SEA ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

APPENDIX III – NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

FOR THE

IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST DRAFT REGIONAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2023-2027

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Section 1   Introduction and Terms of Reference

This is the Non-Technical Summary of the Environmental Report for SEA Environmental Report for the Ireland's Ancient East Draft Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027 (hereafter referred to as 'the Strategy'). The purpose of the Environmental Report is to provide a clear understanding of the likely environmental consequences of decisions regarding the adoption and implementation of the Plan. The Environmental Report has been prepared as part of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process that is being undertaken by CAAS Ltd. on behalf of Fáilte Ireland.

What is an SEA?

SEA is a systematic process of predicting and evaluating the likely environmental effects of implementing a proposed plan, or other strategic action, in order to ensure that these effects are appropriately addressed at the earliest appropriate stage of decision-making on a par with economic, social and other considerations.

Why is it needed?

The SEA is being carried out in order to comply with the provisions of the Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations, as amended, and in order to contribute towards sustainable development and environmental protection and management. The output of the process is an Environmental Report that should be read in conjunction with the Strategy.

How does it work?

All of the main environmental issues in the area were assembled and considered by the team who prepared the Draft Strategy. This helped them to devise a Strategy that contributes towards the protection and management of environmental sensitivities. It also helped to identify wherever potential conflicts between the Strategy and the environment exist and enabled these conflicts to be mitigated.

The SEA was scoped in consultation with designated environmental authorities.

What is included in the Environmental Report that accompanies the Strategy?

The Environmental Report contains the following information:

- A description of the environment and the key environmental issues;
- A description and assessment of alternatives for the Strategy;
- An assessment of the provisions of the Strategy; and,
- Mitigation measures, which will avoid/reduce the environmental effects of implementing the Strategy and will contribute towards compliance with important environmental protection legislation.

Difficulties Encountered during the SEA process

No significant difficulties were encountered in undertaking the assessment.

What happens at the end of the process?

An SEA Statement is prepared which summarises, inter alia, how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Strategy.

Section 2   The Draft Strategy

2.1   Overview

The Ireland's Ancient East Draft Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027 is a roadmap for the industry and all tourism stakeholders in the region to navigate the current challenges and steer a course towards recovery and continued success positioning the region as a destination of choice. The Strategy sets out a strategic approach to unlock the commercial potential of Ireland's Ancient East while ensuring development is sustainable and the benefits accrue to local communities and protect our natural environment.

The intention of the brand is to provide visitors with a very different flavour of Ireland relative to Ireland's other regional experience brands. In building on the early success of Ireland's Ancient East, the continued focus is to increase the economic contribution of tourism to the region by convincing visitors to stay longer and explore more of what the region has to offer and at an industry level to increase the level of brand adoption and collectively grow market awareness of Ireland's Ancient East domestically and internationally. The ambition for this strategy is to drive recovery and growth of the visitor economy in Ireland's Ancient East to create sustainable, high-quality jobs in the sector to support and strengthen local communities while protecting the natural environment.

The strategic challenge is to increase awareness and consumer appeal of the region through a strengthened brand proposition; improve the 'navigability' of the region for the visitor and ensure the continued development of attractive destinations and motivating visitor experiences, in a coordinated and visitor facing manner to attract and disperse targeted domestic and overseas visitors.

The Strategy presents a 10-year vision for the sustainable development of tourism in Ireland's Ancient East together with a 5-year strategy to guide the achievement of that vision:

> "It's 2030 and Ireland's Ancient East is not only internationally renowned for its rich heritage base but also the variety of tracks and trails by which the region can be discovered. Its diverse landscape provides the visitor with a rich tapestry from which to unlock the living culture unique to place and underpinned by 5,000 years of heritage and tradition evidenced in its many historical sites. As the food producing region of Ireland, the provenance and offering is steeped in the same tradition as its music, crafts and culture is alive for all the senses. The region boasts extensive coastline, river and canal network, mountain ranges and low-lying rich pastures accessible by an extensive off-road network of greenways, tracks and trails by which the visitor is invited to discover the heritage that shaped Ireland. Interspersed with cities and towns that provide evening and night-time entertainment, it is the diversity that has developed over time which attracts the visitor for a varied holiday."

It is intended that the Strategy will be the blueprint for sustainable tourism development in the region ensuring our stakeholders and partners can work together towards a shared vision. It provides a guiding strategic framework for other more detailed tourism development plans that will be prepared within the region over the next five years. These include: Destination and Experience Development Plans (DEDPs); County Tourism Strategies; and the tourism sections of County Development Plans. The Strategy will also to help identify priorities for available funding in the region.

The **strategic framework** has been developed to achieve the vision for Ireland's Hidden Heartlands. It consists of:

- Sustainability Strategy;
- Visitor and Brand Strategy;
- Destination Development Strategy & Product Development Strategy;
- Industry Development Strategy;
- Distribution and Business Development Strategy;
- Marketing Strategy;
- Community Strategy; and
- Environmental Strategy.

The strategic initiatives are outlined over the five-year timeframe of the plan. They provide the basis for a collective approach to deliver the strategy a number of stakeholders will work together on and ensure we deliver on the strategic objectives. The **Strategic Objectives** are:

- **Strategic Objective 1:** Motivate the domestic and international consumer to visit Ireland's Ancient East.
- **Strategic Objective 2:** Provide the visitor with more reasons to stay, increasing the economic impact of tourism.
- **Strategic Objective 3:** Ensure the region is easy to access, navigate and consume.
- **Strategic Objective 4:** Enable and assist the industry to grow its capacity and capability to ensure that it can thrive over the period of this strategy and create sustainable jobs in local communities.
  Strategic Objective 5: Build committed stakeholder and industry partnerships to guide sustainable destination development across the region.

The Strategy is supported by Appendices relating to:
- Site Maintenance Guidelines (appended to the SEA ER and to the Strategy);
- Visitor Management Guidelines (appended to the SEA ER and to the Strategy);
- Environmental Management for Local Authorities and Others (appended to this SEA ER and to the Strategy);
- Environmental Damage Resolution (appended to the SEA ER and to the Strategy);
- Greenway Visitor Experience & Interpretation Toolkit (appended to this SEA ER and to the Strategy);
- Environmentally Responsible Tourism Promotion & Campaign Statement (appended to this SEA ER and to the Strategy);
- Blueway Management & Development Guide (appended to the SEA ER and to the Strategy) and
- Sustainable Recreational Trail Development & Operation (in preparation).

2.2 Relationship with other relevant Plans and Programmes

The Strategy is situated alongside a hierarchy of statutory documents setting out public policy for, among other things, land use development, tourism, infrastructure, sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management. These other existing policies, plans etc. have been subject to their own environmental assessment processes, as relevant, and form the decision-making and consent-granting framework.

The National Planning Framework (NPF) sets out Ireland's planning policy direction up to 2040. The NPF is being implemented through Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSESs) and lower tier Development Plans and Local Area Plans. The RSESs set out various objectives relating tourism development and activities that have been subject to environmental assessment. The RSESs have informed, and continue to inform, the preparation of lower-tier Development Plans and Local Area Plans, which also set out various objectives relating tourism development and activities that have been subject to environmental assessment.

Implementation of the Strategy shall be consistent with and conform with the NPF, RSESs and lower-tier land use plans, including provisions relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management that have been integrated into these documents including through SEA and AA processes. In order to be realised, projects included in the Strategy (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, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework, of which the Strategy is not part and does not contribute towards.

Section 3   The Environmental Baseline

3.1   Introduction

The summary of the environmental baseline of the area to which the Strategy relates is described in this section. This baseline together with the Strategic Environmental Objectives, which are identified in Section 3.11, is used in order to identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the Draft Strategy and in order to determine appropriate monitoring measures.

The area to which the Strategy relates is situated within/partially within the following counties: Cork; Tipperary; Offaly; Monaghan; Louth; Meath; Kildare; Wicklow; Wexford; Carlow; Kilkenny; Laois; and Waterford.

The area to which the Strategy relates shares a border with Northern Ireland and the potential for likely significant transboundary environmental effects is considered by the SEA. For this purpose, environmental baseline information at and across the border in Northern Ireland relating to relevant environmental components detailed below have been considered. For more detail refer to SEA Environmental Report.

3.2   Likely Evolution of the Environment in the Absence of the Strategy

The likely evolution of the environment in the absence of a plan would resemble the environmental effects that are described for Alternative 1 (Business as Usual).

3.3   Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna

Key ecological sensitivities across the area to which the Strategy relates include those relating to:
- **Rare species and habitats** protected in the designated Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs);
- **Coastal areas and marine waters and associated aquatic ecology** downstream of the area to which the Strategy relates.
- **Peatlands** associated mainly with upland and coastal locations; and
- **Aquatic and riverine ecology** associated with the various lakes, streams, rivers, and estuaries.

European sites within the area to which the Strategy relates occur in the greatest concentrations in upland and coastal areas and along the waterways within and downstream of the area to which the Strategy relates. These European sites comprise:
- Special Areas of Conservation[1] (SACs); and
- Special Protection Areas[2] (SPAs).

The SEA uses the same zone of influence cited in the Appropriate Assessment (AA); a 15 km buffer around the area to which the Strategy relates. European sites designated within and within 15 km buffer of the area to which the Strategy relates are mapped on Figure 3.1. There are 167 European sites (112 SACs and 55 SPAs) designated within this zone out of which 108 European sites (75 SACs and 55 SPAs) are designated within or partially within the area to which the Strategy relates. For more detail on European sites refer to the SEA Environmental Report and AA document that accompanies the Draft Strategy.

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[1] SACs have been selected for protection under the European Council Directive on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (92/43/EEC) due to their conservation value for habitats and species of importance in the European Union. The Habitats Directive seeks to establish Natura 2000, a network of protected areas throughout the EU. It is the responsibility of each member state to designate SACs to protect habitats and species, which, together with the SPAs designated under the 1979 Birds Directive, form Natura 2000. The European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 consolidate the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997 to 2005 and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats)(Control of Recreational Activities) Regulations 2010.

[2] SPAs have been selected for protection under the 1979 European Council Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC) - referred to as the Birds Directive - due to their conservation value for birds of importance in the EU.

