.													
	PO5	**Develop commercial partnerships that support investment to deliver Outstanding Visitor Destinations.**																	
	PO5.A1	Develop bespoke partnerships to design and build new visitor destinations based on the requirements of each project.	BAU	NA	2026-2030	Contract in place. Visitor Destination delivered.	This action is related to the development of bespoke partnerships to design and build new visitor destinations. This action will create and foster a collaborative approach to providing more recreation facilities. By collaborating with commercial partners to support investments it will allow for the provision of necessary funding resources need to deliver outstanding visitor destinations. This action acts as a driver for the development of visitor destination sites within the Coillte estate. The development of such sites has the potential to generate positive environmental effects, including positive effects on population and human health (through increased economic activity, increased recreation/engagement with nature), cultural heritage (by creating synergies between the development and cultural heritage features) and tourism and recreation. The site-selection process will support the development of such sites at appropriate locations, potential maximising positive environmental effects. The action does however act as a driver for visitor destination development that may have	No	+/-	-	-	+/-	-	0	-	-	0	+	0

Ambition	Ref.	Objective/Action	Geographic Reporting Scale	Target	Time Frame	Monitoring Indicator	Assessment of Likely, Significant Effects on the Environment (in the absence of Environmental Mitigation) - including Cumulative and Transboundary Environmental Effects	Likely, Significant Environmental Effect/s Requiring Mitigation Identified?	Relationship with SEA Environmental Components and SEOs (prior to mitigation)										
									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							negative construction or operational phase environmental effects in the absence of appropriate design/mitigation, such as effects on biodiversity (through increased human interaction with sensitive ecological receptors, noise, land-take, lighting etc.), population and human health (due to construction dust, noise, changes in traffic and transport dynamics), landscape and visual amenity (through the construction of sizeable built development at visually sensitive locations), cultural heritage (due to interactions between the development and the physical integrity and/or setting of unknown or recorded heritage features), soils, the air and noise environment, the water environment (due to construction phase run-off, changes in hydrology or additional wastewater loading in an wastewater catchment/agglomeration), material assets or climate (e.g., from construction embodied carbon, or due to the creation of unsustainable transport/travel patterns). Such effects (positive and negative) may be transmitted to Northern Ireland, in the case of development occurring in proximity to the border. These effects may also combine with effects from other plans, programmes or projects (such as Faillte Ireland or Local Authority plans) to create more significant cumulative effects.												
Ambition 10: Double the number of Recreation	PO6	**Create a system of classification for Recreation Areas, in full consideration of the important ecological features of Coillte's estate, setting out the offer and facilities to be provided for each category.**																	

Ambition	Ref.	Objective/Action	Geographic Reporting Scale	Target	Time Frame	Monitoring Indicator	Assessment of Likely, Significant Effects on the Environment (in the absence of Environmental Mitigation) - including Cumulative and Transboundary Environmental Effects	Likely, Significant Environmental Effect/s Requiring Mitigation Identified?	Relationship with SEA Environmental Components and SEOs (prior to mitigation)										
									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
Areas to 500, to benefit local communities and people's wellbeing.	PO6.A1	Develop a classification system and criteria for recreation areas describing the recreational offering and facilities.	National	NA	2026-2030	Framework to assess and classify destination sites developed.	This actions calls for the development of a classification system and criteria for recreational areas. This will lead to increased knowledge on the offerings within Coillte's estate for recreation, leading to more efficient and informed decisions on the future provisions of recreational facilities with the estate. This will have a positive effect on tourism and recreation. This action will not result in the occurrence of a real, significant adverse environmental effects in and of itself.	No	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0
	PO7	**Develop assessment criteria to identify locations for future Recreational Areas.**																	
		Refer to PO6 Actions.																	
	PO8	**Develop a community model to enable public and local authority involvement in the development of Recreation Areas.**																	
	PO8.A1	Create a community engagement model that facilitates public and local authority participation in the development and maintenance of Recreation Areas while providing opportunities for local communities to contribute and benefit.	National	NA	2026-2030	Community engagement model developed.	This action is related to the creation of a community engagement model. This will facilitate increased engagement with the public and local authorities on development and maintenance of recreation areas, therefore fostering a more collaborative approach. By collaborating with local communities, it allows for more in-depth knowledge of the local area. This leads to actions that will be of the most benefit to these communities, ensuring effective use of time and resources to deliver the most positive results. This will have a positive effect on PHH and tourism and recreation. This action will not result in the occurrence of a real, significant adverse environmental effects in and of itself.	No	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0
	PO9	**Develop methods to measure and quantify the social and wellbeing benefits of outdoor recreation.**																	

