Prepared by
Roughan & O'Donovan
Dublin | Leeds | Cork
www.rod.ie

Natura Impact Statement for the Wexford Destination & Experience Development Plan

July 2025

ROD
ROUGHAN & O'DONOVAN

Natura Impact Statement for the Wexford Destination Plan & Experience Development Plan

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION 1
1.1 Legislative Context 1
1.2 Overview of the Appropriate Assessment Process 3
1.3 Relationship between the AA the SEA Processes 4
1.4 Methodology 4
2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE WEXFORD DEDP 6
2.1 Overview 6
3.0 IDENTIFCATION OF ADVERSE EFFECTS 8
3.1 Potential effects on the Natural Environment 8
3.2 Establishing the Zone of Influence 8
3.3 Conservation Status and Site Integrity 10
4.0 ASSESSMENT OF ADVERSE EFFECTS 12
5.0 MITIGATION 26
5.1 Principles and Approach 26
6.0 IN-COMBINATION EFFECTS 36
6.1 Introduction 36
6.2 Methodology 36
7.0 CONCLUSION 44
8.0 REFERENCES 45

APPENDIX A European Sites and the Zone of Influence

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Fáilte Ireland has prepared the Wexford Destination and Experience Development Plan (hereafter referred to as the 'Wexford DEDP' or the 'DEDP') which will provide a framework to grow the value of tourism as a key economic sector in Wexford, growing tourism employment, disperse visitors across the destination and increase the length of stay. This Natura Impact Statement ("NIS"), with respect to the Wexford DEDP has been prepared independently by Roughan & O'Donovan ("ROD"), on behalf of Fáilte Ireland. It does not, in and of its own right, confer planning permission for any specific development but rather guides the tourism investment and decision making in Wexford.

The requirements arising out of Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora ("the Habitats Directive") in relation to Appropriate Assessment are transposed into Irish law by Part 5 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 (as amended) ("the Habitats Regulations") and, where planning permission is required, Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) ("the Planning and Development Act"). In accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive and Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act, an Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report was prepared to assess whether or not the Plan, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, was likely to have a significant effect on one or more sites of Community importance for nature conservation ("European Sites").

In accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive and section 177V of the Planning and Development Act, it is the Competent Authority – in this case Fáilte Ireland – which carries out the appropriate assessment (AA) which includes inter alia (i) an examination (ii) an analysis (iii) an evaluation (iv) the making of findings (v) the making of conclusions and (vi) the making of a final determination[1]. In accordance with Regulation 42(9) of the Habitat Regulations, where a public authority conducts an Appropriate Assessment, they are required to submit the Natura Impact Statement to the Minister no later than six weeks before the plan or project is adopted. Regulation 42(10) of the same Regulations states that the public authority shall take account of any submission made by the Minister before concluding Appropriate Assessment.

This NIS was prepared by Patrick O'Shea and Madeleine van der Poel. Patrick is a Principal Ecologist with ROD and has over ten years' experience in Appropriate Assessment. He holds a B.A. in Natural Sciences from Trinity College Dublin, and an MSc in Ecological Management and Conservation Biology from Queen's University, Belfast. Madeleine has five years' experience in ecological assessment. She holds a degree in BSc in Ecology from the University of Auckland, New Zealand and a MSc in Forestry and Nature Conservation from Wageningen University, the Netherlands.

1.1 Legislative Context

Council Directive 92/43/EEC of the 21st May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats of wild fauna and flora ("the Habitats Directive") and Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of the 30th November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds ("the Birds Directive") list habitats and species which are important for conservation and in need of protection. This protection is afforded in part through the designation of sites which support significant examples of habitats or

[1] *Waddenzee* (CaseC-127/02) [2004] ECR I-7405; *Commission v Spain* (Case C-404/09) [2011] E.C.R. I-11853; *Sweetman* (Case C-258/11).

populations of species ("European Sites"). Sites designated for birds are termed "Special Protection Areas" (SPAs) and sites designated for natural habitat types or other species are termed "Special Areas of Conservation" (SACs). The complete network of European Sites is referred to as "Natura 2000".

In order to ensure the protection of European Sites in the context of land use planning and development, Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive provides for the assessment of the implications of plans and projects for European Sites, as follows:

> "*Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site* [or sites] *but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site* [...]*, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned* [...]."

The requirements arising out of Article 6(3) are transposed into Irish law by Part XAB, Appropriate Assessment (including section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) (and in other circumstances by Part 5 of the Habitats Regulations).

The determination of whether or not a plan or project meets the two thresholds for requiring AA is referred to as "Stage 1" or "AA Screening". The first threshold is reached if the plan or project is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of one or more European Sites. In its ruling in *Waddenzee*[2], the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) interpreted the second threshold as being reached where "*it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that* [the plan or project] *will have a significant effect on that site*".

Thus, in applying the Precautionary Principle, the CJEU interpreted the word "likely" to mean that, as long as it cannot be demonstrated that an effect will not occur, that effect is considered "likely". A likely effect is considered to be "significant" only if it interrupts or causes a delay in achieving the Conservation Objectives of the site concerned.[3]

Prior to approval of a plan or project which is the subject of AA (also referred to as "Stage 2"), it is necessary to "*ascertain*" that the plan or project will not "*adversely affect the integrity of the site*". In its guidance document (EC, 2018), the European Commission stated that "*the integrity of a site involves its constitutive characteristics and ecological functions*" and that "*the decision as to whether it is adversely affected should focus on and be limited to the habitats and species for which the site has been designated and the site's conservation objectives*". Regarding the word "ascertain", the CJEU, also in *Waddenzee*, interpreted this as meaning "*where no reasonable scientific doubt remains as to the absence of such effects*". Therefore, the legal test at Stage 2 is satisfied (and the plan or project may be authorised) when it can be demonstrated beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the plan or project will not interrupt or cause delays in the achievement of the Conservation Objectives of the site or sites concerned.

[2] Landelijke Vereniging tot Behoud van de Waddenzee, Nederlandse vereniging tot Bescherming van Vogels *v*. Staatssecretaris van Landbouw, Naturbeheer en Visserij (Waddenzee) [2004] C-127/02 ECR I-7405.

[3] Conservation Objectives are referred to, but not defined, in the Habitats Directive. In Ireland, Conservation Objectives are set for Qualifying Interests (the birds, habitats or other species for which a given European site is selected) and represent the overall target that must be met for that Qualifying Interest to reach or maintain favourable conservation condition in that site and contribute to its favourable conservation status nationally.

The CJEU has made a relevant judgment on what information should be contained within documents supporting AA[4] :

> "[The AA] *cannot have lacunae and must contain complete, precise and definitive findings and conclusions capable of removing all reasonable scientific doubt as to the effects of the works proposed on the protected site concerned.*"

The High Court[5] and Supreme Court[6] have also provided clarity on how Competent Authorities should undertake AA and has stated that the following four matters require to be addressed:

- First, an appropriate assessment must identify, in the light of the best scientific knowledge in the field, all aspects of the development project (in this case Wexford DEDP which can, by itself or in combination with other plans or projects, affect (a) European site(s) in the light of its conservation objectives.
- Second, there must be complete, precise, and definitive findings and conclusions regarding the previously identified potential effects on any relevant European site(s) this and may not have lacunae or gaps. The requirement for precise and definitive findings and conclusions requires analysis, evaluation, and decisions. Further, the reference to findings and conclusions in a scientific context requires both findings following analysis and conclusions following an evaluation each in the light of the best scientific knowledge in the field.
- Third, on the basis of those findings and conclusions, the Competent Authority (here Fáilte Ireland) must be able to determine that no scientific doubt remains as to the absence of the identified potential effects.
- Fourth, where the aforesaid three requirements are satisfied, Fáilte Ireland may determine that the proposed development (in this case the Wexford DEDP) will not adversely affect the integrity of any relevant European site. Accordingly, an appropriate assessment may only include a determination that the proposed development (in this case the Wexford DEDP) will not adversely affect the integrity of any relevant European site where upon the basis of complete, precise, and definitive findings and conclusions made, Fáilte Ireland decides that no reasonable scientific doubt remains as to the absence of the identified potential effects.

1.2 Overview of the Appropriate Assessment Process

Appropriate Assessment guidance (EC, 2002) promotes a four-stage process to completing AA. The four steps are summarised as follows:

Stage 1 Screening for Appropriate Assessment: Screening for Appropriate Assessment is the process of determining if a plan, project or in this case, the DEDP, is necessary for the management of the Natura 2000 network, or if it, alone or in-combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have a significant effect on one or more European sites. At this stage, mitigation measures to avoid or reduce the potential for significant effects cannot be considered.

[4] *Sweetman v. An Bord Pleanála* [2013] Case C-258/11.

[5] *Kelly v. An Bord Pleanála* [2014] IEHC 422.

[6] See *Kelly (Eoin) v An Bord Pleanála* [2014] I.E.H.C. 400 where the High Court (Finlay Geoghegan J.) held that section 177V(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) must be construed so as to give effect to Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, and hence, an appropriate assessment carried out under section 177V(1) of the 2000 Act must meet the requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive as interpreted by jurisprudence of the CJEU case law; *Connelly v An Bord Pleanála* [2018] 2 I.L.R.M 453; [2018] I.E.S.C. 31.

Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment: Where the possibility of significant effects on one or more European site cannot be excluded, the process proceeds to Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment. This stage considers whether the plan, project or in this case the Wexford DEDP, in-combination with other plans and projects, will adversely affect the integrity of one or more European site, and includes any mitigation measures to avoid or reduce negative impacts. At Stage 2, the proponent is required to submit a Natura Impact Statement (NIS). This report must contain complete, precise and definitive findings to enable the Competent Authority (Fáilte Ireland in this case) to carry out Appropriate Assessment.

Stage 3 Assessment of Alternative Solutions: Where adverse effects cannot be excluded, the plan, project or in this case the DEDP, must proceed to Stage 3, the Assessment of Alternative Solutions. This stage examines alternative options or solutions which avoid adverse effects. Once an alternative solution is selected, the process returns to Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment. If after examines all alternatives and establishing that adverse effects remain, the process proceeds to Stage 4.

Stage 4 Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI): IROPI is a derogation process which allows a plan, project or in this case the DEDP, to proceed despite the fact that it will have an adverse effect on one or more European sites. At Stage 4 it must be established that no alternatives exist. In addition to the mitigation measures permitted from Stage 2 of the process, at Stage 4 compensatory measures are also permissible. Where priority Annex I habitats are concerned, as defined in the Habitats Directive, the Competent Authority can only approve proposals relating to human health, public safety or beneficial consequences of primary importance to the environment.