Other ecological designations occur within and adjacent to the area to which the Strategy relates (including relevant designations in Northern Ireland) and these are detailed in the main SEA Environmental Report.

For more detail refer to SEA Environmental Report.

Existing Fáilte Ireland Environmental Monitoring
Fáilte Ireland regularly engages with environmental research that is used to make informed management decisions and produce robust guidelines to facilitate the protection of the environment. From its inception in 2014, the Wild Atlantic Way (WAW) Operational Programme Monitoring Programme (undertaken to date by CAAS on behalf of Fáilte Ireland guided by relevant stakeholders) has been conducting research into the impacts of tourism on the receiving environment guided by an independent working group including the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

On site observational surveys and ecological assessments have covered 57 locations and monitored the activities and effects of over 26,000 visitors. The findings, published in the form of Visitor Observation Reports and Ecological Impact Reports, show that visitors cause low levels of effects and that relatively higher levels of effects are predominantly caused by the mismanagement of sites – or the lack of management. Effectively managed sites have been identified where visitor movements are facilitated alongside protection of environmental receptors such as Derrynane House. The research has shown that the protection of sites does not have to rely on infrastructure or visitor restrictions to avoid environmental effects. The monitoring has shown that that activity dynamics are key drivers of both impact occurrence and impact severity. Therefore, it is fundamental that management practices identify and appropriately manage the activities available at nature-based destinations. From the monitoring work it was seen that 75% of all visitor observations resulted in no identifiable effects; which highlights the feasibility of 'no impact tourism' being an achievable target. As well as the site-specific data being collected, the Monitoring Programme collates and interprets existing national environmental indicator data, compiling the results into annual Macro-Monitoring Reports.

The monitoring program has yielded a strong dataset and is set to continue into the future, expanding beyond the WAW to look at a set of 19 sites across Ireland from 2021-2025. As the data expands and is consolidated over time, annual trends and comparisons can be explored which will provide further insights into site-specific interactions. One of the key expansions of the database being gathered, aims to explore impact distance thresholds around nature-based tourism destinations. These data will be harnessed by Fáilte to inform management decisions and further refine existing guidelines and produce additional resources that facilitate environmental protection.

The findings of the Monitoring Programme are circulated to the local authorities with host sites and to site management teams at sites not under the management of local authorities. This ensures that the research can be harnessed on site by those responsible while contributing towards informed management plans and guidelines created by Fáilte Ireland.

In 2014, Fáilte Ireland published the WAW Site Maintenance Guidelines that provide details of the works that may be required to meet a minimum standard of presentation at WAW Discovery Points. The 2014 Guidelines include an Ecological Method Statement which sets out the ecological standards and procedures that must be complied with by local authorities in implementing any works.

Fáilte Ireland is currently preparing guidance for the WAW in order to facilitate the identification of available and effective management options and the championing of concepts like 'keeping it wild'. Furthermore, Fáilte Ireland is preparing a guidelines to facilitate broad scale identification and understanding of the habitats present at Nature-based tourism destinations – including details relating to known sensitivities of the habitats. As well as these, Fáilte Ireland have produced a suite of guidelines giving detailed design guidelines and considerations for planning tourism projects at sensitive sites.

3.4   Population and Human Health

Population has the potential to interact with various environmental components. Potential interactions include:
- Recreational and development pressure on habitats and landscapes;
- Contribution towards increase in demand for wastewater treatment at the municipal level;
- Contribution towards increase in demand for water supply and associated potential impact of water abstraction;
- Potential interactions in flood-sensitive areas; and
- Potential effects on water quality.

Human health has the potential to be impacted upon by environmental vectors (i.e. environmental components such as air, water or soil through which contaminants or pollutants, which have the potential to cause harm, can be transported so that they come into contact with human beings). Hazards or nuisances to human health can arise as a result of exposure to these vectors arising from incompatible adjacent land uses for example. These factors have been considered with regard to the description of: the baseline of each environmental component; and the identification and evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the Strategy.

The greatest health risk from radiation in Ireland is caused by radon. The presence of radon gas, a naturally occurring radioactive gas that originates from the decay of uranium in rocks and soils, occurs across the country. The number of homes within the area to which the Strategy relates with radon levels above the reference level is within the normal range experienced in other locations across the country.

Parts of the Strategy area are very vulnerable to adverse effects from small changes in sea level combined with changes in the occurrence of severe rainfall events and associated flooding of rivers and a number of smaller urban streams. Flooding in certain circumstances could pose a risk to human health.

For more detail refer to SEA Environmental Report.

3.5   Soil

Active blanket bogs and active raised bogs are considered to be priority habitats, listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive. Ombrotrophic (rain-fed) and minerotrophic (groundwater-fed) peat soils are often indicative of areas that are the most sensitive to development due to ecological sensitivities and impeded drainage issues. Many of these peat areas are also subject to ecological designations.

The GSI (Geological Survey of Ireland) have a suite of data sources available that would be useful in planning and assessing individual projects with regard to the environmental topic(s) of soil and/or material assets. These include:
- Aggregate Potential Mapping;
- Bedrock mapping;
- Quaternary and Physiographic mapping; and
- National Aquifer and Recharge mapping.

Geological Survey of Ireland coordinates the Irish Geological Heritage Programme, which seeks to identify and select sites of geological interest within each county across the country. Sites that are appraised, but which are not selected for NHA designation, are classified as 'County Geological Sites' (CGSs), as recognised in the National Heritage Plan (2002). Nationally, audits of geological sites of 29 local authority areas have been completed to date[3], including counties within or partially the area to which the Strategy relates: Tipperary; Offaly; Monaghan; Louth; Meath; Kildare; Wicklow; Wexford; Carlow; Kilkenny; Laois; and Waterford. There are many CGSs within or partially within the area to which the Strategy relates, with the highest concentration of these sites occurring within upland locations.

For more detail refer to SEA Environmental Report.

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[3] The audits of County Cork and County Kerry have not yet been completed. More detail on audits of CGSs is available from the GSI   https://www.gsi.ie/en-ie/programmes-and-projects/geoheritage/activities/county-geological-site-audits/Pages/Completed-audits.aspx.

Figure 3.1 European sites within and within 15 km of the area to which the Strategy relates

3.6 Water

Surface and Groundwater Status

Since 2000, Water Management in the EU has been directed by the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC (WFD). The WFD requires that all Member States implement the necessary measures to prevent deterioration of the status of all waters - surface, ground, estuarine and coastal - and protect, enhance and restore all waters with the aim of achieving *good status*.

The WFD surface water status (2013-2018) for rivers and lakes within and surrounding the area to which the Strategy relates, including a number of *unassigned,[4]* waterbodies is shown on Figure 3.2. The WFD status of the rivers and lakes within the area to which the Strategy relates is classified as *high, good* and *moderate* however, sections[5] of rivers and streams are identified as being of *bad* or *poor* due to unsatisfactory ecological/biological and/or physio-chemical status. The status of transitional and coastal waterbodies within and adjacent to the area to which the Strategy relates is classified as *high good* and *moderate* however some of the transitional and coastal waters are identified as being of *bad* or *poor* due to unsatisfactory ecological/biological and/or physio-chemical status.

The WFD groundwater status (2013-2018) of groundwater underlying the area to which the Strategy relates is mostly identified as being of *good* status, meeting the objectives of the WFD with some areas of *poor* status. The WFD status of river and coastal waterbodies in Northern Ireland (2018)[6] adjacent to the area to which the Strategy relates is also shown on Figure 3.2.

Aquifer Vulnerability

Aquifer vulnerability refers to the ease with which pollutants of various kinds can enter into groundwater. The vulnerability of aquifers underlying the area to which the Strategy relates are generally classified as being of:

- *Low vulnerability;*
- *Moderate; and*
- *High, Extreme vulnerability and Extreme (rock at or near surface or karst).*

The Geological Survey of Northern Ireland (GSNI) provides regional groundwater aquifer and vulnerability classification for Northern Ireland. More detail on groundwater vulnerability and groundwater resources for Northern Ireland are available from the Geological Survey of Northern Ireland's (GSNI) GeoIndex.[7]

Flooding

Flooding is an environmental phenomenon which, as well as causing economic and social impacts, could in certain circumstances pose a risk to human health. The existence of flood risk across the country is illustrated by various sources of information on historical flooding events – including those available from the Office of Public Works, the lead Authority on flooding in the country, National Flood Hazard Mapping website. In addition to this historic mapping there is predictive, modelled Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment and Flood Risk and Hazard mapping available from the OPW including through the National Catchment Flood Risk Management Programme. These mapping sources identify flood risk from various sources, including fluvial, pluvial, coastal and groundwater. The Flood Risk and Hazard mapping has informed the preparation of Flood Risk Management Plans, which have been in force since 2018 across different parts of the Strategy area.

For more detail refer to SEA Environmental Report.