Ambition	Ref.	Objective/Action	Geographic Reporting Scale	Target	Time Frame	Monitoring Indicator	Assessment of Likely, Significant Effects on the Environment (in the absence of Environmental Mitigation) - including Cumulative and Transboundary Environmental Effects	Likely, Significant Environmental Effect/s Requiring Mitigation Identified?	Relationship with SEA Environmental Components and SEOs (prior to mitigation)										
									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
	PO9.A1	Using industry expertise, measure and quantify the economic, social and wellbeing benefits of outdoor recreation.	National	NA	2026-2030	Recreation report produced.	Measuring and quantifying the economic, social and wellbeing benefits of outdoor recreation allows for enhanced knowledge of the effects of this outdoor activity. This will raise awareness on the positive outcomes of providing faculties where this type of recreation can occur, potentially aiding in increasing the investment of future projects that support outdoor recreation. By understanding the benefits, this can be used to encourage the public to increase their use of facilities which provide this type of recreation. This action will have a positive effect on PHH and tourism and recreation. This action will not result in the occurrence of a real, significant adverse environmental effects in and of itself.	No	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0

Ambition	Ref.	Objective/Action	Geographic Reporting Scale	Target	Time Frame	Monitoring Indicator	Assessment of Likely, Significant Effects on the Environment (in the absence of Environmental Mitigation) - including Cumulative and Transboundary Environmental Effects	Likely, Significant Environmental Effect/s Requiring Mitigation Identified?	Relationship with SEA Environmental Components and SEOs (prior to mitigation)										
									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
	PO9.A2	Expand the Woodlands for Health programme.	National	NA	2026-2030	Number of Programme participants.+G21	The Woodlands for Health Programme supports the use of Coillte's recreational forests by adults availing of mental health supports in Ireland, as a way to get out in nature to boost mental health and well-being. it has the potential to have positive effects on population and human health and tourism and recreation. The expansion of this programme may lead to increased human interaction with environmental receptors, resulting in negative effects on biodiversity (e.g. through litter, noise, trampling) or soil or water quality.	Yes	+	-	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	+	0
	PO10	**Develop a community model to support public engagement, identify the emerging social and recreational needs and provide meaningful opportunities for local communities to support the development of Recreation Areas.**																	
		Refer to PO8 Actions.																	
	PO11	**Develop deeper relationships with local authorities to identify and execute local recreational opportunities and leverage funding.**																	

Ambition	Ref.	Objective/Action	Geographic Reporting Scale	Target	Time Frame	Monitoring Indicator	Assessment of Likely, Significant Effects on the Environment (in the absence of Environmental Mitigation) - including Cumulative and Transboundary Environmental Effects	Likely, Significant Environmental Effect/s Requiring Mitigation Identified?	Relationship with SEA Environmental Components and SEOs (prior to mitigation)										
									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
	PO11.A1	Partner with local authorities and development companies to develop and support Outdoor Recreation Committees.	BAU	NA	2026-2035	Recreation opportunities identified.	This action is related to the engagement with local authorities and development companies to support and develop Outdoor Recreation Committees. This action will create and foster a collaborative approach to providing more recreation facilities. By collaborating with local authorities and development companies to create these committees, it allows for local knowledge and input to be heard in forestry recreation management and allows for input from those with experience in the development sector. This allows for more meaningful knowledge sharing. This leads to outdoor recreation management that will be of the most benefit to communities, ensuring effective use of time and resources to deliver the most positive results. This will have a positive effect on PHH and tourism and recreation. This action will not result in the occurrence of a real, significant adverse environmental effects in and of itself.	No	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0
	PO12	**Expand digital services to support the mapping and analysis of Recreational Areas and improve efficiencies in monitoring and management.**																	
	PO12.A1	Partner with external provider of digital recreation services to develop a process to map and analyse recreation areas.	National	NA	2026-2030	Database developed.	By partnering with an external provider to develop a process to map and analyse recreational areas, this will allowed for expertise input that will lead to the creation of a system that is efficient and productive. Being able to map and analyse recreation areas allows for the best management practices to be used, based on the increased level of information available. This will have a positive effect on environmental receptors such as biodiversity, water, and soil. It will also have a positive	No	0	+	0	0	+	0	0	+	0	+	0