1.3 Relationship between the AA the SEA Processes

The SEA and AA of the DEDP were carried out concurrently. There were several areas of overlap and, in accordance with good practice, data on Natura 2000 sites and potential ecological issues were shared with the SEA team. Iterative reviews of the DEDP were also sent to the SEA team for integration into their assessment.

The findings of both processes are documented separately, taking into account their statutory implications. Information on the ecological impact of the Wexford DEDP gathered in the AA is carried forward to contribute to a comprehensive environmental baseline to inform the SEA. Information on the Qualifying Interests, conservation condition and Conservation Objectives of Natura 2000 sites is, therefore, also used to inform environmental assessment in the SEA.

1.4 Methodology

This NIS contains an examination, analysis and evaluation of the likely impacts from the Wexford DEDP, both individually and in combination with other plans and projects, in view of best scientific knowledge and the Conservation Objectives of the European Sites concerned. It also prescribes appropriate mitigation to ensure that the DEDP will not adversely affect the integrity of those sites. Finally, it provides complete, precise, and definitive findings which are capable of removing all reasonable scientific doubt as to the absence of adverse effects on the integrity of the European Sites concerned and sets out detailed reasons which explain the basis for such findings.

With regard to carrying our AA of Plans, EC (2018) states that "*a distinction needs to be made with 'plans' which are in the nature of policy statements, i.e. policy documents which show the general political will or intention of a ministry or lower authority*". SNH (2015) Expands on this: "*Plans or parts of plans which are merely general policy*

statements, or which only show the general political will or intention of a public body, will not be likely to have a significant effect on a European site. However, it is a case-by-case decision as to whether a plan should be subject to appraisal, a critical test being whether it, or any part of it, would be likely to have a significant effect on a European site". The Plan contains policy statements as well as investment priorities, interventions, and programmes.

The following guidance documents informed the assessment methodology:

- EC (2021) *Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*. Environment Directorate-General of the European Commission.
- EC (2018) *Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC*. European Commission, Brussels.
- DEHLG (2010) *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities*. Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin.
- NPWS (2010) *Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities*. Circular Letter NPWS 1/10 & PSSP 2/10. National Parks & Wildlife Service, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin.
- Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR (2021) *Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management*. Office of the Planning Regulator, Dublin.
- Scottish Natural Heritage (2015) Habitat Regulation Appraisals of Plans. Guidance for Plan-making Bodies in Scotland. Version 3.0. January 2015.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE WEXFORD DEDP

2.1 Overview

The Wexford DEDP is a five-year tourism development plan for County Wexford developed through a programme of research and consultation guided by the V.I.C.E. (Visitor, Industry, Community, Environment) model for sustainable tourism. The approach within the plan is based on the views of visitors, the tourism industry and local community stakeholders.

The plan incorporates existing and new projects across the county while also exploring the potential for new tourism development opportunities to grow the value of the tourism sector across Wexford. The approach focuses on the need for greater levels of connectivity between Wexford's coastal, rural and urban experiences and how the county can increase its appeal to international visitors. The county will play a key role in achieving Ireland's Ancient East regional tourism development goals over the next five years. Developing the tourism experience across the county will ensure Wexford will become a key contributor to disrupting future regional visitor flows and ensure the region retains visitors for longer.

The key objectives of the DEDP are:

- Ensure the visitor experience in County Wexford is brought to life through a mix of tourism products and experiences that will attract domestic and international visitors and retain them in the destination for longer.
- Unlock the economic potential of tourism by progressing key initiatives that will disperse tourists across the county.
- Strengthen the value of tourism to local communities by providing sustainable employment opportunities.
- Develop a sustainable basis for commercial tourism development by enhancing and creating compelling destination experiences that excite consumers and buyers alike.
- Create more reasons to attract leisure visitors on a year-round basis to County Wexford and providing the opportunity for visitors to interact with local people as part of an authentic Wexford experience.
- Develop the role of County Wexford as driver of regional tourism development and influence visitor flows across the South East.

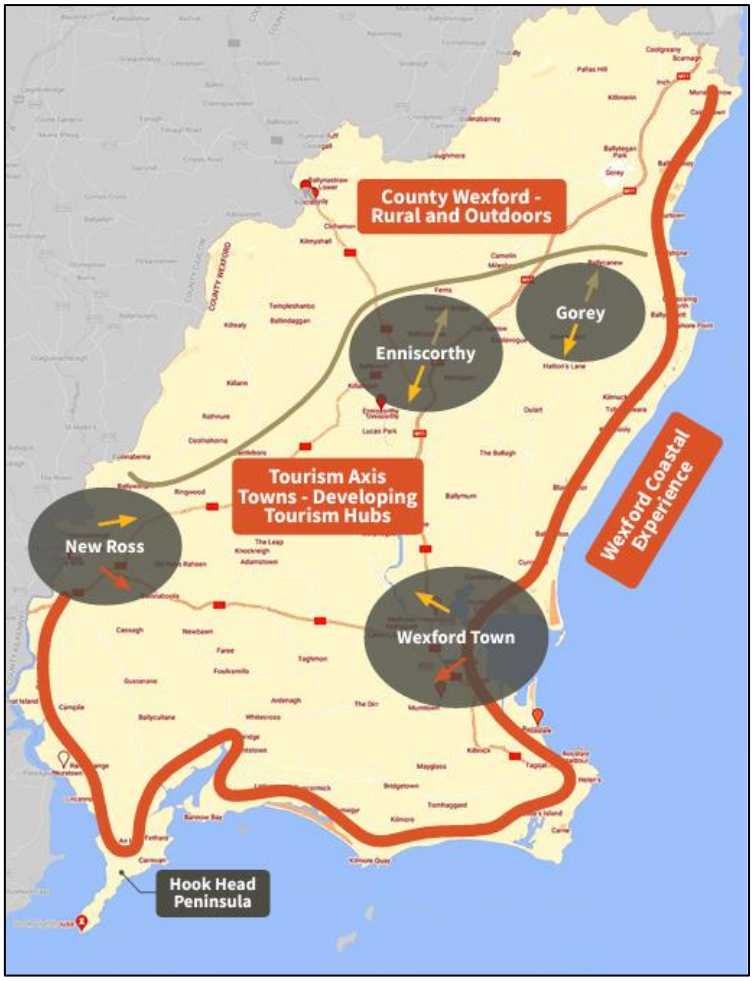


Figure 2-1 Visitor destination experiences across County Wexford (Source Fáilte Ireland DEDP).

The implementation of the Wexford DEDP is based on stakeholder commitment to project delivery and is structured around a multi-annual action plan. The stakeholders will take ownership or partner on the delivery of the key tasks required to implement the Wexford DEDP. It represents a five-year operational plan providing a commercial destination development focus that builds on existing project plans and integrating all related activity for a co-ordinated programme of activity. This includes projects that are currently being implemented, projects featured in existing plans and new concepts to grow the destination's capacity to increase the value of tourism across Wexford.

3.0 IDENTIFCATION OF ADVERSE EFFECTS

Section 3.1 below describes the potential effects that the DEDP could have on the natural environment in general, as a pretext to the identification and assessment of adverse effects on European sites (Section 3.2- 3.4 and Section 4 of this NIS). Section 3.2 presents the methodology for identifying potential adverse effects on European Sites, beginning with establishing the Zone of Influence.

3.1 Potential effects on the Natural Environment

The subsections below describe the potential effects that the DEDP could have on the natural environment in general, as a pretext to the identification and assessment of adverse effects on European sites (Section 3 and 4 of this NIS). A number of elements of the Wexford DEDP have the potential to lead to environmental and ecological impacts. Potential risks to the natural environment arising from the DEDP are as follows:

Habitat loss and fragmentation

The development of tourism infrastructure in Wexford to promote outdoor activities, and the ensuing increased visitor numbers could lead to the loss of habitats, including habitats that are Qualifying Interests of European Sites, and also habitats that are not Qualifying Interests but support Qualifying Interest habitats and species. This can include habitats and species outside the Natura 2000 network, such as areas used for feeding by wintering birds which lie outside the boundary of an SPA.

Direct species mortality

Direct species mortality is possible as a result of site clearance, tree felling and vegetation removal as part of any infrastructure construction required to promote visitors to Wexford.

Disturbance (noise, vibration, movement, lighting)

Disturbance can occur during construction and operation of infrastructure as a result of noise, both within and outside the footprint of the development. Increased visitor numbers and events can result in disturbance to wildlife.

Changes in water quality and hydrology

Water quality impacts arising from both the construction and the operation of the required infrastructure have the potential to directly and indirectly affect a wide range of habitats and species. Accidental pollution events can result in sediment and pollutants entering sensitive watercourses resulting in a deterioration in water quality.

Introduction and spread of invasive species

Invasive species pose a threat to biodiversity and ecosystem functioning and could inadvertently be introduced or spread through increased visitor numbers or construction plant and vehicles during construction works.

3.2 Establishing the Zone of Influence

Section 3.2.3 of DEHLG (2010) guidance outlines the procedure for selecting the European sites to be considered in AA. It states that European sites potentially affected should be identified and listed, bearing in mind the potential for direct, indirect, and in-combination effects. It also states that the specific approach in each case is likely to differ depending on the scale and likely effects of the plan or project. However, it advises that the following sites should generally be included:

- All European Sites within or immediately adjacent to the plan or project area.
- All European Sites within the Zone of Influence of the plan or project.
- In accordance with the Precautionary Principle, all European Sites for which there is doubt as to whether or not they might be significantly affected.

The "Zone of Influence" of a plan or project is the geographic extent over which significant ecological effects are likely to occur. In the case of projects, the guidance recognises that the Zone of Influence must be established on a case-by-case basis using the Source-Pathway-Receptor model (OPR, 2021). A plan or project may only to lead to significant effects on the integrity of the European site where all three elements of Source-Pathway-Receptor are linked. In the absence of one element of this model, adverse effects cannot occur. The assessment should make reference to the following key variables:

- The nature, size and location of the plan or project.
- The nature of the impacts which may arise from the project.
- The sensitivities of the ecological receptors.
- The potential for in-combination effects.

For example, in the case of a project that could affect a watercourse, it may be necessary to include the entire upstream and/or downstream catchment in order to capture all European Sites with water-dependent Qualifying Interests. In the case of plans, however, the guidance (DoEHLG, 2010) states that this zone extend to a distance of 15 km in all directions from the boundary of the plan area.

The Zone of Influence for the Wexford DEDP was defined as County Wexford and a 15km buffer around the county.

A geographical representation of the Zone of Influence wad produced in QGIS 3.28.8-Firenze using publicly available Ordnance Survey Ireland maps. This is used in combination with NPWS SAC and SPA shapefiles to identify the boundaries of European Sites in relation to the Zone of Influence (Appendix A).

There are 32 European sites within the Zone of Influence. Table 3-1 presents the number of SACs and SPAs in the Zone of Influence and Table 3-2 lists the names and site codes of the European sites.