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[4] There is a data gap relating to WFD surface water status data. Overall status is currently not assigned and the term *"unassigned status"* applies in respect of these waterbodies.
[5] As per EPA classification system (gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps).
[6] The 2018 WFD datasets are the most recent GIS and mapping datasets available for Northern Ireland: https://gis.daera-ni.gov.uk.
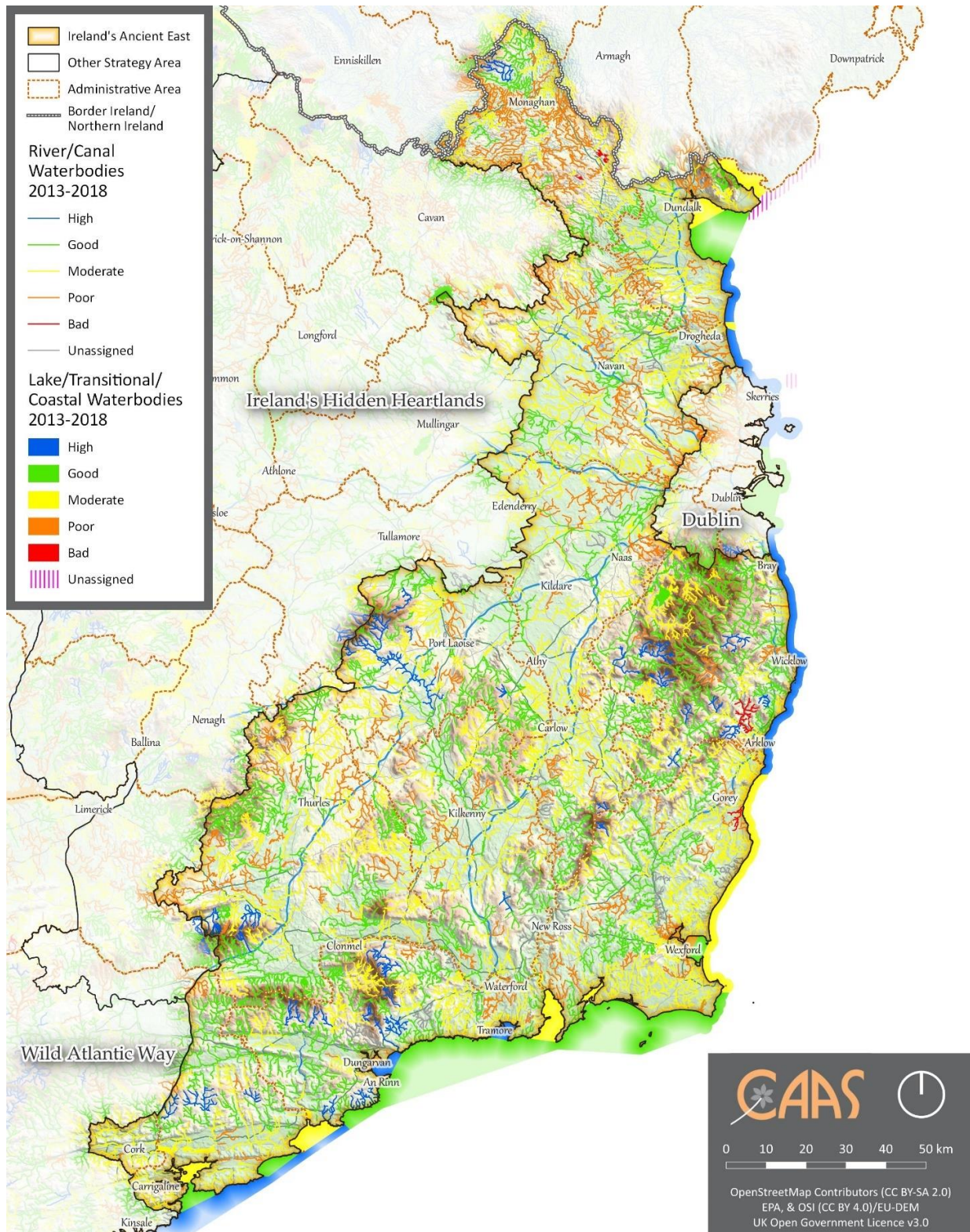[7] https://mapapps2.bgs.ac.uk/GSNI_Geoindex/home.html

Figure 3.2 WFD Surface Waterbodies Status (2013-2018)

3.7   Air and Climatic Factors

Various provisions relating to climatic factors have been integrated into the Strategy, compliance with which will need to be demonstrated by those seeking or maintaining funding from Fáilte Ireland. Such measures   include those relating to:
- Walking and cycling; and
- Contribution towards European and national objectives for climate adaptation and mitigation, taking into account a wide range of detailed measures including those relating to resilience.

Interactions with climatic factors are also present with other environmental components including water/flooding.

The revised National Climate Action Plan 2021 provides a detailed plan for taking decisive action to achieve a 51% reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and setting us on a path to reach net-zero emissions by no later than 2050, as committed to in the Programme for Government and set out in the Climate Act 2021. The Plan lists the actions needed to deliver on our climate targets and sets indicative ranges of emissions reductions for each sector of the economy. It will be updated annually, including in 2022, to ensure alignment with our legally binding economy-wide carbon budgets and sectoral ceilings.

The Climate Change Advisory Council's Annual Review 2021 identified that when considering national policy goals to 2050, Ireland is presently significantly off-track from paths that deliver long-term transition towards climate neutrality on that timescale.

The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 commits Northern Ireland to a target of 48% reduction in emissions and 80% renewable electricity by 2030 and carbon net zero by 2050.

In order to protect human health, vegetation and ecosystems, EU Directives set down air quality standards in Ireland and the other Member States for a wide variety of pollutants. These pollutants are generated through fuel combustion, in space heating, traffic, electricity generation and industry and, in sufficient amounts, could affect the well-being of the areas inhabitants. The EU Directives include details regarding how ambient air quality should be monitored, assessed and managed. In order to apply with European Directives relating to air quality, the EPA manages the National Ambient Air Quality Network and measures the levels of a number of atmospheric pollutants at locations across the country.

For more detail refer to SEA Environmental Report.

3.8   Material Assets

Wastewater
Based on the EPA's assessment of monitoring information provided by Irish Water and the enforcement activities carried out by the EPA, this report identifies urban areas with the most important environmental issues that must be addressed. There are currently a number of Wastewater Treatment Plants (WWTP) within and/or serving the area to which the Strategy relates, listed by the EPA as "priority areas", where improvements are required to resolve urgent environmental issues.

The area to which the Strategy relates is served by combined sewer networks, including septic tanks and sewerage treatment schemes serving agglomerations under 500 P.E. and urban WWTPs. The most recent and available Irish Water compliance report for the wastewater treatment plants serving the area to which the Strategy relates, provide information on the environmental performance and wastewater discharge licence compliance of the following WWTPs. Irish Water in collaboration with County Councils has developed and prioritised a major programme of work which will address deficiencies that exist across the wastewater infrastructure across the country.

Water Supply

Drinking water supply in the area to which the Strategy relates is provided by private and public water supply schemes. Irish Water in collaboration with County Councils has developed and prioritised a major programme of work, which will address deficiencies that exist across the water supply network and infrastructure. Irish Water is currently preparing a National Water Resources Plan (NWRP) to address urgent issues with the supply and demand for drinking water in Ireland over the short, medium and long term.

Under Section 58 of the Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992, the EPA is required to collect and verify monitoring results for all water supplies in Ireland covered by the European Communities (Drinking Water) Regulations, 2000. The EPA publishes their results in annual reports that are supported by Remedial Action Lists (RALs). The RAL identifies water supplies that are not in compliance with the Regulations mentioned above. There are currently a number of public water supply schemes within and/or serving the area to which the Strategy relates listed on the most recent EPA Remedial Action List (Q4 of 2021).

Public Assets and Infrastructure

The area to which the Strategy relates is served by rail, bus, cycle network, regional and strategic roads. Public transport to Ireland's Ancient East from east coast hubs such as Dublin City and Airport and Cork City is strong with regular bus services operated by the public and private sector. Public transport within counties however is weaker with little to no linkages between towns and visitor attractions or key cities and tourism towns.

The waterways, marinas, ports and harbours located across the area to which the Strategy relates have many functions including transport, fishing, marine leisure and tourism. The area to which the Strategy relates provides with access to the natural environment and other significant cultural, tourism, recreation and sports assets including access to lakes, forests and mountains.

Public assets and infrastructure that have the potential to be impacted upon by the development of tourism related infrastructure, if unmitigated, include resources such as public open spaces, parks and recreational areas; public buildings and services; utility infrastructure (electricity, gas, telecommunications, water supply, wastewater infrastructure etc.). These resources are generally located within the immediate outskirts of urban/suburban areas. Various provisions relating to material assets have been integrated into the Strategy, compliance with which will need to be demonstrated by those seeking or maintaining funding from Fáilte Ireland.

Forestry

Some parts of the area to which the Strategy relates are covered by forestry. Woodlands provide recreational opportunities in addition to their heritage and economic benefits. They are a valuable resource in terms of biodiversity, recreation and tourism, and also important as links in the green infrastructure network.

Peatlands

Many parts of the area to which the Strategy relates are covered by peatlands. Peatlands provide a valuable natural and archaeological resource. Peatlands are also important controllers of water levels in river catchments, providing a source of water in dry conditions and soaking up excess water during wetter periods; they actively capture and hold carbon and are an important natural resource in combatting climate change. Cutaway bogs have the potential to facilitate land uses such as employment, renewable energy generation, waste management, industrial, and tourism and recreation. Peat soils, such as those found in some parts of the area to which the Strategy relates, are often indicative of areas that are the most sensitive to development due to ecological sensitivities and impeded drainage issues. Many of the peatland areas are subject to ecological designations.

Coastline

The coastline and coastal erosion are topics with relevance to various environmental components. Coastlines can be amongst the most sensitive and valuable resources, in terms of natural and cultural heritage, scenic beauty and recreation. The coast is also an important economic resource -

particularly for the fishing, aquaculture, leisure and tourism industries. Some of the settlements within the area to which the Strategy relates have developed along or near the coast.

Waste Management
For the purposes of waste management planning, Ireland is now divided into three regions: Southern, Eastern-Midlands and Connacht-Ulster. Waste management plans for each waste management region were published in 2015 and provided a framework for the prevention and management of waste in a sustainable manner.

For more detail refer to SEA Environmental Report.

3.9   Cultural Heritage

Archaeological Heritage
Archaeological heritage is protected under the National Monuments Acts (1930-2004), Natural Cultural Institutions Act 1997 and the Planning Acts. The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) is an inventory, put on a statutory basis by amendment to the National Monuments Act 1994, of sites and areas of archaeological significance, numbered and mapped. A Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) is a manual containing a numbered list of all certain and possible monuments accompanied. An Urban Archaeology Survey was completed in 1995 and contained reports on historic towns dating to before 1700 A.D. with a view to delineating zones of archaeological potential (SMR Zones of Notification).

Figure 3.3 shows the spatial distribution of recorded monuments and associated SMR Zones of Notification within the Strategy area and beyond. There are thousands of Recorded Monuments within the area to which the Strategy relates, concentrated within urban/suburban areas. These are less common in areas which are not settled, most noticeably in the upland locations. These archaeological monuments include a number of National Monuments in State Care Ownership and Guardianship within the area to which the Strategy relates. Lakes, rivers, estuaries, coastal and transitional waters within and surrounding the area to which the Strategy relates, may contain many features and finds associated with maritime/riverine heritage such as shipwrecks, piers, quay walls, fords, stepping stones and associated archaeological objects and features.