Ambition	Ref.	Objective/Action	Geographic Reporting Scale	Target	Time Frame	Monitoring Indicator	Assessment of Likely, Significant Effects on the Environment (in the absence of Environmental Mitigation) - including Cumulative and Transboundary Environmental Effects	Likely, Significant Environmental Effect/s Requiring Mitigation Identified?	Relationship with SEA Environmental Components and SEOs (prior to mitigation)										
									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							effect on tourism and recreation. This action will not result in the occurrence of a real, significant adverse environmental effects in and of itself.												
Ambition 11: Create 1,200 new jobs in rural communities to support the just transition to a low carbon economy.	PO13	**Support businesses of different types and scale to develop and grow markets for value-added wood products, forest tourism and recreation opportunities.**																	
	PO13.A1	Support RD&I and demonstrator projects that advance new value-added wood products and timber-based building systems.	National	NA	2026-2030	Number demonstration projects implemented.	This action aims to increase support for RD&I (Research, Development and Innovation) and demonstrator projects that advance new value-added wood products and timber-based building systems. This support will help to increase the timber and wood product industry within in Ireland. The growth and diversification of this market allows for greener wood-products to be used within the Irish market and can replace the use of fossil-fuel based products. This has the potential to lead to increased use of sustainable timber products, potentially creating positive effects for population and human health, material assets and climate. This action, in combination with various other actions and measures supporting timber production/forestry activity, can lead to the increased demand for timber which can drive increased forestry/harvesting, resulting in negative environmental effects (if forestry activity is not planned and managed appropriately). This increased demand may also reduce the total quantum of forestry providing carbon sequestration	Yes	+/-	+/-	-	-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	-	+/-

Ambition	Ref.	Objective/Action	Geographic Reporting Scale	Target	Time Frame	Monitoring Indicator	Assessment of Likely, Significant Effects on the Environment (in the absence of Environmental Mitigation) - including Cumulative and Transboundary Environmental Effects	Likely, Significant Environmental Effect/s Requiring Mitigation Identified?	Relationship with SEA Environmental Components and SEOs (prior to mitigation)										
									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							and biodiversity related services.												

Ambition	Ref.	Objective/Action	Geographic Reporting Scale	Target	Time Frame	Monitoring Indicator	Assessment of Likely, Significant Effects on the Environment (in the absence of Environmental Mitigation) - including Cumulative and Transboundary Environmental Effects	Likely, Significant Environmental Effect/s Requiring Mitigation Identified?	Relationship with SEA Environmental Components and SEOs (prior to mitigation)										
									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
	PO13.A2	Partner with IAAT (Irish Association for Adventure Tourism) to promote forest recreation opportunities for service providers and operators.	National	NA	2026-2030	Recreation opportunities identified.	This action aims to promote forest recreation activities for service providers and operators by partnering with IAAT. This partnership fosters a collaborative approach to expanding recreation services and facilities within Coillte's estate. and has the potential to generate positive effects on population and human health and tourism and recreation. This action may lead to increased human interaction with environmental receptors, resulting in negative effects on biodiversity (e.g. through litter, noise, trampling) or soil or water quality. It may also drive the carrying out of tourism and recreation development, which can result in a range of construction and operational phase effects on the environment.	Yes	+/-	-	-	+/-	-	0	-	-	0	+	0
	PO14	**Support the operational contractor base to grow and diversify, so that it has the capacity to deliver Coillte's afforestation, peatland redesign and nature ambitions.**																	
	PO14.A1	Through the Workforce Capacity Project, Focus on sourcing new contractors to meet our demands. Ensure contractors are equipped with the skills needed to align with Coillte's ambitions.	National	NA	2026-2030	Workforce Capacity Project report.	This action focuses on sourcing new contractors with the relevant skills to support Coillte's capacity to deliver its future ambitions. This increase will aid in helping to achieve the forest-related targets set out by Coillte in this plan. The achievement of these targets with have a positive effect on environmental receptors (biodiversity, soil, water, air), PHH, and climate change. The use of skilled contractors helps ensure best practices are followed, minimising potential negative impacts on forests. This action will not result in the	No	+	+	0	0	+	0	+	+	0	0	+