Table 3-1 European Sites within the Zone of Influence

European Sites	No. sites
Special Areas of Conservation	21
Special Protection Areas	12
Total	**33**

Table 3-2 European Sites within the Zone of Influence

Site Code	Site Name
Special Protection Area	
004020	Ballyteige Burrow SPA
004033	Bannow Bay SAC SPA

Site Code	Site Name
004143	Cahore Marshes SPA
004118	Keeragh Islands SPA
004009	Ladys Island Lake SPA
004233	River Nore SPA
004002	Saltee Islands SPA
004237	Seas of Wexford SPA
004092	Tacumshin Lake SPA
004019	The Raven SPA
004027	Tramore Back Strand SPA
004076	Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA
Special Area of Conservation	
000696	Ballyteige Burrow SAC
000697	Bannow Bay SAC
000770	Blackstairs Mountains SAC
002953	Blackwater Bank SAC
000729	Buckroney-Brittas Dunes and Fen SAC
000700	Cahore Polders and Dunes SAC
002269	Carnsore Point SAC
001952	Comeragh Mountains SAC
000764	Hook Head SAC
001741	Kilmuckridge-Tinnabearna Sandhills SAC
001741	Kilpatrick Sandhills SAC
000704	Ladys Island Lake SAC
002161	Long Bank SAC
002137	Lower River Suir SAC
000710	Raven Point Nature Reserve SAC
002162	River Barrow and River Nore SAC
000707	Saltee Islands SAC
000708	Screen Hills SAC
000781	Slaney River Valley SAC
000709	Tacumshin Lake SAC
000671	Tramore Dunes and Backstrand SAC

3.3 Conservation Status and Site Integrity

Article 1(e) of the Habitats Directive defines the conservation status of a natural habitat as "*the sum of the influences acting on a natural habitat and its typical species that may affect its long-term natural distribution, structure and functions as well as the long-term survival of its typical species […].*

The conservative status of a natural habitat will be taken as "favourable" when:

- *its natural range and areas it covers within that range are stable or increasing, and*
- *the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and*
- *the conservation status of its typical species is favourable as defined in (i);*".

Article 1(i) defines the conservation status of a species as "*the sum of the influences acting on the species concerned that may affect the long-term distribution and abundance of its populations […];*

The conservation status will be taken as "favourable" when:

- *population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and*
- *the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and*
- *there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis;".*

EC (2018), the European Commission stated that "the integrity of a site involves its constitutive characteristics and ecological functions". The site's integrity is therefore based on the Qualifying Interests for which the site is designated, along with their ecological requirements. When undertaking Appropriate Assessment, the integrity of a site is no affected as long as the conservation objectives for the site are not undermined.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF ADVERSE EFFECTS

Table 4-1, 4-2, 4-3, 4-4, 4-5 and 4-6 below identify the Vision, Key Objectives, Strategic Objectives, Catalyst Projects, Destination Enabling Projects and Guiding Principles contained within the DEDP and assesses their potential to adversely affect the integrity of the European sites listed in Table 3-2.

Table 4-1 Evaluation of Potential Adverse Effects as a Result of the Vision.

Vision 2034	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
"Wexford has something for everybody on land and water! With 260 km of coastline to be actively explored, a broad range of immersive attractions throughout the county, rural experiences and bustling towns, Wexford offers a complete year round holiday experience for our international and domestic visitors.	The Vision is a high-level policy statement, and therefore it can be concluded that it will not lead to an adverse effect on any European site.	No

Table 4-2 Evaluation of Potential Adverse Effects as a result of the Key Objectives.

Key Objective	Summary	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
Key Objective 1	• Ensure the visitor experience in Wexford is brought to life through a mix of tourism products and experiences that will attract domestic and international visitors and retain them in the destination for longer.	The Key Objectives are a set of high-level policy statements, and therefore it can be concluded that they will not lead to an adverse effect on any European site.	No
Key Objective 2	• Unlock the economic potential of tourism by progressing key initiatives that will disperse tourists across the county.		
Key Objective 3	• Strengthen the value of tourism to local communities by providing sustainable employment opportunities.		
Key Objective 4	• Develop a sustainable basis for commercial tourism development by enhancing and creating compelling destination experiences that excite consumers and buyers alike.		
Key Objective 5	• Create more reasons to attract leisure visitors on a year-round basis to Wexford and providing the opportunity for visitors to interact with local people as part of an authentic Wexford experience.		
Key Objective 6	• Develop the role of Wexford as driver of regional tourism development and influence visitor flows across the South East.		

Table 4-3 Evaluation of Potential Adverse Effects as a result of the Strategic Goals

Strategic Goal	Strategic Objectives	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
Strategic Goal 1: Motivate the domestic and international consumer to visit Wexford and Ireland's Ancient East.	• Develop a clear and consistent approach to the sales and marketing of Wexford domestically and internationally by Visit Wexford, state agencies and industry. • Extend the traditional tourism season to become a year-round destination supported by a mix of compelling urban, coastal and rural experiences which motivate domestic and international visitors to visit Wexford. • Strengthen the appeal of our urban tourism hubs to attract domestic and international visitors to Wexford. • Build on Wexford's profile for coastal tourism to grow the appeal of our coastal communities to international visitors. • Develop the capacity of the Wexford industry to collectively grow annual visitor numbers through experience innovation, collaboration and a collective international sales focus. • Maximise future capital investment in visitor attractions to deliver best in class visitor experiences. • Maximise the opportunity for the destination through the Rosslare EuroPort as a major international access point. • Develop the appeal of Wexford as an outdoor activity destination.	Plans and projects stemming from Strategic Goal 1, (such as the development of greenways, blueways or walking tracks), as well as increased visitor numbers (as an outcome of the successful implementation of this goal), have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes
Strategic Goal 2: Provide the visitor with more reasons to stay, increasing the economic impact of tourism.	• Develop and implement clear action plans to help Wexford Town, Gorey, New Ross and Enniscorthy to become key tourism towns through collaboration of stakeholders, businesses and communities supported by a new vision in how they attract and retain visitors. • Focus on experience development with new and existing operators to maximise the potential of outdoor activities - trails, South East Greenway, coastal and on water activities.	Plans and projects stemming from Strategic Goal 2, (such as the development of greenways, blueways or walking tracks), as well as increased visitor numbers (as an outcome of the successful implementation of this goal), have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or	Yes

Strategic Goal	Strategic Objectives	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
	• Maximise the potential of the investment in walking trails, the Norman Way and Eurovelo through a new focus on experience development • Maximise the quality of the coastal and river environment to create an expanded range of sustainable water based and slow adventure experiences. • Develop destination clusters (New Ross and Hook Peninsula, Wexford Town, Gorey / Enniscorthy) to grow the volume of saleable experiences across Wexford and accelerating new ways of working together. This will be monitored through key accounts and feedback form cluster groups. • Develop and implement the Wexford Food in Tourism Strategy to leverage the food heritage of Wexford and increase economic impact of tourism for producers and food businesses. • Grow the accommodation base in destination towns while exploring the opportunity to increase the volume of niche visitor accommodation options in rural destinations. • Grow the activity tourism enterprise base linked to coastal activities and experiences. • Undertake a programme of continuous improvement and innovation in how cultural venues and attractions are used during the day and evening time. • Develop the potential of the destination's existing outdoor trails infrastructure to animate the trails through a new experience led approach.	habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	
Strategic Goal 3: Ensure the region is easy to access,	• Maximise the potential of existing accommodation hubs to act as gateways into the rural and coastal Wexford experience.	Plans and projects stemming from the Strategic Goal 3, such as the development of greenways, blueways, walking and cycling trails throughout the county and the enhancement of Rosslare Europort to become the main access hub for	Yes

Strategic Goal	Strategic Objectives	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
navigate and consume for the visitor	• Realise the potential of Rosslare EuroPort to become the main access hub for international visitors to the county. • Develop an experience led approach to enable visitors to easily explore the county through the development of activity/ walking trails, the Norman Way, Eurovelo, and Greenways. • Achieve regional connectivity through regional product opportunities such as Greenways, coastal routes and Eurovelo in addition to the development of enhanced product connections in areas such as food, culture and activities. • Develop the Greenway product to introduce visitors to a blend of urban and rural community experiences and contribute to the development of the SouthEast Greenway in the medium term and the Dublin Cork Greenway Project in the longer term. • Explore the potential of a regional Coastal Blueway through the development of pilot sites in Wexford. • Develop a necklace of existing coastal walking trails throughout Wexford that introduce visitors to innovative approaches to sustainable coastal tourism activity. • Examine the opportunities for international product linkages with pilgrim routes and trails linked to other regional and international routes. • Highlight the ease of access into Wexford via Dublin by road and rail, direct ferry access and proximity to regional clusters in Waterford, Kilkenny and Wicklow through the development of industry supports e.g. sales toolkit including routes/trails, Tourism Towns, increased local linkages with TFI Local Link Wexford and Rosslare Harbour.	international visitors visiting the country has the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	
Strategic Goal 4: Enable and assist the industry to grow its capacity and capability	• Strengthen the tourism industry's approach to county wide collaboration by creating destination clusters that will motivate visitors to explore Wexford's urban, rural and coastal communities.	Strategic Goal 4 is a high-level policy statement. It can be concluded that this non-infrastructure programme will not lead to an adverse effect on any European site.	No

Strategic Goal	Strategic Objectives	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
to ensure it can thrive over the period of this strategy and create sustainable jobs in local communities.	• Grow the value of international tourism to Wexford through tactical initiatives such as International Sales Ready Programme and the development of new experiences across the destination. • Build the tourism industry's capacity to align with future niche destination positioning opportunities such as coastal and rural tourism, visitor attractions innovation, the outdoors and food. • Grow the tourism enterprise base to support the coastal tourism opportunity for Wexford • Ensure tourism is integrated into future urban and rural regeneration activity in developing Wexford as a great place to live, work and visit.		
Strategic Goal 5: Build committed stakeholder and industry partnerships to guide sustainable destination development across the region.	• Achieve low carbon and sustainable growth in the development of new urban and rural visitor experiences that contribute to the county's ambition to become a sustainable tourism destination. • Develop Wexford to become renowned for its approach to sustainable coastal tourism. • Develop the Hook Head Peninsula cluster as a best-in-class eco-tourism destination supported by a destination wide approach to sustainable tourism development. • Develop and encourage increased consideration of sustainable transport options. • Explore the rural tourism opportunity to develop sustainable and regenerative Wexford community experiences. • Integrate the Wexford food story as a key element of communicating the destination's approach to sustainability. • Develop a county wide approach to grow access to slow tourism experiences as a key element of sustainable tourism development for Wexford.	Plans and projects stemming from the Strategic Goal 5, (such as the development of the transport network in Wexford and the Hook Head cluster) as well as increased visitor numbers (as an outcome of the successful implementation of this goal) has the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes

Table 4-4 Evaluation of Potential Adverse Effects as a result of the Key Destination Catalyst Projects

Catalyst Project and Objective	Activating Project	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
Catalyst Project 1: Wexford Attractions - Large Scale Capital Investment Grow the commercial capabilities of Wexford's network of new and existing visitor attractions to increase the value of tourism across the county.	• Wexford Visitor Attractions • Wexford RRDF Projects • Irish National Heritage Park - Viking Village • Dunbrody Ship – New Ross • Norman Experience – New Ross • New Ross Tourism Transformation • Johnstown Castle Estate Museum and Gardens • Johnstown Castle Estate Museum and Gardens Experience Innovation • Wells House Experience Innovation • Enniscorthy Attractions Experience • Athenaeum Building Assessment	Plans and projects stemming from this Catalyst Project, which promotes the development of projects which aim to attract visitors through development on a countywide scale have the the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes
Catalyst Project 2: Wexford Town Develop Wexford town into a national tourism destination by growing its appeal in the international and domestic market	• Wexford Town Tourism Hub Development • Wexford Heritage Town Plan • Wexford Town Visitor Orientation • Wexford Town Events Hub • Wexford Arts Centre • Wexford Town Night Time Economy • Trinity Wharf	Plans and projects stemming from this Catalyst Project to enhance existing infrastructure to attract visitors to Wexford Town have the potential to adversely affect European Sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes

Catalyst Project and Objective	Activating Project	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
Catalyst Project 3: Hook Head Peninsula Develop a sustainable tourism approach to grow the value of tourism across Hook Head Peninsula.	• Hook Head Peninsula Master Plan • Hook Head Peninsula Experience • Hook Head Peninsula Lighthouse • Hook Head Peninsula - Duncannon Fort	Plans and projects stemming from this Catalyst Project to develop tourism in the Hook Head peninsula, and the increase in visitor numbers (as an outcome of the successful implementation of the project) has the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes
Catalyst Project 4: Forth Mountain Activity Centre Establish Forth Mountain Activity Centre as a regional sustainable activity and adventure hub attracting domestic and international visitors.	• Forth Mountain Activity Centre	Projects to attract visitors via the improvement of outdoor activities at Forth Mountain have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes

Catalyst Project and Objective	Activating Project	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
Catalyst Project 5: Greenways & The Outdoors Become an integral element of the South East Greenway which will represent the catalyst for additional greenway developments across Wexford.	• Greenways - South East Greenway • New Ross Greenway Trail Head • Greenways - New Ross to Rosslare • Greenways – Wexford to Rosslare Strand Greenway • National Greenways Trail • Bree Hill MTB - Mountain Bike Trail • North Wexford Walking & Cycling Trails • Eurovelo • Enniscorthy Outdoor Experience / Riverside Trail • Enniscorthy Outdoor Experience / River Walk • Greenway Training and Capability Building	Projects to attract visitors (such as the development of greenways, blueways or walking tracks), as well as increased visitor numbers (as an outcome of the successful implementation of this goal), have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes
Catalyst Project 6: Coastal Activity Centres Develop a best-in-class coastal activity tourism destination that motivates domestic and international visitors to explore Wexford's coastal communities	• Curracloe Water sports facility • Coastal Destination Courtown Project • Coastal Tourism Centre of Excellence Coastal Experiences • Wexford Coastal Trail Feasibility • Coastal Blueway • Coastal Tourism Maritime and Seafaring Experience • Rosslare & Rosslare EuroPort Opportunity	Projects to increase visitor numbers to coastal areas via the development of greenways, blueways, walking trails, fishing activities or improvement of outdoor activities have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes

Table 4-5 Evaluation of Potential Adverse Effects as a result of the Destination Enabling Projects

Destination Enabling Project	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required
Tourism Clusters / Networks	• Wexford Tourism Clusters & Networks • Outdoor Activity Enterprise Development • Wexford Attractions Network • Visitor Experience Development	Plans and projects stemming from this Enabling project which aims to increase visitors to the coast/outdoors via the development of greenways or improvement of outdoor activities have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes
Visitor Experience Development	• Evening Time Experiences – Tourism Axis Towns • OPW Visitor Experience • Enniscorthy Urban Experience • Vinegar Hill • Ferns Community Experience • Norman Way Experience Innovation • Wexford Garden Trail Experience Innovation • Value Proposition of Leisure Tourism • Wexford Craft Trail	Plans and projects stemming from this Enabling project which aims to develop key tourist sites to attract a greater number of visitors, has the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes

Destination Enabling Project	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required
Accommodation Growth	• Wexford Accommodation Audit • Wexford Accommodation Growth	Plans and projects stemming from this Enabling project, which aims to develop new and existing accommodation which would in turn increase the tourist capacity of Wexford, has the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes
Festivals & Events	• Festivals & Events • Festivals & Events Pilot Programme – Event Space Innovation	Plans and projects stemming from this Enabling project, which aims to develop festivals and events to increase visitor numbers has the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes
Climate Action and Sustainability	• Carbon Footprint Reduction • Sustainable Tourism Excellence • Wexford Biodiversity Experiences • Seal Rescue Courtown Ireland • Sustainable Transport - TFI Local Link Wexford	Plans and projects stemming from this Enabling project, specifically the Wexford Biodiversity Experiences, which aims to attract visitors to marine and nature reserves, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes

Destination Enabling Project	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required
Wexford Food Experiences	• Wexford Food in Tourism Plan implementation • Food in Tourism capability building	Plans and projects stemming from this Enabling project, which aims to promote food in Wexford by growing the number of food and drink experiences, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes
International Visitor Readiness / Capability Building	• International Sales Focus • Capacity Building Supports - Agency Alignment	This is a non-infrastructure programme based on international sales capacity building and will not lead to an adverse effect on any European site.	No

Table 4-6 Evaluation of Potential Adverse Effects as a Result of the Guiding Principles.

Guiding Principles	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
To ensure the successful implementation of the Wexford DEDP experiences and the creation of a sense of place, the following guiding principles have been established to guide certain recommendations and projects listed in this section. • All projects are self-sustainable, meaning they have access to capital and are not relying solely on grant aid to be developed or maintained. • All projects are on-message with the Wexford DEDP experiences and are aligned to the broader mission of Ireland's Ancient East proposition and regional brand. • All projects focus on setting the area apart from its competitors, contributing actively to creating a strong sense of place with a unique feel and ensuring visitor needs are catered for across the day and evening time. • All projects add value to the area and provide a direct and demonstrable link to either extend visitors' length of stay, extend the length of the tourist season or develop new markets. • Principles of responsible and sustainable tourism development are embedded in each action, creating better places to live in and to visit. • All stakeholders will demonstrate a strong and sustained willingness to work as a collaborative network.	The guiding principles are a set of high-level principles to guide the recommendations and projects contained in the Plan, and therefore it can be concluded that it will not lead to an adverse effect on any European site.	No

5.0 MITIGATION

5.1 Principles and Approach

Section 4.0 of this NIS identified adverse effects likely to arise from the DEDP. This section prescribes measures aimed at mitigating these adverse effects, thereby protecting the integrity of European sites.

The mitigation measures prescribed in this NIS have been designed according to the principle of a mitigation hierarchy, as outlined in the European Commission's guidance document *Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC* (EC, 2021). According to this hierarchy, the following mitigation approaches were adopted, in order of decreasing preference:

1. Avoidance (preventing impacts from happening in the first place)
2. Reduction (reducing the magnitude and/or likelihood of an impact)

The mitigation measures presented in Table 5-1 below apply to the Strategic Goals, Catalyst Projects and Destination Enabling Projects contained in the DEDP, where the potential for adverse effects could not be excluded, as described in Section 4.0.

Any future plans or projects that stem of the DEDP will be subject to Appropriate Assessment at the project level, in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, as transposed into domestic law by Part 5 of the Habitats Regulations and Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act. Where potential adverse effects cannot be avoided, the mitigation measures presented in Table 5-1 below will apply and any other measures specified as part of the project level assessments, including AA, as appropriate

Table 5-1 Mitigation Measures

Source	Relevant Strategic Objective/ Catalyst Project/ Destination Enabling Project	Potential Adverse Effect	Mitigation Measure (s)[7]	Residual Effects
The construction and operation of tourism-related infrastructure and development, as well as increased visitor numbers during operation	**Goals:** Strategic Goal 1 Strategic Goal 2 Strategic Goal 3 Strategic Goal 4 Strategic Goal 5 **Catalyst Projects:** 1. Wexford Attractions - Large Scale Capital Investment 2. Wexford Town 3. Hook Head Peninsula 4. Forth Mountain Activity Centre 5. Greenways & the Outdoors 6. Coastal Activity Centres **Destination Enabling Projects** 7. Tourism Clusters / Networks 8. Visitor Experience Development 9. Accommodation Growth 10. Festivals & Events 11. Climate Action and Sustainability 12. Wexford Food Experiences	Habitat loss and fragmentation	The potential for habitat loss and fragmentation will be mitigated through the implementation of the Policy Objectives as laid out in the adopted Wexford County Development Plan 2022 – 2028, including the following: • Climate Action Objective CA11. • Core Strategy Objectives CS04, CS26. • Sustainable Housing Objectives SH04 • Economic Development Objectives ED11, ED112, ED115. • Environmental Management Objectives EM01, EM02, EM03, EM04, EM05, WQ01, EL02, • Tourism Development Objectives TM01, TM04, TM06, TM07, TM11, TM23, TM29, TM30, WQ15. • Transportation Objective TS29. • Natural Heritage Objectives NH01, NH02, NH03, NH04, NH05, NH06, NH07, NH08 NH09, NH10, NH11, NH16, NH19, NH20, NH21, NH26, NH27 • Coastal Zone Management and Martine Spatial Planning Objectives CZM32, CZM44 • Infrastructure Objectives TC11 FRM15, FRM6, FRM17, GC04, TC15, WW01. • Landscape and Green Infrastructure Objective GI01. The 4th National Biodiversity Plan including: • Outcome 3A (Sustainable tourism) and Outcome 3B (Biodiversity and tourism) Visitor Management Guidelines for the Wild Atlantic Way (June 2020) development by Fáilte Ireland. It should be noted that although these guidelines were developed for the Wild Atlantic Way, the principles and objectives are applicable to all Fáilte Ireland tourism regions (Ireland's Ancient East Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027).	Provided the mitigation measures prescribed in this NIS are implemented, the DEDP, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, will not adversely affect the integrity of the any European site.

[7] The policy objectives contained in Table 5-1 are presented in full in Table 5-2.

