

Strategic Environmental Assessment Monitoring Report of the Ancient Destination Experience Development Plan

May 2025



Strategic Environmental Assessment Monitoring Report

Ancient Destination Experience Development Plan

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ACRONYM LIST

| | |
|-------|--|
| AA | Appropriate Assessment |
| ACA | Architectural Conservation Area |
| ADEDP | Ancient Destination Experience Development Plan |
| B2B | Business-to-business |
| BVT | Boyne Valley Tourism |
| CCC | Cavan County Council |
| CFRAM | Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management |
| DCHG | Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht |
| DEHLG | Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government |
| DHLGH | Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage |
| EIA | Environmental Impact Assessment |
| EPA | Environmental Protection Agency |
| EU | European Union |
| FI | Fáilte Ireland |
| GSI | Geological Survey of Ireland |
| HSE | Health Service Executive |
| IAE | Ireland's Ancient East |
| IWBNG | Inland Waterways – Boyne Navigation Group |
| LCC | Louth County Council |
| LEO | Local Enterprise Office |
| LTN | Local Tourism Network |
| OPW | Office of Public Works |
| MCC | Meath County Council |
| MnCC | Monaghan County Council |
| NHA | Natural Heritage Area |
| NMS | National Monuments Service |
| NPWS | National Parks and Wildlife Service |
| NTA | National Transport Authority |
| pNHA | Proposed Natural Heritage Area |
| PS | Private Sector |
| RMP | Record of Monuments and Places |
| RPA | Register of Protected Areas |
| RPS | Record of Protected Structures |
| RBMP | River Basin Management Plan |
| SAC | Special Area of Conservation |
| SCC | Sligo County Council |
| SEA | Strategic Environmental Assessment |
| SEO | Strategic Environmental Objective |
| SEUPB | Special EU Programmes Body |

| | |
|--------|-----------------------------|
| SI No. | Statutory Instrument Number |
| SPA | Special Protection Area |
| Údarás | Údarás na Gaeltachta |
| WCC | Westmeath County Council |
| WFD | Water Framework Directive |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fáilte Ireland (FI) is the National Tourism Development Authority with the role of supporting the long-term sustainable growth in the economic, social, cultural and environmental contribution of tourism in Ireland. Fáilte Ireland also provides funding for sustainable tourism projects that emerge as part of specific, competitive, themed and time-bound grant schemes or as part of wider strategic partnerships.

The Ancient Destination Experience Development Plan (ADEDP) (hereafter referred to as “The Plan”) was launched by Fáilte Ireland on the 12th of May 2021 and organised into a development framework for a five-year period between 2021-2026. The Plan focusses largely on the Boyne Valley, which spans across counties Meath and South Louth. The DEDP will cover North Louth as well as areas of Cavan, Monaghan and Westmeath with relevance to the Ancient proposition. The Plan was developed with members of the tourism industry to provide guidance for tourism development and economic generation through projects adopted by all stakeholders. It is intended to capitalise on existing assets, offering the tourism sector a short-term focus on destination recovery after Covid-19, while having a key long-term destination and experience development outlook. It is intended to achieve the objectives of addressing seasonality, increasing visitor numbers, improving dwell time and visitor dispersion across the destination. The Plan was informed by the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process in accordance with the SEA Directive 2001/42/EEC. Under Article 10 of the SEA Directive, “the significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan are monitored in order, inter alia, to identify at an early-stage unforeseen adverse effects, and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action”. Monitoring is an important tool for evaluating whether the SEA is fulfilling its core objective of providing for a high level of protection of the environment and the promotion of sustainable development.

The SEA monitoring has been completed approximately four years into a five-year implementation phase of the Plan. The Plan’s SEA Statement (CAAS, 2020a) details the monitoring programme to be used to assess the likely significant effects on the environment. The monitoring programme contains fifteen environmental indicators accompanied by environmental targets, which are used to assess the likely significant effects of implementing the Plan.

This monitoring report provides an update to the baseline environmental receptors relevant to the monitoring programme and identifies any changes in the baseline since the preparation of the Plan. This step informs the monitoring team of any changes or trends in the environment, which is subsequently used to inform the need for additional mitigation measures or remedial action.

The Plan was developed with the objective of increasing bed nights, visitor dispersion, employment growth and season extension across the destination. A key source of information regarding the progress on the projects was through consultations with Fáilte Ireland and the Plan Implementation Group.

The Plan includes four Catalyst Projects, which are delivered through four Strategic Pillars and three Elevation Projects. These projects include a total of 111 actions, all of which underwent SEA monitoring. The actions were screened and assessed for their potential to result in a significant environmental effect. As a result of the screening process, 41 actions were not deemed to require environmental monitoring and 40 actions had not progressed to a level capable of detailed environmental monitoring. The remaining 30 actions were assessed for their potential environmental impact. The assessment found that the Plan has had a neutral effect on most of the SEA indicators. There are several actions, such as actions 7.1 and 9.3 relating to improving visitor infrastructure and facilities at the Tain Trail and Tara resulted in potential positive effects on the environment by providing improved critical infrastructure by means of a public toilets, public parking and other visitor facility enhancements. The assessment also found that there have been broader social, economic, and environmental benefits associated with the implementation of the Plan to date. A number of recommendations are included in this monitoring report which should be considered as part of the next monitoring programme.

1. INTRODUCTION

The *Ancient Destination Experience Development Plan* (ADEDP) (hereafter referred to as “The Plan”) was published in May 2021 by Fáilte Ireland. The Plan was informed by the Strategic Environmental Assessment¹ (SEA) process throughout its development. The SEA Directive 2001/42EC requires under Article 10 that, “the significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan are monitored in order, inter alia, to identify at an early-stage unforeseen adverse effects, and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action”.

This report is the first SEA Monitoring Report for the Plan, undertaken at an appropriate point in the Plan’s implementation, approximately four years into the five-year plan.

This SEA monitoring report has been prepared having regard to the relevant legislation namely the SEA Directive - Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of Ministers, of 27th June 2001, on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, and the relevant national statutory instrument for tourism plans which is transposed by 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).

1.1 Fáilte Ireland

As the National Tourism Development Authority, Fáilte Ireland’s role is to support the long-term sustainable growth in the economic, social, cultural, and environmental contribution of tourism in Ireland. Fáilte Ireland works in partnership with Government, State agencies, local authorities, representative groups, and industry to develop tourism across Ireland by creating visitor and destination development plans and networks and investing in infrastructure, activities, visitor attractions and festivals. Fáilte Ireland also provides consumer and buyer insights, mentoring, business support, training programmes, and buyer platforms to help tourism businesses innovate and grow.

In addition, Fáilte Ireland supports business tourism, managing the bidding for and securing of larger conferences, meetings, and events to be hosted in Ireland. Fáilte Ireland are also responsible for domestic holiday marketing across four regional experience brands: Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland’s Ancient East, Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands, and Dublin.

Fáilte Ireland provides funding for sustainable tourism projects that emerge as part of specific, competitive, themed, and time-bound grant schemes or as part of wider strategic partnerships. These include projects relating to land use, infrastructural development, and land use activities and attractions. Any reference made to such projects included in the Plan does not guarantee funding. While funding is provided to certain projects, Fáilte Ireland is not the developer.

¹ Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt it.

- Develop a sustainable basis for commercial development centred on creating strong signature, supporting and ancillary experiences that are commoditised through the creation of saleable experiences that excite consumers and buyers alike.
- Create the conditions to encourage international visitors to immerse themselves actively in the locale, interact with local people engaging the senses by immersing themselves in the destination.
- Strengthen the value of tourism to the local community by providing employment opportunities.

The development framework of the Plan features three layers of activity:

1. Achieving the 'Big Ideas' through Destination Catalyst Projects (Transformational),
2. Strategic Development Pillars - Create the conditions for Experience Development (Developing New Experiences), and
3. Elevation Projects - Destination Enablers (Developing the Core).

The 'Big Ideas' identifies two product development themes: *Ancient* Routes and *Ancient* Senses. The 'Big Ideas' will be delivered through destination catalyst projects, integrating existing products with a new development focus. The Plan identifies four 'Strategic Development Pillars' for growing the local tourism industry through existing assets. The 'Elevation Projects' represent strategic enabling projects designed to focus on industry capacity development, industry collaboration, and visitor experience development through key Ancient assets.

Section 5.5 of the Plan sets out the Implementation Plan and outlines the projects and actions identified to deliver the Plan over the five-year period. It identifies the lead organisation and partners as well as the associated timeframe for delivery. The workstreams are categorised by the four Strategic Pillars: Pillar 1 – Unlock the Heritage Assets, Pillar 2 – Reveal the Natural Assets, Pillar 3 – Introduce the *Ancient* Legends, and Pillar 4 – Develop the Industry Base.

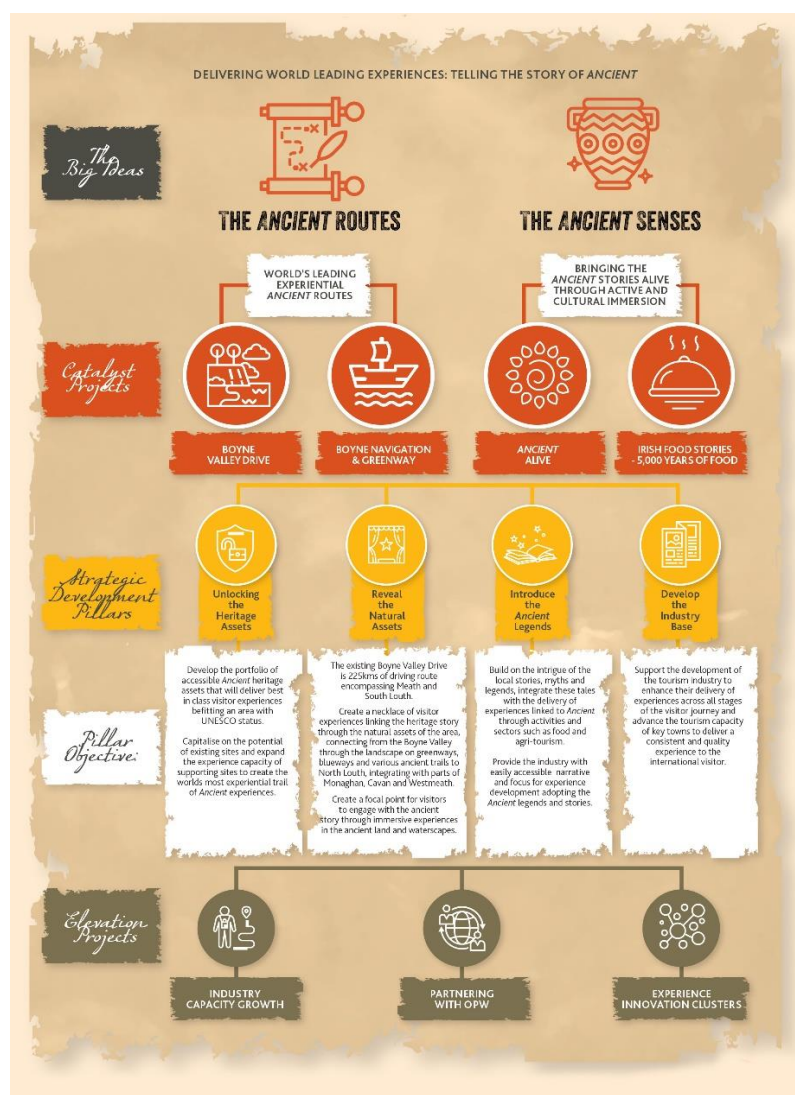


Figure 2.2 Delivering the Ancient Destination Experience Development Plan (Source: Fáilte Ireland, 2021)

The story of *Ancient* contains a depth of Ireland's Ancient East story supported by a diversity of historical venues for event and experience innovation. The Plan states that “the portfolio of built and natural assets provides the context to develop a more coherent approach to develop the Ancient visitor proposition and lead the way in telling the Ancient story through compelling visitor experiences. The area has the capacity for significant growth through season extension and visitor dispersion across the Ancient geography.”

2.1 Integrating Environmental Protection and Management into the Plan

The implementation of the Plan is required to be consistent with and conform with the higher-level plans, including the National Planning Framework (NPF), Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027, Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, and relevant Local Area Plans (LAPs), which include provisions relating to sustainable development, environmental protection, and environmental management that have been integrated into these documents. In order to be realised, projects and actions included in the Plan (in a similar way to other projects from any other sector) will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment (AA), Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment (SSFRA) and other consenting / licencing requirements as appropriate that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework, of which the Plan is not part of and does not contribute towards.

The legislation, policies, plans, and programmes include:

- Requirements for lower-tier environmental assessment, including EIA and AA, SSFRA;
- The Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 and the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, including the SEA environmental monitoring and provisions relating to sustainable development, environmental protection, and environmental management; and
- The national annual Climate Action Plan, the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (2018 and any subsequent versions) etc.

The SEA team worked with the Plan preparation team at Fáilte Ireland in order to integrate requirements for environmental protection and management during the Plan preparation stage. The SEA Statement, dated September 2020, details the final SEA Environmental Monitoring Programme which is also included in Appendix 1 of the Plan. The selected indicators, targets and monitoring sources identified as part of the SEA Statement stage are the starting point for this monitoring report.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Monitoring can help to evaluate whether the SEA is fulfilling its core objective of providing for a high level of protection of the environment and the promotion of sustainable development (Article 1 of the SEA Directive).

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) *Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment Statements and Monitoring* (EPA, 2023a) identify a number of overarching aims with regard to the SEA monitoring process:

- Reveal the “real” effects of implementing the Plan (i.e., the Plan’s environmental performance). This would be through comparing the environmental assessment results with the environmental effects that occur. In turn, this will help improve or refine the SEA assessment methods.
- Fill data gaps, reducing uncertainties in the assessment.
- Measure targets and indicators over time to identify long-term changes and trends in the environment, building knowledge on how the trends will affect or be affected by the Plan and help identify the need for additional mitigation measures or remedial action where issues are identified.
- Identifying unforeseen effects that may not have been identified during the assessment.
- Gather information through monitoring to provide up-to-date baseline environmental data readily available, thus informing the review and preparation of subsequent iterations of the Plan.

3.1.1 Guidance

Key relevant guidance documents include, but are not limited to, the following:

- *Good practice guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Tourism Sector*, EPA (2023b);
- *Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment Statements and Monitoring*, EPA (2023a);
- *Good practice guidance on Cumulative Effects Assessment in SEA*, EPA (2020);
- *Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) And Climate Change: Guidance for Practitioners*, EPA (2013);
- *Grid Implementation Plan 2017-2022 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) SEA-Related Monitoring Report Final Monitoring Report December 2022*, EirGrid (2022);
- *Strategic Environmental Assessment: Guidelines for Regional Assemblies and Planning Authorities*, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (2022).

3.2 Assessment Methodology

This section details the methodology used to monitor the likely significant effects on the environment from the implementation of the Plan. Likely significant effects on the environment are considered in accordance with the ‘*Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports*’ referred to hereafter as ‘EPA EIAR Guidelines’ published by the EPA in 2022 (EPA, 2022a). Determining the likely significant effects on the environment include considerations such as, the location and sensitivities of environment; and the nature and characteristics of the project that will impact environmental factors. The potential magnitude of the effect, which considers duration and spatial extent of the impact on the environment and whether the effect(s) is direct, indirect, residual or cumulative informs the significance of the effect. Effects can be described as positive, negative or neutral effect and can be temporary, short-term, medium-term, long-term, permanent or reversible effects.

The methodology for this monitoring report includes a review and update of the baseline, relevant to the SEA indicators and targets², is presented under each environmental factor relevant to the monitoring period i.e. 2021 to 2024.

Given the geographically defined nature of Fáilte Ireland projects, a review of project-specific effects was a key pillar of the assessment approach informing the likely significant environmental effects. Firstly, an update on the progress related to each 'Project' and their 'Actions' in the Plan is provided, which was informed by Fáilte Ireland and/or the partners responsible for implementing the Action. The Projects were subsequently put into a matrix and based on the Action description and relevant update, it is screened for the potential to result in significant environmental effects.

The screening process for likely significant effects follows the considerations detailed in the *EPA EIAR Guidelines*. If the screening identified potential for significant environmental effects the Project was brought forward for detailed monitoring. The staged monitoring process is described in the sections below and illustrated in Figure 3.1.

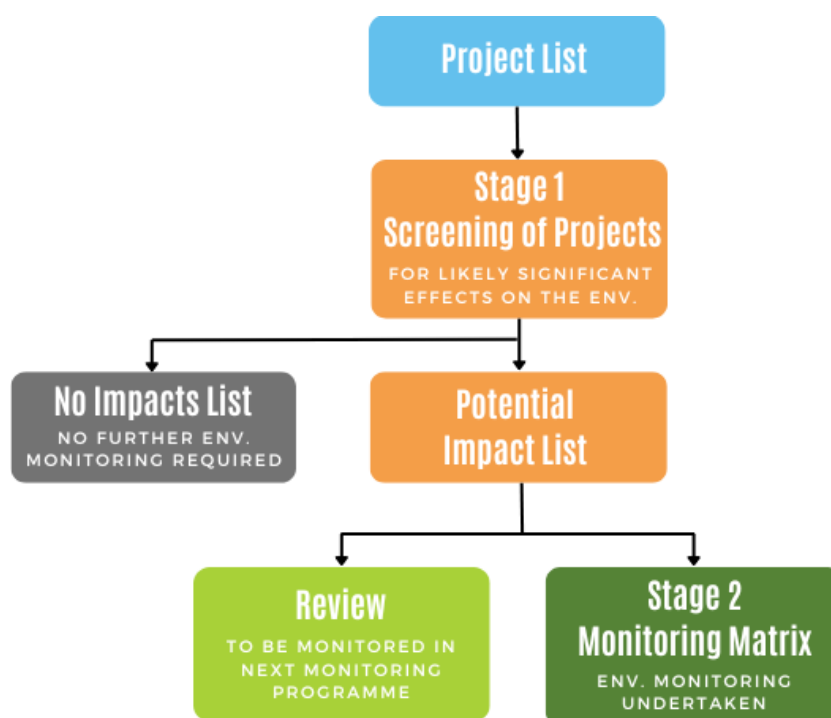


Figure 3.1 Screening the Projects under the Plan for likely significant environmental effects

Stage 1 – Screening: Screening is used to determine if the Actions are likely to have a significant effect on the environmental indicators. This stage is a high-level environmental screening process which includes considerations such as whether the nature and/or scope of the Action will result in physical works and therefore, likely to have an impact on the environment. If there is no potential for significant environmental effects identified (for example, this could include Actions relating to development of industry training programmes, creating working groups, etc.), these projects are identified as not requiring environmental monitoring and are screened out. When screened out, it is intended that these Actions would not require future environmental monitoring, however, this should be reviewed as part of the next monitoring programme.

For the Actions that are identified as having the potential for environmental effects, they are screened in and included in the 'Potential Impact List' and brought forward for environmental monitoring.

² The SEA targets and indicators from the SEA Statement are replicated in Appendix A of this report.

The '**Potential Impact List**' is further refined for assessment based on the progress associated with the Action. The Actions are then divided into a '**Review**' list and a '**Monitoring**' list. The Review list relates to those Actions that cannot be taken any further in this monitoring programme due to insufficient information or limited and/or no progress. These Actions are identified in the column '**Review**' and are recommended to be reviewed as part of subsequent monitoring programme. The '**Monitoring**' list are the Actions that have progressed and can be subjected to detailed environmental monitoring under the SEA environmental indicators.

Stage 2 - Monitoring results: The Actions brought forward for detailed monitoring are placed into a separate Monitoring Matrix (Refer to Section 5 of this report). Any supplementary updates after the initial screening stage are included at this stage. The Actions are assessed across all environmental indicators. The same acronyms as those presented in the SEA Statement are used, for example, 'B1' signifies Biodiversity related indicators, 'S1' signifies the Soil related indicator, etc. (refer to **Appendix A** in this Report for full details).

The Action is assessed against the specific indicators with an environmental assessment rating assigned, reflecting if the Action has had a Positive (✓) Negative (X), Neutral (0), and / or Unknown (?) effect on the indicator being assessed. As previously stated, the criteria for the assessment of effects are based on the *EPA EIAR Guidelines (EPA, 2022a)* identified in Table 3.4 of the Guidelines. A commentary/narrative is included to provide a more detailed rationale for the assessment and whether there is a positive, negative, neutral or unknown effect.

Should the occurrence of persistent or significant adverse environmental effects which are directly attributable to the Plan be identified, this would necessitate consideration of the effects in the context of the Plan and a possible review of part(s) of the Plan, including the monitoring programme. Remedial measures are included if required and will form part of the next monitoring programme.

3.2.1 Data sources

Publicly available sources of data were used to inform the baseline data for each environmental factor. Relevant information includes, but is not limited to:

- SEA Environmental Report for the Ancient Destination Experience Development Plan;
- SEA Statement Ancient Destination Experience Development Plan;
- *Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027, Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027* and their supporting environmental assessments; and
- Fáilte Ireland and the Plan Implementation Group feedback.
- EPA mapping and GIS data sources and other sources referenced across the report.