Ambition	Ref.	Objective/Action	Geographic Reporting Scale	Target	Time Frame	Monitoring Indicator	Assessment of Likely, Significant Effects on the Environment (in the absence of Environmental Mitigation) - including Cumulative and Transboundary Environmental Effects	Likely, Significant Environmental Effect/s Requiring Mitigation Identified?	Relationship with SEA Environmental Components and SEOs (prior to mitigation)										
									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
							occurrence of a real, significant adverse environmental effects in and of itself.												
	PO15	**Enhance operational guidance for staff and contractors regarding biodiversity management and peatland redesign, with the input of suitably qualified specialists.**																	
		Refer to CO7, NO6, and NO9 Actions.																	
	PO16	**Support the provision of education and training to attract new entrants to the sector and enhance skills in new and emerging areas.**																	
	PO16.A1	Advance the Workforce Capacity Project by collaborating with industry forums, educators, and government stakeholders to design and deliver targeted training programs, enhance tertiary education curricula, and develop innovative initiatives, such as digital learning experiences for students, to attract new entrants and build skills in emerging areas. Additionally, advocate for the inclusion of forestry-related skills on the Critical Skills List, monitor annual updates, and address gaps in recognizing essential forestry roles through	National	NA	2026-2030	Workforce Capacity Project report.	This action is related to advancing the Workforce Capacity Project through various form of collaboration. This allows for increased engagement with experts in their field and leads to enhanced knowledge and skill sharing to create programs that attract new people to the forestry workforce. The creation of these educational programs, upskilling of individuals, and identification of gaps within the recruiting process, it creates a stronger more resilient work force within in the forestry sector that is better able to achieve the Ambitions set out by Coillte. This will have a positive effect on PHH. This action will not result in the occurrence of a real, significant adverse environmental effects in and of itself.	No	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Ambition	Ref.	Objective/Action	Geographic Reporting Scale	Target	Time Frame	Monitoring Indicator	Assessment of Likely, Significant Effects on the Environment (in the absence of Environmental Mitigation) - including Cumulative and Transboundary Environmental Effects	Likely, Significant Environmental Effect/s Requiring Mitigation Identified?	Relationship with SEA Environmental Components and SEOs (prior to mitigation)										
									PHH	BFF	L	CH	S	LU	AQN	W	MA	TR	CC
		partnerships and apprenticeships.																	
	PO17	**Support the enhancement of the curriculum in tertiary education and the development of apprentices to attract new forestry and related professionals to the sector.**																	
		Refer to PO16 Actions.																	
	PO18	**Support and continue to engage with government and other stakeholders towards the inclusion of forestry skills on the Critical Skills List.**																	
		Refer to PO16 Actions.																	
Additional People Objectives: Human wellbeing & health	PO19	**Maintain occupational health and safety across the Coillte estate.**																	
	PO19.A1	Continue to monitor H&S across the estate and provide updated guidance to all staff and contractors.	National	NA	2026-2035	H&S report.	Monitoring of H&S across the estate allows for an iterative approach to developing new guidelines that keep employees safe. This will have a positive effect on PHH. This action will not result in the occurrence of a real, significant adverse environmental effects in and of itself.	No	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	PO20	**Expand the Woodlands for Health programme.**																	
		Refer to PO9 Actions.																	

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APPENDIX 4

SEA Screening for Draft Plan Amendments

Overview

The following table presents the amendments made to Coillte's Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan (LUSIP) over the Plan-making process. Additions to existing text have been denoted in *blue* and removals in ~~*blue strikethrough*~~. The amendments have been subject to further SEA Screening.

Table 1: SEA Screening for Amendments to the Draft Plan

Section / Action	Draft LUSIP Text	Summary of Amendment	Screening Assessment
CO3.A1	Support and facilitate those public bodies who are committed to pursuing opportunities for afforestation on publicly owned land by supplying key afforestation management and planning services, where appropriate.	Support and facilitate those public bodies who are committed to pursuing opportunities for afforestation on publicly owned land by supplying key afforestation management and planning services, at appropriate locations.	The amendment relates to a clarification in the text of the action to specify that afforestation management and planning services will be extended to afforestation efforts at appropriate locations. The amendment is minor and will not introduce a source of environmental impact beyond what has already been considered in the SEA of the Plan.
CO4.A1	Consider proposals to help promote sustainable farmer-led afforestation and collaborate with key stakeholders.	Consider proposals to help promote sustainable farmer-led afforestation at suitable locations and collaborate with key stakeholders	The amendment relates to a clarification in the text of the action to specify that proposals for promoting sustainable farmer-led afforestation at suitable and appropriate locations. . The amendment is minor and will not introduce a source of environmental impact beyond what has already been considered in the SEA of the Plan.