Source	Relevant Strategic Objective/ Catalyst Project/ Destination Enabling Project	Potential Adverse Effect	Mitigation Measure (s)[7]	Residual Effects
	13. International Visitor readiness / capability building		The assessment of effects of plans and projects stemming from the DEDP will be undertaken by competent experts and in accordance with best practice guidelines, including the guidelines published by the National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS), Chartered Institute of Ecological and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), including any subsequent updates. Ecological surveys and assessment will be carried out in accordance with the following best practice guidance and any subsequent updates: • CIEEM (2018) Guidelines for the Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine version 1.2. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester. • TII (2009) *Ecological Survey Techniques for Protected Flora and Fauna during the Planning of National Road Schemes.* Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Dublin. • Smith et al. (2011) *Best Practice Guidance for Habitat Survey and Mapping.* Heritage Council. Site specific surveys will be undertaken in accordance with these guidelines in order to identify Qualifying Interests, including non-Qualifying Interest species and habitats on which they rely, that may be affected by a plan or project. This will include surveys for mobile species which may be found outside the boundary of a European site.	
		Direct mortality	Pre-construction surveys will be carried out for Qualifying Interests, where required. The life span of ecological surveys and the requirement for pre-construction surveys will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, determined by a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist and informed by *Advice Note on the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys* (CIEEM, 2019). The following guidance and any subsequent updates will also be adhered to, where appropriate: • TII (2009) *Ecological Survey Techniques for Protected Flora and Fauna during the Planning of National Road Schemes.* Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Dublin.	

Source	Relevant Strategic Objective/ Catalyst Project/ Destination Enabling Project	Potential Adverse Effect	Mitigation Measure (s)[7]	Residual Effects
			• Collins (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (4th Edition). • Inland Fisheries Ireland (2016) *Guidelines on Protection of Fisheries During Construction Works and Adjacent to Waters.* • NIEA (2019) *Otters and Development.* Northern Ireland Environment Agency Where works are to be carried out in sensitive areas, a suitably qualified Ecological Clerk of Works will be employed to supervise the works. In-stream works will only take place between the 1st July and 30th September, unless otherwise agreed with Inland Fisheries Ireland. Site specific mitigation measures will be incorporated into any future project(s) to reduce the risk to QI species and habitats, such as fencing, green bridges and hop-over planting.	
		Disturbance	The potential for disturbance to species will be mitigated through the implementation of the Policy Objectives as laid out in the adopted Wexford County Development Plan 2022 – 2028, including the following: • Environmental Management Objectives EM01, EL02. • Natural Heritage Objectives NH04, NH05, NH08 NH09, NH21. • Recreation and Open Space Objective ROS51 • Coastal Zone Management and Martine Spatial Planning Objectives CZM03, CZM31, CZM41, CZM46, CZM51. • Infrastructure Objective TC11 • Landscape and Green Infrastructure Objective GI03. Visitor Management Guidelines for the Wild Atlantic Way (June 2020) development by Fáilte Ireland. It should be noted that although these guidelines were developed for the Wild Atlantic Way, the principles and objectives are applicable to all Fáilte Ireland tourism regions (Ireland's Ancient East Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027). Relevant legislation and guidance relating to noise, vibration, lighting and disturbance will be adhered to during the planning of projects, including, but not limited to:	

Source	Relevant Strategic Objective/ Catalyst Project/ Destination Enabling Project	Potential Adverse Effect	Mitigation Measure (s)[7]	Residual Effects
			• CIEEM (2018) *Guidelines for the Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine*. version 1.2. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester. • Institution of Lighting Professionals (2020) *Guidance notes for the reduction of obtrusive light.* Guidance Note 01/20. Institution of lighting professionals, Regent House, Regent Place, Rugby, Warwickshire, UK. • Cutts, N, Hemingway K and Spencer J (2013) *The Waterbird Disturbance Mitigation Toolkit Informing Estuarine Planning and Construction Projects. Produced by the Institute of Estuarine and Coastal Studies*. Version 3.2. • Collins (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (4th Edition). • Inland Fisheries Ireland (2016) *Guidelines on Protection of Fisheries During Construction Works and Adjacent to Waters.* • NIEA (2019) *Otters and Development*. Northern Ireland Environment Agency.	
		Habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction	The potential for habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction will be mitigated through the implementation of the Policy Objectives as laid out in the adopted Wexford County Development Plan 2022 – 2028, including the following: • Environmental Management Objectives EM01, EL02. • Natural Heritage Objectives NH04, NH05, NH08 NH09, NH21. • Recreation and Open Space Objective ROS51 • Coastal Zone Management and Martine Spatial Planning Objectives CZM03, CZM31, CZM41, CZM46, CZM51. • Infrastructure Objective TC11 • Landscape and Green Infrastructure Objective GI03. And as laid out in the Ireland's Ancient Easy Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027 pertaining to visitor management (Appendix A3 of the Strategy).	

Source	Relevant Strategic Objective/ Catalyst Project/ Destination Enabling Project	Potential Adverse Effect	Mitigation Measure (s)[7]	Residual Effects
			Plans and projects will be designed, constructed and operated in accordance with relevant legislation and where applicable, with the following guidelines and any subsequent updates: • (TII, 2008) *Guidelines for the crossing of Watercourses During Construction of National Road Schemes* • (IFI, 2016) *Guidelines on Protection of Fisheries during Construction Works in and adjacent to Waters*. • CIRIA C753 The SUDS Manual • TII (2015) Road Drainage and the Water Environment. • CIRIA C753 The SUDS Manual • CIRIA C532: Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites, Guidance for Consultants and Contractors • CIRIA C692: Environmental Good Practice on Site • CIRIA C648: Control of Water Pollution from Linear Construction Projects: Technical Guidance • CIRIA C648: Control of water pollution from linear construction projects: Site guide.	
		Spread of invasive species	The potential for the spread invasive species will be mitigated through the implementation of the Policy Objectives as laid out in the adopted Wexford County Development Plan 2022 – 2028, including the following: • Natural Heritage Policy Objectives NH19, NH22, NH23, NH24, NH25, NH26, NH27, NH28 • Landscape and Green Infrastructure Objective GI01. Plans and projects will be designed, constructed and operated in accordance with relevant legislation and where applicable, with the following guidelines: • TII (2020a) *The Management of Invasive Alien Plant Species on National Roads – Standard*. • TII (2020b) *The Management of Invasive Alien Plant Species on National Roads – Technical Guidance*	

In addition to the mitigation described above to be implemented as part of the plans and objectives of the DEDP, Fáilte Ireland's stakeholders will be required to demonstrate compliance with the following measures contained within the DEDP, in order to begin land use or infrastructure development or land use activities.

- Infrastructure Capacity – "*With respect to infrastructural capacity (including drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) the potential environmental impacts associated with increase visitor numbers and increase pressure on capacities of existing infrastructure (including accommodation) will require careful planning and assessment. The potential environmental effects of the likely increase in tourism volumes resulting from the relevant projects in this plan will need to be considered at project level and mitigated as appropriate. This aspect should be linked to the development of visitor management plans as appropriate. The promotion of developing visitor friendly supporting infrastructure where it is required will also be encouraged.*"
- Visitor Management – "*Those receiving funding shall seek to sustainably manage existing and any increase in visitor numbers and/or any change in visitor behaviour to avoid significant effects on the environment including loss of habitat and/or disturbance to sensitive species (including human beings and biodiversity). This shall include for example, ensuring that new projects are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities. Visitor management plans will be required for proposed plans, programmes and projects that are to receive funding as relevant and appropriate.*"
- Blue and Green Infrastructure and Ecosystem Services – "*Those receiving funding shall contribute towards the maintenance and enhancement of existing blue and green infrastructure and its ecosystem services. Proposals for the development of any blue and green infrastructure or activities in these areas should demonstrate the synergies that can be achieved with regard to the: provision of open space amenities; sustainable management of water; protection and management of biodiversity; protection of cultural heritage; and protected landscape sensitivities.*"

The majority of the mitigation measures are achieved through the environmental policies and objectives laid out in the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028. The County Development Plan provides for sustainable planning and management of all development in the County. The table below (Table 5.2) describes the relevant objectives from the County Development Plan.

Table 5.2 Relevant objectives from the Wexford County Development Plan

CA11	To support measures to build resilience to climate change including adaptive capacity, awareness and providing for nature-based solutions and emergency planning and to raise awareness of the role of spatial planning in climate change mitigation and adaptation through the forward planning and development management functions of the Planning Authority.
CS26	To promote the protection, restoration and enhancement of biodiversity and green infrastructure in all settlements and in the open countryside.
ET02	To develop and facilitate new tourism related developments, both direct and indirect, that will expand the tourism offering and potential of the town and its surrounding area, and to work with key stakeholders to develop Enniscorthy as a vibrant visitor hub and tourism destination town in the county.
SH04	To ensure that new residential developments minimises the use of natural resources and impacts on natural assets. The locations selected for residential developments should maximise the potential to use sustainable modes of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport to reduce dependence on fossil fuels. The design of residential units and associated services should maximise the use of renewable energy and minimise the use of water.

ED11	To protect the natural resources, amenities and heritage of our county and ensure that economic development does not significantly impact on this heritage, the environmental capacity or on the amenity of the residents of the county.
ED112	To facilitate the sustainable development of forestry in the county provided that no significant adverse impacts are caused to natural waters, wildlife habitats and biodiversity and that it does not have a significant adverse visual impact on the local landscape. Forestry developments should include environmental enhancement and restoration where possible.
ED115	To ensure that existing native woodlands are protected and enhanced and, where appropriate, encourage the conversion of coniferous forest to native woodlands with a focus on opportunities for habitat linkage and wider eco-services.
EM01	To ensure that proposed projects/developments comply with the requirements of EIA Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014, amending Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, and as transposed into Irish law under national legislation, including in Schedule 5 Part 1 and Part 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended). In accordance with Article 3 of Directive 2014/52/EU, where EIA is required the environmental impact assessments presented in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) shall identify, describe and assess in an appropriate manner, the direct, indirect and cumulative significant effects of a project on the following factors: population and human health; biodiversity (with particular attention to species and habitats protected under Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC); land, soil, water, air and climate, material assets, cultural heritage, and the landscape, and the interaction between the foregoing factors.
EM02	To ensure that planning permission will only be granted for a development proposal that, either individually or in combination with existing and/or proposed plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on a European site, or where such a development proposal is likely or might have such a significant effect (either alone or in combination), the planning authority will, as required by law, carry out an appropriate assessment as per requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC of the 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, as transposed into Irish legislation. Only after having ascertained that the development proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site, will the planning authority agree to the development and impose appropriate mitigation measures in the form of planning conditions. A development proposal which could adversely affect the integrity of a European site may only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive as transposed into Irish legislation.
EM04	To ensure that plans, including land use plans, will only be adopted, if they either individually or in combination with existing and/or proposed plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on a European Site, or where such a plan is likely or might have such a significant effect (either alone or in combination), Wexford County Council will, as required by law, carry out an appropriate assessment as per requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC of the 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, as transposed into Irish legislation. Only after having ascertained that the plan will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site, will Wexford County Council adopt the plan, incorporating any necessary mitigation measures. A plan which could adversely affect the integrity of a European site may only be adopted in exceptional circumstances, as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive as transposed into Irish legislation.
EM05	To implement the provisions of EU and National legislation and other relevant legislative requirements on protecting and improving surface and ground water quality, air quality and climate, and on reducing adverse noise and light nuisance, as appropriate and in conjunction with all relevant stakeholders in the interests of the protection of the environment, public health and the sustainable development of the county.
EL02	To ensure that external lighting and lighting schemes are designed so that light spillage is minimised thereby protecting the amenities of nearby properties and wildlife, including protected species.
TM01	To protect and sustain the natural, built and cultural features that form the basis of the county's tourism industry including landscapes, historic buildings and structures, habitats, species and areas of natural heritage value and water quality.