3.2.2 Data gaps / Limitations

A source of data for monitoring identified in the SEA Monitoring Programme is the land use plans of relevant local authorities. SEA monitoring programmes for land use plans namely the Louth and Meath County Development Plans and LAPs subject to SEA in the Plan area have not been prepared at the time of writing. However, the County Development Plans listed in Section 3.2.1 above and their SEAs were consulted as part of this process. There were no significant data gaps associated with completing the monitoring report.

3.2.3 Consultation inputs into the SEA monitoring

Consultation with Fáilte Ireland and the Plan Implementation Group has been a key source of information particularly relating to the individual Actions and implementation that is included in this report.

4. BASELINE ENVIRONMENTAL UPDATE AND MONITORING RESULTS

This section provides a baseline update following on from the *SEA Environmental Report* (CAAS, 2020), which is relevant to the indicators and targets under each environmental factor over the monitoring period. A review of the baseline trends helps inform the monitoring assessment across each of the targets and indicators. The baseline updates and the monitoring results are informed by the relevant sources of data identified in the SEA Environmental Monitoring Programme (Appendix A) and any other sources that are identified as being relevant.

Given the area to which the Plan relates, as seen in Figure 2.1, the baseline predominantly covers the two counties of Louth and Meath.

4.1 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna

4.1.1 Policy and Legislation

Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (2023 – 2030) (NPWS, 2023), in accordance with the Convention on Biological Diversity, is a framework for the conservation and protection of Ireland's biodiversity, with an overall objective to secure the conservation, including, where possible, the enhancement and sustainable use, of biological diversity in Ireland and to contribute to collective efforts for conservation of biodiversity globally.

Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) contains five overall Objectives:

1. Adopt a Whole-of-Government, Whole-of-Society Approach to Biodiversity.
2. Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs.
3. Secure Nature's Contribution to People.
4. Enhance the Evidence Base for Action on Biodiversity.
5. Strengthen Ireland's Contribution to International Biodiversity Initiatives

The Nature Restoration Law was adopted in 2024 and legally binds EU Member States to restore at least 20% of the EU's land and sea areas by 2030, and all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050. The regulation contains the following specific targets (EC, 2024):

- **Targets Based on Existing Legislation (for Wetlands, Forests, Grasslands, River and Lakes, Heath & Scrub, Rocky Habitats and Dunes)** - improving and re-establishing biodiverse habitats on a large scale, and bringing back species populations by improving and enlarging their habitats.
- **Pollinating Insects** – reversing the decline of pollinator populations by 2030, and achieving an increasing trend for pollinator populations, with a methodology for regular monitoring of pollinators.
- **Forest Ecosystems** – achieving an increasing trend for standing and lying deadwood, uneven aged forests, forest connectivity, abundance of common forest birds and stock of organic carbon.
- **Urban Ecosystems** – no net loss of green urban space and tree cover by 2030, and a steady increase in their total area from 2030.
- **Agricultural Ecosystems** – increasing grassland butterflies and farmland birds, the stock of organic carbon in cropland mineral soils, and the share of agricultural land with high-diversity landscape features; restoring drained peatlands under agricultural use.
- **Marine Ecosystems** – restoring marine habitats such as seagrass beds or sediment bottoms that deliver significant benefits, including for climate change mitigation, and restoring the habitats of iconic marine species such as dolphins and porpoises, sharks and seabirds.
- **River Connectivity** – identifying and removing barriers that prevent the connectivity of surface waters, so that at least 25 000 km of rivers are restored to a free-flowing state by 2030.

4.1.2 Baseline update

Table 4.1 Status and trends of habitats protected under the Habitats Directive according to Article 17 reporting (NPWS, 2019).

| Status | | | | Trend | | | |
|------------|------------|-----|---------|--------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| Favourable | Inadequate | Bad | Unknown | Stable | Improving | Declining | Unknown |
| 15% | 46% | 39% | 0% | 52.5% | 2% | 45.5% | 0% |

Table 4.2 Status and trends of species protected under the Habitats Directive according to Article 17 reporting (NPWS, 2019).

| Status | | | | Trend | | | |
|------------|------------|-----|---------|--------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| Favourable | Inadequate | Bad | Unknown | Stable | Improving | Declining | Unknown |
| 57% | 15% | 15% | 13% | 55% | 17% | 15% | 13% |

According to the EPA (EPAb, 2020), the main pressures and threats on Ireland's protected habitats and species include the following:

- Agriculture
- Extraction of resources and forestry
- Urbanisation
- Recreation
- Invasive species
- Climate change

Recreation is recognised as one of the main pressures and threats to protected habitats and species. Other sectors may also be influenced indirectly by tourism and while agriculture, the extraction of resources, and forestry do not directly relate to tourism, recreation does, and developments and travel linked with tourism can result in further urbanisation, the spread of invasive species, and contribute to climate change.

In accordance with Article 12 of Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), Member States are also obliged to report on the status and trends of bird populations protected under the Birds Directive. The following conclusions have been drawn from the most recent Article 12 reporting which was published in 2018 and were reported on in the *Ireland's Environment – An Integrated Assessment 2020* (EPA, 2020b).

Data reported by the European Environment Agency (EEA) shows that approximately 20% of Ireland's breeding bird species are in long-term decline, and approximately 30% of breeding species populations are stable or have increased over the long term (EEA, 2020a). A number of breeding farmland songbirds are under increasing pressures from the modernisation and intensification of agricultural practices, and breeding populations of waders have declined by 93% over the long term (EPA, 2020b).

Most wintering species that were assessed are waterbirds and are seasonal visitors in Ireland. Ireland is internationally important for hundreds of thousands of visiting waterbirds every year. The populations of more than half of these species are declining in the short term. This includes waders and duck species which have seen a decline of 91% in the short term. Many winter waterbird species are showing a northeasterly shift in their range across Europe which may be due to climate change. Additionally, decades of habitat degradation and land use change have resulted in large declines in ground nesting bird populations (EPA, 2020b). Short and long-term trends in breeding and wintering bird species are outlined in Table 4.3 and Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.3 Short and long-term breeding population trends of bird species protected under the Bird's Directive (EEA, 2020a)

| Short-term Trend | | | | |
|------------------|--------|------------|-----------|---------|
| Increasing | Stable | Decreasing | Uncertain | Unknown |
| 43% | 25% | 21% | 4% | 8% |
| Long-term Trend | | | | |
| Increasing | Stable | Decreasing | Uncertain | Unknown |
| 22% | 7% | 19% | 1% | 51% |

Table 4.4 Short and long-term wintering population trends of bird species protected under the Bird's Directive (EEA, 2020b)

| Short-term Trend | | | | Long-term Trend | | | |
|------------------|--------|------------|---------|-----------------|--------|------------|---------|
| Increasing | Stable | Decreasing | Unknown | Increasing | Stable | Decreasing | Unknown |
| 10% | 3% | 53% | 34% | 21% | 0% | 23% | 56% |

4.1.3 Monitoring Results

Results from sources of data consulted:

- Article 17 and 12 reports outline changes in the conservation status of habitats and species listed under the Habitats Directive and bird species listed under the Birds Directive, respectively. Additionally, they discuss the pressures and threats that have led to declines in populations and conservation status of habitats and species where relevant which can be linked back and are assessed under the Actions arising from the Plan.
- Article 17 reports have not been updated since the Plan was prepared. Article 17 reports are produced every six years, and the most recent reports were produced in 2019. The next Article 17 reports were due to be published in 2024.
- Article 12 reports have not been updated since the Plan was prepared. Article 12 reports are supposed to be produced every three years; however, the most recent Article 12 reports were published in 2018.
- The CORINE mapping has not been updated since the development of the Plan. CORINE mapping is updated every five years. It was last updated in 2018, therefore, there is nothing to report in respect of this data source.
- Since the preparation of the Plan, Carlingford has been monitored under the Fáilte Ireland National Monitoring Programme. Monitoring for the site was undertaken in 2021 and 2022, with site features and amenities, visitor behaviour and impacts, and ecological assessment among the items reported on. No other sites within the Ancient East were included.

Monitoring Indicator (B1): Conservation status of habitats and species as assessed under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive.

Result B1: The maintenance of favourable conservation status for all habitats and species protected under National and International legislation affected by the implementation of the Plan to date is unknown as there are no results available since the preparation of the Plan. Therefore, the plan has had an unknown effect on this indicator.

Monitoring Indicator (B2): Percentage loss of functional connectivity without remediation resulting from Plan.

Result B2: No significant ecological networks or parts thereof which provide functional connectivity have been lost resulting from the Plan, therefore, the implementation of the plan has had a neutral to unknown effect on this indicator.

Monitoring Indicator (B3i): Number of significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites resulting from the Plan.

Result B3i: Significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites resulting from the Plan have not been recorded and / or have been avoided, therefore, the implementation of the plan has had a neutral to unknown effect on this indicator.

Monitoring Indicator (B3ii): Number of significant impacts on the protection of listed species.

Result B3ii: No significant impacts on the protection of listed species resulting from the implementation of the Plan, therefore, the implementation of the plan has had a neutral to unknown effect on this indicator.

Table 4.3 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna Monitoring Results

| Indicator | Target | Monitoring Status |
|--|--|---|
| B1: Conservation status of habitats and species as assessed under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive | B1: Maintenance of favourable conservation status for all habitats and species protected under National and International legislation to be unaffected by implementation of the Plan ³ | Unknown effect / No results to report. |
| B2: Percentage loss of functional connectivity without remediation resulting from Plan | B2: No significant ecological networks or parts thereof which provide functional connectivity to be lost without remediation resulting from the Plan | Unknown effect / No results to report. |
| B3i: Number of significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites resulting from the Plan | B3i: Avoid significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites resulting from the Plan | Unknown effect / No results to report. |
| B3ii: Number of significant impacts on the protection of listed species | B3ii: No significant impacts on the protection of listed species resulting from the Plan | Unknown effect / No results to report. |

4.2 Population and Human Health

4.2.1 Baseline update

As shown in Figure 2.1 above, the Plan area covers predominantly the counties of Louth and Meath.

The population of County Louth increased from 128,884 in 2016 to 139,703 in 2022 representing an 8% increase (CSO, 2022). The increase indicates that County Louth is in line with the population projections for County Louth in the *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern & Midland Region* (RSES) which ranged from 8% to 12% increase from 2016 to 2026. The population of County Meath increased from 195,044 in 2016 to 220,826 in 2022 representing a 13% increase (CSO, 2022). Meath is also in line with the population projections for Meath from the RSES which ranged from 11% to 13% increase from 2016 to 2026.

³ Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be: (a) No alternative solution available; (b) Imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the programme to proceed; and (c) Adequate compensatory measures in place.

For the purpose of reporting on the population statistics of the Plan Area, and to facilitate subsequent monitoring, data from the two counties of Louth and Meath are consulted and are illustrated in Figure 4.1 below.



Figure 4.1 Plan area population (Counties Meath and Louth) Census 2022 (Source: CSO, 2022)

The total population of County Louth increased from 128,884 in 2016 to 139,703 in 2022, representing a 8.4% increase and the population of County Meath increased from 195,044 to 220,826 within the same period, representing a 13.2% increase. The total population of County Louth and County Meath, which covers the area of the Plan, increased from 323,928 in 2016 to 360,529 in 2022, representing a 11.3% increase (Census, 2022). The main settlements/towns in the Plan area are Carlingford, Dundalk, Drogheda, Edenderry, Kells, Navan, Slane, and Trim. Between the last Census periods, all the main settlements experienced in the plan area experienced population increases, ranging from 4% to 12%. The population change from 2016 to 2022 Census period are detailed in Table 4.6 below.

Table 4.4 Population of the main settlements/towns in the Plan area (CSO, 2022)

| Settlement/Town | 2016 | 2022 | % change |
|-----------------|--------|--------|----------|
| Carlingford | 1,445 | 1,528 | +5.7% |
| Dundalk | 39,004 | 43,112 | +10.5% |
| Drogheda | 40,956 | 44,135 | +7.8% |
| Edenderry | 7,359 | 7,888 | +7.2% |
| Kells | 6,135 | 6,608 | +7.7% |
| Navan | 30,173 | 33,886 | +12.3% |
| Slane* | 1,369 | - | - |
| Trim | 9,194 | 9,563 | +4.0% |

*In the 2022 Census, Slane is no longer under the category of main settlements/towns.

According to Census 2022, the average age of Louth's population is 38.2 years an increase when compared with Census 2016 which was 36.4 years. Meath's average age of the population is 36.9 years, a minor increase when compared with Census 2016 which was 35.2 years. These figures are comparable to the national situation with the average age of the population is 38.8 years, up from 37.4 years compared with Census 2016. National population projections between 2016 and 2031 anticipate large increases in the 15–24 year age group by 26%, 45–64 year age group by 14% and 65+ year age group by 56% (CSO, 2022). This projected changing age profile, particularly for the over 65 age cohort, will impact both how tourism and support services are delivered locally, and the offering provided to tourists (domestic and foreign) visiting the region in the future.

From the report *Regional tourism performance in 2016* report (Fáilte Ireland, 2018), County Louth had a total of approximately 176,000 tourists visiting and County Meath had a total of approximately 155,000 tourists visiting in 2016. Fáilte Ireland's *Tourism Facts 2019: Ireland's Ancient East* (2019) research states that the Ancient East area was visited by approximately 2.4 million international tourists and 4 million domestic tourists in 2019, which decreased in 2023 for international tourists to 1.6 million but increased for domestic tourists to 4.7 million (Fáilte Ireland, 2023b). *Ireland's Ancient East Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027* states that there were 650,000 more visitors visiting the Ancient East region in 2019 compared to 2017.

Monitoring of Carlingford under Fáilte Ireland's National Tourism Monitoring Program found that from 2021 to 2022, there was a reduction of visitors at the survey site located at the waterfront between Carlingford Harbour and Carlingford pier (during the 8-hour survey period) by 38%, with dwell time reducing by 2% (CAAS, 2023). Additionally, there was a decrease in percentage of swimming-related activities and stationary activities such as picnicking (CAAS, 2023).

Economically, tourism in the Ancient East was worth €1.7bn to the regional economy by 2019, supporting approximately 55,200 jobs. 55% of this revenue was generated by international visitors and the remaining 45% from Ireland visitors (Fáilte Ireland, 2023).

Health

In 2022, 87% of people in Meath self-reported that their health was good or very good compared with 90% in 2016. In Louth, 82% of people self-reported that their health was good or very good compared with 86% in 2016 (CSO, 2022). The majority (83%) of the population of Ireland reported their health as either 'Good' or 'Very Good' in 2022, a decrease from 87% in 2016 (CSO, 2022). The development of green infrastructure including walking and cycling trails, and blue infrastructure development along the marine and coastal environments are promoted in the Plan and support the ongoing health and well-being of the population both resident and visiting. The tourism industry also supports direct and indirect employment opportunities (year-round or seasonal) providing income to populations which is also one of the key determinants of health.

4.2.2 Monitoring Results

Monitoring Indicator (PHH1) – PHH1: Occurrence (any) of a spatially concentrated deterioration in human health arising from environmental factors resulting from the Plan, as identified by the Health Service Executive and Environmental Protection Agency.

Sources of Data consulted:

- Publicly available data from the HSE and EPA is reported throughout this report. There are no projects that required direct consultation with the HSE.
- Air Quality is addressed in the Air and Climatic Factors Section 4.5.1 below.
- Bathing water quality is addressed in the Water Section 4.4.1 below.
- Population and human health depend on wastewater, water supply and essential services which is addressed in Section 4.6 Material Assets of this report.

Result PHH1: There have been no reported spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of the implementation of the Plan, therefore, the implementation of the Plan has had a neutral effect on this indicator.

Whilst not relevant to the specific monitoring indicator above, the Actions under the Plan are likely to have neutral to positive effects on population and human health outcomes both for locals and tourists alike. For example, when tourists spend money, it can support local populations income which is regularly linked with improving access to goods, services and resulting in positive, social, economic and health outcomes. Similarly, specific Actions such as those associated with supporting and encouraging increasing activity level and social connectedness can also have influence positive health outcomes. For example, Actions related to the greenways and blueways development support and facilitate increasing physical activity levels across the population, attracting visitors, while also potentially reducing emissions from transport affecting the environment and populations.

Table 4.5 Population and Human Health SEA Monitoring Result

| Indicator | Target | Monitoring Status |
|---|--|----------------------------|
| PHH1: Occurrence (any) of a spatially concentrated deterioration in human health arising from environmental factors resulting from the Plan, as identified by the Health Service Executive and Environmental Protection Agency | PHH1: No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result the Plan | Neutral / Positive effect. |

4.3 Soil

4.3.1 Baseline update

There are no specific updates relating to soil resources since the preparation of the SEA Environmental Report. While soil quality in Ireland is regarded as generally good, protection against land use change which can result in soil sealing is the main soil quality pressure (CORINE land cover survey).

There is still no legislation which is specific to the protection of soil resources 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. Actions include tabling a dedicated legislative proposal to enable the objectives of the EU soil strategy and achieve good soil health by 2050. In 2023, the European Commission (EC) proposed a Directive on Soil Monitoring and Resilience.

In March 2023, National Mapping Division of Tailte Éireann, formerly Ordnance Survey of Ireland, developed a high- resolution land cover map in partnership with the EPA. The map is a more detailed land cover map (than the Corine). With greatly enhanced detail, the map is a new benchmark in land evidence for Ireland. It will facilitate significantly improved monitoring and assessment of impacts and benefits for water, climate, air, noise and biodiversity, as well delivering support for better decision making on land management. The Actions reviewed as part of this monitoring programme did not require land cover map to be consulted, however, this resource could be utilised as part of the review and is included as part of the recommendations section of this report.

The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) has identified generally low levels of landslide susceptibility across the Plan area and various inland areas of the Cooley peninsula are of moderately high and high levels of landslide susceptibility (see Figure 4.2 below). The data on landslide events and susceptibility has not been updated since the CAAS (2020) SEA Environmental Report, which was during the monitoring period of 2007-2016. GSI reports that there have been 5 recorded landslide events across the Plan area. These types of events can be dangerous and can impact natural and built heritage resources which could affect the tourism sector.

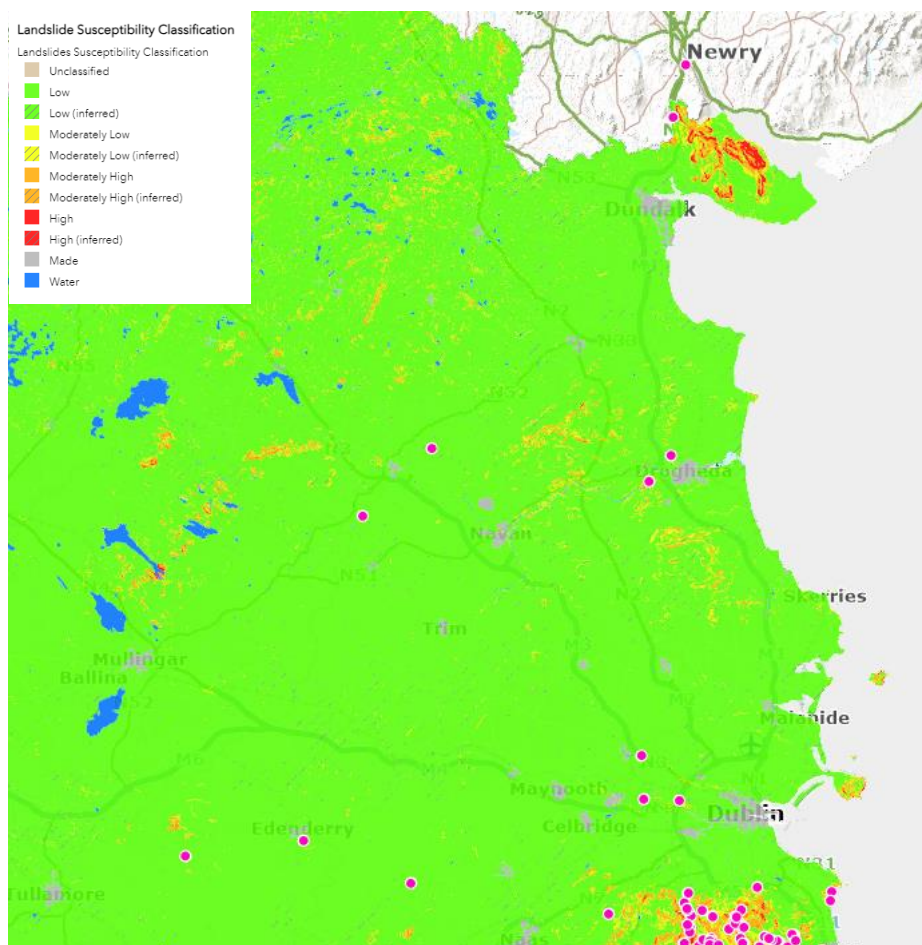


Figure 4.2 Landslide events and susceptibility (Source: GSI, 2022)

4.3.2 Monitoring Results

Monitoring Indicator S1: Artificial surfaces land cover extent.

Result S1: The identified target relates to National land cover which is reported as part of the CORINE Survey. The Survey was last undertaken in 2018, therefore, there is nothing new to report in respect of this data source.