Relevant archaeological heritage designations in Northern Ireland include Areas of Significant Archaeological Interest, Scheduled Historic Monuments and entries to the Northern Ireland Sites and Monuments Record.

Architectural Heritage
Records of Protected Structures are legislated for under Section 12 and Section 51 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended. Protected structures are defined in the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended as structures, or parts of structures that are of special interest from an architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical point of view. Similar to the general spatial spread of archaeological heritage, clusters of architectural heritage are indicated within developed urban and suburban locations across the area to which the Strategy relates, as shown on Figure 3.4.

The purpose of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) is to identify, record, and evaluate the post-1700 architectural heritage of Ireland, uniformly and consistently as an aid in the protection and conservation of the built heritage. NIAH surveys provide the basis for the recommendations of the Minister of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht to the local authorities for the inclusion of particular structures in their Record of Protected Structures. Figure 3.4 shows entries to NIAH within the area to which the Strategy relates.

Relevant architectural heritage designations in Northern Ireland include Listed Buildings, Defence Heritage and entries to the Industrial Heritage Record.

For more detail refer to SEA Environmental Report.

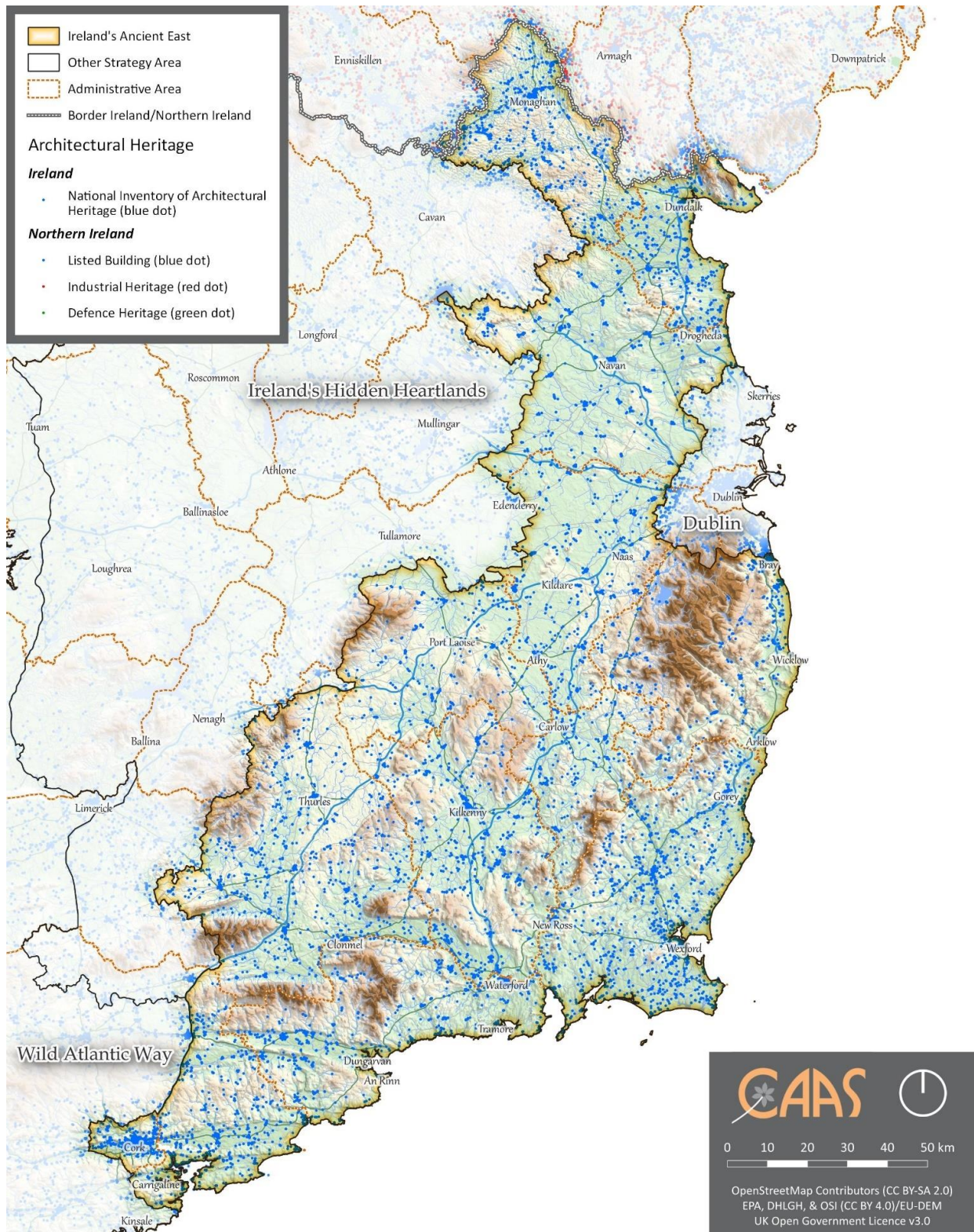**Figure 3.3 Archaeological Heritage**

Figure 3.4 Archaeological Heritage

3.10 Landscape

The unique visual character of the area to which the Strategy relates is due to its variety of landscapes, seascapes and rich and diverse built, natural and cultural heritage. The Strategy area encompasses landscape designations and sensitivities that have been identified by Development Plans prepared for administrative areas of counties: Cork; Tipperary; Offaly; Monaghan; Louth; Meath; Kildare; Wicklow; Wexford; Carlow; Kilkenny; Laois; and Waterford; and also landscape designations and sensitivities in adjacent counties and along the border with Northern Ireland.

The different landscapes found across the area to which the Strategy relates have varying visual and amenity values, topography, exposure levels and contain a variety of habitats. Each landscape type has varying capacity to absorb development related to its overall sensitivity.

CORINE land cover mapping classifies land cover under various headings. This dataset allows for the identification of areas that are likely to be most visually sensitive and robust. Land cover is the observed physical cover, as seen from the ground or through remote sensing, including for example natural or planted vegetation, water and human constructions which cover the earth's surface.

The importance of landscape and visual amenity and the role of its protection are recognised in the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended, which requires that Development Plans include objectives for the preservation of the landscape, views and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty. These objectives and associated plan content often designate different aspects of the landscape such as the following:

- Landscape character areas;
- Landscape sensitivity and value areas;
- High amenity zones;
- Scenic views and prospects; and
- Land use objectives relating to landscape protection.

Such designations, which vary from local authority to local authority and change over time, should be taken into account by lower tier planning and environmental assessments.

For more detail refer to SEA Environmental Report.

3.11 Strategic Environmental Objectives

Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) are methodological measures developed from policies that generally govern environmental protection objectives established at international, Community or Member State level e.g. the environmental protection objectives of various European Directives that have been transposed into Irish law and that are required to be implemented.

The SEOs are set out under a range of topics and are used as standards against which the provisions of the Strategy and the alternatives are evaluated in order to help identify which provisions would be likely to result in significant environmental effects and where such effects would be likely to occur, if - in the case of adverse effects - unmitigated.

All SEOs are provided on Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Guiding Principle	Strategic Environmental Objectives
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	BFF	No net contribution to biodiversity losses or deterioration	• Preserve, protect, maintain and, where appropriate, enhance the terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, particularly EU designated sites and protected species • Ensure no adverse effects on the integrity of any European site, with regard to its qualifying interests, associated conservation status, structure and function • Safeguard national, regional and local designated sites and supporting features which function as stepping stones for migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species • Enhance biodiversity in line with the National Biodiversity Action Plan and its targets • To protect, maintain and conserve natural capital
Population and Human Health	PHH	Improve quality of life for all ages and abilities based on high-quality, serviced, well connected and sustainable residential, working, educational and recreational environments	• Contribute towards economic growth to encourage retention of working age population and funding of sustainable and regional development and environmental protection and management • Seek to ensure that tourism is serviced by the required public infrastructure and services • Safeguard citizens and visitors from environment-related pressures and risks to health and well-being
Soil (and Land)	S	Ensure the long-term sustainable management of land	• Protect soils against pollution, and prevent degradation of the soil resource • Safeguard areas of prime agricultural land and designated geological sites
Water	W	Protection, improvement and sustainable management of the water resource	• Ensure that the status of water bodies is protected, maintained and improved in line with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive • Ensure water resources are sustainably managed to service development funded under the Strategy in the context of existing and projected water supply and wastewater capacity constraints, ensuring the protection of receiving environments • Avoid funding inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding and areas that are vulnerable to current and future erosion • Ensure that sustainable water management solutions (such as SuDS, porous surfacing and green roofs) are integrated into developments funded under the Strategy where relevant and appropriate

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Guiding Principle	Strategic Environmental Objectives
Material Assets	MA	Sustainable and efficient use of natural resources	• Optimise use of existing infrastructure and seek to ensure that new infrastructure is provided to match development funded under the Strategy - this includes transport infrastructure • Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all which encourages a broad energy generation mix to ensure security of supply – wind, solar, hydro, biomass, energy from waste and traditional fossil fuels • Promote the circular economy, reduce waste, and increase energy efficiencies • Ensure there is adequate sewerage and drainage infrastructure capacity in place to support new development • Reduce the energy demand from the transport sector and support moves to electrification of road and rail transport modes • Reduce the average energy consumption per capita including promoting energy efficient buildings, retrofitting, smart-buildings, towns and grids
Air	A	Support clean air policies that reduce the impact of air pollution on the environment and public health	• Avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole resulting from emissions to air from all related sectors with particular reference to emissions from transport, heating, industry and agriculture • Maintain and promote continuing improvement in air quality through the reduction of emissions and promotion of renewable energy and energy efficiency • Promote continuing improvement in air quality • Reduction of emissions of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, ammonia and fine particulate matter which are responsible for acidification, eutrophication and ground-level ozone pollution • Meet Air Quality Directive standards for the protection of human health — Air Quality Directive • Significantly decrease noise pollution by 2020 and move closer to WHO recommended levels
Climatic Factors [8]	C	Achieving transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient economy that is cognisant of environmental impacts	• Minimise emissions of greenhouse gasses • Integrate sustainable design solutions into infrastructure (e.g. energy efficient buildings; green infrastructure) • Contribute towards the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with national targets • Promote development resilient to the effects of climate change • Promote the use of renewable energy, energy efficient development and increased use of public transport
Cultural Heritage	CH	Safeguard cultural heritage features and their settings through responsible design and positioning of development	Protect places, features, buildings and landscapes of cultural, archaeological or architectural heritage
Landscape	L	Protect and enhance the landscape character	Avoid conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those provided by Development Plans and other statutory land-use plans

For more detail refer to SEA Environmental Report.