TM04	To implement the County Wexford Tourism Strategy 2019-2023 subject to compliance with the Habitats, SEA, EIA and Water Framework Directives and normal planning and environmental criteria.
TM06	To engage with Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland, the Arts Council, National Parks and Wildlife, Wexford Local Economic Office and other key stakeholders to promote and maximise the tourism potential of the county and to support the development of niche tourism sectors such as Geo-tourism, Eco-tourism, Food tourism and community-based tourism, while ensuring the protection of the natural, cultural and built heritage of the county.
TM07	To support the future development of Destination Experience Development Plans which may be developed by Fáilte Ireland during the lifetime of this plan and to ensure continued collaboration and alignment with Fáilte Ireland and tourism stakeholders to ensure successful implementation and delivery of these plans subject to compliance with the Habitats, SEA, EIA and Water Framework Directives and normal planning and environmental criteria.
TM11	To develop Wexford Town's profile as a unique and vibrant Maritime town which encompasses its natural environment, its history and heritage, water-based activities, festivals, innovation and food offering subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.
TM23	To ensure that tourism development or activity does not impact on coastal habitats, species and features such as wetlands and vegetated dunes which play an important role in flood relief and in protecting from coastal erosion and are important in their own right.
TM29	To support the co-ordinated development of the Irish Sea Way Trail subject to compliance with the Habitats, SEA, EIA and Water Framework Directive and all other planning and environmental criteria and the proper planning and sustainable development of the county.
TS29	To provide cycling and walking routes as resources allow within and between settlements, and between settlements and rural trip generators (including places of employment, sports facilities, tourism assets including greenways and other amenities). The Council will provide a cycle way, segregated where possible, between County Wicklow, Gorey, Camolin, Ferns and Enniscorthy, with a view to extending this cycle way towards Rosslare Europort and New Ross. The provision of such cycling and walking routes shall be subject to the protection of habitats, environment, amenity and heritage and Appropriate Assessment in accordance with the requirement of the EU Habitats Directive to ensure the protection and preservation of all designated SACs and SPAs. Green infrastructure and sustainable drainage shall be designed into such routes where possible.
NH01	To ensure the protection of all designated ecological sites (as detailed in Section 13.2.1 to 13.2.11) in relevant Local Area Plans and in the assessment of planning applications and promote the restoration of sites where required.
NH02	To protect and enhance the rich qualities of our natural heritage in a manner that is appropriate to its significance.
NH03	To promote biodiversity protection, restoration and habitat connectivity both within protected areas and in the landscape through promoting the integration of green infrastructure and ecosystem services, including landscape, heritage and biodiversity and management of invasive and alien species in the plan making and development management processes.
NH04	To protect the integrity of sites designated for their habitat and species importance and prohibit development which would damage or threaten the integrity of these sites. Such sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and candidate SACs, Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Natural Heritage Areas(NHAs) and proposed NHAs, Nature Reserves, Refuges for Fauna and RAMSAR sites. To protect protected species wherever they occur
NH05	In assessing planning applications located in and/or in proximity to Natura 2000 sites, whether hydraulically linked or otherwise linked or dependent (such as feeding, roosting or nesting grounds) to a designated site, regard shall be had to the detailed conservation management plans and data reports prepared by NPWS, where available, to the identified features of interest of the site, the identified conservation objectives to ensure the maintenance or restoration of the features of interests to favourable conservation status, the NPWS Article 17 current conservation status reports, the underlying site specific conditions, and the known threats to achieving the conservation objectives of the site.
NH08	To ensure that any plan/project and any associated works, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, are subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment to ensure there are no likely significant effects on any Natura 2000 site(s) and that the requirements of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive are fully satisfied. Where a plan/project is likely to

	have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site or there is uncertainty with regard to effects, it shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment. The plan/project will proceed only after it has been ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site or where, in the absence of alternative solutions, the plan/project is deemed by the competent authority imperative for reasons of overriding public interest.
NH16	To support the conservation, sustainable management and restoration of marine ecosystems in any existing or future Marine Protected Area which may be designated during the lifetime of the Plan.
NH19	To implement the requirements of EU Regulations 1143/2014 on the Prevention and Management of the Introduction and Spread of Invasive Alien Species and Regulation 49 and 50 of the EU (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011(S.I. No. 477/2011), as amended.
NH21	To ensure that natural heritage and biodiversity consideration are integral to the preparation of Local Area Plans and to identify, protect and manage biodiversity through these Plans.
NH26	To require best practice and facilitate the development of appropriate facilities to minimise the spread of invasive species along blueways and greenways.
NH27	To carefully consider and implement the management of invasive species where there is a corridor, such as hydrological connections to European Sites in order to prevent the spread of invasive species to sensitive sites.
CZM32	To prepare coastal erosion management plans and support the development of coastal protection or management works for the following locations subject to compliance with the Habitats and SEA/EIA Directive and subject to normal planning and environmental criteria: • Rosslare Coastal Erosion and Flood Risk Management Plan. • Courtown North Beach Nourishment and Marina Feasibility Study. • Grange, Fethard on Sea Coastal Erosion Management Plan. • Bastardstown / Ballyhealy Coastal Erosion and Flood Risk Management Plan for the area between Kilmore Quay and Carnsore.
CZM44	To protect water quality in our coastal and maritime areas and to ensure that development proposals would not result in adverse impacts on water quality in order to comply with objectives of the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and the associated National River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021, the EU Shellfish Waters Directive (2006/113/EC) and associated Pollution Reduction Programme, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the Habitats Directive.
TC11	To minimise, and avoid where possible, the development of masts and antennae within the following areas: • Prominent locations in the Distinctive, Uplands, River Valley and Coastal landscape character units. • Locations which impede or detract from existing public view points to/from Distinctive, Uplands, River Valley and Coastal landscape character units, and rivers, estuaries or the sea. • Historic landscapes and battlefields. • Areas within or adjoining the curtilage of protected structures. • Areas on or within the setting of archaeological sites. • Within or adjacent to Natura 2000 sites. • The Council may consider an exemption to this objective where: • An overriding technical need for the equipment has been demonstrated and which cannot be met by the sharing of existing authorised equipment in the area, and • The equipment is of a scale and is sited, designed and landscaped in a manner which minimises adverse visual impacts on the subject landscape unit.
TC15	To support the relocation or replacement of existing telecommunications infrastructure where the proposed location or form will be more suited in terms of visual amenity, residential amenity, the environment, biodiversity and built or natural heritage.
WW01	To require that all wastewater generated is collected, treated and discharged after treatment in a safe and sustainable manner, having regard to the standards and requirements set out in EU and national legislation and guidance and subject to complying with the provisions and

	objectives of the EU Water Framework Directive, the National River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 and any updated version during the lifetime of the Plan, the Pollution Reduction Programmes for Shellfish Waters, Urban Wastewater Water Directive and the Habitats Directive.
GI03	To support investment in the on-going maintenance and enhancement of existing green infrastructure and support the provision of new public parks, green space corridors and other public open spaces in tandem with projected population growth to create green healthy settlements throughout the county. Wexford County Council shall identify the locations of new public parks and open spaces and ensure that decision-making in relation to the development of new or enhanced Green Infrastructure and new public parks and facilities is informed by an appropriate level of environmental assessment.

6.0 IN-COMBINATION EFFECTS

6.1 Introduction

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive requires that AA be carried out in respect of plans and projects that are likely to have significant effects on European sites, "*either individually or in combination with other plans or projects*". Therefore, regardless of whether or not the likely effects of a plan or project are significant when considered on their own, the significance of the combined effects of the plan or project under assessment and other plans and projects must also be evaluated.

6.2 Methodology

Given the strategic nature of DEDP and that the details of the Catalyst and Enabling Projects contained in the DEDP are unknown, it is not possible to assess DEDP against projects. Therefore, the in-combination assessment has assessed the potential for in-combination effects with other, similar, strategic Plans.

Table 6-1 below presents the in-combination assessment of the DEDP and other Plans.