Section / Action	Draft LUSIP Text	Summary of Amendment	Screening Assessment
CO6.A1	Review existing in-house information to identify potential locations for the redesign of ca. 15,000 ha of peatlands and engage with external stakeholders, as appropriate, ensuring environmental considerations and constraints inform this process where possible. Redesign of unproductive Peatland Forests will be science-based and will ultimately be delivered - subject to carbon funding initiatives - over the longer term through a combination of rewetting/rehabilitation ("Forest-to-Bog" projects) and transitioning to semi-natural forests with open spaces as appropriate.	Review existing in-house information to identify potential locations for the redesign of ca. 15,000 ha of peatlands and engage with external stakeholders, as appropriate, ensuring environmental considerations and constraints inform this process where possible. ~~Redesign of unproductive Peatland Forests will be science-based and will ultimately be delivered - subject to carbon funding initiatives - over the longer term through a combination of rewetting/rehabilitation ("Forest-to-Bog" projects) and transitioning to semi-natural forests with open spaces as appropriate~~. Redesign of unproductive peatland forests will ultimately be delivered over the longer term and subject to carbon funding initiatives.	The amended action has removed references to science-based evidence and Forest-to-Bog projects. It is inherent that these projects will be based on science. The SEA of the Plan has considered the potential impacts of peatland restoration projects in depth and have mitigated against the identified adverse effects on the receiving environment. The amendment will not introduce a source of environmental impact beyond what has already been considered and mitigated against in the SEA.
CO11.A1	Develop a forest resilience strategy that considers the impacts of climate change, identifies risks and mitigations as well as the risk of pests and diseases and evaluate how these findings can be incorporated into our planning models.	Develop a forest resilience strategy that considers the impacts of climate change~~,~~ ~~identifies risks and mitigations as well as the risk of pests and diseases and evaluate how these findings can be incorporated into our planning models~~ and identify mitigating measures to help our forests adapt to these climate risks. Evaluate how these findings can be incorporated into our planning models.	The amendment has removed clauses relating to particular risks for conciseness as these risks are covered within the impacts of climate change. The amended action, despite the rephrasing, will achieve the same outcomes as originally intend in the Draft Plan, i.e., prevent and reduce the impacts of climate change on Coillte estate and achieve appropriate climate adaptation. The amendment will not introduce a source of environmental impact beyond what has already been considered in the SEA.

Section / Action	Draft LUSIP Text	Summary of Amendment	Screening Assessment
NO5.A4	Develop a process for recording and reporting species (flora and fauna) to build our knowledge of their occurrence across the estate and to better inform appropriate protection measures	Develop a process for recording and reporting species (flora and fauna), and for sharing data with relevant stakeholders, to build our knowledge of their occurrence across the estate and to better inform appropriate protection measures	The amendment has introduced a clause for sharing collected data with relevant stakeholders. The amendment will not introduce a source of environmental impact beyond what has already been considered in the SEA.
NO13.A1	Maintain and update the existing protocols for protected species and habitats adopted in Coillte appropriate assessment and develop action plans for key species on the estate (e.g. lesser horseshoe bat, freshwater pearl mussel etc.) having due regard to existing and emerging best practice and relevant NPWS species plans, such as the following: • Hen Harrier Threat Response Plan • Lesser Horseshoe Bat Species Action Plan	Maintain and update the existing protocols for protected species and habitats ~~adopted in Coillte appropriate assessment~~ and develop action plans for key species on the estate (e.g. lesser horseshoe bat, freshwater pearl mussel etc.) having due regard to existing and emerging best practice and relevant NPWS species plans, such as the following: • Hen Harrier Threat Response Plan • Lesser Horseshoe Bat Species Action Plan	The amendment has removed the clause pertaining to review of protocols for Coillte Appropriate Assessments. The action will still focus on the development of action plans for management of key species present in the estate and have regard to existing and emerging best practice and relevant NPWS species plans. The amendment will not introduce a source of impact on the receiving environment.
NO18.A1	Through the **Deer Management Forum** , assist in the development of Irish Deer Management Strategy and once developed, update processes to implement the recommended measures.	Through the ~~Deer Management Forum~~ Irish Deer Management Strategy Group (IDMSG) , assist in the development of Irish Deer Management Strategy and once developed, update processes to implement the recommended measures.	The amendment has clarified a reference to the body (Irish Deer Management Strategy Group) previously referred to as the 'Deer Management Forum'. There is no environmental impact associated with this amendment.

Section / Action	Draft LUSIP Text	Summary of Amendment	Screening Assessment
WO1.A2	N/A	Coillte will continually review and analyse forest management practices and growing stock to ensure that our rate of harvesting does not exceed the forests growth rate thereby securing a continuous supply of timber in the long-term.	The amendment has introduced a new objective/action within the Plan. The new action pertains to the continual review and analysis of forest management practices to ensure that harvesting rates do not exceed forest growth rates. The action ensure the sustainable management of the estate. In and of itself, being review-based, the amendment will not introduce a source of impact on the receiving environment.

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