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[8] Please also refer to relevant legislation and requirements in the SEA Environmental Report under Section 4.10, Section 8, Section 9 and Appendices III and IV. Targets under the national Climate Action Plan are reviewed and updated periodically and include those under the headings of Electricity, Built Environment, Transport, Agriculture, Forestry and Land Use and Enterprise.

Section 4   Alternatives

4.1   Introduction

As per the requirements of the SEA Directive, this SEA considers reasonable alternatives, which are capable of being implemented for the Strategy, taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the Strategy.

4.2   Description of Alternatives

Current Situation (Alternative 1: Business as Usual)
Ireland's Ancient East was launched in 2015 as a mechanism to unify the region as an internationally marketable tourism destination. By 2019, tourism in Ireland's Ancient East was worth €1.7bn to the regional economy supporting approximately 55,200 jobs. Over half (55%) of this revenue was generated by international visitors with the remaining 45% from Island of Ireland visitors.

At a consumer level, the brand has proven to be a motivating reason to visit Ireland with 650,000 more visitors visiting the region in 2019 compared to 2017. Nationally, Ireland's Ancient East has a 25% share of overseas visitors to Ireland and 35% share of total domestic trips. In the international marketplace, the brand has proven to be very appealing to the Great Britain, German, French and North American markets.

The intention of the brand is to provide visitors with a very different flavour of Ireland relative to Ireland's other regional experience brands.

While 2022 is a strong year due to pent-up demand and deferred bookings from the previous two years, 2023 and beyond are expected to be more challenging. Forecasting is very difficult in the current economic environment as the global economy recovers from the impact of Brexit, Covid-19 and the Russian-Ukraine conflict. At a minimum, a return to 2019 levels of revenue by 2026 is expected, in inflation adjusted terms, and with an ambition to exceed this.

There are various policies and plans that are already in place relating to the development of tourism, including:

- The Government's Tourism Strategy, People, Place and Policy: Growing Tourism to 2025;
- Fáilte Ireland's Corporate Strategy 2021-2023; and
- The wider statutory planning framework, including the National Planning Framework, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and the various Development Plans and Local Area Plans in force across the country.

This current situation presents **Alternative 1 (Business as Usual)** to be considered by the SEA. Overtime, the numbers of visitors would be expected to restore to pre-pandemic levels under this scenario.

Prepare a Strategy (Alternatives 2A and 2B: Prepare a Strategy)
Alternatives 2A and **2B** both involve preparing a Strategy that would seek to drive recovery and growth of the visitor economy in Ireland's Ancient East to further unlock the commercial potential (see Section 6.2) of Ireland's Ancient East by creating sustainable, high-quality jobs in the sector to support and strengthen local communities. This would be achieved by raising awareness and consideration of the region as a visitor destination and by increasing the average length of stay, convincing visitors to stay longer and explore more of what the region has to offer.

A Strategy would refine and strengthen the destination's brand proposition to embrace the broader offering of the destination and increase its consumer appeal to a wider audience; increase knowledge and awareness, and improve the 'navigability' of the region; alongside establishing iconic and

signature visitor experiences and strong destination towns that have the potential to become key regional attractors to drive and disperse targeted domestic and overseas visitors.

Under the heading of Alternative 2 there are two separate alternatives:

Alternative 2A: A Strategy with Additional Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management

Fáilte Ireland provides funding sustainable tourism projects including land use and infrastructural development and land use activities. In order to achieve funding (including promotion) for land use or infrastructural development or land use activities from Fáilte Ireland, **Alternative 2A** would require Fáilte Ireland's stakeholders to demonstrate compliance with measures relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management including those relating to:

- Site Maintenance;
- Visitor Management;
- Environmental Management for Local Authorities and Others;
- Environmental Damage Resolution;
- Environmentally Responsible Tourism Promotion and Campaigns;
- Blueway Management and Development;
- Sustainable Recreational Trail Development and Operation;
- Infrastructure capacity; and
- Ecosystem services.

Alternative 2A would also integrate focus on:

- Optimising existing assets, in addition to developing new stock, when increasing supply side capacity (accommodation, visitor attractions, activity providers, etc.) to come on stream over the period of the Strategy (e.g. longer opening hours and using mid-week and weekend capacity across the full calendar year); and
- Visitor management, including through lower-tier Destination and Experience Development Plans.

Alternative 2B: A Strategy without Additional Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management

Alternative 2B would not include the requirements for environmental protection and management described under Alternative 2A. Projects would continue to be required to comply, as relevant, with the various provisions of documents that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework.

4.3 Detailed Consideration of Alternatives

Table 4.1 below describes effects common to all Alternatives (1, 2A and 2B).

Table 4.1 Effects Common to All Alternatives

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects from all Alternatives, in combination with the existing statutory planning/decision-making and consent-granting framework[9]	
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potential Significant Adverse Effect, if unmitigated
Biodiversity and flora and	• Contribution towards the protection and management of	Arising from both construction and operation of tourism related development/activities:

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[9] Effects include in-combination effects – those arising from services, infrastructure and other development (to service development, including tourism) that are planned for and consented through the statutory framework including the NPF, RSES and lower-tier land use plans. Examples may include developments/operation of developments relating to water services, transport, access or accommodation. Effects would be to varying degrees – refer to Comparative Evaluation of Alternative Table 7.4 in the SEA ER.

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects from all Alternatives, in combination with the existing statutory planning/decision-making and consent-granting framework[9]	
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potential Significant Adverse Effect, if unmitigated
fauna	biodiversity and flora and fauna (in designated sites, including European Sites and Wildlife Sites, and Annexed habitats and species, listed species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats) • Contribution towards the maintenance of existing green infrastructure and its ecosystem services. • Contribution towards protection of biodiversity and flora and fauna as a result of contributing towards the protection of environmental vectors, air, water and soil.	• Loss of/damage to biodiversity in designated sites (including European Sites and Wildlife Sites) and Annexed habitats and species, listed species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats; and disturbance to biodiversity and flora and fauna; • Habitat loss, fragmentation and deterioration, including patch size and edge effects; and • Disturbance (e.g. due to noise and lighting as a result of product development in semi-natural areas) and displacement of protected species such as birds and bats.
Population and human health	• Contribution towards the protection of human health. • Contribution towards the protection of amenity usage and access. • Contribution towards the sustainable growth of tourism and associated sustenance and growth of communities within the Region.	• Potential interactions if effects upon environmental vectors such as water are not mitigated. • Potential interactions if additional tourists are directed towards specific locations in instances where significant problems with critical infrastructure (drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) have been identified.
Soil	• Contribution towards minimising land-take and loss of extent of soil resource. • Contribution towards the protection of the environment from contamination. • Contributes towards protection of designated sites of geological heritage.	• Land-take arising from mobility, accommodation and hospitality and other tourism products. • Adverse impacts upon the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource. • Adverse effects on designated geological heritage sites. • Potential for increase in coastal /river bank erosion.
Water	• Contribution towards the protection of water resources (including the status of surface and groundwaters), bathing water quality and water-based designations. • Contribution towards flood risk management and appropriate drainage.	• Adverse impacts upon the status of water bodies, associated fisheries, and entries to the WFD Register of Protected Areas (ecological and human value), arising from changes in quality, flow and/or morphology. • Increase in flood risk.
Air and climatic factors	• Contribution towards climate adaptation and mitigation.	• Potential conflict, in combination with plans and programmes from all sectors including transport and land use planning, between increases in visitors (which is likely to result in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions and other emissions to air, including from aviation, with associated interactions with climatic factors) and local, national and European objectives to reduce carbon emissions. • Potential conflicts between transport movements, including car movements, and air quality.
Material Assets	• Contributes towards protection and allows for continued use of public assets and infrastructure. • Contribution towards compliance with national and regional water services and waste management policies.	• Increased number of visitors have the potential to increase traffic levels. • The need to provide adequate and appropriate water services (it is the function of Irish Water to provide for such needs; this Region has been in receipt of significant structural investment for water services over the past 15 years). • Increases in waste levels and residual wastes from visitors and construction of developments. • Potential impacts upon public assets and infrastructure.

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects from all Alternatives, in combination with the existing statutory planning/decision-making and consent-granting framework[9]	
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potential Significant Adverse Effect, if unmitigated
		• Contributes to overall energy use, in-combination with all other sectors in the state.
Cultural Heritage	• Contribution towards the long-term protection of archaeological and architectural heritage.	• Potential effects on designated and unknown archaeological heritage. • Potential effects on architectural heritage.
Landscape	• Contribution towards the protection of landscape designations.	• Occurrence of adverse visual impacts, especially in marine, estuary, island and ridge areas where, and conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape. • Changes in the appearance of the landscape.

Alternative 1: Business as Usual

Sustainable development, environmental management and environmental protection under **Alternative 1** is provided through the existing statutory planning and consent framework. These measures would contribute towards positive effects on the protection and management of all environmental components (see Table 4.1).

Tourism related development would continue to be planned for and consented through the existing statutory planning and consent framework. Potential adverse effects (see Table 4.1) would continue be mitigated through that process.

In the absence of a Strategy, overtime, a restoration of tourist numbers back to pre-pandemic levels would be expected. An increase in visitors would increase potential adverse effects on all environmental components (arising from increased levels of land use development and activities).

Potential increases in travel related greenhouse gas and other emissions to air, including from aviation, would occur as a result of increases in visitors; however, emission reduction measures contained within the Climate Action Plan would be likely to increasing take effect, more so towards the end of the Strategy period (2026). The increase in visitors and associated emissions would be likely to be less under **Alternative 1**. Additional mitigatory provisions contained within the **Alternative 2A** Strategy, including those relating to low-carbon travel, such as walking and cycling, and the circular economy would not be provided for.

There would be one layer of mitigation under **Alternative 1**; the existing statutory planning and consent framework. Tourism related development would continue to be planned for and consented through the existing statutory planning and consent framework. Potential adverse effects (see Table 4.1) would continue be mitigated through that process.