Table 6-1 In-combination effects assessment

Plans, Policies, and Programmes	Summary	Potential for In-combination Effects
Wexford Destination and Development Plan	The description of the DEDP is provided in Section 2 of this NIS.	The projects and actions within the DEDP have the potential to give rise to in-combination effects. However, each component of the plan is subject to mitigation measures if required, which avoid adverse effects on designated sites. Therefore, while interactions between the components are possible, the mitigation strategies will prevent any in-combination effects.
Project Ireland 2040: • Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework (NPF) 1st Revision • National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030	The NPF is a high-level framework that sets plans for investing in social, economic and cultural infrastructure to achieve overarching strategic objectives of wellbeing, equality and opportunity. The NDP a high-level budgetary plan that identifies strategic need and priorities for governmental capital investment for the period 2021 - 2030.	These are strategic level plans, and no project specific details are available. Therefore, there is no potential for in-combination effects.
National CFRAMS Programme South- eastern Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Study	Catchment-based Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Studies and their product – Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) – are at the core of national policy for flood risk management and the strategy for its implementation. These studies are required by The Floods Directive [2007/60/EC], which is being implemented in Ireland through the European Communities (Assessment and Management of Flood Risks) Regulations 2010 [S.I.122/2010]. Each FRMP is accompanied by an associated SEA Environmental Report and Natura Impact Statement.	The AA of the CFRAMs considered the potential for impacts from hard engineering solutions and how they might affect hydrological connectivity and hydromorphological supporting conditions for protected habitats and species. No likely significant in-combination effects are envisaged
Regional Tourism Development Strategies 2023-2027 – Ireland's Ancient East Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027	Ireland's Ancient East Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023 – 2027 is high-level strategy for the tourism industry and relevant stakeholders to increase awareness and consumer appeal of the region. This plan was subject to AA and SEA processes.	These are strategic level plans, and no project specific details are available. Therefore, there is no potential for in-combination effects.
River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for Ireland 2022-2027	The River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for Ireland 2022-2027 sets out the measures that are necessary to protect and restore water quality in Ireland. The overall aim of the plan is to protect and sustainably manage	No risk of likely significant in-combination effects will result as the primary purpose

Plans, Policies, and Programmes	Summary	Potential for In-combination Effects
	Ireland's freshwater and marine waters to improve Ireland's water-based environments. This plan was subject to AA and SEA processes.	of the Directive is to improve ecological status.
4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030	The purpose of the 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030 is to set out a high-level strategy for halting the decline of Ireland's biodiversity and restore and maintain ecosystems and ecosystem services from 2023 – 2030. This plan was not subject to SEA or AA processes.	As the BAP is aimed at environmental protection, there are no in-combination effects.
County Wexford Biodiversity Plan 2013-2018	The purpose of the National Biodiversity Action Plan is to set out a high-level strategy for halting the decline of Ireland's biodiversity and restore and maintain ecosystems and ecosystem services. County and Local Biodiversity Action Plans contain specific objectives and actions that translate the high-level strategies set out in the National Biodiversity Action Plan into action on the ground.	This plan was subject to AA. No significant in-combination impacts are envisaged at plan level. Projects arising from the plan will be required to undergo AA Screening which will ensure no in-combination effects
Waterford City & County Development Plan 2022-2028	The County Development Plan (CDP) provides the principal planning strategy document for the development of a local authority area over the statutory time period of the plan. The CDP has been subject to SEA and AA processes to ensure that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the DEDP have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	
Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028	The County Development Plan (CDP) provides the principal planning strategy document for the development of a local authority area over the statutory time period of the plan. The CDP has been subject to SEA and AA processes to ensure that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the DEDP have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	
Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028	The County Development Plan (CDP) provides the principal planning strategy document for the development of a local authority area over the statutory time period of the plan. The CDP has been subject to SEA and AA processes to ensure that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the DEDP have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	

Plans, Policies, and Programmes	Summary	Potential for In-combination Effects
Kilkenny County Development Plan 2021-2027	The County Development Plan (CDP) provides the principal planning strategy document for the development of a local authority area over the statutory time period of the plan. The CDP has been subject to SEA and AA processes to ensure that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the DEDP have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	
Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028	The County Development Plan (CDP) provides the principal planning strategy document for the development of a local authority area over the statutory time period of the plan. The CDP has been subject to SEA and AA processes to ensure that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the DEDP have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	
All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025	The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (AIPP) 2021-2025 is a five-year road map developed to build on the successful delivery of the 81 actions in the first Plan prepared for the 2015 to 2020 period. It aims to take steps to restore pollinator populations to health levels in Ireland. It creates a framework to bring together pollinator initiatives across Ireland, so that through coordination and cooperation to overarching goal can be achieved. The AIPP 2021-2025 has 186 actions spread across the following six objectives: • Objective 1: Making farmland pollinator friendly. • Objective 2: Making public land pollinator friendly. • Objective 3: Making private land pollinator friendly. • Objective 4: All-Ireland Honeybee Strategy. • Objective 5: Conserving rare pollinators. Objective 6: Strategic coordination of the Plan.	As the plan is aimed at environmental protection, there are no in-combination effects.
Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (1979)	The Bern Convention aims to ensure conservation of wild flora and fauna species and their habitats. Special attention is given to endangered and vulnerable species, including endangered and vulnerable migratory species specified in appendices to the Convention. The Parties commit to take all appropriate measures to ensure the conservation of the habitats of the wild flora and fauna species. Such measures should be included in the parties' planning and development policies and pollution control, with	As the plan is aimed at environmental protection, there are no in-combination effects.

Plans, Policies, and Programmes	Summary	Potential for In-combination Effects
	particular attention to the conservation of wild flora and fauna. The Parties undertake to promote education and disseminate general information concerning the need to conserve species of wild flora and fauna and their habitats. The Convention establishes a Standing Committee on which the parties are represented by their delegates. The Committee's principal task is to monitor the provisions of this Convention in the light of development of the wild flora and the assessment of its needs. For this purpose, the Standing Committee is especially competent to make recommendations to the Parties and amendments to the appendices where these protected species are specified.	
Biodiversity Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan (2019)	The Biodiversity Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan considers terrestrial, freshwater, and marine biodiversity and ecosystem services. The goal is to protect biodiversity from the effects of climate change and to conserve and manage ecosystems so that they deliver services that increase the adaptive capacity of people and biodiversity. This is achieved by identifying adaptation options that will help to protect biodiversity and ecosystem services from the effects of changing climate.	The measures and research as a result of the plan will place a responsibility on all stakeholders to adapt to the impacts of predicted climate change. This framework prioritises reducing knowledge gaps through an evidence base and to develop tools to support the adaptation decision-making process. The framework and the DEDP will be complimentary and as such no significant in-combination effects are envisaged.
Bonn Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (1983)	The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (also known as CMS or the Bonn Convention) aims to conserve terrestrial, marine and avian migratory species throughout their range. It is one of a small number of intergovernmental treaties concerned with the conservation of wildlife and wildlife habitats on a global scale. Since the Convention entered into force on 1 November 1983, its membership has grown steadily to include 80 (as of 1 September 2002) Parties from Africa, Central and South America, Asia, Europe, and Oceania.	As the plan is aimed at environmental protection, there are no in-combination effects.
Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Implementation Plan for the period 2019 – 2024	The North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO) was established by the Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean in 1984. NASCO's objective is to conserve, restore, enhance and rationally manage Atlantic salmon through cooperation of six Governments and the European Union. Implementation plans are prepared by each jurisdiction to demonstrate what actions are being taken	As the plan is aimed at environmental protection, there are no in-combination effects.

Plans, Policies, and Programmes	Summary	Potential for In-combination Effects
	by the parties to implement NASCO's resolutions, agreements and guidelines. NASCO. The U.K and the European Union are members of the North-East Atlantic Commission under this organisation. The functions of this Commission are brought into effect through implementation plans and include the following: • Providing a forum for consultation and co-operation on the conservation, restoration, enhancement and rational management of salmon stocks; • Proposing regulatory measures; and • Making recommendations on scientific research. Each jurisdiction develops Implementation Plans detailing measures to be taken over five-year periods in relation to three areas of concern: • Management of salmon fisheries; • Protection and restoration of Atlantic salmon habitat; and • Management of aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics. Atlantic Salmon is protected under Annex II and V of the Habitats Directive. A total of 26 SACs in Ireland have been designated for the protection Atlantic Salmon. As discussed above, the European Communities Regulation on Quality of Salmonid Waters (S.I. No. 293/1988) intends on maintaining or restoring water quality and unimpeded migratory corridors within salmonid waters.	
Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)	The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) stems from the growing recognition that biological diversity is an asset of tremendous value to present and future generations across the world. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) tasked experts to prepare an international legal instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. They were to consider "the need to share costs and benefits between developed and developing countries" as well as "ways and means to support innovation by local people". The text of the Convention was adopted on 22 May 1992 in Nairobi and was opened to signature on 5 June 1992, during the Rio "Earth Summit". Within a year, it had received 168 signatures. It entered into force on 29 December 1993.	As the plan is aimed at environmental protection, there are no in-combination effects.

Plans, Policies, and Programmes	Summary	Potential for In-combination Effects
	The CBD meets every two years. Its website offers more information about the CBD and how it works, as well as all the available documents, for every meeting since the first Conference of the Parties. In accordance with Article 6 of the Convention, parties have to develop national biodiversity strategies or action plans (NBSAPs).	
Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention) 1971	The Convention on Wetlands, signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, is an intergovernmental treaty, which provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and appropriate use of wetlands and their resources.	As the plan is aimed at environmental protection, there are no in-combination effects.
European Communities (Quality of Salmonid Waters) Regulations, 1988. (S.I. No. 293/1988)	The European Communities (Quality of Salmonid Waters) regulations, S.I. No 84 of 1988 defines freshwaters as being waters capable of supporting Salmon (Salmo Salar), Trout (Salmo trutta), Char (Salvelinus) and whitefish (Coregonus) and are hereby designated as Salmonid waters. A local authority shall carry out or cause to be carried out, sampling of Salmonid waters in its functional area in respect of the parameters specified in the second schedule of the 1988 regulation. The European commission oversees Member State's policies in this area. In Ireland the Department of the Environment and local Government is responsible for making designations which the local authorities implement.	As the plan is aimed at environmental protection, there are no in-combination effects.
European Union Biodiversity Strategy for 2030	The EU's Biodiversity Strategy 2030 is a comprehensive, ambitious, and long-term plan to protect nature and reverse the degradation of ecosystems. The Strategy aims to put Europe's biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030 and contains specific actions and commitments. The Biodiversity Strategy is designed to halt biodiversity loss in Europe by committing to land and sea protection and restoring ecosystems by 2030. The biodiversity strategy aims to put Europe's biodiversity on the path to recovery by 2030 for the benefit of people, climate and the planet. In the post-COVID-19 context, the strategy aims to build our societies' resilience to future threats such as: • the impacts of climate change; • forest fires; • food insecurity; and • disease outbreaks - including by protecting wildlife and fighting illegal wildlife trade.	As the plan is aimed at environmental protection, there are no in-combination effects.

Plans, Policies, and Programmes	Summary	Potential for In-combination Effects
National Raised Bog SAC Management Plan 2017-2022	The National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) Management Plan 2017 - 2022 sets out a roadmap for the long-term management, restoration, and conservation of protected raised bogs in Ireland. This Plan was published on 21 December 2017. The Plan strikes an appropriate balance between the need to conserve and restore Ireland's raised bog network and the needs of stakeholders and gives recognition to the important role that communities must play in the conservation and restoration of raised bogs. The National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) Management Plan 2017-2022 is part of the measures being implemented in response to the on-going infringement action against Ireland in relation to the implementation of the EU Habitats Directive, regarding the regulation of turf cutting on the SACs and on foot of the recommendation of Mr. Justice Quirke that a National Raised Bog SAC Management Plan be drawn up, arising from the Peatlands Forum (2012). Subsequently, Dáil Éireann unanimously supported the recommendation for a national plan to be put in place for Ireland's protected raised bogs.	The Raised Bog SAC Management Plan was subject to its own AA. This plan would not be expected to conflict with any aspects of the DEDP but to positively interact with it and outline a series of considerations in relation to peatlands. Therefore, there are no likely significant in-combination effects foreseen.
Prioritised Action Framework 2021-2027 (NPWS)	The Prioritised Action Framework 2021-2027 for Ireland has been informed by reports on: the 'Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland' submitted in 2019 to the European Commission, under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive, and on the 'Status of Birds in Ireland', submitted in 2019 to the European Commission, under Article 12 of the Birds Directive. Prioritised Action Frameworks (PAFs) are strategic multiannual planning tools, aimed at providing a comprehensive overview of the measures that are needed to implement the EU-wide Natura 2000 network and its associated green infrastructure, specifying the financing needs for these measures and linking them to the corresponding EU funding programmes.	No risk of likely significant in-combination effects as this plan is entirely positive in its actions. The framework supports climate change mitigation. The framework will assist in ensuring the Natura 2000 Network adapts to climate change.