Table 4.6 Soil Monitoring Results

| Indicator | Target | Monitoring Status |
|---|---|--|
| S1: Artificial surfaces land cover extent | S1: Contribute towards the target of the National Planning Framework's SEA (2018) to "Maintain built surface cover nationally to below the EU average of 4%." | Neutral effect / No results to report. |

4.4 Water

4.4.1 Baseline update

The baseline trends serve as a reference point for evaluating any deviations or changes in the water quality and ecosystem dynamics resulting from the Plan, emphasising the significance of preserving the integrity of the water resources for sustainable economic and environmental well-being. The Government has produced a roadmap to better water quality, known as the River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) which is now on its third cycle, RBMP 2022-2027. The RBMP is now based on a single national river basin district. For the purpose of assessment, reporting, and management of water the RBMP is divided into groundwater, rivers, lakes, estuarine waters and coastal waters that are in turn divided into specific, clearly defined water bodies. The main rivers in the Plan area are the Boyne, Nanny, Dee, Fane, Castletown, Big,

Blackwater, Drumleck and Fane. The relevant surface waters and RBMP catchments are Newry-Fane-Glyde-Dee, Boyne, Nanny-Delvin, Erne, Upper Shannon, Lower Shannon, Liffey and Dublin Bay, Barrow, and Lough Neagh and Lower Bann. The draft RBMP lists the current status of waters and details the measures required to bring those failing back to 'good' status and maintain the high status of the pristine sites. The RBMP aims to achieve 'good' ecological status and prevent deterioration in water quality in all waters.

Several areas across the area to which the Plan relates are at risk from coastal and fluvial flooding with historical flooding reported in the settlements of Drogheda, Edenderry, Kells, Dundalk, Carrickmacross, Navan, Slane and Trim. Additional baseline updates are provided in the sections below relevant to the indicators.

Water quality in Ireland 2016-2021 (EPA, 2022b) reports that surface waters and groundwaters are under pressure nationally from human activities. "The main pressure damaging water quality is the presence of too many nutrients coming mainly from agriculture and waste water discharges and the damage that various activities such as land drainage and urban development do to the physical condition of our water habitats (2022b)." The EPA reports that, agriculture is the most significant pressure causing water quality impacts with the key issues being excess nutrients being released into water bodies from point sources such as farmyards, or from diffuse sources such as spreading fertilisers and manures. Other causes include hydromorphology (e.g. changes in physical habitat conditions i.e. caused by channelisation, dredging and land drainage, etc), forestry and discharges from urban waste water treatment plants.

4.4.2 Monitoring Results

Monitoring Indicator W1i: Classification of Overall Status (comprised of ecological and chemical status) under the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (SI No. 272 of 2009).

Surface and Ground Water Status

Table 4.9 below displays the Water Framework Directive (WFD) surface water status comparing data from 2010-2015 (pre-plan as referenced in the SEA ER) with 2016-2021 (post implementation of the plan). The River Boyne catchment includes the area drained by the River Boyne and by all streams entering tidal water between the Haven and Mornington Point. The *Boyne Catchment Report* (EPA, 2024) reports that there were 29% of surface waterbodies within the River Boyne catchment which were at good or high ecological status in the 2016-2021 monitoring period. A total of 72 (41.9%) waterbodies (surface and groundwater) are currently meeting their environmental objective of good or high ecological status, and good ecological potential for canals (EPA, 2024). The 2016-2021 WFD status of the main channel of the River Boyne was identified as moderate. The WFD 2016-2021 status of transitional waters adjacent to the area to which the Plan relates are generally identified as moderate and coastal waters are generally good. The status of lakes, rivers and their tributaries in the area to which the Plan relates ranges from high and good, to moderate, poor and bad, as well as a number of unassigned rivers and lakes.

There were 90% of groundwater bodies underlying the Plan area which were at good status for the 2016-2021 monitoring period, therefore meeting the objectives of the WFD (EPA, 2024).

Result W1i: From the *Boyne Catchment Report* (EPA, 2024), there has been an increase of surface water bodies with high and good status, with 1% of high status surface water bodies in 2013-2018 to 3% in 2016-2021 and from 24% of good status surface waterbodies in 2013-2018 to 29% in 2016-2021. There were also 50% of surface waterbodies in 2013-2018 with moderate status, which decreased to 36% in 2016-2021. However, the 2013-2018 status of surface waterbodies that were poor was 25%, which increased to 32% in 2016-2021. Therefore, although there has been an increase of surface water bodies with high and good status, there has also been an increase in poor status. Further analysis by the EPA is ongoing to better understand what has caused these water quality declines, but preliminary evidence suggests that significant pressures affecting these waterbodies include mainly nutrient pollution, altered morphology condition (habitat) and organic pollution impacts for surface water and chemical quality diminution for surface water, nutrient pollution and chemical pollution for groundwaters

(EPA, 2022b). The deterioration has not been linked to the implementation of projects in the Plan. Consequently, there is no adverse effect upon the ability of any surface water to achieve 'good status' as a result of the Plan.

Indicator W1ii: Mandatory and Guide values as set by the EU Bathing Water Directive and transposing Bathing Water Quality Regulations (SI No. 79 of 2008).

Bathing water quality is recorded as 'Excellent', by the EPA in Shelling Hill/Templetown, Port, Lurganboy, Clogherhead, Seapoint, and Laytown/Bettystown. At the time of writing, bathing locations at Shelling Hill/Templetown, Port, Lurganboy, Clogherhead, and Bettystown currently hold Blue Flag beaches. Furthermore, at the time of writing, Seapoint, Termonfeckin, Mornington, and Bettystown Beach have been recognised for their environmental excellence with the Green Coast Award (Green Coast Award, 2024).

While water quality is reported as excellent across both water quality monitoring periods, historical restrictions may be reported in the future for some bathing waters due to agricultural diffuse pollution affecting water quality, caused by a) agricultural runoff or b) expected heavy rainfall which risks the deterioration of water quality. These types of events are not associated with the Plan and can generally be managed so that bathers are not adversely affected. While the Plan is not a cause of this, this type of pollution can result in short-term pollution and restrictions which can affect the implementation of the Plan objectives.

Result W1ii: The implementation of the Plan has not resulted in any deterioration of bathing waters as required by the EU Bathing Water Directive; therefore, the implementation of the Plan has had a neutral effect on this indicator.

Monitoring Indicator W2: Interactions with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC resulting from development adhering to the Plan.

The WFD Groundwater status of groundwater bodies within the Plan area, comparing data periods from 2010-2015 with 2016-2021, are identified as being generally 'Good' status, meeting the objectives of the WFD. However, from the 2010-2015 period, there has been one groundwater body that has decreased in status from 'Good' to 'Poor' namely Wilkinstown, located north of Drogheda in the northeast of the Boyle Catchment. The *Water Quality in Ireland 2016-2021* report states that Wilkinstown groundwater body had statistically significant upward trends in nitrate concentration, projected to be higher than the drinking water standard and as a result, was assessed as poor status under the drinking water protected area test.

The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) rates groundwater according to both their productivity and vulnerability to pollution. There has been no change in the aquifer vulnerability and productivity since the Plan was prepared. Thus, aquifer vulnerability and productivity has not been affected by the implementation of the Plan.

Result W2: The compliance with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC is not affected by the implementation of the Plan, therefore, the implementation of the plan has had a neutral effect on this indicator.

Indicator W3: Compliance of relevant lower tier assessments and decision making with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines.

Result W3: There is no evidence of any Action under the Plan completing or requiring a site-specific flood risk assessment, to date. Based on the information available on the Actions, they have complied with the relevant lower-tier assessments and decision-making, including with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines. The implementation of the Plan has had a neutral effect on this indicator.

Table 4.9 Water Monitoring Results

| Indicator | Target | Status |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| W1i: Classification of Overall Status (comprised of ecological and chemical status) under the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (SI No. 272 of 2009) W1ii: Mandatory and Guide values as set by the EU Bathing Water Directive and transposing Bathing Water Quality Regulations (SI No. 79 of 2008) | W1i: No deterioration in the status of any surface water or adverse effect upon the ability of any surface water to achieve 'good status' as a result of the Plan. W1ii: No deterioration in the value of bathing waters or adverse effect upon the ability of any bathing water to achieve Mandatory values and, where possible, Guide values as a result of the Plan | Neutral effect / No results to report |
| W2: Interactions with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC resulting from development adhering to the Plan | W2: Not to affect the ability of groundwaters to comply with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC, subject to exemptions provided for by Article 4 of the WFD | Neutral effect / No results to report |
| W3: Compliance of relevant lower tier assessments and decision making with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines | W3: For lower tier assessments and decision making to comply with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines | Neutral effect / No results to report |

4.5 Air and Climatic Factors

4.5.1 Baseline update

Climate

The baseline update focuses on the air quality and climatic factors within the Plan area, providing a reference point for gauging any changes resulting from the implementation of the Plan. This includes consideration of the current state of Ireland's Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, ambient air quality, and adherence to World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines.

The *Climate Action Plan 2024* (Government of Ireland, 2023) sets out the commitment for Ireland to achieve a 51% reduction in GHG emissions from 2021 to 2030. As a result of the Climate Action and Low Carbon (Amendment) Act 2021 every Local Authority (LA) in the country is required to develop a Local Authority Climate Action Plan (LACAP) that will be in effect for five years. The LACAP will ensure a coordinated local response to climate change and bring together critical stakeholders across local government, communities, and businesses to build a vision for a climate neutral and resilient future.

Louth County Council published their Local Authority Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 (LCC, 2024) which was adopted on 19th February 2024. The baseline emissions study results show that the sector with the highest emissions of 29% was the agricultural sector. The second largest with 21% was the residential sector and thirdly was the industrial sector with 17% of the county's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The next highest sectors were commercial and transport at 17% and 11%, respectively. As the *Draft Louth County Council Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029* states that Agriculture is the largest emitting sector in County Louth, the Department of Agriculture will be targeting a national decarbonisation target of 25% (LCC, 2024).

For Meath County Council, their Local Authority Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 (MCC, 2024) which was adopted on 29th January 2024, states that the main sector responsible for the highest emissions in the county is the industrial sector at 29% of emissions. The agricultural sector follows with 25% and manufacturing and commercial as the third highest emitting sector at 13%. Transport accounts for the next highest sector at 10%. The *Meath County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029* has included a Climate Change Risk Assessment and a Baseline Emissions Inventory for the county and its nine Decarbonising Zones (MCC, 2021).

There are numerous national agri-environmental / climate programmes and advisory services including Sign-Post Farms; Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advisory Programme (ASSAP) and European Innovation Partnerships (EIPs) that are being rolled out across the region to meet the challenges faced by the agriculture sector in cutting their emissions.

Dundalk Blackrock Decarbonising Zone

As part of the *Draft Louth Climate Action Plan 2024-2029*, the Dundalk Blackrock Decarbonising Zone (DZ) has been established. A baseline emissions inventory for the Dundalk Blackrock Decarbonising Zone reported that industry had the highest share of emissions at 44%, with transport second at 24%. As a result, specific actions were developed to facilitate a reduction in sector baseline emissions of the Decarbonising Zone.

The overarching vision of the DZ is, *“The coastal community of Dundalk Blackrock will lead out on climate action in county Louth in through flexible, incremental and community-driven climate action.”* (LCC, 2024).

Figure 4.3 below illustrates the Dundalk Blackrock DZ which falls within the Plan area.

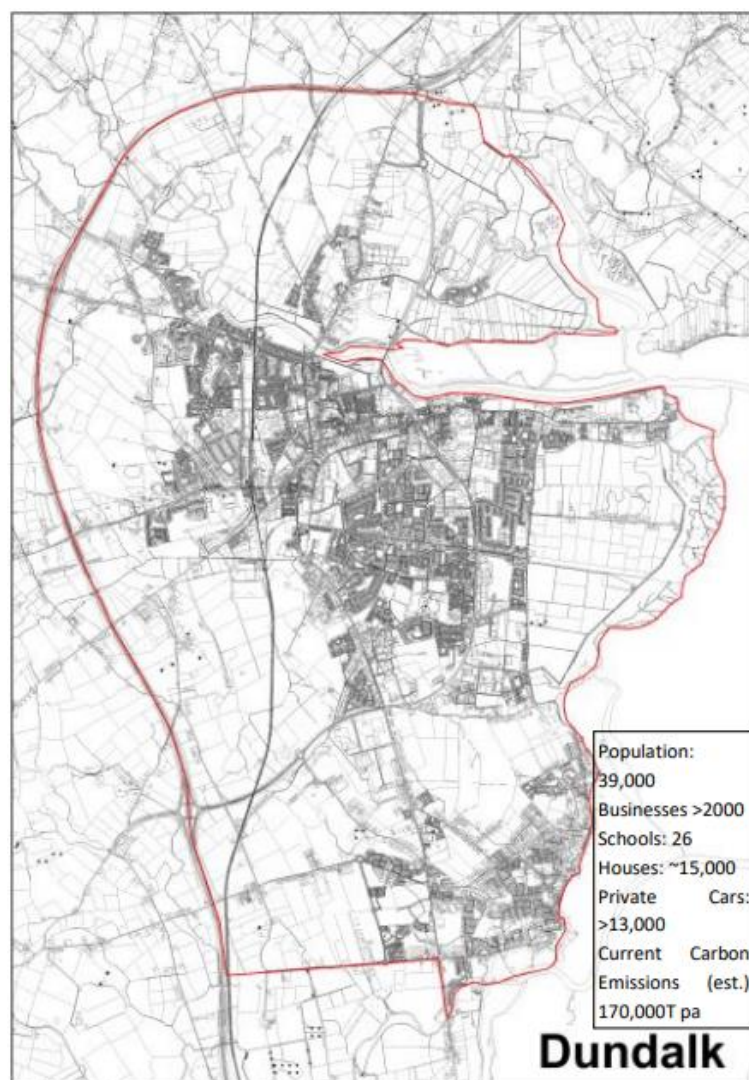


Figure 4.3 Dundalk Blackrock Decarbonising Zone (Source: LCC, 2023)

Meath Decarbonisation Zones

The decarbonisation zones (DZs) in County Meath are identified in the *Meath County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029* (MCC, 2024). The DZs are: Navan, Ashbourne, Trim, Kells, Dunboyne, Laytown/Bettystown, Dunshaughlin, Ratoath and Duleek. These nine areas

represent 50% of Meath's population (based on the 2016 census) and 49% of residential emissions (MCC CAP). The overarching vision for the DZs is, *"Working together to create climate resilient, biodiverse rich, vibrant, and sustainable towns that supports healthy lifestyles and jobs growth."* An objective of all DZs is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030 and reach net zero by 2050.

There are several strategic actions identified in the LACAPs that are mutually supportive of the actions identified in the Plan. These include actions for the built environment and transport sector to reducing carbon emissions through supporting sustainable mobility measures. There are also actions focused on community resilience, adaptation, transition, and supporting the natural environment and green infrastructure development that are all complimentary and supportive to the Plan actions.

The implementation of *Ireland's Ancient East Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023 – 2027* promotes the vision of the LACAPs by promoting sustainable destination development across the region and *"environmental considerations including water quality and amenity, climate change, traffic, biodiversity, built and cultural heritage, landscape, critical infrastructure and communities, all play a vital part in our tourism sector."* (Fáilte Ireland, 2023).

Air quality

EPA maintain current ambient air monitoring stations across Ireland. Air quality at these sites is assessed in line with requirements as defined by S.I. 180 of 2011 and form part of the National Ambient Air Quality Programme. The majority of the plan area is located in Rural (Zone D) and certain areas in Other Cities and Large Towns (Zone C) with an air quality index of '1-Good' (updated on January 2025, EPA maps). The monitoring stations within the plan area include Dundalk, Drogheda and Navan, which are all indicating air quality as 'Good'. Since the implementation of the Plan, air quality measurements indicate there are no exceedances of selected pollutants to EU legal limit value at any of the ambient air quality network monitoring sites in Ireland (EPA, 2023f).

4.5.2 Monitoring Result

Monitoring Indicator AC1: Demonstration of compliance with provisions relating to climate adaptation and mitigation have been integrated into the Plan.

Result AC1: All Actions that have and will be progressed through planning system will be required to continue to demonstrate compliance with the relevant air quality and climate legislation / provisions including any required emissions reductions. To date, there have been no specific Actions under the Plan that have progressed relating to climate adaptation and mitigation, therefore, there are no direct results to report relating to the Plan. However, a variety of the Plan Actions are likely to have positive indirect effects on air and climatic factors. A number of Actions include the promotion of sustainable modes of transport for example, walking, cycling and water-based travel through the development of Greenways and Blueways, maintenance / improvement of trails, or increasing accessibility and links to public transport services. Other Actions are related to understanding and addressing the effects of climate change such as coastal erosion. Once fully implemented, these Actions will support climate adaptation and mitigation measures.

Table 4.10 Air and Climatic Factor SEA Monitoring Results

| Indicator | Target | Monitoring Status |
|--|---|---|
| AC1: Demonstration of compliance with provisions relating to climate adaptation and mitigation have been integrated into the Plan. | C1: To maximise the amount of measures relating to climate adaptation and mitigation being implemented. | Neutral to Positive effects / No results to report. |

4.6 Material Assets

4.6.1 Baseline update

Tourism relies on well-functioning infrastructure including transport infrastructure and utilities (water supply, wastewater, internet connection/broadband). The availability and access to a destination's existing infrastructure and services are necessary to meet the needs of visitors, improve satisfaction during their stay, and for the development of the tourism sector. As the population is projected to increase across the region, it will be important to ensure that tourism does not create pressure on infrastructure in the area including on housing and services, which could occur particularly during seasonal (peak) periods.

The *SEA Environmental Report for the Ancient Destination Development Plan* (CAAS, 2020b) identified the main aspects of the baseline environment relating to material assets to include wastewater, water supply, public assets and infrastructure, and waste management. The baseline is reviewed and updated in this context.

Water Services

The EPA has highlighted environmental issues that Irish Water must address in order to preserve the environment from the harmful effects of wastewater discharges. Two of these environmental priorities are to "Ensure waste water treatment at all large urban areas complies with European Union standards" and "Eliminate discharges of raw sewage" (EPA, 2023c). Previous to the implementation of the Plan, *Urban Waste Water Treatment in 2017* reports that wastewater treatment at 28 of Ireland's 179 large urban areas did not meet relevant standards in 2017 (EPA, 2023d). This has reduced to 10 large urban areas not meeting European Union treatment standards in 2023 (EPA, 2023e), representing an improvement in standards. Furthermore, it is reported that raw sewage is released into the environment from 38 urban areas in 2017 (EPA, 2023d) which decreased to 26 urban areas in 2022 (EPA, 2023e).

The two counties of Louth and Meath have two urban areas listed as priority areas for improvements to prevent wastewater discharges from impacting rivers, lakes, estuaries, and coastal waters in 2013: Dundalk and Dunleer (EPA, 2023e). With these urban areas within the Plan area, there is potential for indirect effects on the environment, and exacerbated by increased tourism numbers during peak periods. The EPA reports that Uisce Éireann must complete overdue assessments of the impacts of wastewater discharges on a number of designated shellfish waters in the Plan area, which are Carlingford Lough and Dundalk Bay (EPA, 2023e). No assessments were done in 2023 which make them long overdue.

Uisce Éireann connected Louth, as one of 13 towns and villages, to treatment plants between the beginning of 2023 and mid-2024 (EPA, 2023e). The Annual Environmental Report (AER) 2023 by Uisce Éireann's Environmental Information System (EIMS) has been prepared for the 12 agglomerations in County Louth in accordance with the requirements of the wastewater discharge licence. The agglomerations are served by wastewater treatment plants (WWTP) with varying Plant Capacities ranging from the 1000 in Tallanstown to 101,600 in Drogheda. All of the Plants are reported as having treated discharge, and majority with a compliant status of its final effluent, except for Drogheda and Ardee which were reported as non-compliant (Uisce Éireann, 2023). For Meath, the AER 2023 has been prepared for 17 agglomerations in accordance with the requirements of the wastewater discharge licence. The Plant capacities for the agglomeration's WWTP vary from the 600 in Drumconrath to 14,600 in Trim. All of the Plants are reported as having treated discharge, and the majority have a compliant status of its final effluent, except for Drumconrath, Kildalkey, Slane, Summerhill and Stamullen, which were reported as non-compliant (Uisce Éireann, 2023). The water collection systems that have been found as non-compliant has decreased from eight in 2018 to seven in 2023.

Private / public water supply schemes supply drinking water throughout the Plan area (CAAS, 2020a). *Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027* (LCC, 2021) states that approximately 6-8% of Louth's water supply comes from groundwater sources and thus, the protection of this natural resource is significant for the Council. In the *Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027* (MCC, 2021), it is estimated that approximately 45 million litres of potable water were treated and supplied through 64 separate public water supply schemes and a watermain distribution network of over 1,800km in the county in 2018. It is also reported that 20%-25% of

drinking water supplies in the county is supplied by groundwater, making it a major natural resource. The reports also outline the development of the National Water Resource Plan (NWRP) by Uisce Éireann on how to transition into having a sustainable, secure and reliable public drinking water supply balance with safeguarding the environment over a 25 year period.