Alternatives 2A and 2B: Prepare a Strategy

Alternatives 2A 'A Strategy with Additional Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management' and **2B** 'A Strategy without Additional Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management' both involve preparing a Strategy that would seek to drive recovery and growth of the visitor economy in Ireland's Ancient East to further unlock the commercial potential (see Section 6.2 in the SEA ER) of Ireland's Ancient East by creating sustainable, high-quality jobs in the sector to support and strengthen local communities. A Strategy would refine and strengthen the destination's brand proposition to embrace the broader offering of the destination and increase its consumer appeal to a wider audience; increase knowledge and awareness, and improve the 'navigability' of the region; alongside establishing iconic and signature visitor experiences and strong destination towns that have the potential to become key regional attractors to drive and disperse targeted domestic and overseas visitors.

Therefore, **Alternatives 2A** and **2B** would be likely to result in a greater increase in tourism levels – and associated development and activity requirements and loadings – than would be the case under **Alternative 1** ('Business as Usual').

Under both **Alternatives 2A** and **2B**, tourism related development would continue to be planned for and consented through the existing statutory planning and consent framework. Potential adverse effects (see Table 4.1) would continue be mitigated through that process.

Potential increases in travel related greenhouse gas and other emissions to air, including from aviation, would occur as a result of increases in visitors; however, emission reduction measures contained within the Climate Action Plan would be likely to increasing take effect, more so towards the end of the Strategy period (2027). The increase in visitors and associated emissions would be likely to be more under **Alternatives 2A** and **2B** when compared with **Alternative 1**. The **Alternative 2A** Strategy would provide additional measures relating to emissions reduction, including those relating to low-carbon travel, such as walking and cycling, and the circular economy.

A Strategy would help to promote new experiences – including those relating to land use activities and developments. These would also have the potential to increase adverse effects. Notwithstanding this, there would be one layer of mitigation under **Alternative 2B**, through the existing statutory planning and consent framework. **Alternative 2A** would provide additional requirements for environmental protection and management, including those relating to:

- Site Maintenance;
- Visitor Management;
- Environmental Management for Local Authorities and Others;
- Environmental Damage Resolution;
- Environmentally Responsible Tourism Promotion and Campaigns;
- Blueway Management and Development;
- Sustainable Recreational Trail Development and Operation;
- Infrastructure capacity; and
- Ecosystem services.

Alternative 2A would also integrate focus on:

- Optimising existing assets, in addition to developing new stock, when increasing supply side capacity (accommodation, visitor attractions, activity providers, etc.) to come on stream over the period of the Strategy (e.g. longer opening hours and using mid-week and weekend capacity across the full calendar year); and
- Visitor management, including through lower-tier Destination and Experience Development Plans.

4.4   Selected Alternative for the Strategy

Taking into account the environmental effects detailed above and the strengths and potential present for tourism across the Ireland's Ancient East Region, Fáilte Ireland have proceeded with Alternative 2A "A Strategy with Additional Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management". For a comparative assessment of all three alternatives against SEOs refer to Table 7.4 in the SEA ER.

For more detail refer to SEA Environmental Report.

Section 5 Summary of Effects arising from the Draft Strategy[10]

Table 5.1 Overall Findings – Environmental Effects arising from Strategy Provisions

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the existing statutory planning/decision-making and consent-granting framework[11]			SEO Codes
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	**Potential Significant Adverse Effect, if unmitigated**	**Residual Adverse Non-Significant Effects**	
Biodiversity and flora and fauna	• Contribution towards the protection and management of biodiversity and flora and fauna (in designated sites, including European Sites and Wildlife Sites, and Annexed habitats and species, listed species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats) including through additional requirements for environmental protection and management, including those relating to: • Site Maintenance; • Visitor Management; • Environmental Management for Local Authorities and Others; • Environmental Damage Resolution; • Environmentally Responsible Tourism Promotion and Campaigns; • Blueway Management and Development; • Sustainable Recreational Trail Development and Operation; • Infrastructure capacity; and • Ecosystem services. • Contributes towards the maintenance of existing green infrastructure and its ecosystem services. • Contribution towards protection of biodiversity and flora and fauna as a result of contributing towards the protection of environmental vectors, air, water and soil.	Arising from both construction and operation of tourism related development/activities: • Loss of/damage to biodiversity in designated sites (including European Sites and Wildlife Sites) and Annexed habitats and species, listed species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats; and disturbance to biodiversity and flora and fauna; • Habitat loss, fragmentation and deterioration, including patch size and edge effects; and • Disturbance (e.g. due to noise and lighting as a result of product development in semi-natural areas) - and displacement of protected species such as birds and bats.	• Loss of an extent of non-protected habitats and species arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces arising from projects consented through the statutory planning/consent-granting framework. • Losses or damage to ecology (these would be: in compliance with relevant legislation; and mitigated as projects would demonstrate compliance with various environmental protection and management measures).	BFF
Population and human health	• Contribution towards the protection of human health including through Strategy requirements for environmental protection and management. • Contribution towards the protection of human health as a result of not directing additional tourists	• Potential interactions if effects upon environmental vectors such as water are not mitigated. • Potential interactions if additional tourists are directed towards specific	• Potential interactions with residual effects on environmental vectors. This has been mitigated by provisions that have been integrated into the Strategy, including those relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and	PHH

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[10] For more detail refer to SEA Environmental Report.

[11] Effects include in-combination effects – those arising from services, infrastructure and other development (to service development, including tourism) that are planned for and consented through the statutory framework including the NPF, RSESs and lower-tier land use plans. Examples may include developments/operation of developments relating to water services, transport, access or accommodation. Mitigation includes that which has been integrated into the Strategy – please refer to Section 9 of this report.

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the existing statutory planning/decision-making and consent-granting framework[11]			SEO Codes
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potential Significant Adverse Effect, if unmitigated	Residual Adverse Non-Significant Effects	
	towards specific locations in instances where significant problems with critical infrastructure (drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) have been identified. • Contribution towards the protection amenity usage and access. • Contribution towards the sustainable growth of tourism and associated sustenance and growth of communities within the Region.	locations in instances where significant problems with critical infrastructure (drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) have been identified.	environmental management.	
Soil	• Contribution towards minimising land-take and loss of extent of soil resource – including making appropriate use of previously exploited peatlands. • Contribution towards the protection of the environment from contamination. • Contributes towards protection of designated sites of geological heritage.	• Land-take arising from mobility, accommodation and hospitality and other tourism products. • Adverse impacts upon the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource. • Adverse effects on designated geological heritage sites. • Potential for increase in coastal /river bank erosion.	• Loss of an extent of soil function arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces and from sea level rise/coastal erosion.	S
Water	• Contribution towards the protection of water resources (including the status of surface and groundwaters), bathing water quality and water-based designations including through integrating requirements for environmental protection and management into the Strategy. • Contribution towards flood risk management and appropriate drainage.	• Adverse impacts upon the status of water bodies, associated fisheries, and entries to the WFD Register of Protected Areas (ecological and human value), arising from changes in quality, flow and/or morphology. • Increase in flood risk.	• Increased loadings as a result of development to comply with River Basin Management Plan. • Flood related risks remain due to uncertainty with regard to extreme weather events – however such risks will be mitigated by: measures that have been integrated into the Strategy; and the statutory planning/consent-granting framework.	W

Air and climatic factors	• Contribution towards climate adaptation and mitigation through measures relating to:
	  • Decarbonise the tourism sector, improving low carbon travel, such as walking and cycling, and the circular economy; and
	  • European and national objectives for climate adaptation and mitigation, taking into account a wide range of detailed measures, including those relating to resilience.
		• Potential conflict, in combination with plans and programmes from all sectors including transport and land use planning, between increases in visitors (which is likely to result in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions and other emissions to air, including from aviation, with associated interactions with climatic factors) and local, national and European objectives to reduce carbon emissions.
		• Potential conflicts between transport movements, including car movements, and air quality.
			• An increase in travel related greenhouse gas and other emissions to air, including from aviation. This has been mitigated by the Climate Action Plan and by provisions that have been integrated into the Strategy.
			• Risks remain due to uncertainty with regard to climate and interactions with issues including flooding and material assets.
				A
				C

Material Assets	• Contributes towards protection and allows for continued use of public assets and infrastructure. • Helps to minimise likelihood of exceeding capacity in	• Increased number of visitors have the potential to increase traffic levels. • The need to provide adequate and	• Residual wastes to be disposed of in line with higher level waste management policies. • Increased loading on critical infrastructure	MA

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the existing statutory planning/decision-making and consent-granting framework[11]			SEO Codes
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	**Potential Significant Adverse Effect, if unmitigated**	**Residual Adverse Non-Significant Effects**	
	material assets as a result of not directing additional tourists towards specific locations in instances where significant problems with critical infrastructure (drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) have been identified. • Contribution towards compliance with national and regional water services and waste management policies.	appropriate water services (it is the function of Irish Water to provide for such needs; this Region has been in receipt of significant structural investment for water services over the past 15 years). • Increases in waste levels and residual wastes from visitors and construction of developments. • Potential impacts upon public assets and infrastructure. • Contributes to overall energy use, in-combination with all other sectors in the State.	(drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) where no significant problems have been identified with this infrastructure[12]. • Exceedance of capacity in critical infrastructure risks remain due to uncertainty with regard to climate – however such risks will be mitigated by: measures that have been integrated into the Strategy; and the statutory planning/consent-granting framework. • Any impacts upon public assets and infrastructure to comply with statutory planning/consent-granting framework.	
Cultural Heritage	• Contribution towards the long-term protection of archaeological and architectural heritage by encouraging greater levels of awareness and appreciation through, use, interpretation and access, in line with the requirements relating to the protection of cultural heritage including: entries to the Record of Monuments and Places and/or their context; and entries to the Records of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context.	• Potential effects on designated and unknown archaeological heritage. • Potential effects on architectural heritage.	• Potential alteration to the context and setting of architectural heritage however, these will occur in compliance with legislation. • Potential alteration to the context and setting of archaeological heritage however, this will occur in compliance with legislation. • Potential loss of unknown archaeology however, this loss will be mitigated by measures integrated into the Strategy.	CH
Landscape	• Contribution towards the protection of landscape designations as a result of: facilitating compliance with relevant plans; and maintaining the wildness of areas that have not yet been developed.	• Occurrence of adverse visual impacts, especially in marine, estuary, island and ridge areas where, and conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape. • Changes in the appearance of the landscape.	• Residual visual effects (these would comply with landscape designation provisions).	L

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[12] There is a need for close collaboration with the relevant stakeholders, such as local authorities and Irish Water, to ensure that any proposals within the Tourism Strategy align with the capacity of the supporting critical service infrastructure.