7.0 CONCLUSION

This NIS has been prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Habitats Directive, the Habitats Regulations and the Planning and Development Act, as well as the relevant case law and current guidance. It has demonstrated that, in the absence of appropriate mitigation, the Wexford DEDP could adversely affect the integrity of European sites, in view of their Conservation Objectives. In light of this finding, this NIS has prescribed appropriate mitigation to eliminate or minimise such effects. This assessment has been undertaken on the basis of the best scientific knowledge in the field and the Precautionary Principle. No reasonable scientific doubt remains as to the absence of such effects.

It is the considered opinion of ROD, as the author of this NIS, that given the full and proper implementation of the mitigation prescribed in this NIS, the Wexford DEDP, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site.

8.0 REFERENCES

DEHLG (2010) *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities*. Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin.

EC (2018) *Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC*. European Commission, Brussels.EC (2021) *Assessment of plans and Projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*. Environment Directorate-General of the European Commission.

EC (2007) *Guidance Document on Article 6(4) of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/43/EEC. Clarification of the Concepts of Alternative Solutions, Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest, Compensatory Measures, Overall Coherence*. Opinion of the European Commission.

NPWS (2010) *Circular NPW 1/10 & PSSP 2/10 Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities*. Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin.

NPWS (2018) *Online Map Viewer* <http://webgis.npws.ie/npwsviewer/> [Accessed 27/09/2024]. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Dublin.

NPWS (2019a). *The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. Volume 1: Summary Overview.* Dublin: NPWS.

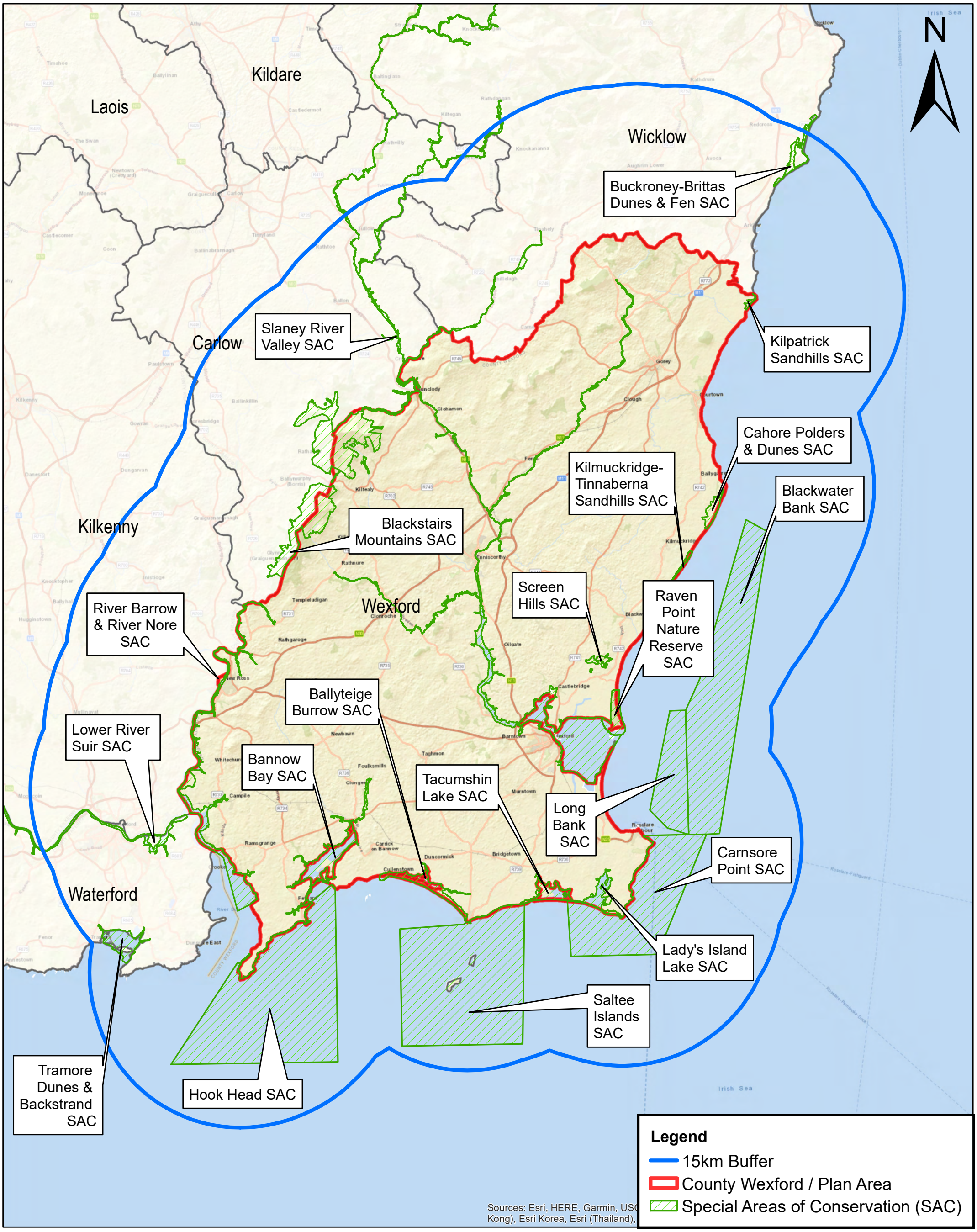
NPWS (2019b). *The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. Volume 2: Habitat Assessment.* Dublin: NPWS.

NPWS (2019c). *The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. Volume 3: Species Assessment.* Dublin: NPWS

OPR (2021) *Practice Note PN01: Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management*. Office of the Planning Regulator, Dublin.

APPENDIX A

European Sites and the Zone of Influence

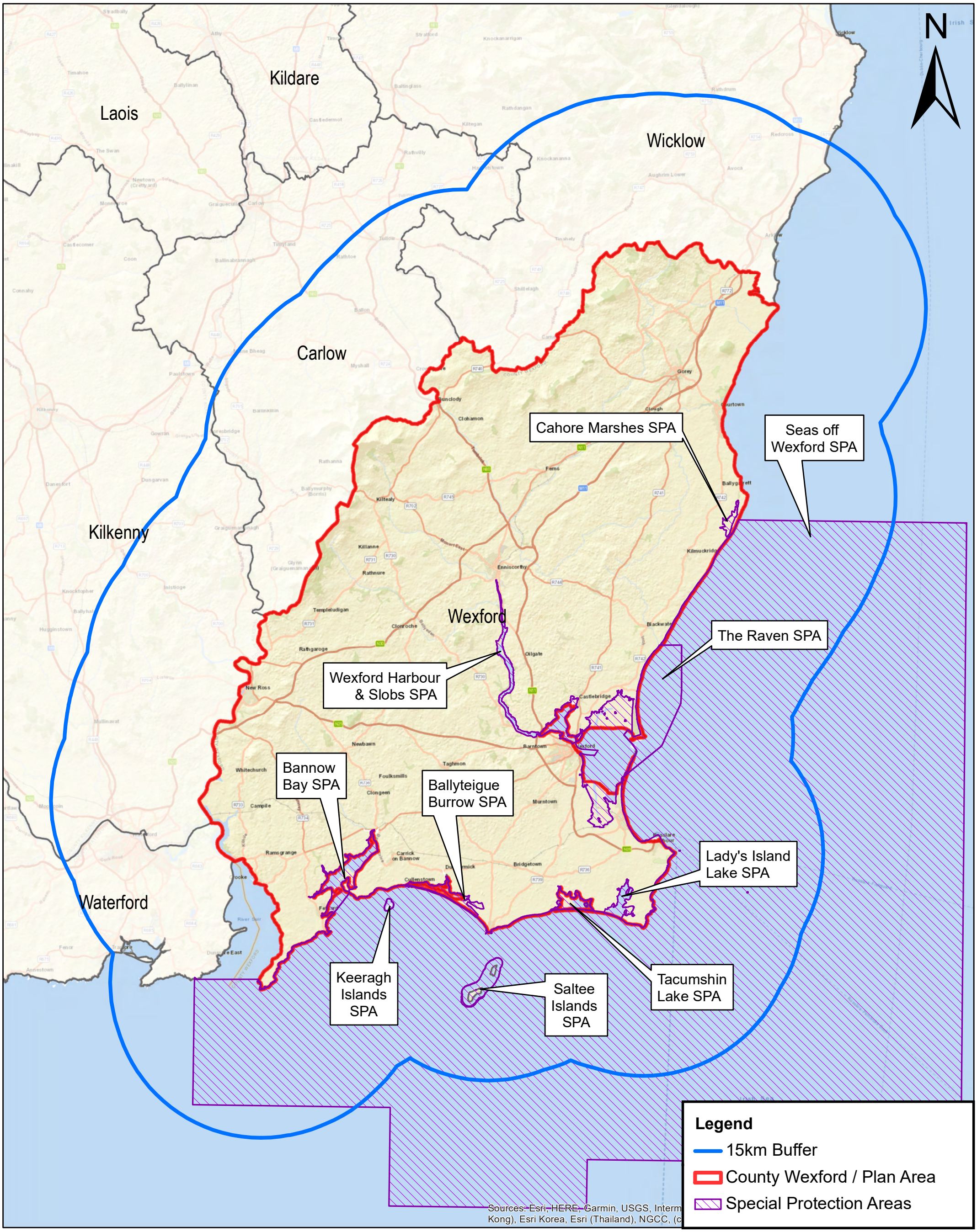


TITLE: Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) Within Co. Wexford & 15km Buffer

Sources:
Nature Reserves - National Parks and Wildlife Services (2015)

ROD
ROUGHAN & O'DONOVAN

CYAL50320424
© Ordnance Survey Ireland/Government of Ireland.



TITLE: Special Protection Areas (SPA) Within Co. Wexford & 15km Buffer

Sources:
National Parks - National Parks and Wildlife Services (2017

ROD
ROUGHAN & O'DONOVAN

CYAL50320424
© Ordnance Survey Ireland/Government of Ireland.