The *EPA Drinking Water Remedial Action List Q4 of 2024 (2025)* lists the water supplies in Cavanhill, Greenmount, Tallanstown in County Louth, and Drumcondra and Navan (Mid Meath Kilcarn PWS) in County Meath as requiring Action Programmes to upgrade the water supply treatment facilities. Both County Development Plans emphasise that the councils will support Irish Water in “promoting public awareness and involvement in water conservation measures by households, business and industry” (LCC, 2021), and in the preparation of management plans and a Water Conservation Programme for the Country (MCC, 2021).

Waste management

The *Eastern-Midlands Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021* (EMWR, 2015) reports that the management of waste has improved significantly as a result of waste legislation, with major waste streams being managed in the region as household wastes, commercial wastes, construction wastes and industrial wastes. The vision set out for the regional waste plan is to “rethink the approach to managing waste, by viewing waste streams as valuable material resources”. This will be through better use of resources and the reduction of leakage as wastes from the economies.

As part of the Tidy Towns awards of 2024 (Tidy Towns, 2024), in County Louth, Blackrock was awarded Ireland’s tidiest small town and Carlingford won 2nd prize for ‘Town Centre First Award’. The analysis of marks placed Louth - Lú in Category B with 305 points. In County Meath, Bettystown won the ‘Youth Award’ under the Climate Action Award category as well as one of the winners for the ‘Waters and Communities Award’; Athboy won the ‘Small Town Category’ under the Local Authority Pollinator Award; and Dunboyne was the Regional and Overall Award Winners for ‘Supervalu School Award’.

4.6.2 Monitoring Results

Monitoring Indicator M1: Number of instances whereby additional tourists are directed by beneficiaries of funding towards areas in the Plan area where adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity is unavailable.

Result M1: There have been no reported instances whereby additional tourists are directed by beneficiaries of funding towards areas with inadequate critical infrastructure. However, there are sites that have been reported as not having adequate facilities for existing tourists. This includes, the Hill of Tara, which attracted 24,331 visitors in 2023 (Fáilte Ireland, 2024a), and is reported to have insufficient visitor facilities, including toilets, signage, and designated trails. Regarding the lack of parking facilities, which has been one of the most significant issues for visitors and is resulting in further issues such as traffic congestion, there is currently only one small public parking and one privately-owned parking in use at the site. The OPW and DHLGH have planned for immediate visitor servicing requirements for the enhancements in visitor facilities at the Hill of Tara through implementation of the Hill of Tara Conservation Management Plan and the planned Sustainable Access Plan (refer to Action 7.3 in Appendix B).

The assessment identifies that this results in a positive environmental effect under material assets indicators. It is not known exactly when the enhancements of these facilities will be completed nor if they will sufficiently ameliorate the aforementioned issues, however, it is expected that it will improve visitor experience.

Additionally, similar issues with the lack of visitor facilities at the Tain Trail have been reported in the *Reimagined Tain Trail report* produced by Fáilte Ireland (Fáilte Ireland, 2024b). The aim of the report is to include outdoor visitor facilities and address the insufficient infrastructure such as public car parking, which would result in potential positive effects on material assets (refer to Action 9.3 in Appendix B).

Monitoring Indicator M2: Number of significant adverse effects on the use of or access to public assets and infrastructure.

Result M2: There are 15 Actions identified which are relevant to this indicator, these are Brú na Bóinne Orientation and Experience Development (Action 1.1), the King John's Castle upgrade (Action 4.1), the Tara Conservation Management Plan (Actions 7.1 and 7.3), the development of Ancient trails (Actions 9.1 and 9.4), Reimagining the Boyne Valley Drive (Actions 10.1, 10.2 and 24.1), the development of Greenways and Blueways (Actions 11.2, 11.4 and 11.6), the Porchfield project (Actions 22.1 and 22.2), and the Carlingford and Cooley Region Destination Orientation and Development Plan (Action 26.1).

The progression of these Actions has resulted in improving access to public assets and infrastructure (particularly the road and active travel network and access to public sites, such as cultural heritage sites and public transport hubs). There are no significant positive or negative effects reported. At the time of writing there is limited data available relating to the specific outcomes of these Actions, however, anecdotal evidence suggests that these Actions are likely to have a positive effect on the use and access to public assets and infrastructure at these locations.

The implementation of the Plan projects ensures the continued access and improvement of access to public assets and infrastructure including but not limited to, urban and residential areas, community facilities and services, walking trails, viewing points and the various cultural heritage sites across Ireland's Ancient East region.

Monitoring Indicator M3: Preparation and implementation of construction and environmental management plans.

Result M3: Where planning consent requires that construction environmental management plans (CEMPs) must be prepared on Actions, the developer / contractor will be required to implement the relevant plans. To date, there have not been any actions under the Plan that have progressed to the extent whereby CEMPs have been prepared and / or implemented, therefore, the implementation of the Plan has had a neutral effect on this Indicator.

Table 4.7 Material Assets Monitoring Results

| Indicator | Target | Monitoring Status |
|--|--|---|
| M1: Number of instances whereby additional tourists are directed by beneficiaries of funding towards areas in the Plan area where adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity is unavailable | M1: No instances whereby additional tourists are directed by beneficiaries of funding towards areas in the Plan area where adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity that does not present a danger to human health are unavailable. | Neutral effect. No danger to human health reported. Refer to Actions 7.3 and 9.3. |
| M2: Number of significant adverse effects on the use of or access to public assets and infrastructure. | M2: No significant adverse effects on the use of or access to public assets and infrastructure. | Neutral / to Positive effect. |
| M3: Preparation and implementation of construction and environmental management plans. | M3: For construction and environmental management plans to be prepared and implemented for relevant projects. | Neutral / No results to report. |

4.7 Cultural Heritage

4.7.1 Baseline update

The *Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027* (LCC, 2021) and *Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027* (MCC, 2021) provide a policies and objectives to protect the archaeological, architectural, and cultural heritage in County Louth and County Meath respectively. It also identifies extensive number of Record Protected Structures (RPS) across both counties which are very often also tourism attractions. These sites are protected due to their special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.

County Louth and County Meath both have extensive numbers of archaeological recorded monuments included in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), National Monuments in State Care and National Monuments subject to Preservation Order. A list of these for County Louth can be found in *Chapter 9 – Built Heritage and Culture* of the *Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027* (LCC, 2021) and for County Meath in Appendix 9 of the *Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027* (MCC, 2021).

There are a total of 36 designated Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) in County Louth which encompasses boundaries within the County, Drogheda and Dundalk (LCC, 2021) identified in Table 4.12. There are a total of 22 ACAs in County Meath (MCC, 2021) identified in the list below:

- Ardbracon Demesne
- Athboy
- Dunboyne
- Dunsany Castle Demesne
- Headfort Demesne
- Julianstown
- Kells Historic CoreKells – Headfort Place
- Kilmessan
- Laytown – Netterville and Victoria Terrace
- Longwood
- Moynalty
- Navan Historic Core
- Oldbridge Demesne
- Oldcastle
- Slane
- Slane Castle Demesne
- Slane Mill Complex
- Somerville Demesne
- Stackallen Demesne
- Summerhill
- Trim Historic Core
- Trim Porch Fields

There have been no changes to the ACAs relevant to the Plan area.

Table 4.12 ACAs in County Louth (LCC, 2021)

| County | Drogheda | Dundalk |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Ardee | Bolton Square/Green Lanes | St Mary's Road |
| Carlingford | Clinton's Lane | Roden Place |
| Castlebellingham | The Dale | The Crescent |
| Collon | Fair Street | Clanbrassil Street |
| Greenore | Laurence's Street | Jocelyn Street / Seatown Place |
| Monasterboice | Legavoureen Park | Soldiers Point – Coastguard Houses |
| Newtown – Monasterboice - Clachan | Magdalene Street (North) | Magnet Road/The Demesne |
| Salterstown | St. Mary's Cottages | The Crescent, Blackrock |

| County | Drogheda | Dundalk |
|-------------------------------|---|---------|
| Whitestown | Millmount | |
| Townley Hall Demesne | North Quays/Back Lanes | |
| Oldbridge Demesne (Co. Meath) | St. Peter's Church and its Environs | |
| | Railway Terrace | |
| | Windmill Road (part of) | |
| | West Street and surrounding shopping streets forming Drogheda's shopping core | |
| | Leyland Place | |
| | Ship Street | |
| | Old Abbey Lane | |
| | Merchant's Quay | |

There are two sites in County Meath that have been included on the Tentative List for nomination to the World Heritage List as part of larger assemblies of sites, namely the Tara Complex and Kells:

- The Tara Complex as part of The Royal Sites of Ireland (which comprise: Cashel, Dún Ailinne, Hill of Uisneach, Rathcroghan Complex and Tara Complex).
- Kells, as part of the Early Medieval Monastic Sites (which comprise: Clonmacnoise, Durrow, Glendalough, Inis Cealtra, Monasterboice and Kells).

Ireland has a rich underwater cultural heritage in its marine, coastal, and inland waterways. A total of approximately 68 wrecks are recorded in the WIID (Wreck Inventory of Ireland Database) off Counties Louth and Meath. .

UNESCO World Heritage Site - Brú na Bóinne

Brú na Bóinne is an UNESCO World heritage site (WHS). Brú na Bóinne includes many structures of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, social, scientific or technical importance listed on the RPS and RMP of County Louth and County Meath. The *Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Site Management Plan* (National Monuments Service, 2017) identifies 247 records of monuments located within the WHS and its Buffer Zones, 154 in the Core Area and 93 in the Buffer Zone. This includes the following main types: passage tombs, henges, fulachta fiadh and cist burials, ringforts and souterrains, granges, medieval manorial village, Battle of the Boyne landmarks (demesne landscapes and The Boyne Navigation).

The *Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027* states that the WHS contains 33 Protected Structures (28 in Meath and five in Louth). There are also 18 protected views including the WHS (MCC, 2021). The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) survey of the built environment of Brú na Bóinne includes a range of buildings within the WHS area such as Dowth Hall, Boyne Valley Cottage, Rosnaree Mill, and two World War II concrete pillboxes, identified as part of the survey for County Meath. The NIAH survey for County Louth includes buildings and structures within the vicinity of the WHS such as the Obelisk Bridge over the River Boyne and the nationally important Townley Hall (National Monuments Service, 2017).

4.7.2 Monitoring Results

Monitoring Indicator CH1: Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan.

Result CH1: There have been no unauthorised adverse effects on archaeological heritage including RMPs from the implementation of the Plan.

The Plan includes enhancement of visitor facilities to improve accessibility and visitor experiences as well as conservation initiatives at heritage sites. This includes Action 7 on the conservation management plan for the Hill of Tara. Action 7.1, relating to the *Tara Conservation Management Plan* (OPW, 2022), in which Tara is a national monument (National Monument Nos. 148 and 676) within the meaning of the National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2014, includes conservation initiatives and implementation of management plans that support the management and protection of this area of National Monuments, as well as creating awareness on its history to visitors and the local community. An SEA pre-screening was also undertaken for the management plan and determining that an SEA was not required. Refer to Section 5 of this Report for detailed monitoring results relating to Action 7.1).

Therefore, the implementation of the Plan has had a neutral to positive effect on this Indicator.

Monitoring Indicator CH2: Percentage of entries to the Records of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan.

Result CH2: The requirements of the national legislation including those relating to protection of heritage is required to be implemented on all projects. The implementation of the Plan has the potential for neutral to positive effects on RPS as part of Actions as a result of enhancement of visitor facilities to improve accessibility and visitor experiences as well as conservation initiatives at these heritage sites. This includes Action 3.2 relating to Trim Castle enhancements, in which Trim Castle (TT036- 057) is listed as an RPS. This also includes Action 1.1 relating to Bru na Boinne, in which contains a number of RPS however, none of the works under the Plan have the potential to lead to significant direct or indirect effects. Refer to Section 5 of this Report for detailed monitoring results relating to Actions 3.2 and 1.1.

Although there has been no reported unauthorised direct adverse effects on this Indicator resulting from implementation of the Plan, the implementation of the Plan to date has had a neutral to positive effect on this Indicator based on the Actions progressed.

Table 4.13 Cultural Heritage Monitoring Results

| Indicator | Target | Monitoring Status |
|---|---|----------------------------------|
| CH1: Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan. | CH1: No unauthorised adverse effects on archaeological heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan. | Neutral effect/ positive effect. |
| CH2: Percentage of entries to the Records of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan. | CH2: No unauthorised adverse effects on architectural heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan. | Neutral effect/ positive effect. |

4.8 Landscape

4.8.1 Baseline update

The landscape features of the Plan area are examined and updated considering changes since the implementation of the Plan, including topography, landscape character assessment, and protected views. The assessment also considers relevant policies guiding the implementation of the Plan.

A high-level policy framework for landscape protection, management, and planning is outlined in the *National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015–2025* (Government of Ireland, 2015). A key initiative for this framework is the creation of a national landscape character assessment, which has not currently been developed. The strategy emphasises integrating landscape policies and objectives into local development plans, ensuring the identification and protection of areas with landscape and scenic values by land-use zoning and designations. It also highlights the synergy of landscape protection with biodiversity and climate change, as well as

aligning with EU Directives such as the Water Framework Directive and relevant national legislation.

The area to which the Plan relates is identified as being situated mainly within counties Louth and Meath. Relevant Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) are listed below and can be seen on Figure 4.4 and Figure 4.5. Figure 4.6 provides a sensitivity assessment⁴ of County Meath.

Louth County

- Dunany, Boyne Estuary Close LCA
- Louth Drumlin & Lake Areas LCA
- Muirhevna Plain LCA
- Uplands of Collon, Monasterboice LCA
- Dundalk Bay Coast LCA
- Lower Faughart, Castletown & Flurry River Basins LCA
- Carlingford Lough, Mountains Including West
- Cooley Lowlands & Coastal Area LCA
- Boyne & Mattock Valley LCA

Meath County

- Teervurcher Uplands LCA 1
- North Meath Lakelands LCA 2
- North Navan Lowlands LCA 3
- Rathkenny Hills LCA 4
- Boyne & Mattock Valley LCA 5
- Boyne & Mattock Valley LCA 5
- Central Lowlands LCA 6
- Coastal Plains LCA 7
- Nanny Valley LCA 8
- Bellewstown Hills LCA 9
- The Ward Lowlands LCA 10
- South East Lowlands LCA 11
- Tara Skryne Hills LCA 12
- Rathmoylan Lowlands LCA 13
- Royal Canal LCA 14
- South West Lowlands LCA 15
- West Navan Lowlands LCA 16
- South West Kells Lowlands LCA 17
- Lough Sheelin Uplands LCA 18
- Loughcrew and Slieve na Calliagh Hills LCA 19
- Blackwater Valley LCA 20

⁴ Overall sensitivity assessments cover the area's sensitivity of Context, Scale, Landform, Landcover, Built Environment, Perceptual Qualities, Visual Amenities, and Landscape Values.



Figure 4.4 Landscape Character Area (extract from Section 8 Map 8.5 Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 (LCC, 2021))

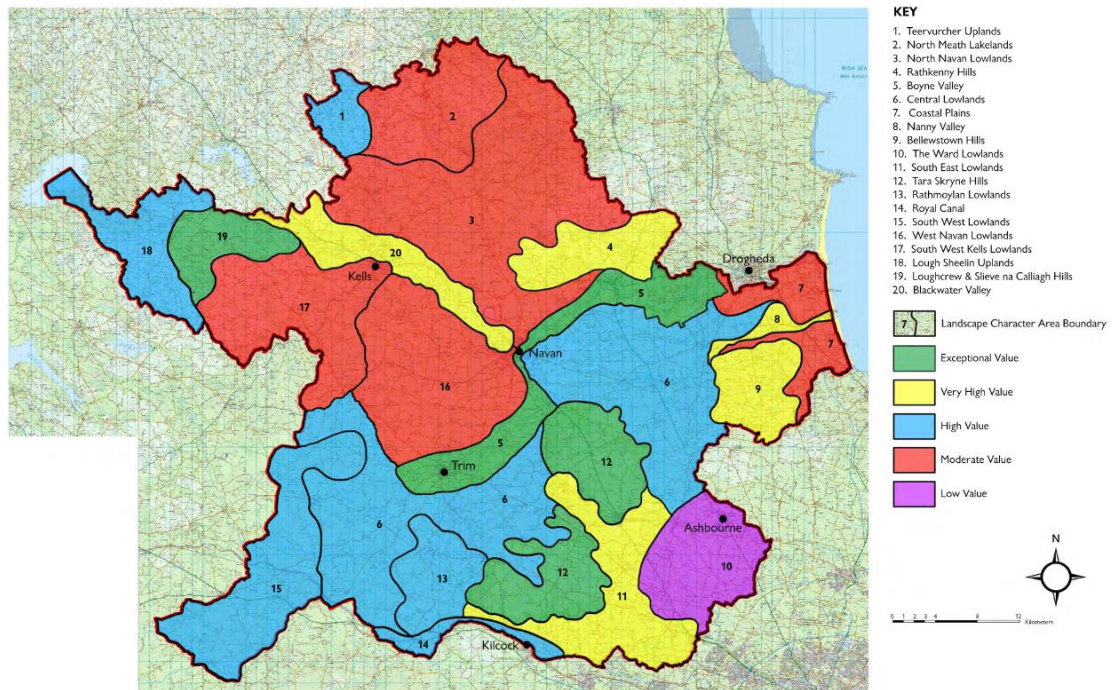


Figure 4.5 Landscape Character Area (extract from Appendix 5 Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (MCC, 2021))

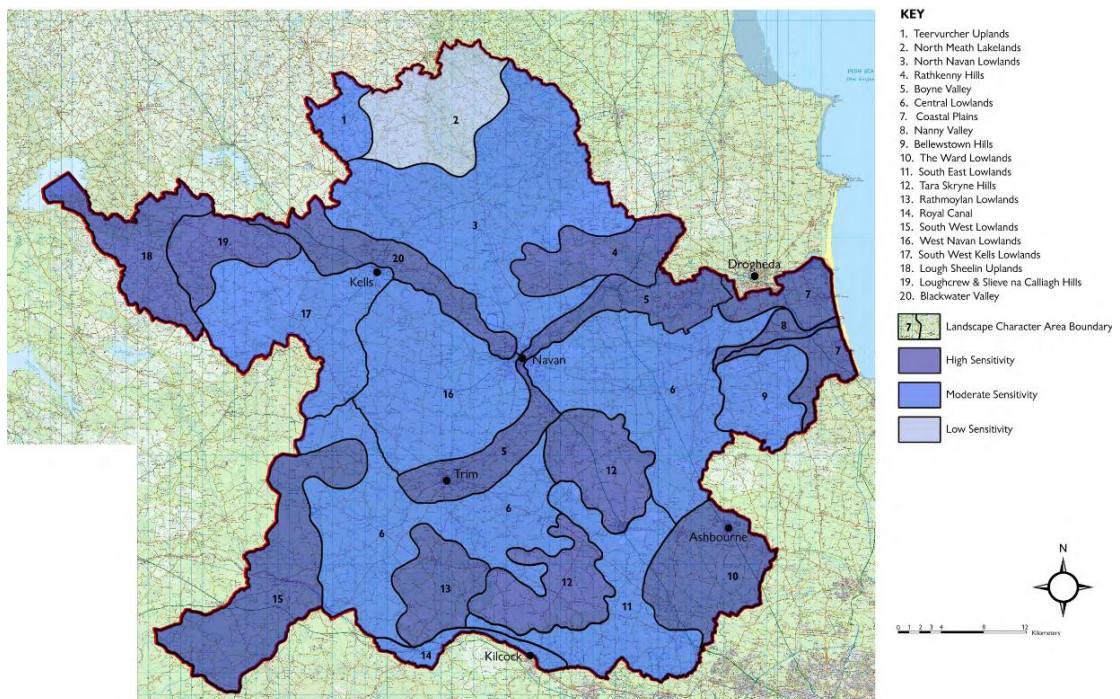


Figure 4.6 Landscape Sensitivity (extract from Appendix 5 Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (MCC, 2021))

4.8.2 Monitoring Results

Monitoring Indicator L1: Number of unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in Development Plans and other statutory land-use plans.

Result L1: There have been no reported unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in the land use

plans, particularly of Louth County Council and Meath County Council. Therefore, the implementation of the Plan has had a neutral effect on this Indicator.

Table 4.14 Landscape Monitoring Results

| Indicator | Target | Monitoring Status |
|--|---|--|
| L1: Number of unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in Development Plans and other statutory land-use plans. | L1: No unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in Development Plans and other statutory land-use plans. | Neutral effect / No results to report. |

5. MONITORING RESULTS BY PROJECT

The implementation plan contained in the Ancient DEDP Plan provides a basis for all stakeholders to engage with the Plan. The Action Plan comprises 111 Actions. The SEA monitoring focuses on the Actions that are likely to have a significant effect on the environment, for example, due to physical works / construction impacts, or other works which could require planning permission and subject to environmental assessment for example, EIA, AA or SSFRA.