Section 6   Mitigation and Monitoring Measures

6.1   Mitigation

Mitigation measures are measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and, as fully as possible, offset any significant adverse impacts on the environment of implementing the Strategy. Various environmental sensitivities and issues have been communicated to Fáilte Ireland through the SEA and Appropriate Assessment (AA) processes.

By integrating all SEA and AA recommendations into the Strategy[13], Fáilte Ireland is helping to ensure that:
- The potential significant adverse effects of implementing the Strategy, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Strategy and other plans, programmes, etc., are avoided, reduced or offset; and
- The beneficial environmental effects of implementing the Strategy, in combination with implementation of other provisions from the Strategy and other plans, programmes, etc., are maximised.

Mitigation was achieved through the following:
- Establishing the status of the Strategy and its interrelationship with the Statutory Decision-Making and Consent-Granting Framework[14]; and
- Integrating Requirements for Environmental Compliance into the Strategy[15].

The SEA team worked with the Strategy-preparation team at Fáilte Ireland in order to help establish the status of the Strategy and its interrelationship with the Statutory Decision-Making and Consent-Granting Framework.

Implementing the Strategy will involve Fáilte Ireland helping to facilitate, promote, support and coordinate stakeholders (including local authorities, other government agencies, tourism operators, communities and visitors) in their activities in a way that is consistent with existing and emerging plans that have been subject to environmental assessment. The Strategy does not provide consent, establish a framework for granting consent or contribute towards a framework for granting consent.

The Strategy is situated alongside a hierarchy of statutory documents setting out public policy for, among other things, land use development, tourism, infrastructure, sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management. These other existing policies, plans etc. have been subject to their own environmental assessment processes, as relevant, and form the decision-making and consent-granting framework.

The National Planning Framework (NPF) sets out Ireland's planning policy direction up to 2040. The NPF is being implemented through Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSESs) and lower tier Development Plans and Local Area Plans. The RSESs set out various objectives relating tourism development and activities that have been subject to environmental assessment. The RSESs have informed, and continue to inform, the preparation of lower-tier Development Plans and Local Area Plans, which also set out various objectives relating tourism development and activities that have been subject to environmental assessment.

Implementation of the Strategy shall be consistent with and conform with the NPF, RSESs and lower-tier land use plans, including provisions relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management that have been integrated into these documents including through SEA and AA processes. In order to be realised, projects included in the Strategy (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, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework, of which the Strategy is not part and does not contribute towards.

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[13] All recommendations made by the SEA and AA processes either have already been integrated into the Plan that is being placed on public display or shall be integrated into the Plan in advance of adoption.
[14] This framework includes various environmental requirements.
[15] These requirements include those that have arisen through the SEA and/or AA processes.

For more detail refer to SEA Environmental Report.

6.2   Monitoring

The SEA Directive requires that the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes are monitored. Monitoring is based around indicators that allow quantitative measures of trends and progress over time relating to the Strategic Environmental Objectives identified at Table 3.1 and used in the evaluation.

The occurrence of persistent significant adverse environmental effects that are directly attributable to tourism would necessitate consideration of the effects in the context of the Strategy and a possible review of part(s) of the Strategy.

Sources

The Strategy is situated alongside a hierarchy of statutory documents setting out public policy for, among other things, land use development, tourism, infrastructure, sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management. These other existing policies, plans etc. have been subject to their own environmental assessment processes, as relevant, and form the decision-making and consent-granting framework. In implementing the Monitoring Programme Fáilte Ireland will take into account this hierarchy of planning and environmental monitoring. Furthermore, environmental monitoring for the strategy and other existing/future Fáilte Ireland plans, programmes, etc. may be undertaken and reported on at the same time.

Confirmation of compliance with relevant environmental measures (see Section 9 in the SEA ER) will be a source of information for the Monitoring Programme. This documentation may include monitoring undertaken by beneficiaries to demonstrate compliance with the environmental requirements.

Other existing monitoring sources will be used, including:

- Information gathered through existing and new Fáilte Ireland environmental monitoring programmes (including the National Environmental Monitoring Programme 2021-2026) in order to monitor any effects of visitors (see Section 4.6.2 in the SEA ER);
- Sources maintained by local authorities within the Ireland's Ancient East Region (such as those arising from the SEA of land use plans) and the relevant authorities e.g. the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Central Statistics Office; and
- Lower-tier environmental assessment and decision making – including a review of project approvals granted and associated documents – will also be utilised as part of the Monitoring Programme.

Reporting and Responsibility

Reporting on environmental monitoring will address the indicators set out below. Fáilte Ireland is responsible for the ongoing review of indicators and targets, collating existing relevant monitored data, the preparation of monitoring evaluation report(s), the publication of these reports and, if necessary, the carrying out of corrective action, in combination with the relevant authorities.

Environmental monitoring for the Strategy and other existing/future Fáilte Ireland plans, programmes, etc. may be undertaken and reported on at the same time. The findings of monitoring will be reported on periodically with frequencies to be determined during implementation.

For more detail refer to SEA Environmental Report (ER).

Table 6.1 Selected Indicators, Targets and Monitoring Sources

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action[16]
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	**BFF**	• Compliance of funding approvals with Strategy measures providing for the protection of biodiversity and flora and fauna – Section 9 of the SEA Environmental Report identifies a selection of such measures from the Strategy	• For funding only to be provided when applications demonstrate that they comply with all Plan measures providing for the protection of biodiversity and flora and fauna – Section 9 of the SEA Environmental Report identifies a selection of such measures from the Strategy	• Internal review of grants of funding, including compliance with Strategy's mitigation – see Section 9 SEA ER • 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, new or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes • DHLGH report of the implementation of the measures contained in the Habitats Directive - as required by Article 17 of the Directive (every 6 years) [17] • DHLGH National Birds Directive Monitoring Report for the under Article 12 (every 3 years) [18] • Consultations with the NPWS (see Section 10.4 SEA ER) [19] • Review of all lower-tier Fáilte Ireland plans • For Water - see below	• Review internal systems and, if necessary, the Strategy • Where impacts are identified these will be investigated as per the Environmental Damage Resolution procedure • Environmentally Responsible Tourism Promotion and Campaign Procedure will be available to assist in remedial action, where relevant, at a future date • For Water – see below
		• Condition of European sites	• Implement the provisions of the Strategy providing for the protection and management of biodiversity and flora and fauna • Require all lower-tier Fáilte Ireland plans to include ecosystem services and green/blue infrastructure provisions and, as a minimum, to have regard to the required targets in relation to the conservation of European sites, other nature conservation sites, ecological networks, and protected species		
		• Number of lower-tier Fáilte Ireland plans that have included ecosystem services content, mapping and policy to protect ecosystem services	• Require all lower-tier Fáilte Ireland plans to include ecosystem services and green/blue infrastructure provisions and, as a minimum, to have regard to the required targets in relation to the conservation of European sites, other nature conservation sites, ecological networks, and protected species		
		• SEAs and AAs as relevant for new Fáilte Ireland policies, plans, programmes etc.	• Screen for and undertake SEA and AA as relevant for new Fáilte Ireland policies, plans, programmes etc.		
		• Status of water quality in water bodies	• Included under Water below		

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[16] The occurrence of persistent significant adverse environmental effects that are directly attributable to tourism would necessitate consideration of the effects in the context of the Strategy and a possible review of part(s) of the Strategy. Examples of where consultation with local authorities and others and the possible coordination of remedial action may be required include: complaints received from statutory consultees regarding avoidable impacts on any environmental components resulting from development which is funded under the Strategy; court cases taken by the Government Departments regarding impacts upon archaeological heritage from development which is granted permission under the Strategy; failure to meet bathing water Mandatory Values directly attributable to tourism; fish kills directly attributable to tourism; and boil notices on drinking water directly attributable to tourism.

[17] Including confirmation with development management that the following impacts have been considered and including use of monitoring data, where available: biodiversity/habitat loss; nitrogen deposition impacts on Natura 2000 sites; recreational disturbance resulting from implementation of tourism and recreation policies and objectives particularly in riparian areas; biodiversity enhancement; and disturbance /visitor pressure impacts of recreation, amenity and tourism development.

[18] Including confirmation with development management that the following impacts have been considered and including use of monitoring data, where available: biodiversity/habitat loss; nitrogen deposition impacts on Natura 2000 sites; recreational disturbance resulting from implementation of tourism and recreation policies and objectives particularly in riparian areas; biodiversity enhancement; and disturbance /visitor pressure impacts of recreation, amenity and tourism development.

[19] Including confirmation with development management that the following impacts have been considered and including use of monitoring data, where available: biodiversity/habitat loss; nitrogen deposition impacts on Natura 2000 sites; recreational disturbance resulting from implementation of tourism and recreation policies and objectives particularly in riparian areas; biodiversity enhancement; and disturbance /visitor pressure impacts of recreation, amenity and tourism development.