In accordance with the methodology presented in Section 3, out of the 111 Actions that were screened (**Refer to Appendix B**) 30 Actions were brought forward for detailed environmental monitoring. The monitoring results are presented in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1 **SEA Monitoring Results**

| Project | ID | Action | Lead | Partner | Action Status & Update | Monitoring result likely significant effects on the SEA environmental Indicators X - Negative, 0 - Neutral, √ - Positive ? - Unknown | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Assessment Narrative | | |
|--------------------------|-----|---|-------------|---------|--|---|----|-----|------|------|----|-----|------|----|----|-----|----|----|----|-----|-----|----------------------|----|--|
| | | | | | | B1 | B2 | B3i | B3ii | PHH1 | S1 | W1i | W1ii | W2 | W3 | AC1 | M1 | M2 | M3 | CH1 | CH2 | | L1 | |
| Project 1: Brú na Bóinne | 1.1 | Continue to provide experience development support for the Brú na Bóinne development as a priority that supports the site in maximising the investment to create a world class attraction and visitor experience, developed with consideration to the carrying capacity of monuments within a World Heritage sites. | OPW & DHLGH | | An outcome of this Action is the <i>Brú na Bóinne Orientation and Experience Development Report</i> (Failte Ireland, 2021). FI have worked with consultants to develop this report, which was published in November 2021. This was developed by the OPW and FI Attractions team. The main outcomes of the report include identifying potential visitor experiences; and ensure that experience delivery and associated revenue generation are mindful and inclusive of all elements of Brú na Bóinne. The document reports enhanced visitor experiences at Newgrange, Knowth. There has been a link with the Boyne Valley food story at these heritage sites and intend to build on this food experience at these sites. One of the Experience Development ideas include a 'blended' timetable which allows for an increase in tours per day and visitor capacity through an earlier start and end time for tours. There was previously 2 hour tours departing every 15 minutes from 9:30am to 4:30pm, with a maximum totalling of 29 tours per day with 24 visitors per tour. The total average visitor number per day was 696. The 'blended' timetable includes visits from 9am to 5:15pm. This proposed time table would result in a total of 32 tours per day and a total visitor capacity of 768. However, the visitor number is capped at 576 per day to visit Newgrange or Knowth, reducing footfall at each site by 120. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | The assessment of the indicators and targets has found that this Action has a neutral effect on the majority of the indicators. However, the initiative has been reported to result in increased availability of times to access the World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne. It has resulted in positive effects on the material assets indicator in that it improves access to public assets and infrastructure (i.e. cultural heritage sites). This Action has involved no infrastructural works nor planning, and has therefore, had a neutral effect on the World Heritage sites. However, this assessment recognises that there is potential for wider positive effects on cultural heritage due to the improved access and enhanced visitor experience at these sites. |
| Project 3: Trim Castle | 3.2 | Provide experience development support for the development of a visitor experience combining the development requirements of Trim Castle and Trim as identified in the Boyne Valley Masterplan and supported by the destination town activity. | OPW & DHLGH | MCC | <p>The Action is being considered as part of the Re-Imagined Boyne Valley Drive cluster orientation project, reported in Failte Ireland and The Paul Hogarth Company's document <i>Reimagining the Boyne Valley Drive</i>.</p> <p>The report outlines the following development planned for Trim. These Actions fall and will be further assessed under the Re-Imagined Boyne Valley Drive cluster orientation project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The development of a Themed Boyne Valley Walks connecting the Town and River.• Connection to the river through enhancement to the Boyne Blueway Trailheads.• The development of a Trim Arrival Point through the refurbishment of the Visitor Centre and the introduction of a looped walk and interpretation (includes enhancements works to the existing Pillory, including surface improvement works; Interpretation signage; Sculpture/seating introduced, a small rounded boat synonymous with the river Boyne; Review the existing furniture and develop to be in accordance with a Boyne Valley Materials Palette; Refurbishment of the Visitors Centre).• Deliver a Cluster Development Programme to assess and build industry capacity within the cluster.• Linking to the wider storyline and sites including Millmount Fort, Boyne Navigation. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | The assessment of the indicators and targets has found that this Action has had a neutral effect on the majority of the indicators. However, the assessment recognises that there are wider social, economic and environmental benefits likely to population and human health and material assets factors due to the improvement of visitor facilities, creating a safer environment for pedestrian use, and ensuring tourists are directed to attractions that have adequate critical infrastructure. There are also potential positive effects on cultural heritage factors through enhancing visitor experiences and interpretation of the historic site to visitors and the local community. The refurbishment of the Visitor Centre and any other infrastructural developments will require the appropriate environmental assessments to be undertaken to ensure potential negative effects on the environment are avoided, reduced and/ or minimised as appropriate. |

| Project | ID | Action | Lead | Partner | Action Status & Update | Monitoring result likely significant effects on the SEA environmental Indicators X - Negative, 0 - Neutral, √ - Positive ? - Unknown | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Assessment Narrative |
|--|-----|---|-------------|-------------------------|---|---|----|-----|------|------|----|-----|------|----|----|-----|----|----|----|-----|-----|----|---|
| | | | | | | B1 | B2 | B3i | B3ii | PHH1 | S1 | W1i | W1ii | W2 | W3 | AC1 | M1 | M2 | M3 | CH1 | CH2 | L1 | |
| Project 4: Kings John's Castle Carlingford | 4.1 | Provide experience development support for the development of an operational and visitor development plan based on a new visitor experience approach to support and maximise the impact of the recent project investment in the site. | OPW & DHLGH | FI | The Carlingford Heritage Trust is currently being delivered on site. This Action has involved €400k in funding from Fáilte Ireland's Capital Grants Allocation to OPW for the development of King John's Castle in Carlingford. The investment will include the provision of performance infrastructure which will allow for the castle to be used as a setting for cultural events. The Action seeks to enhance the castle with better internal access, attractive landscaping and improved visitor facilities including information and interpretation, creating an enhanced visitor experience and improving accessibility to visitors. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | The assessment of the indicators and targets has found that this Action has a neutral effect on the majority of the indicators. However, the initiative has been reported to result in enhancement of the visitor experience to King John's Castle. This has resulted in neutral to positive effects on the material assets indicator in that it improves the use of and access to public assets and infrastructure (i.e. the archaeological protected site of King John's Castle) through improved visitor facilities. There are no planning applications or environmental reports available for this Action. The assessment has also found that there is potential for wider social, economic and environmental effects from enhancing the visitor experience at this site. |
| Project 6: Boyne Valley Drive | 6.1 | Conduct an audit of the Boyne Valley Drive and key visitor attractions and sites to review effectiveness in delivering great visitor experiences. | FI | MCC - LCC - OPW - DHLGH | Failte Ireland and The Paul Hogarth Company have developed the <i>Reimagining the Boyne Valley Drive</i> plan. The plan focuses on existing heritage sites supported by new complementary activities and experiences available in the wider landscape. A total of 57 projects have been identified. Infrastructure and innovation will be developed within Drogheda, Navan, Kells, Slane, Trim, Mouth of the Boyne North, Mouth of the Boyne South, Townley, Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Site, Ardmulchan, Tara to Bective, Loughcrew, Athboy and Kilskeer, and Monasterboice. Regional level projects include establishing engaging regional signage and visitor infrastructure, improve public transport and active travel networks, and associated arrival experience, facilities and infrastructure. Key outputs include reviewing public transport travel experiences, facilities, and coordination of timetables, as well as development of Boyne Valley Navigation & Greenway and the Tain Trail. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | The improvement in public transport connection and increased active travel will result in neutral to positive effects on M1 as tourists are directed to the Boyne Valley Drive where transport facilities are improved and more connected. It is recognised that there are wider positive social, economic and environmental effects likely to air quality factors as a result of improving public transport provision that supports the tourism sector and also local communities, as well as population and human health factors due to the promotion of walking in the area. The development of any other aspects associated with this Action such as, improving infrastructure will require the relevant and appropriate environmental assessments to be undertaken to ensure any potential negative effects on the environment are avoided, reduced and/ or minimised as appropriate and in accordance with any planning requirements. |
| | 6.2 | Identify projects to establish the Boyne Valley Drive route as a best in class visitor experiential route. | | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| | 6.3 | Prepare an experience development action plan to create a world leading 'Ancient Experience Trail'. | | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| | 6.4 | Assess site requirements to grow visitor numbers at key sites along the Boyne Valley Drive such as the plans for Oldbridge - Battle of the Boyne Site. | OPW & DHLGH | MCC – LCC - FI | Failte Ireland and The Paul Hogarth Company have developed the Reimagining the Boyne Valley Drive plan, which outlines the site-specific plans at the Oldbridge-Battle of the Boyne site. The existing trails in this woodland is to be reviewed and a loop will be upgraded with improved surfacing, orientation and seating opportunities. Interpretation will be provided to support the story being told at the Oldbridge-Battle of the Boyne site. This woodland walking experience aims to connect the visitor and local community with the history of this site. According to the <i>Visitor Numbers to Attractions Dashboard</i> by Failte Ireland, the Battle of Boyne / Oldbridge Estate received a total of 358,247 visitors in 2023. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | The Action has a neutral effect on the majority of the indicators. The assessment has found that there is a neutral to positive effect on indicator M1 as a result of upgrading the existing visitor facilities with seating and safer walking surfaces. These initiatives ensure tourists are directed to attractions that have adequate infrastructure. |
| Project 7: Hill of Tara | 7.1 | Continue to develop the Conservation Management Plan currently in progress for the Hill of Tara. | DHLGH | FI - MCC - OPW | The <i>Tara Conservation Management Plan</i> (CMP), published September 2022, has been developed by OPW on behalf of the Government of Ireland. One of the objectives of the plan is to identify any threats or issues that might negatively impact the significance of the site. A pre-screening was carried out for the plan and the outcome concluded that an SEA was not required. However, an AA was carried out. The plan outlines a programme of actions relating to conservation and interpretation, infrastructure and management, access and enjoyment. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0√ | 0√ | 0 | 0√ | 0√ | 0 | The assessment of the indicators and targets has found that this Action has a neutral effect on the majority of the indicators. However, there is a potential for positive effects on the air and climatic factors indicator due to the development of the framework for monitoring the impacts of climate change on site, which is an action under their Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan tailored to Tara. There are |

| Project | ID | Action | Lead | Partner | Action Status & Update | Monitoring result likely significant effects on the SEA environmental Indicators X - Negative, 0 - Neutral, √ - Positive ? - Unknown | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Assessment Narrative |
|--|-----|---|-------------|---------------------------------------|--|---|----|-----|------|------|----|-----|------|----|----|-----|----|----|----|-----|-----|----|---|
| | | | | | | B1 | B2 | B3i | B3ii | PHH1 | S1 | W1i | W1ii | W2 | W3 | AC1 | M1 | M2 | M3 | CH1 | CH2 | L1 | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | also potential positive effects on all aspects of material assets as a result of the <i>Tara Conservation Management Plan</i> (CMP) which is implementing measures under a Sustainable Access Plan to improve traffic management and visitor access. It is also recognised that there are wider positive social, economic and environmental effects likely particularly to preserving and protecting cultural heritage, biodiversity, flora and fauna and landscape factors as a result of improving conservation initiatives and implementing management plans. This supports the management and protection of National Monuments as well as creating awareness on its history to visitors and the local community. |
| | 7.3 | Undertake an assessment of the immediate visitor servicing requirements to support the recommendations of the Hill of Tara Conservation Management Plan that will enhance site interpretation and visitor facilities. | OPW & DHLGH | FI - MCC | OPW/DHLGH are driving this Action and the <i>Tara Conservation Management Plan</i> (CMP), published September 2022, has been developed by OPW on behalf of the Government of Ireland. The Tara CMP states that the infrastructure is not sufficiently robust to cope with the growth in the number of visitors to Tara. The Tara CMP reported that the most recent year of visitor number readings was 182,782 in 2021, which has showed an increase from previous recorded years, i.e. 2018 - 166,471. Narrow country roads are the commonly used access route which causes safety issues for pedestrians and cyclists. There are only 2 small car parks, which causes cars to park along road sides. It is also reported that the site has a lack of other visitor facilities, including toilets, signage, and designated trails. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | The assessment of the indicators and targets has found that this Action has a neutral effect on the majority of the indicators. The assessment has found that there are also neutral to positive effects on the material assets indicators through the implementation of a Conservation Management Plan that supports the development of visitor infrastructure as part of the tourism sector. Wider positive social, economic and environmental are likely particularly for population and human health as a result of increasing the engagement with stakeholders around visitor infrastructure at the site and the implementation of the Sustainable Access Plan. |
| Project 8: Boyne Navigation and Greenway | 8.1 | Complete the Boyne Navigation and Greenway planning process through a partnership approach that will include MCC, LCC, FI, OPW, DHLGH, Inland Waterways, NPWS - Boyne Navigation Group and local communities. | MCC | FI - OPW - LCC - DHLGH - IWBNG - NPWS | Actions 8.1 and 8.2 have been assessed as one Action. The Actions are being led by MCC. The public consultation on the Emerging Preferred Route took place in early 2024. Following the completion of the feasibility study for the proposed Navigation Restoration Scheme and a review of the route options for the proposed Greenway Scheme, a decision has been reached that the proposed Navigation Restoration should be considered separately from the Greenway Scheme. A section of the construction of the Boyne Greenway, from Drogheda to Mornington, was submitted for planning permission by ABP in 2020 (Planning ref: 307652, Applicant: MCC), accompanied by an NIS. An AA Screening was carried out for the project and concluded that there are three European Sites which the proposed development has the potential to have a significant effect on. Planning permission was refused on 29/08/2023. At the time of writing, no further planning applications related to this project has been lodged. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | This Action is currently undergoing the relevant detailed environmental assessment. The assessment of the indicators and targets has identified that there is potential for negative effects on biodiversity and water indicators which are currently being reviewed as part of the options assessment therefore this assessment has determined neutral to unknown effects as the information is not available. Likely effects during construction in and/or close to the European designated sites have the potential to give rise to negative effects if unmitigated. The assessment has also found that there are neutral to positive effects on air quality and population and human health factors indicators as a result of improving active travel provision that supports the tourism sector and local communities as well as promoting walking in the area. Once the site is developed, it is expected it will support local communities as well as wider tourism facilities in the town. The development of this Action will require further required environmental assessments to be undertaken to ensure potential negative effects on the environment are avoided, reduced and/ or minimised as appropriate, |
| | 8.2 | Undertake consultations with all stakeholders as part of planning process. | MCC | FI - OPW - LCC - DHLGH | | 0? | 0 | 0? | 0 | 0√ | 0 | 0? | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |

| Project | ID | Action | Lead | Partner | Action Status & Update | Monitoring result likely significant effects on the SEA environmental Indicators X - Negative, 0 - Neutral, √ - Positive ? - Unknown | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Assessment Narrative |
|--|------|--|----------------|-------------------------------|---|---|----|-----|------|------|----|-----|------|----|----|-----|----|----|----|-----|-----|--|--|
| | | | | | | B1 | B2 | B3i | B3ii | PHH1 | S1 | W1i | W1ii | W2 | W3 | AC1 | M1 | M2 | M3 | CH1 | CH2 | L1 | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | and positive effects on the environment promoted. |
| Project 9: Integrated Ancient Trails | 9.1 | Review the experience development potential of existing and proposed trails including Greenways and Blueways across the destination with the objective of immersing the visitor in the Ancient story and linking all trails. | MCC-LCC | FI - NMS - NPWS - DHLGH - OPW | This Action is connected to the Destination Orientation Plans, such as the <i>Brú na Bóinne Orientation and Experience Development Report</i> (Failte Ireland and the Paul Hogarth Company, November 2021) and <i>Carlingford and Cooley Region Destination Orientation Development Plan</i> by Failte Ireland, which focus on creating a direct links to the Ancient site such as Brú na Bóinne's Neolithic ancestor sites. There are many trails proposed across the destination linking to Ancient story sites, including the Re-imagined Boyne Valley Drive, Tain Trail, the Castletown and Nobber loops, Nobber to Kilmainhamwood Greenway, Omeath to Carlingford Lough Greenway, the River Boyne, Boyne Navigation and Greenway, Carlingford Lough, amongst others. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0 | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | The assessment of the indicators and targets has found that this Action has had a neutral effect on the majority of the indicators. However, the assessment has found that there are neutral to positive effects on population and human health and air and climatic factors indicators due to the promotion of walking in the area. The assessment has also found that there are neutral to positive effects on the cultural heritage indicator due to the increased access and connectivity public assets including Ancient historic sites and their stories through the development of these trails. |
| | 9.4 | Support the development of new and emerging trails that collectively increase the range of options for visitors to extend dwell time and explore new places e.g. Louth Heritage Trail, Cooley Camino. | LCC | FI | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 9.2 | Examine the potential of the Boyne Camino to develop as a multi-day experience linking key Ancient sites as a Camino 5000. | LCC | MCC - FI | The Boyne Camino is now accredited as part of the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrimage Route. The project lead is Louth County Council, delivered in partnership with Boyne Valley Walking Trails. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0? | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | The assessment of the indicators and targets has found that this Action has had a neutral effect on the majority of the indicators. There may be unknown or potential negative effects on M1 as a result of directing more visitors for longer periods of time (through the multi-day activities) to sites and tourism infrastructure that may not have adequate critical infrastructure to accommodate for the increase footfall. However, the assessment has found that there are neutral to positive effects on the population and human health factors indicator due to the promotion of walking in the area. |
| | 9.3 | Review of the visitor experience development potential of the Táin March and the enhancement of the existing Táin Trail as an appealing walking and cycling route. | LCC | FI | The report <i>Reimagined Táin Trail Strategy Report</i> has been produced by Failte Ireland and published on September 2024 (Failte Ireland, 2024). The report states that there has been a lack of facilities such as car parking and concern around road safety. This action plan has been developed to include a variety of actions, which would include developing more trails, viewpoints and other outdoor visitor facilities. Once the plan is implemented, there is likely to be enhancements to the Táin Trail which would result in potential positive effects across a number of environmental factors. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Project 10: Reconnecting to the River Boyne | 10.1 | Undertake an audit of directional and interpretation signage for the River Boyne linked to the Boyne Valley Drive review. | MCC - LCC - FI | PS - OPW - NPWS | The <i>Reimagining the Boyne Valley Drive</i> report has been produced by Failte Ireland and Paul Hogarth Company (2023). This report has been developed to include a variety of actions, including improved access to watercourses, improved surfacing, seating and lighting along with interpretative points and viewpoints which will frame heritage assets and engage visitors via sound, texture and scale of memorable interventions. Once the plan is implemented, there is likely to be enhancements to the Boyne Valley Drive which would result in potential positive effects across a number of environmental factors. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | The assessment of the indicators and targets has found that this Action has had a neutral effect on the majority of the indicators. However, the assessment has found that there are neutral to positive effects on population and human health and material assets indicators due to the improvement of visitor facilities, creating a safer environment for pedestrian use, as well as improving access to public assets and the associated visitor experiences. | |
| | 10.2 | Identify River Boyne viewing points to create 'sharable' experiences for visitors through innovative interpretation and place making installations linked to the Boyne Valley Drive Review. | MCC - LCC | NPWS | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 |

| Project | ID | Action | Lead | Partner | Action Status & Update | Monitoring result likely significant effects on the SEA environmental Indicators X - Negative, 0 - Neutral, √ - Positive ? - Unknown | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Assessment Narrative |
|---|-------|--|-----------|---------|--|---|----|-----|------|------|----|-----|------|----|----|-----|----|----|----|-----|-----|----|--|
| | | | | | | B1 | B2 | B3i | B3ii | PHH1 | S1 | W1i | W1ii | W2 | W3 | AC1 | M1 | M2 | M3 | CH1 | CH2 | L1 | |
| Project 11: Greenways & Blueways Development | 11.1 | Develop the Navan to Kingscourt Greenway incorporating the rail line. | MCC | | The Navan to Kingscourt Greenway is also known as the Boyne Valley to Lakelands Greenway. The Greenway is fully operational. The Greenway is 30km in length commencing at Navan in Co. Meath to Kingscourt in Co. Cavan. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | The assessment of the indicators and targets has found that this Action has had a neutral effect on the majority of the indicators. However, the assessment has found that there are neutral to positive effects on population and human health and air and climatic factors indicators due to the promotion of walking in the area. There may also be neutral to positive effects on the soil indicator, given the use of the existing rail line for sections of the greenway, rather than increasing built surface cover. |
| | 11.2 | Create an experience plan for the development and usage of the Blueway from Trim to Bective. | MCC | | The experience plan is yet to commence. The Trim to Bective blueway has been certified. The accreditation criteria of a blueway includes safety, technical, conservation / environment, sustainability, access and experience. Water-based activities are required to be in-line with standard guidelines, falling under the criteria required for accreditation. This includes trailhead facilities such as toilets, changing rooms and adequate parking. It also will require disabled access to the outdoor recreation experiences. The accreditation also requires Blueway development and management top avoid any negative impact on the environment, with a maintenance of high level of water quality. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | The assessment of the indicators and targets has found that this Action has had a neutral effect on the majority of the indicators. However, the assessment has found that there are neutral to positive effects on population and human health, water and material assets indicators as a result of the blueway accreditation. The accreditation leads to the improvement of visitor facilities, creating a safer environment for pedestrian use, ensuring tourists are directed to attractions that have adequate critical infrastructure, increase the accessibility of water-based activities, and maintaining high standards of water quality. |
| | 11.4 | Undertake a review of the requirements to create a more accessible and user friendly Blueway trail head in Trim. | MCC | OPW | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0 | 0√ | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| | 11.6 | Develop the Great Eastern Greenway as a new walking and cycling route starting with the development of the partially constructed elements on the old railway line between Omeath and Carlingford. This will form part of a greenway stretching from Lough Neagh to Dublin. Complete the Cross Border Omeath to Victoria Lock & Carlingford Marina to Carlingford Village element for 2023. | LCC | SEUPB | The Greenway has been built. Prior to the Greenway, cyclist has to travel along the busy R173 and there are no pavements for much of the way. This Greenway links to key villages and urban areas, including facilities such as public toilets, cafes, restaurants, and shops. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0√ | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | The assessment of the indicators and targets has found that this Action has had a neutral effect on the majority of the indicators. However, the assessment has found that there are neutral to positive effects on population and human health and air and climatic factors indicators due to the promotion of active travel in the area, in a safer environment for pedestrian use. There may also be neutral to positive effects on the soil indicator, given the use of the existing rail line for sections of the greenway, rather than increasing built surface cover. There may also be a neutral to positive effects on the material assets indicator as a result of the increased connectivity and accessibility to visitor facilities and other Greenways. |
| | 11.11 | Review the feasibility of extending the Boyne Greenway through Drogheda to link up with Public Transport Hubs and the proposed Drogheda to Mornington Greenway. | LCC - MCC | NTA | The <i>Reimagining the Boyne Valley Drive</i> report has been produced by Failte Ireland and Paul Hogarth Company (2023). This report has been developed to include a variety of actions, including the extension of the Boyne Greenway. However, construction of the Boyne Greenway section from Drogheda to Mornington was refused planning permission by ABP on 29/08/2023 (Planning ref: 307652, Applicant: MCC). An AA Screening was carried out to support the Action which concluded that there are three European Sites in respect of which the proposed development has the potential to have a significant effect. An NIS has also been developed, including mitigation measures to the potential adverse effects posed by the proposed development. | 0? | 0 | 0? | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0? | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | The assessment of the indicators and targets has found that this Action has unknown or the potential for negative effects on biodiversity and water indicators. This is mostly due to the construction works which would be taking place in and/or close to the European designated sites. It is recognised that there are neutral to positive effects on air quality and climatic factors indicator as a result of improving active travel provision through promoting walking in the area and increasing connectivity to other public transport hubs. Once the site is developed, it is expected it will support local communities as well as wider tourism facilities in the town which will lead to wider positive social, economic and environmental effects. The development of this Action will require further appropriate environmental |

| Project | ID | Action | Lead | Partner | Action Status & Update | Monitoring result likely significant effects on the SEA environmental Indicators X - Negative, 0 - Neutral, √ - Positive ? - Unknown | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Assessment Narrative | |
|--|------|--|------|---------|---|---|----|-----|------|------|----|-----|------|----|----|-----|----|----|----|-----|-----|----------------------|---|
| | | | | | | B1 | B2 | B3i | B3ii | PHH1 | S1 | W1i | W1ii | W2 | W3 | AC1 | M1 | M2 | M3 | CH1 | CH2 | | L1 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | assessments to be undertaken to ensure potential negative effects on the environment are avoided, reduced and/ or minimised as appropriate. |
| Project 21: Tourism Destination Town - Drogheda | 22.1 | Create a tourism destination town development plan for Trim. | MCC | | This Action has been completed as part of the Destination Towns project for Trim's Porchfield. The project has been transformed into an engaging outdoor space through funding from Fáilte Ireland's 'Destination Town Capital Investment Scheme' launched in June 2022 as well as investment from MCC. The outcome of this Action includes an enhancement of the outdoor space adjacent to Trim Castle. There has been improvements in walking and picnic/seating facilities, all-weather walking tracks, newly planted wildflower meadow, an outdoor gym area and restoration of the Horse Bridge. 2021 saw approximately 300,000 people walking Porchfield, 5,000 people per week. The Porchfield project has provided an outdoor performance space for greater animation and interpretative panels and digital storyline on Trim. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | The assessment of the indicators and targets has found that this Action has had a neutral effect on the majority of the indicators. However, the assessment has found that there are neutral to positive effects on population and human health and material assets indicators due to the improvement of visitor facilities. These improvements create an enhanced visitor experience to this area, as well as improves access to public assets and the associated visitor experiences. |
| | 22.2 | Develop the Porchfields project to create an animated visitor and community space. | | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Project 24: Developing Navan as a Tourism Base | 24.1 | Devise a destination town approach for Navan initially targeting the day time visitor. | MCC | | This Action included piloting an initiative with Navan Racing Festival and is linked to the Re-imagined Boyne Valley Drive clusters. The <i>Reimagining the Boyne Valley Drive</i> report has been produced by Fáilte Ireland and Paul Hogarth Company (2023). This report has been developed to include a variety of actions for Navan, including infrastructure and innovation such as developing the Navan River Boyne Walk, the Navan to Slane River Walk, and the Boyne valley to Lakelands County Greenway. The Navan Cluster initiatives aim to increase the sustainable tourism offer through active travel facilities and engagement with the historic sites such as the Tara zinc mine. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | The assessment of the indicators and targets has found that this Action has had a neutral effect on the majority of the indicators. However, the assessment has found that there are neutral to positive effects on population and human health and material assets indicators due to the promotion of walking in the area and improving access to public assets. The development of the walking trails and any other infrastructural developments will require the appropriate environmental assessments to be undertaken to ensure potential negative effects on the environment are avoided, reduced and/ or minimised as appropriate. |
| Project 26: Develop Carlingford as a Tourism Hub | 26.1 | Undertake a masterplanning development process to develop a long term vision and enhance the visitor experience in Carlingford and surrounding area that will support its development as a key activity hub. | LCC | FI | A 10-year vision for Carlingford and Cooley Peninsula has been completed. One of the outcomes of this Action which incorporates this 10-year vision is the <i>Carlingford and Cooley Region Destination Orientation and Development Plan</i> (DODP) developed by LCC, Fáilte Ireland and The Paul Hogarth Company, which focuses on outdoor development. The projects under this report include developing public travel hubs, trailheads, local active travel hubs, increased parking, pedestrian linkages, greenway network enhancements, viewpoints, education and research centre, safer on-street active travel, and road and traffic management. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | The assessment of the indicators and targets has found that this Action has had a neutral effect on the majority of the indicators. However, the assessment has found that there are neutral to positive effects on population and human health and air quality and climatic factors indicators due to the promotion of active travel and public transport in the area. The Action also aims to create a safer environment for pedestrians. The initiative of road and traffic management will result in a safer, less congested and more pleasant journey in Carlingford. This will result in wider positive effects particularly on the material assets indicators in that it improves access to public assets and infrastructure (i.e. the road network itself and also tourist attractions, beaches, cultural heritage sites, etc). The progression of any other future infrastructural developments planned under this Action, such as the education and research centre, will require the appropriate environmental assessments to be undertaken to ensure potential negative effects on the environment are avoided, reduced and/ or minimised as appropriate. |

| Project | ID | Action | Lead | Partner | Action Status & Update | Monitoring result likely significant effects on the SEA environmental Indicators X - Negative, 0 - Neutral, √ - Positive ? - Unknown | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Assessment Narrative |
|--|-------|---|------|---------|---|---|----|-----|------|------|----|-----|------|----|----|-----|----|----|----|-----|-----|----|--|
| | | | | | | B1 | B2 | B3i | B3ii | PHH1 | S1 | W1i | W1ii | W2 | W3 | AC1 | M1 | M2 | M3 | CH1 | CH2 | L1 | |
| Project 27: Develop Dundalk as a Tourism Hub | 27.2 | Support the visitor experience at the County Museum as a 'Designated Museum' association with the National Museum of Ireland examining opportunities to showcase the 'Ancient' theme through the National Collection. | LCC | FI | This Action is being assessed as part of the <i>Reimagined Tain Trail Strategy Report</i> (Failte Ireland, 2024b), named <i>Reimagined County Museum Dundalk</i> . The museum's strong community and school connections provide a unique opportunity to involve local children in the retelling of the Táin and to provide engagement opportunities for visitors through educational and cinematic hub. Some of the development considerations include wall displays, simple interactives, floor maps, and lighting. Digital assets could include Minecraft, film set/studio and gamification room. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0√ | 0 | The assessment of the indicators has identified that this project has had a neutral effect on all SEA targets. However, the assessment has found that there are neutral to positive effects on cultural heritage indicators due to the allocation of the County Museum Dundalk as a Signature Tain Experience., This results to enhanced and more engaging visitor experiences through branding the existing auditorium as a Tain educational and cinematic hub with storytelling assets. Once the site is developed it is expected it will support local communities as well as wider tourism relating to the Tain Trail. |
| Project 29: Supporting our Tourism Partners | 29.1 | Boann Distillery - Provide experience development support for the development of a new visitor attraction by 2021. | PS | FI | The Action involves, and is now in the process of, developing a new visitor centre/cafe, within the footprint of an existing building. The Boann Distillery was granted planning permission by MCC on 7/11/23 (Planning ref: 23401, Applicant: Boann Distillery Limited) to change the use of a former showroom and warehouse to a new distillery and visitor centre, restaurant, retail area, storage and offices. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | The assessment of the indicators and targets has found that this Action has had a neutral effect on the majority of the indicators. However, the assessment has found that there are neutral to positive effects on the material assets indicator due to the improvement of visitor facilities, ensuring tourists are directed to attractions that have adequate critical infrastructure, such as toilets, food and beverage, etc. |
| | 29.6 | Boyne Valley Activities - Provide experience development support for the expansion of water activities at Trim base based on opening of the Blueway. | PS | FI | The Boyne Blueway Trim is an 8km stretch of the River Boyne which flows from Trim to Bective Mill. As part of the opening of the Boyne Blueway Trim, the Boyne Blueway Trim development includes the Boyne Valley Activities Centre, located on Jonathan Swift Street which has opened, providing a range of visitor facilities such as boat washdown, kayak hire, shower, toilets, coffee facilities and shuttlebus service. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | The assessment of the indicators and targets has found that this Action has had a neutral effect on the majority of the indicators. However, the assessment has found that there are neutral to positive effects on the material assets indicator due to the development of visitor facilities, where previously may be insufficient, ensuring tourists are directed to attractions that have adequate critical infrastructure, such as toilets, food and beverage and public transport. |
| | 29.19 | Carlingford - Provide experience development support for the opportunity to develop destination profiling experiences with tourism operators such as Carlingford Ferry focusing on the Lough of Legends and accessing the Ancient clusters. | PS | FI | This Action is guided by the <i>Carlingford and Cooley Region Destination Orientation Development Plan</i> by Failte Ireland. As part of this Action, the report outlines the enhancement of active travel connections, edge of town parking, and links to local marine and car ferry services for ease of visitor arrival, safe movement and legibility of local interpretation. These enhancements will overall create a better visitor experience. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0√ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | The assessment of the indicators and targets has found that this Action has had a neutral effect on the majority of the indicators. However, the assessment has found that there are neutral to positive effects on population and human health and material assets indicators due to the improvement of visitor facilities, creating a safer environment for visitor use, as well as improving access to public assets through improved active travel and general transport connections to urban / residential areas. |

6. REMEDIAL MITIGATION FOR NEXT MONITORING CYCLE

No significant negative effects have been identified as a result of the implementation of the Plan, therefore, no remedial measures are required. A number of recommendations are included for consideration which would inform the next monitoring cycle.

6.1 Recommendations

Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna

While no remedial measures were identified as being required relating to biodiversity, arising from the monitoring results, the next monitoring programme could consider:

- Requesting funding applicants to monitor and report on specific ecological data / indicators relevant to the specific project/proposal being developed so that it can be included in future monitoring frameworks, where appropriate. The data should not be overly complex to collect / report on but could inform species and habitat management in sensitive and heavily visited tourist sites.

Soil

No remedial measures were identified as being required relating to soil arising from the monitoring. Tailte Éireann in partnership with the EPA's have developed a National Land Cover map which should be included as a source of data to inform the development of future DEDPs/VEDPs and associated projects and monitoring, as appropriate.

Cultural Heritage

The current indicators and targets for CH1 and CH2 address impacts on RMP and RPS, respectively. However, there is likely to be overlap in the designation of sites and features between these categories. To improve clarity and efficiency in future monitoring, it is recommended that the indicators and targets for CH1 and CH2 be consolidated into a single indicator and target. See revised SEA targets and indicators for Cultural Heritage in Table 6.2 below.

General recommendations

Data gaps

The SEA Statement monitoring programme includes a source of data to use in the monitoring programme which is not available, namely:

Documentation demonstrating compliance⁵ with "*Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management*". The SEA Statement specifies that Fáilte Ireland's stakeholders shall be required to demonstrate compliance with measures relating to sustainable development, environmental protection, and environmental management contained within the following Fáilte Ireland published documents:

- Wild Atlantic Way Operational Programme Appendix 5 "*Site Maintenance Guidelines*" and other relevant measures from the Fáilte Ireland visitor and habitat management guidelines series (and any subsequent replacements); and
- Wild Atlantic Way Operational Programme Appendix 6 "*Environmental Management for Local Authorities and Others*" (and any subsequent replacements).

Recommendation: Funding organisations should incorporate the requirement to demonstrate compliance if considered appropriate as part of the application and funding process / procedures which would help streamline reporting on this compliance process. Alternatively, if there is no reliable mechanism to collect such data, the data source should be eliminated from the SEA monitoring programme.

Revision of SEA targets and Indicators

After completing the monitoring programme some of the indicators used to assess the Actions were positioned at a strategic and or national level. Consideration should be given to revising

⁵ Demonstration of compliance may be supported by monitoring undertaken by the beneficiary.

the monitoring targets and indicators to be more meaningful to the Plan area and specific Actions that are being monitored and the likely significant effects on the environment. These revisions should be flexible enough to monitor significant changes resulting from the plan including the nature of the projects, potential effects relating to tourism and sources of data that are readily available.

An example of potential changes to some of the targets and indicators are provided below relating to Population and Human Health. Consultation with the owners / source of data would be required before finalising any changes to the monitoring programme.

Table 6.1 Revised SEA indicators and targets for next monitoring cycle

| Env. Topic | Indicators | Target |
|---|--|--|
| Existing Population and Human Health | PHH1: Occurrence (any) of a spatially concentrated deterioration in human health arising from environmental factors resulting from the Plan, as identified by the Health Service Executive and Environmental Protection Agency. | PHH1: No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result the Plan. |
| Proposed revision: | | |
| Proposed Population and Human Health | PHH1a: Visitor numbers to site(s) and reports of littering of sites. ^(Note 1) PHH1b: Implementation of a tourism management plan for sites. ^(Note 1) PHH2: Trends/numbers employed in the tourism sector over time. PHH2b Number of people employed ^(Note 1) | PHH1: Sustainably manage any increase in visitors to the area. PHH2: Maintain and/or increase employment in the area. |
| Material Assets | | |
| Existing Material Assets | M1: Number of instances whereby additional tourists are directed by beneficiaries of funding towards areas in the Plan area where adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity is unavailable. | M1: No instances whereby additional tourists are directed by beneficiaries of funding towards areas in the Plan area where adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity that does not present a danger to human health are unavailable. |
| Proposed revision: | | |
| Proposed Material Assets | M1: Locations where additional tourists are directed by beneficiaries of funding towards areas where critical infrastructure is inadequate to sustainably manage/provide for visitors. ^(Note 1) | M1: Funding shall be directed towards areas to where adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity is available and/or is delivered as part of funding (i.e. water, wastewater, electricity, and access to the site – e.g. sufficient carparking, transportation, etc.) |
| Cultural Heritage | | |
| Existing Cultural Heritage | CH1: Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan. CH2: Percentage of entries to the Records of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected | CH1: No unauthorised adverse effects on archaeological heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan. CH2: No unauthorised adverse effects on architectural heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan. |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| | from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan. | |
| Proposed revision: | | |
| Proposed Cultural Heritage | CH1: Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, RPS and Architectural Conservation Areas protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan. | CH1: No unauthorised adverse effects on these heritage sites/features resulting from implementation of the Plan. |
| Note 1: | Monitoring is related to the specific Actions or if the site is being actively managed / monitored. | |

7. CONCLUSION

The Ancient Destination Experience Development Plan was developed for a five-year period (2021-2026). This monitoring report identifies that there are no significant changes to the baseline environment since the preparation of the Plan. The monitoring results indicate that out of the 111 Actions detailed in the Plan, 30 Actions have been progressed to a stage where they can be assessed for potential effects on the environment. 41 Actions were screened out of future SEA monitoring programmes, 40 Actions were found to have progressed but have insufficient information to complete the detailed SEA monitoring.

The monitoring undertaken on the 41 Actions found that overall, there has been a neutral effect on the environmental indicators, with no Actions resulting in significant negative and / or positive effects on the environment. However, the monitoring has identified that the Actions have delivered broader social, economic, and environmental benefits associated with the implementation of the Plan.

While no remedial measures were identified to be required however several recommendations have been included in this monitoring report which should be considered as part of the next monitoring programme. Therefore, it can be concluded that the SEA is fulfilling its core objective of providing for a high level of protection of the environment and the promotion of sustainable development.

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APPENDIX A

Table A-1 is the SEA Monitoring programme which was finalised and published in the previous SEA stage. It was published in the SEA Statement for the *Ancient Destination Experience Development Plan* (CAAS, 2020a). It identifies the selected indicators, targets and monitoring sources for the monitoring of significant environmental effects of the Plan. It informs the methodology for the monitoring which is contained in this report.

Table A-1 Selected Indicators, Targets and Monitoring Sources

| Environmental Component | Indicators | Targets | Source and (where available) Frequency |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna | B1: Conservation status of habitats and species as assessed under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive | B1: Maintenance of favourable conservation status for all habitats and species protected under National and International legislation to be unaffected by implementation of the Plan ⁶ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation demonstrating compliance with “Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management” Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht report of the implementation of the measures contained in the Habitats Directive - as required by Article 17 of the Directive (every 6 years) Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's National Monitoring Report for the Birds Directive under Article 12 (every 3 years) Consultations with the NPWS CORINE mapping resurvey (every c. 5 years) Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes |
| | B2: Percentage loss of functional connectivity without remediation resulting from Plan | B2: No significant ecological networks or parts thereof which provide functional connectivity to be lost without remediation resulting from the Plan | |
| | B3i: Number of significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites resulting from the Plan B3ii: Number of significant impacts on the protection of listed species | B3i: Avoid significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites resulting from the Plan B3ii: No significant impacts on the protection of listed species resulting from the Plan | |
| Population and Human Health | PHH1: Occurrence (any) of a spatially concentrated deterioration in human health arising from environmental factors resulting from the Plan, as identified by the Health Service Executive and Environmental Protection Agency | PHH1: No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result the Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation demonstrating compliance with “Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management” Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities |

⁶ Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be: (a) No alternative solution available; (b) Imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the programme to proceed; and (c) Adequate compensatory measures in place.

| Environmental Component | Indicators | Targets | Source and (where available) Frequency |
|-------------------------|--|---|--|
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) Consultations with the HSE and EPA Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes |
| Soil | S1: Artificial surfaces land cover extent | S1: Contribute towards the target of the National Planning Framework's SEA (2018) to "Maintain built surface cover nationally to below the EU average of 4%." | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) CORINE mapping resurvey (every c. 5 years) Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes |
| Water | W1i: Classification of Overall Status (comprised of ecological and chemical status) under the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (SI No. 272 of 2009) | W1i: No deterioration in the status of any surface water or adverse effect upon the ability of any surface water to achieve 'good status' as a result of the Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities Data issued under the Water Framework Directive Monitoring Programme for Ireland (multi-annual) EPA The Quality of Bathing Water in Ireland reports SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes |
| | W1ii: Mandatory and Guide values as set by the EU Bathing Water Directive and transposing Bathing Water Quality Regulations (SI No. 79 of 2008) | W1ii: No deterioration in the value of bathing waters or adverse effect upon the ability of any bathing water to achieve Mandatory values and, where possible, Guide values as a result of the Plan | |
| | W2: Interactions with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC resulting from development adhering to the Plan | W2: Not to affect the ability of groundwaters to comply with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC, subject to exemptions provided for by Article 4 of the WFD | |

| Environmental Component | Indicators | Targets | Source and (where available) Frequency |
|---------------------------------|--|---|--|
| | W3: Compliance of relevant lower tier assessments and decision making with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines | W3: For lower tier assessments and decision making to comply with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines | |
| Air and Climatic Factors | AC1: Demonstration of compliance with provisions relating to climate adaptation and mitigation have been integrated into the Plan. | C1: To maximise the amount of measures relating to climate adaptation and mitigation being implemented | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes |
| Material Assets | M1: Number of instances whereby additional tourists are directed by beneficiaries of funding towards areas in the Plan area where adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity is unavailable | M1: No instances whereby additional tourists are directed by beneficiaries of funding towards areas in the Plan area where adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity that does not present a danger to human health are unavailable | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) Consultations with the partners such as the EPA, Irish Water and/or planning authorities Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes |
| | M2: Number of significant adverse effects on the use of or access to public assets and infrastructure | M2: No significant adverse effects on the use of or access to public assets and infrastructure | |
| | M3: Preparation and implementation of construction and environmental management plans | M3: For construction and environmental management plans to be prepared and implemented for relevant projects | |
| Cultural Heritage | CH1: Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan | CH1: No unauthorised adverse effects on archaeological heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes |
| | CH2: Percentage of entries to the Records of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan | CH2: No unauthorised adverse effects on architectural heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan | |

| Environmental Component | Indicators | Targets | Source and (where available) Frequency |
|-------------------------|---|--|--|
| Landscape | L1: Number of unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in Development Plans and other statutory land-use plans | L1: No unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in Development Plans and other statutory land-use plans | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation demonstrating compliance with “Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management” • Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities • SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) • Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes |