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action[16]
Population and Human Health	**PHH**	• Compliance of funding approvals with Strategy measures providing for: the protection of population and human health; and the development of sustainable tourism, accompanied by public infrastructure and services – Section 9 of the SEA Environmental Report identifies a selection of such measures from the Strategy • Number of spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors resulting from development funded under the Strategy	• For funding only to be provided when applications demonstrate that they comply with all Strategy measures providing for: the protection of population and human health; and the development of sustainable tourism, accompanied by public infrastructure and services – Section 9 of the SEA Environmental Report identifies a selection of such measures from the Strategy • No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of funding under the Strategy	• Internal review of grants of funding, including compliance with Strategy's mitigation – see Section 9 SEA ER • 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, new or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes • Consultations with the Health Service Executive and EPA	• Review internal systems and, if necessary, the Strategy • Consultations with the Health Service Executive and EPA • Where impacts are identified these will be investigated as per the Environmental Damage Resolution procedure • Environmentally Responsible Tourism Promotion and Campaign Procedure will be available to assist in remedial action, where relevant, at a future date
Soil (and Land)	**S**	• Compliance of funding approvals with Strategy measures providing for the protection of soil – Section 9 of the SEA Environmental Report identifies a selection of such measures from the Strategy • Instances where contaminated material must be disposed of • Percentage of designated geological sites protected from adverse effects resulting from development which is funded under the Strategy	• For funding only to be provided when applications demonstrate that they comply with all Strategy measures providing for the protection of soil – Section 9 of the SEA Environmental Report identifies a selection of such measures from the Strategy • Dispose of contaminated material in compliance with EPA guidance and waste management requirements • Protect designated geological sites from adverse effects resulting from development which is funded under the Strategy	• Internal review of grants of funding, including compliance with Strategy's mitigation – see Section 9 SEA ER • 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, new or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes	• Review internal systems and, if necessary, the Strategy • Consultations with the EPA and review of internal systems • Where impacts are identified these will be investigated as per the Environmental Damage Resolution procedure • Environmentally Responsible Tourism Promotion and Campaign Procedure will be available to assist in remedial action, where relevant, at a future date
Water	**W**	• Compliance of funding approvals with Strategy measures providing for the protection of water – Section 9 of the SEA Environmental Report identifies a selection of such measures from the Strategy	• For funding only to be provided when applications demonstrate that they comply with all Strategy measures providing for the protection of water – Section 9 of the SEA Environmental Report identifies a selection of such measures from the Strategy	• Internal review of grants of funding, including compliance with Strategy's mitigation – see Section 9 SEA ER • Environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities	• Review internal systems and, if necessary, the Strategy • Where impacts are identified these will be

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action[16]
		• Status of water bodies as reported by the EPA Water Monitoring Programme for the WFD	• Not to cause deterioration in the status of any surface water or affect the ability of any surface water to achieve 'good status' • Implementation of the objectives of the River Basin Management Plan	• 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, new or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes • EPA Monitoring Programme for WFD compliance	investigated as per the Environmental Damage Resolution procedure • Environmentally Responsible Tourism Promotion and Campaign Procedure will be available to assist in remedial action, where relevant, at a future date
		• Number of incompatible developments funded within flood risk areas	• Minimise developments funded on lands which pose - or are likely to pose in the future - a significant flood risk		
Material Assets	MA	• Compliance of funding approvals with Strategy measures providing for the protection of material assets – Section 9 of the SEA Environmental Report identifies a selection of such measures from the Strategy • Programmed delivery of Irish Water infrastructure for all key growth towns in line with Irish Water Investment Plan and prioritisation programme to ensure sustainable growth can be accommodated • Number of new developments funded which can be adequately and appropriately served with waste water treatment and drinking water • Fulfilment of Climate Action Plan measures, including those related to energy, where Fáilte Ireland is Lead or Key Stakeholder	• For funding only to be provided when applications demonstrate that they comply with all Strategy measures providing for the protection of material assets – Section 9 of the SEA Environmental Report identifies a selection of such measures from the Strategy • New developments funded to be connected to and adequately and appropriately served by waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Strategy • Where individual on-site wastewater treatment systems are proposed, for developments only to be funded when applications demonstrate that the outfall from the individual on-site wastewater treatment system will not – in-combination with other septic tanks – contribute towards any surface or ground water body not meeting the objective of good status under the Water Framework Directive • Facilitate, as appropriate, Irish Water in developing water and wastewater infrastructure • Maximise fulfilment of Climate Action Plan measures, including those related to energy, where Fáilte Ireland is Lead or Key Stakeholder • Implement the provisions of the Strategy providing for the protection and management of material assets	• Internal review of grants of funding, including compliance with Strategy's mitigation – see Section 9 SEA ER • 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, new or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes • Consultations with EPA and Irish Water • Internal review of progress with Climate Action Plan measures • Monitoring relating to energy use by tourists where available	• Review internal systems and, if necessary, the Strategy • Where impacts are identified these will be investigated as per the Environmental Damage Resolution procedure • Environmentally Responsible Tourism Promotion and Campaign Procedure will be available to assist in remedial action, where relevant, at a future date • Environmentally Responsible Tourism Promotion and Campaign Procedure will be available to assist in remedial action, where relevant, at a future date
Air	A	• Compliance of funding approvals with Strategy measures providing for the protection of air and noise – Section 9 of the SEA Environmental Report identifies a selection of such measures from the Strategy • Fulfilment of Climate Action Plan	• For funding only to be provided when applications demonstrate that they comply with all Strategy measures providing for the protection of air and noise – Section 9 of the SEA Environmental Report identifies a selection of such measures from the Strategy • Maximise fulfilment of Climate Action Plan	• Internal review of grants of funding, including compliance with Strategy's mitigation – see Section 9 SEA ER • Environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities • SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities	• Review internal systems and, if necessary, the Strategy • Where impacts are identified these will be investigated as per the Environmental Damage

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action[16]
		measures where Fáilte Ireland is Lead or Key Stakeholder • Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to 2016 National Travel Survey levels of 74% • NO_x, SO_x, PM10 and PM2.5 as part of Ambient Air Quality Monitoring	measures where Fáilte Ireland is Lead or Key Stakeholder • Decrease in proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to 2016 National Travel Survey levels • Improvement in Air Quality trends, particularly in relation to transport related emissions of NO_x and particulate matter	(as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies) • Input from any other existing, new or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes • Internal review of progress with Climate Action Plan measures • CSO data • Data from the National Travel Survey • EPA Air Quality Monitoring	Resolution procedure • Environmentally Responsible Tourism Promotion and Campaign Procedure will be available to assist in remedial action, where relevant, at a future date
Climatic Factors [20]	C	• Compliance of funding approvals with Strategy measures relating to climate action – Section 9 of the SEA Environmental Report identifies a selection of such measures from the Strategy • Fulfilment of Climate Action Plan measures where Fáilte Ireland is Lead or Key Stakeholder • A competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy • Share of renewable energy in transport • Greenhouse gas emissions across related sectors • Energy consumption, the uptake of renewable options and solid fuels for residential heating • Proportion of journeys made by low	• For funding only to be provided when applications demonstrate that they comply with all Strategy measures relating to climate action – Section 9 of the SEA Environmental Report identifies a selection of such measures from the Strategy • Maximise fulfilment of Climate Action Plan measures where Fáilte Ireland is Lead or Key Stakeholder • Contribute towards transition to a competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050 • Contribute towards the targets of the Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC), for all Member States to reach: a 16% share of renewable energy in Gross Final Consumption (GFC); and a 10% share of renewable energy in transport, by facilitating the development of electricity charging and transmission infrastructure in compliance with the provisions of the Strategy. • Contribute towards greenhouse gas emission reduction targets across related sectors including electricity (75%), transport (50%), buildings (commercial and public) (45%), buildings (residential) (40%), industry (35%), agriculture (25%) and other (gases, petroleum refining and waste) (50%) • To promote reduced energy consumption and support the uptake of renewable options and a move away from solid fuels for residential heating • Increase in the proportion of journeys made by	• Internal review of grants of funding, including compliance with Strategy's mitigation – see Section 9 SEA ER • 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, new or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes • Internal review of progress with Climate Action Plan measures • EPA Annual National Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory reporting • Climate Action Regional Office • Consultations with DECC • Monitoring relating to transport use by tourists where available	• Review internal systems and, if necessary, the Strategy • Where impacts are identified these will be investigated as per the Environmental Damage Resolution procedure • Environmentally Responsible Tourism Promotion and Campaign Procedure will be available to assist in remedial action, where relevant, at a future date

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[20] Please also refer to relevant legislation and requirements under Section 4.10, Section 8, Section 9 and Appendices III and IV. Targets under the national Climate Action Plan are reviewed and updated periodically and include those under the headings of Electricity, Built Environment, Transport, Agriculture, Forestry and Land Use and Enterprise.

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action[16]
		carbon transport modes	low carbon transport modes, where survey information is available		
Cultural Heritage	CH	• Compliance of funding approvals with Strategy measures providing for the protection of cultural heritage – Section 9 of the SEA Environmental Report identifies a selection of such measures from the Strategy	• For funding only to be provided when applications demonstrate that they comply with all Strategy measures providing for the protection of cultural heritage – Section 9 of the SEA Environmental Report identifies a selection of such measures from the Strategy	• Internal review of grants of funding, including compliance with Strategy's mitigation – see Section 9 SEA ER • 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, new or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes	• Review internal systems and, if necessary, the Strategy • Where impacts are identified these will be investigated as per the Environmental Damage Resolution procedure • Environmentally Responsible Tourism Promotion and Campaign Procedure will be available to assist in remedial action, where relevant, at a future date
		• Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, and the context these entries within the surrounding landscape where relevant, protected from significant adverse effects resulting from development that is funded under the Strategy	• Protect entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, and the context of these entries within the surrounding landscape where relevant, from significant adverse effects resulting from development that is funded under the Strategy		
		• Percentage of entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from significant adverse effects resulting from development that is funded under the Strategy	• Protect entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context from significant adverse effects resulting from development that is funded under the Strategy		
Landscape	L	• Compliance of funding approvals with Strategy measures providing for the protection of the landscape – Section 9 of the SEA Environmental Report identifies a selection of such measures from the Strategy	• For funding only to be provided when applications demonstrate that they comply with all Strategy measures providing for the protection of the landscape – Section 9 of the SEA Environmental Report identifies a selection of such measures from the Strategy	• Internal review of grants of funding, including compliance with Strategy's mitigation – see Section 9 SEA ER • 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, new or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes	• Review internal systems and, if necessary, the Strategy • Where impacts are identified these will be investigated as per the Environmental Damage Resolution procedure • Environmentally Responsible Tourism Promotion and Campaign Procedure will be available to assist in remedial action, where relevant, at a future date
		• Number of developments funded that result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, especially with regard to landscape designations, resulting from development that is funded under the Strategy	• No developments funded that result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, especially with regard to landscape designations, resulting from development that is funded under the Strategy		