APPENDIX B

SCREENING AND ASSESMENT OF PROJECTS FROM THE PLAN

STRATEGIC PILLAR ONE: UNLOCK THE HERITAGE ASSETS

| Project | Action | Description | Lead | Partner | Progress made on Action update | No env. impact | Review | Monitoring |
|-----------------------------|--------|---|-------------|---------|---|----------------|--------|------------|
| Project 1: Brú na Bóinne | 1.1 | Continue to provide experience development support for the Brú na Bóinne development as a priority that supports the site in maximising the investment to create a world class attraction and visitor experience, developed with consideration to the carrying capacity of monuments within a World Heritage sites. | OPW & DHLGH | FI | Fáilte Ireland have worked with consultants to develop the site orientation plan. This was developed by the OPW and FI Attractions team. ASSESSMENT: This Action relates to experience development and development of a site orientation plan, however, there are potential indirect environmental effects as a result of the plan development. This Action is taken forward to SEA monitoring. | | | Yes |
| | 1.2 | Examine approach to cross sell other 'Ancient' sites and local activities. | OPW & DHLGH | FI | This Action is currently being addressed as part of the Cluster Development process. Activities in this context are broad ranging and can be defined as experiences that enhance the visitor's engagement with Ireland's natural, cultural, and historical assets. Key categories of activities range from outdoor activities (including hiking, cycling, kayaking etc.), cultural and heritage activities (e.g. guided tours of historical sites, improving access to and interpretation of Ancient sites like Newgrange, the Hill of Tara, and Slane Castle), festivals and events, food and drink experiences etc. This aims to support the regional IAE strategies aiming to distribute visitors more evenly, reducing pressure on popular sites and encouraging exploration of lesser-known areas. ASSESSMENT: There is no direct potential for environmental effects to occur, however, there may be the potential for indirect environmental effects to occur with the promotion and diversification of local activities. At the time of writing, there is insufficient information to perform a detailed assessment. This action will be reviewed as part of the next monitoring programme. | | Yes | |

| Project | Action | Description | Lead | Partner | Progress made on Action update | No env. impact | Review | Monitoring |
|--------------------------------|--------|---|-------------|---------|---|-------------------------------------|--------|------------|
| | 1.3 | Provide experience development support for the development of Dark Sky experience at the site along with other diversification of the offering. | OPW & DHLGH | | ASSESSMENT: This proposal to provide experience development support for the Dark Sky Ireland experience has not started to date, however, there may be potential for environmental effects to occur with the diversification of the offer. This action will be reviewed as part of the next monitoring programme. | | Yes | |
| | 1.4 | Undertake and implement the recommendations of the pilot training needs analysis review for Brú na Bóinne. | OPW & DHLGH | FI | The training schedule was implemented in 2022/23 and is continually under review. ASSESSMENT: This Action relates to training analysis and has been completed, therefore, it is screened out of the SEA monitoring. | No further env. monitoring required | | |
| Project 2: Loughcrew Cairns | 2.1 | Undertake an examination of existing site review documents to establish areas of prioritisation in addressing visitor management requirements for the site and future inclusion in strategic projects between OPW and Fáilte Ireland. | OPW & DHLGH | | The Action has not yet proceeded. Initiatives/interventions relating to this action need to be discussed in advance and agreed with the OPW/DHLGH before any related initiatives can proceed. This Action will be advanced in partnership with the OPW/DHLGH within the lifetime of the DEDP. ASSESSMENT: This Action has not started and the potential for environmental effects depends on the evolving nature of this Action. Due to insufficient information, monitoring is not currently possible. However, this Action will be reassessed during the next monitoring programme. | | Yes | |

| Project | Action | Description | Lead | Partner | Progress made on Action update | No env. impact | Review | Monitoring |
|--|--------|--|-------------|---------|--|----------------|--------|------------|
| | 2.2 | Provide experience development support for the identification of a range of management options for the site accounting for the current archaeological management requirements of the site. | OPW & DHLGH | FI | <p>The Action has not yet proceeded. Initiatives/interventions relating to this action need to be discussed in advance and agreed with the OPW/DHLGH before any related initiatives can proceed. This Action will be advanced in partnership with the OPW/DHLGH within the lifetime of the DEDP.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: This Action has not started and the potential for environmental effects depends on the evolving nature of this Action. Due to insufficient information, monitoring is not currently possible. However, this Action will be reassessed during the next monitoring programme.</p> | | Yes | |
| Project 3: Trim Castle | 3.1 | Continue to provide experience development support for the development and a working group to continually review and upgrade the visitor experience requirements based on the agreed new investment into Trim Castle. | OPW & DHLGH | MCC | <p>This Action is ongoing.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: This Action relates to providing experience development support and creating a working group, however, depending on the new investment into Trim Castle, there may be potential works and environmental effects. Therefore, it will be reviewed as part of the next monitoring programme when more information is made available.</p> | | Yes | |
| | 3.2 | Provide experience development support for the development of a visitor experience combining the development requirements of Trim Castle and Trim as identified in the Boyne Valley Masterplan and supported by the destination town activity. | OPW & DHLGH | MCC | <p>The Action options are to be considered as part of the Re-imagined Boyne Valley Drive cluster orientation project currently underway. (Note: The Boyne Valley Masterplan has not been endorsed by OPW).</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur. This Action is taken forward to SEA monitoring.</p> | | | Yes |
| Project 4: Kings John's Castle Carlingford | 4.1 | Provide experience development support for the development of an operational and visitor development plan based on a new visitor experience approach to support and maximise the impact of the recent project investment in the site. | OPW & DHLGH | FI | <p>This Action is complete. Carlingford Heritage Trust is currently being delivered on site.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur. This Action is taken forward to SEA monitoring.</p> | | | Yes |

| Project | Action | Description | Lead | Partner | Progress made on Action update | No env. impact | Review | Monitoring |
|----------------------------------|--------|--|----------------|----------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--------|------------|
| Project 5: Ardee Castle | 5.1 | Establish a working group of all key stakeholders to implement the next phases of visitor experience development. | LCC | FI | ASSESSMENT: This Action relates to establishing a working group, therefore, it is screened out of the SEA monitoring. | No further env. monitoring required | | |
| | 5.2 | Create and implement a Visitor experience plan. | LCC | | This Action is going forward and is intended to be connected to the implementation of the Tain Trail and its recommendations (refer to Action 9.3 Integrated Ancient Trails). ASSESSMENT: This Action relates to creating a visitor experience plan for Ardee Castle. Given that the plan has not been developed as of yet, monitoring is not currently possible. However, this Action will be reassessed during the next monitoring programme. | | Yes | |
| Project 6: Boyne Valley Drive | 6.1 | Conduct an audit of the Boyne Valley Drive and key visitor attractions and sites to review effectiveness in delivering great visitor experiences. | FI | MCC - LCC - OPW - DHLGH | The Re-imagined Boyne Valley Drive report has been completed. ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur. This Action is taken forward to SEA monitoring. | | | Yes |
| | 6.2 | Identify projects to establish the Boyne Valley Drive route as a best in class visitor experiential route. | FI | MCC - LCC - OPW - DHLGH | | | | |
| | 6.3 | Prepare an experience development action plan to create a world leading 'Ancient Experience Trail'. | FI | MCC - LCC - OPW - DHLGH | | | | |
| | 6.4 | Assess site requirements to grow visitor numbers at key sites along the Boyne Valley Drive such as the plans for Oldbridge - Battle of the Boyne Site. | OPW & DHLGH | MCC - LCC - FI | The Action options are to be considered as part of the Re-imagined Boyne Valley Drive cluster orientation project currently underway. ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur. This Action is taken forward to SEA monitoring. | | | Yes |

| Project | Action | Description | Lead | Partner | Progress made on Action update | No env. impact | Review | Monitoring |
|----------------------------|--------|---|-------------|----------------|--|-------------------------------------|--------|------------|
| | 6.5 | Continue the implementation programme for the Boyne Valley Masterplan and miscellaneous works outlined in the Masterplan while working with Fáilte Ireland to identify the key ticketed and non-ticketed sites for visitor flow enhancement and inclusion in the visitor numbers monitoring system. | OPW & DHLGH | MCC - LCC - FI | ASSESSMENT: This Action relates to implementing a programme for Boyne Valley Masterplan. Due to insufficient information, monitoring is not currently possible. However, this Action will be reassessed during the next monitoring programme. | | Yes | |
| Project 7: Hill of Tara | 7.1 | Continue to develop the Conservation Management Plan currently in progress for the Hill of Tara. | DHLGH | FI - MCC - OPW | This Conservation Management Plan has been completed by OPW. ASSESSMENT: This Action relates to developing a Plan and has been completed, therefore, it is screened out of the SEA monitoring. | | | Yes |
| | 7.2 | Create a working group to implement the final recommendations of Hill of Tara Conservation Management Plan when completed. | OPW & DHLGH | FI - MCC | OPW/DHLGH are driving this Action. The Conservation Management Plan has been completed. Meath County Council is in the process of setting up the working group. ASSESSMENT: This Action relates to creating a working group, therefore, it is screened out of the SEA monitoring. | No further env. monitoring required | | |
| | 7.3 | Undertake an assessment of the immediate visitor servicing requirements to support the recommendations of the Hill of Tara Conservation Management Plan that will enhance site interpretation and visitor facilities. | OPW & DHLGH | FI - MCC | OPW/DHLGH are driving the Action. The Conservation Management Plan has been completed. Meath County Council has acquired land to address site enhancement and visitor servicing facilities. ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur. This Action is taken forward to SEA monitoring. | | | Yes |

STRATEGIC PILLAR TWO: REVEAL THE NATURAL ASSETS

| Project | Action | Description | Lead | Partner | Progress made on Action update | No env. impact | Review | Monitoring |
|---|--------|---|---------|---|---|----------------|--------|------------|
| Project 8: Boyne Navigation and Greenway | 8.1 | Complete the Boyne Navigation and Greenway planning process through a partnership approach that will include MCC, LCC, FI, OPW, DHLGH, Inland Waterways, NPWS - Boyne Navigation Group and local communities. | MCC | FI - OPW - LCC - DHLGH - IWBNG - NPWS | This Action is ongoing and being led by Meath County Council. Since the public consultation on the Emerging Preferred Route in early 2024, the project team have been finalising documentation relating to the option selection phase and progressing the development of the Emerging Preferred route, at the time of writing. ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur. This Action is taken forward to SEA monitoring. | | | Yes |
| | 8.2 | Undertake consultations with all stakeholders as part of planning process. | MCC | FI - OPW - LCC - DHLGH | This Action is linked to Action 8.1 and is still ongoing. Further consultation will be undertaken on the announcement of the preferred route. ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur. This Action is taken forward to SEA monitoring. | | | |
| | 8.3 | Develop a plan to create an innovative interpretative walk on the existing stretch between Drogheda town centre to the area adjacent to the Battle of the Boyne site. | MCC-LCC | FI | An interpretation plan for the Greenway is currently being developed and is being led by the Attractions Team. ASSESSMENT: This Action relates to developing a walk on an existing Greenway. The Action does not currently involve physical works, however, works may be possible in the future. This action will be reviewed as part of the next monitoring programme. | | Yes | |
| | 8.4 | Undertake a programme of works to upgrade the appropriate elements of the Navan to Boyne Valley Blueway. | MCC | | This Action is being led by Meath County Council with an ongoing status. The Boyne Blueway is certified from Trim to Bective Mill. ASSESSMENT: This Action relates to undertaking upgrade works on an existing Greenway. Due to the ongoing status and thus, insufficient information to date, monitoring is not currently possible. However, this Action will be reassessed during the next monitoring programme. | | Yes | |

| Project | Action | Description | Lead | Partner | Progress made on Action update | No env. impact | Review | Monitoring |
|--|--------|---|----------------|-------------------------------|--|----------------|--------|------------|
| Project 9: Integrated <i>Ancient</i> Trails | 9.1 | Review the experience development potential of existing and proposed trails including Greenways and Blueways across the destination with the objective of immersing the visitor in the <i>Ancient</i> story and linking all trails. | MCC-LCC | FI - NMS - NPWS - DHLGH - OPW | This Action is ongoing and is connected to the Destination Orientation Plans. ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur. This Action is taken forward to SEA monitoring. | | | Yes |
| | 9.2 | Examine the potential of the Boyne Camino to develop as a multi-day experience linking key <i>Ancient</i> sites as a Camino 5000. | LCC | MCC - FI | The Boyne Camino is now accredited as part of the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrimage Route. The development of the multi-day experience is still ongoing. The Action lead is Louth County Council, delivered in partnership with Boyne Valley Walking Trails. The Action is being part-funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development through the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme. ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur. This Action is taken forward to SEA monitoring. | | | Yes |
| | 9.3 | Review of the visitor experience development potential of the Táin March and the enhancement of the existing Táin Trail as an appealing walking and cycling route. | LCC | FI | This Action is ongoing. A report to Re-Imagine the Táin Trail has been produced, but no actions have been progressed yet. ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur. This Action is taken forward to SEA monitoring. | | | Yes |
| | 9.4 | Support the development of new and emerging trails that collectively increase the range of options for visitors to extend dwell time and explore new places e.g. Louth Heritage Trail, Cooley Camino. | LCC | FI | This Action is ongoing and is connected to Destination Orientation Plans. ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur. This Action is taken forward to SEA monitoring and will be reviewed with Action 9.1. | | | Yes |
| Project 10: Reconnecting to the River Boyne | 10.1 | Undertake an audit of directional and interpretation signage for the River Boyne linked to the Boyne Valley Drive review. | MCC - LCC - FI | PS – OPW - NPWS | This Action is to be considered as part of the Re-imagined Boyne Valley Drive Cluster orientation project currently underway. | | | Yes |

| Project | Action | Description | Lead | Partner | Progress made on Action update | No env. impact | Review | Monitoring |
|--|--------|---|-----------|---------|---|-------------------------------------|--------|------------|
| | | | | | ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur. This Action is taken forward to SEA monitoring. | | | |
| | 10.2 | Identify River Boyne viewing points to create 'sharable' experiences for visitors through innovative interpretation and place making installations linked to the Boyne Valley Drive Review. | MCC - LCC | NPWS | This Action is linked to Action 10.1. It is to be considered as part of the Re-imagined Boyne Valley Drive Cluster Orientation project currently underway. ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur. This Action is taken forward to SEA monitoring and will be assessed with Action 10.1. | | | |
| | 10.3 | Establish a working group to examine the wider experience development opportunities that exist through a River Boyne visitor proposition. | MCC - LCC | FI | This Action is to be considered as part of the Re-imagined Boyne Valley Drive Cluster Orientation project currently underway. ASSESSMENT: This Action relates to establishing a working group, therefore, it is screened out of the SEA monitoring. | No further env. monitoring required | | |
| Project 11: Greenways & Blueways Development | 11.1 | Develop the Navan to Kingscourt Greenway incorporating the rail line. | MCC | | This Action is complete and the greenway is operational. ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur. This Action is taken forward to SEA monitoring. | | | Yes |
| | 11.2 | Create an experience plan for the development and usage of the Blueway from Trim to Bective. | MCC | | The blueway has been certified and is currently being utilised by local provider Boyne Valley Activities. The experience plan is yet to commence. ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur. This Action is taken forward to SEA monitoring. | | | Yes |
| | 11.3 | Review the feasibility of extending the Blueway from Bective to Navan creating a trailhead in Navan. | MCC | | This Action has not been developed as of yet. ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur. However, due to the ongoing status and insufficient information to date, monitoring is not currently possible. However, this Action will be reassessed during the next monitoring programme. | | Yes | |

| Project | Action | Description | Lead | Partner | Progress made on Action update | No env. impact | Review | Monitoring |
|---------|--------|--|------|---------|---|----------------|--------|------------|
| | 11.4 | Undertake a review of the requirements to create a more accessible and user friendly Blueway trail head in Trim. | MCC | OPW | This Action is complete. The trail head has been developed at Boyne Valley Activities in Trim. This project is to be assessed with Action 11.2. ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur. This Action is taken forward to SEA monitoring. | | | Yes |
| | 11.5 | Complete signage and ancillary signage on the Royal Canal Greenway. | MCC | WI - FI | The Interpretation plan is complete, however, there is currently insufficient information on this Action. ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur. However, due to the ongoing status and insufficient information to date, monitoring is not currently possible. However, this Action will be reassessed during the next monitoring programme. | | Yes | |
| | 11.6 | Develop the Great Eastern Greenway as a new walking and cycling route starting with the development of the partially constructed elements on the old railway line between Omeath and Carlingford. This will form part of a greenway stretching from Lough Neagh to Dublin. Complete the Cross Border Omeath to Victoria Lock & Carlingford Marina to Carlingford Village element for 2023. | LCC | SEUPB | This Action has been completed. ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur. This Action is taken forward to SEA monitoring. | | | Yes |
| | 11.7 | Great Eastern Greenway: Review the feasibility of completion of the greenway from Carlingford - Greenore - Templetown Beach. | LCC | | This Action is still ongoing. At the time of writing, the preferred route is being considered. ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur. However, due to the ongoing status and insufficient information to date, monitoring is not currently possible. However, this Action will be reassessed during the next monitoring programme. | | Yes | |
| | 11.8 | Review the feasibility of incorporating a Greenway into a coastal defence project from Dundalk to Blackrock. | LCC | OPW | This Action has not started at the time of writing and therefore, there is insufficient information available on the Action. | | Yes | |

| Project | Action | Description | Lead | Partner | Progress made on Action update | No env. impact | Review | Monitoring |
|---------|--------|---|-----------|-----------------|---|----------------|--------|------------|
| | | | | | ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur. However, there is insufficient information to date and monitoring is not currently possible. This Action will be reassessed during the next monitoring programme. | | | |
| | 11.9 | Review the feasibility of incorporating a Greenway into a coastal defence project in Drogheda. | LCC | OPW | This Action has not started at the time of writing and therefore, there is insufficient information available on the Action. ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur. However, there is insufficient information to date and monitoring is not currently possible. This Action will be reassessed during the next monitoring programme. | | Yes | |
| | 11.10 | Review the feasibility of completion of the Greenway from Blackrock to Drogheda. | LCC | | This Action has not started at the time of writing and therefore, there is insufficient information available on the Action. ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur. However, there is insufficient information to date and monitoring is not currently possible. This Action will be reassessed during the next monitoring programme. | | Yes | |
| | 11.11 | Review the feasibility of extending the Boyne Greenway through Drogheda to link up with Public Transport Hubs and the proposed Drogheda to Mornington Greenway. | LCC - MCC | NTA | This Action is to be considered as part of the Re-imagined Boyne Valley Drive Cluster orientation project currently underway. ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur. This Action is taken forward to SEA monitoring. | | | Yes |
| | 11.12 | Review the feasibility of the greenway from Dundalk to Sligo as part of East West Road Project (Dundalk to Sligo (Route 1) National Cycle Strategy). | CCC | LCC - MCC - SCC | This Action has not started at the time of writing and therefore, there is insufficient information available on the Action. ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur. However, there is insufficient information to date and monitoring is not currently possible. This Action will be reassessed during the next monitoring programme. | | Yes | |

| Project | Action | Description | Lead | Partner | Progress made on Action update | No env. impact | Review | Monitoring |
|---------|--------|--|------|---------|--|----------------|--------|------------|
| | 11.13 | Review the feasibility of the proposed Dundalk to Inniskeen Greenway along old rail track. | LCC | MnCC | This Action has not started at the time of writing. ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur. However, there is insufficient information to date and monitoring is not currently possible. This Action will be reassessed during the next monitoring programme. | | Yes | |

STRATEGIC PILLAR THREE: INTRODUCE THE *ANCIENT* LEGENDS

| Project | Action | Description | Lead | Partner | Progress made on Action update | No env. impact | Review | Monitoring |
|---|--------|---|------|-----------|---|-------------------------------------|--------|------------|
| Project 12: Experience Innovation Cluster - Ancient Activity Experience Development | 12.1 | Create an <i>Ancient</i> Activity cluster to become the catalyst for immersive ancient experiences on land and on water. | FI | LCC - MCC | This Action is to be considered as part of the Re-imagined Boyne Valley Drive Cluster orientation project currently underway. ASSESSMENT: This Action relates to creating a cluster group and is not likely to have a significant impact on the environment, therefore, it is screened out of the SEA monitoring. | No further env. monitoring required | | |
| | 12.2 | Gap analysis of current experiences, activities, trails and supporting experiences identifying the core experiences for <i>Ancient</i> Activity and Lough of Legends development. | FI | LCC - MCC | This Action is to be considered as part of the Re-imagined Boyne Valley Drive Cluster orientation project currently underway. ASSESSMENT: This Action relates to a gap analysis and is not likely to have a significant impact on the environment, therefore, it is screened out of the SEA monitoring. | No further env. monitoring required | | |
| Project 13: Experience Innovation Cluster - Food & Drink Experience Development | 13.1 | Undertake an audit of current food experiences to identify year round food experiences with growth potential. | FI | MCC - LCC | This Action has been completed. 32 new experiences have been created. ASSESSMENT: This Action relates to an audit of current food experiences and has been completed, therefore, it is screened out of the SEA monitoring. | No further env. monitoring required | | |
| | 13.2 | Develop an <i>Ancient</i> Food Trail route linking year round 'fish and farm to fork' experiences across the entire <i>Ancient</i> destination. | FI | LCC - MCC | The Boyne Valley Food Development Strategy 2024-2028 has been developed in 2024. ASSESSMENT: This Action builds on existing services/food offering. Potential positive effects are | No further env. monitoring required | | |

| Project | Action | Description | Lead | Partner | Progress made on Action update | No env. impact | Review | Monitoring |
|---------|--------|--|-----------|---------|---|-------------------------------------|--------|------------|
| | | | | | recognised but it is not likely to have a significant impact on the environment, therefore, it is screened out of the SEA monitoring. | | | |
| | 13.3 | Create the <i>Ancient</i> seafood trail, Sea Louth, based on the Louth coastline, linking 'tide to table' experiences and as a basis for development of new seafood experiences. | LCC | FI | The trail is complete and will be further enhanced as part of Boyne Valley Food Development Strategy 2024-2028. There will be no physical works involved. ASSESSMENT: This Action builds on existing services/food offering. Potential positive effects are recognised but it is not likely to have a significant impact on the environment, therefore, it is screened out of the SEA monitoring. | No further env. monitoring required | | |
| | 13.4 | Develop an agri-tourism visitor experience network to align with the food cluster opportunity. | MCC - LCC | FI | This Action will be advanced as part of the Boyne Valley Food Development Strategy 2024-2028. There will be no physical works involved. ASSESSMENT: This Action has not involved physical works to date and builds on existing services/food offering. There is potential for future environmental effects to occur related to increase in visitors as a result from this enhance food network. However, there is insufficient information to date and monitoring is not currently possible. This Action will be reassessed during the next monitoring programme. | | Yes | |
| | 13.5 | Examine the heritage of food innovation interpretation opportunity in association with Dowth and Devenish and scope out the story to focus the site experience. | PS | FI | This Action is complete and will be considered as part of Lands at Dowth National Park development. ASSESSMENT: This Action relates to examining and scoping food innovation interpretation opportunities and has been completed, therefore, it is screened out of the SEA monitoring. | No further env. monitoring required | | |
| | 13.6 | Support the creation of best in class whiskey experiences through Slane and Boann Distilleries. | FI | PS | The visitor proposition has been completed at Boann. Work is being done with Slane Estate to maximise engagement with Slane Distillery. ASSESSMENT: This Action relates to supporting whiskey experiences at existing distilleries, therefore, it is screened out of the SEA monitoring. | No further env. monitoring required | | |

| Project | Action | Description | Lead | Partner | Progress made on Action update | No env. impact | Review | Monitoring |
|---|--------|---|------|-----------------|--|-------------------------------------|--------|------------|
| Project 14: Experience Innovation Cluster - Ancient Culture & Creative | 14.1 | Examine the development of an <i>Ancient</i> Culture & Creative hub in Kells. | MCC | FI - LTN | This Action is to be considered as part of the Re-imagined Boyne Valley Drive Cluster orientation project currently underway. ASSESSMENT: This Action will not involve any physical works. There is potential for future environmental effects to occur related to the increase in visitors or future works as a result of this Hub. However, there is insufficient information to date and monitoring is not currently possible. This Action will be reassessed during the next monitoring programme. | | Yes | |
| | 14.2 | Review the requirements to create a world class visitor experience linking Kells to the story of the Book of Kells integrating St. Columcille's House with the broader Kells experiences focused on cultural experiences. | MCC | FI - OPW | This Action is to be considered as part of the Re-imagined Boyne Valley Drive Cluster orientation project currently underway. ASSESSMENT: The potential for environmental effects depends on the evolving nature of this Action. As there are no specific activities linked to this Action as of yet, and due to insufficient information, monitoring is not currently possible. However, this Action will be reassessed during the next monitoring programme. | | Yes | |
| | 14.3 | Examine the development of a strategic alliance between Trinity College Dublin (TCD) and Kells to link to the Book of Kells story through possible community outreach / engagement model. | MCC | FI | This Action will be addressed as part of the Kells masterplanning project. ASSESSMENT: This Action relates to developing an alliance and creating an engagement model, therefore, it is screened out of the SEA monitoring. | No further env. monitoring required | | |
| Project 15: Púca - Halloween Festival | 15.1 | Develop a Púca working group to create, review and implement festival development proposals for the 3 areas of Trim, Drogheda and Athboy. | FI | MCC - LCC - BVT | Drogheda is no longer being considered as a festival location. ASSESSMENT: This Action is complete and relates to developing proposals for festival locations. This Action aligned accordingly to Fáilte Ireland guidelines on events. Drogheda is no longer included as a location for the Púca festival. The Action relating to the areas of Trim and Athboy does not involve physical works. Potential positive effects are recognised regarding creating a working group for | No further env. monitoring required | | |

| Project | Action | Description | Lead | Partner | Progress made on Action update | No env. impact | Review | Monitoring |
|---------------------------------|--------|---|-----------|-----------------|---|-------------------------------------|--------|------------|
| | | | | | tourism development and resource efficiency but it is not likely to have a significant impact on the environment, therefore, it is screened out of the SEA monitoring. | | | |
| | 15.2 | Devise a growth strategy for the Púca festival incorporating industry opportunities to sustain year-round experiences in Trim, Drogheda and Athboy. | FI | MCC - LCC - BVT | Drogheda is no longer being considered as a festival location. ASSESSMENT: This Action has not involved physical works to date. There is potential for future environmental effects to occur related to the increase in visitors as a result of this growth strategy. However, there is insufficient information to date and monitoring is not currently possible. This Action will be reassessed during the next monitoring programme. | | Yes | |
| | 15.3 | Create an industry training programme to support the growth of Púca through the creation of Halloween experiences throughout the destination. | FI | MCC - LCC - BVT | Further work is planned as part of this Action. ASSESSMENT: This Action relates to creating a training programme, therefore, it is screened out of the SEA monitoring. | No further env. monitoring required | | |
| Project 16: Living History | 16.1 | Examine the requirements to build on existing living history re-enactments throughout the destination combined with new opportunities for immersive visitor experiences through existing cultural and visual arts facilities. | MCC - LCC | FI - LTN - BVT | This Action will be addressed as part of the Re-imagined Boyne Valley Drive Cluster orientation project currently underway and the emerging recommendations from the Re-Imagined Tain Trail. ASSESSMENT: This Action builds on history re-enactments experiences at existing locations. It is not likely to have a significant impact on the environment, therefore, it is screened out of the SEA monitoring. | No further env. monitoring required | | |
| Project 17: Destination Imagery | 17.1 | Review gaps in Ireland's content pool for relevant local <i>Ancient</i> content. | FI | | This Action is based on a review which has been completed. The review will be constantly updated, as required. ASSESSMENT: This Action relates to reviewing a content pool based on the DEDP themes. 6 Destination websites have been reviewed to ensure consistency and alignment with guidelines. Given that there are no significant environmental impacts envisaged, this Action is screened out of the SEA monitoring. | No further env. monitoring required | | |

STRATEGIC PILLAR FOUR: DEVELOP THE INDUSTRY BASE

| Project | Action | Description | Lead | Partner | Progress made on Action update | No env. impact | Review | Monitoring |
|--|--------|---|----------|----------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--------|------------|
| Project 18: Accommodation Capacity Growth | 18.1 | Complete an accommodation needs analysis for the Boyne Valley. | FI | MCC - LCC | A pre-covid needs analysis has been completed. ASSESSMENT: This Action relates to conducting an analysis and is not likely to have a significant impact on the environment, therefore, it is screened out of the SEA monitoring. | No further env. monitoring required | | |
| | 18.2 | Prepare an accommodation growth plan. | FI | MCC - LCC | This Action will be addressed as part of the post-covid analysis work planned. ASSESSMENT: The potential for environmental effects depends on the evolving nature of this Action. Due to insufficient information, monitoring is not currently possible. However, this Action will be reassessed during the next monitoring programme. | | Yes | |
| | 18.3 | Support the development of niche accommodation development (e.g. eco and rural tourism) in line with the outputs of the accommodation needs analysis for the Boyne Valley. | FI | MCC - LCC | This Action will be addressed as part of the post-covid analysis work planned. ASSESSMENT: The potential for environmental effects depends on the evolving nature of this Action. Due to insufficient information, monitoring is not currently possible. However, this Action will be reassessed during the next monitoring programme. | | Yes | |
| | 18.4 | Develop the capability levels of the accommodation sector to consistently raise product and service quality standards to match the visitor promise of a world leading <i>Ancient</i> destination. | FI | | This Action will be addressed as part of the post-covid analysis work planned. ASSESSMENT: This Action relates to raising product and service quality standards and is not likely to have a significant impact on the environment, therefore, it is sifted out of the SEA monitoring. | No further env. monitoring required | | |
| Project 19: Evening Economy | 19.1 | Create an evening economy development plan using existing cultural and heritage venues for destination towns. | FI - BVT | MCC - LCC - OPW - PS | This Action is currently being addressed as part of the Drogheda cluster. ASSESSMENT: The potential for environmental effects depends on the evolving nature of this Action. Due to insufficient information, monitoring is not currently possible. However, this Action will be reassessed during the next monitoring programme. | | Yes | |

| Project | Action | Description | Lead | Partner | Progress made on Action update | No env. impact | Review | Monitoring |
|---|--------|---|-----------|--|---|-------------------------------------|--------|------------|
| | 19.2 | Undertake a review to examine the existing evening time entertainment provision to create easily accessible schedule of current evening activity. | MCC - LCC | | This Action is currently being addressed as part of the Drogheda cluster. ASSESSMENT: This Action relates to reviewing existing entertainment times and schedules and is not likely to have a significant impact on the environment, therefore, it is screened out of the SEA monitoring. | No further env. monitoring required | | |
| | 19.3 | Examine the creation of a unique <i>Ancient</i> or regionally themed music evening hosted throughout the destination on agreed evenings e.g. Boyne Sessions. | FI | MCC - LCC | This Action will take place within existing venues and will be driven by local authority partners. ASSESSMENT: This Action relates to hosting music events at existing venues and is not likely to have a significant impact on the environment, therefore, it is screened out of the SEA monitoring. | No further env. monitoring required | | |
| Project 20: Ancient Experience Industry Development Programme | 20.1 | Create a dedicated <i>Ancient</i> Experience Industry Development Programme approach for high potential experiences. | FI | FI - LEADER - MCC - LCC - Udasás - LEO | This Action is still ongoing. ASSESSMENT: This Action relates to creating a programme and is not likely to have a significant impact on the environment, therefore, it is screened out of the SEA monitoring. | No further env. monitoring required | | |
| Project 21: Tourism Destination Town - Drogheda | 21.1 | Develop a masterplanning approach for Drogheda to build on the destination town potential to become a tourism destination of scale connecting all existing heritage assets e.g. Linear mile while examining the potential of an attraction of scale for the town. | LCC - FI | | The initial masterplanning approach is being appraised by Louth County Council. The Boyne Valley Gateway masterplan is yet to be developed. The originally defined attraction of scale, MO'Connell, has been deemed not feasible. ASSESSMENT: The potential for environmental effects depends on the evolving nature of this Action. Due to insufficient information, monitoring is not currently possible. However, this Action will be reassessed during the next monitoring programme. | | Yes | |
| | 21.2 | Develop a legacy plan from Drogheda's hosting of the Fleadh Cheoil to focus on developing the evening economy opportunity. | LCC | FI | The New Festivals and Events Strategy for Drogheda is complete. ASSESSMENT: The potential for environmental effects depends on the evolving nature of this Action. Due to insufficient information, monitoring is not currently possible. However, this Action as well as the New Festivals and Events Strategy for | | Yes | |

| Project | Action | Description | Lead | Partner | Progress made on Action update | No env. impact | Review | Monitoring |
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| | | | | | Drogheda report will be reassessed during the next monitoring programme. | | | |
| | 21.3 | Undertake a review of the operational options for Laurence's Gate, Tholsel and Millmount Museum to build on their capacity to attract increased visitor numbers in line with the Drogheda masterplan development. | LCC | | <p>The initial masterplanning approach is being appraised by Louth County Council. The Boyne Valley Gateway masterplan is yet to be developed. The Boyne Valley Gateway masterplan is yet to be developed. The originally defined attraction of scale, MO'Connell, has been deemed not feasible.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: The potential for environmental effects depends on the evolving nature of this Action. Due to insufficient information, monitoring is not currently possible. However, this Action will be reassessed during the next monitoring programme.</p> | | Yes | |
| Project 22: Tourism Destination Town - Trim | 22.1 | Create a tourism destination town development plan for Trim. | MCC | | This Action has been completed as part of the Destination Towns project. | | | Yes |
| | 22.2 | Develop the Porchfields project to create an animated visitor and community space. | MCC | | ASSESSMENT: The Action is complete. However, there is potential for environmental effects to occur with increasing visitor numbers to this space. Therefore, there is potential for environmental effects to occur. This Action is taken forward to SEA monitoring. | | | |
| | 22.3 | Undertake a capacity review of the tourism trade to identify immediate tourism industry training requirements and accommodation provider capabilities. | FI | MCC - BVT | <p>This Action is being considered as part of the Boyne Valley Drive Cluster Development Plans.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: This Action relates to capacity reviews and is not likely to have a significant impact on the environment, therefore, it is screened out of the SEA monitoring.</p> | No further env. monitoring required | | |
| Project 23: Tourism Destination Towns | 23.1 | Create a measurement system to assess the impact of the Tourism Destination Town activity through a system of annual review with all stakeholders. | FI | MCC - LCC - OPW | <p>This Action is ongoing with the Local Authorities.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: This Action relates to assessing impacts of tourism activities and is not likely to have a significant impact on the environment, therefore, it is screened out of the SEA monitoring.</p> | No further env. monitoring required | | |
| Project 24: Developing Navan as a Tourism Base | 24.1 | Devise a destination town approach for Navan initially targeting the day time visitor. | MCC | | This Action included piloting an initiative with Navan Racing Festival and is linked to the Re-imagined Boyne Valley Drive clusters. This Action is not complete as additional work is required. | | | Yes |

| Project | Action | Description | Lead | Partner | Progress made on Action update | No env. impact | Review | Monitoring |
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| | | | | | ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur. This Action is taken forward to SEA monitoring. | | | |
| | 24.2 | Create an industry group to focus on the day time opportunity to attract international visitors through the quality of the food, drink and retail provision. | MCC | FI | The initial work on the Boyne Valley Drive Navan cluster has commenced but the project is not complete. ASSESSMENT: This Action relates to forming a collaborative group and is not likely to have a significant impact on the environment, therefore, it is screened out of the SEA monitoring. | No further env. monitoring required | | |
| | 24.3 | Create a dedicated training supports programme to develop the day time visitor economy opportunity to support the industry group. | MCC | FI | ASSESSMENT: This Action relates to creating a training programme and is not likely to have a significant impact on the environment, therefore, it is screened out of the SEA monitoring. | No further env. monitoring required | | |
| Project 25: Slane Experience Innovation Cluster | 25.1 | Undertake a review of the experience development requirements for Slane and Slane Estate aligned with the review of the Boyne Valley Drive. | FI - MCC | | This Action involved the completion of the Visitor Proposition for Slane Estate and assisting in their Masterplan development. The Boyne Valley Drive Slane Cluster has been established and infrastructure improvements is to be considered as part of the Re-imagined Boyne Valley Drive cluster orientation project currently underway. The <i>Reimagining the Boyne Valley Drive</i> report makes mention of the Slane cluster and the future development of the Sland Caste and Estate, however, there are insufficient details on this available to assess. ASSESSMENT: The potential for environmental effects depends on the evolving nature of this Action. Due to insufficient information, monitoring is not currently possible. However, this Action will be reassessed during the next monitoring programme. | | Yes | |
| Project 26: Develop Carlingford as a Tourism Hub | 26.1 | Undertake a masterplanning development process to develop a long term vision and enhance the visitor experience in Carlingford and | LCC | FI | The 10 year vision for Carlingford and Cooley Peninsula is complete. The Destination Orientation and Development Plan (DODP) focusing on outdoor development is complete. | | | Yes |

| Project | Action | Description | Lead | Partner | Progress made on Action update | No env. impact | Review | Monitoring |
|---|--------|--|----------|---------|--|----------------|--------|------------|
| | | surrounding area that will support its development as a key activity hub. | | | ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur, therefore, this Action is taken forward to SEA monitoring. | | | |
| | 26.2 | Support the advancement of potential destination transformation projects such as the proposed Sky Adventure / Tree Top proposition as an anchor project supporting the creation of the <i>Ancient</i> Activity Cluster, introducing innovative ways of telling the <i>Ancient</i> story. | LCC - PS | | Work is still ongoing to develop a master plan for Ravensdale Forest Park with strategic partner, Coillte, connected to the DODP. The industry cluster has been established in Carlingford and a capacity building plan for Carlingford Heritage Trust is in place. ASSESSMENT: This Action is related to advancement of potential projects. The Ravensdale Forest Park is ongoing and there have been no outcomes of the Carlingford Heritage Trust capacity building plan as of yet. The potential for environmental effects depends on the evolving nature of this Action and what the transformation projects entail. Due to insufficient information, monitoring is not currently possible. However, this Action will be reassessed during the next monitoring programme. | | Yes | |
| Project 27: Develop Dundalk as a Tourism Hub | 27.1 | Undertake a review of the experience development requirements for Dundalk to establish it as a visitor base and tourism hub developing the visitor experience through enhancement of existing heritage and cultural assets. | LCC | FI | ASSESSMENT: This Action is related to undertaking a review of experience development requirements as part of the Táin Trail. The potential for environmental effects depends on the evolving nature of this Action. Due to insufficient information, monitoring is not currently possible. However, this Action will be reassessed during the next monitoring programme. | | Yes | |
| | 27.2 | Support the visitor experience at the County Museum as a 'Designated Museum' association with the National Museum of Ireland examining opportunities to showcase the ' <i>Ancient</i> ' theme through the National Collection. | LCC | FI | This Action is being addressed as part of the Tain Trail. ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur. This Action is taken forward to SEA monitoring. | | | Yes |

| Project | Action | Description | Lead | Partner | Progress made on Action update | No env. impact | Review | Monitoring |
|---|--------|--|---------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------------|--------|------------|
| Project 28: Monaghan / Cavan / Meath / Westmeath Clusters | 28.1 | Develop a tourism industry cluster strategy to develop new visitor experiences and integrate saleable experiences in Carrickmacross, Virginia / Oldcastle and North Westmeath adopting the themes of the DEDP. | MnCC - CCC - MCC - WCC | Lead - FI - Partners - MnCC - CCC | The industry cluster has been established in Monaghan. Cavan and Westmeath have since aligned to IHH and Monaghan has its own DEDP. ASSESSMENT: This Action is related to the creation of an industry cluster and trade programme. It is not likely to have a significant impact on the environment, therefore, it is screened out of the SEA monitoring. | No further env. monitoring required | | |
| | 28.2 | Support the enhancement of the visitor experience at the Monaghan and Cavan County Museums through their 'Designated Museum' association with the National Museum of Ireland examining opportunities to showcase the 'Ancient' themes. | MnCC - CCC | FI | This Action involves an aligned new visitor proposition at the new €17.5m Monaghan Peace Campus/County Museum with Monaghan DEDP. Cavan has since aligned to IHH and Monaghan has its own DEDP. ASSESSMENT: This Action is related to the enhancement of visitor experiences within existing museums. It is not likely to have a significant impact on the environment, therefore, it is screened out of the SEA monitoring. | No further env. monitoring required | | |
| Project 29: Supporting our Tourism Partners | 29.1 | Boann Distillery - Provide experience development support for the development of a new visitor attraction by 2021. | PS | FI | Faite Ireland worked with Boann Distillery to define a destination-related visitor proposition. The Action involves, and is now in the process of, developing a new visitor centre/cafe, within the footprint of an existing building. The Boann Distillery was granted planning permission by MCC on 7/11/23 (Planning ref: 23401, Applicant: Boann Distillery Limited) to change the use of a former showroom and warehouse to a new distillery and visitor centre, restaurant, retail area, storage and offices. ASSESSMENT: There is potential for environmental effects to occur. This Action is taken forward to SEA monitoring. | | | Yes |
| | 29.2 | Land of Myth - Provide experience improvement support for the expansion of a Visitor Attraction Development in Slane adopting the theme of myths and legends. | PS | FI | This Action included an application for support under the Small Grants Attractions scheme, which has now been withdrawn. ASSESSMENT: This Action has not progressed, however, works may be possible in the future. This | | Yes | |

| Project | Action | Description | Lead | Partner | Progress made on Action update | No env. impact | Review | Monitoring |
|---------|--------|-------------|------|---------|---|----------------|--------|------------|
| | | | | | action will be reviewed as part of the next monitoring programme. | | | |



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