

Biodiversity Sectoral Climate Change Adaptation Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Statement

Introduction

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act, 2015 provides for the preparation and approval of plans by Government in relation to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Under Section 5 of the Act, the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment published the National Adaptation Framework (NAF) in January 2018. The NAF specifies the national strategy for the application of adaptation measures in different sectors and by local authorities in their administrative areas in order to reduce the vulnerability of the State to the negative effects of climate change and to avail of any positive effects that may occur. The NAF identifies Biodiversity as one of the priority sectors, and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht as the Lead Department for the adaptation plan for the sector. A Biodiversity Sectoral Adaptation Plan has therefore been prepared by the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required of certain plans and programmes by Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. The Directive has been transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (SI 435/2004), as amended by the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (SI 200/2011). The goal of the SEA Directive is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development.

Description of the Plan

The goal of the Biodiversity Sectoral Adaptation Plan is to protect biodiversity from the impacts of climate change and to conserve and manage ecosystems so that they deliver services that increase the adaptive capacity of people and biodiversity. The objectives of the Plan are to:

1. Protect, restore and enhance biodiversity to increase the resilience of natural and human systems to climate change
2. Improve understanding of the impacts of climate change on biodiversity;
3. Improve landscape connectivity to facilitate mobility in a changing climate
4. Engage society and all sectors to protect biodiversity to enhance resilience,
5. Ensure sufficient financing is available to implement the Biodiversity Climate Change Adaptation Plan, and
6. Put adequate monitoring and evaluation measures in place to review the implementation of the Biodiversity Climate Change Adaptation Plan

The Plan identifies a total of 38 actions which are to be implemented in relation to the objectives in the Plan. Implementation of actions will involve a range of stakeholders and progress will be

monitored and evaluated by plan team in the National Parks and Wildlife Service on an ongoing basis.

Pre-Screening Process

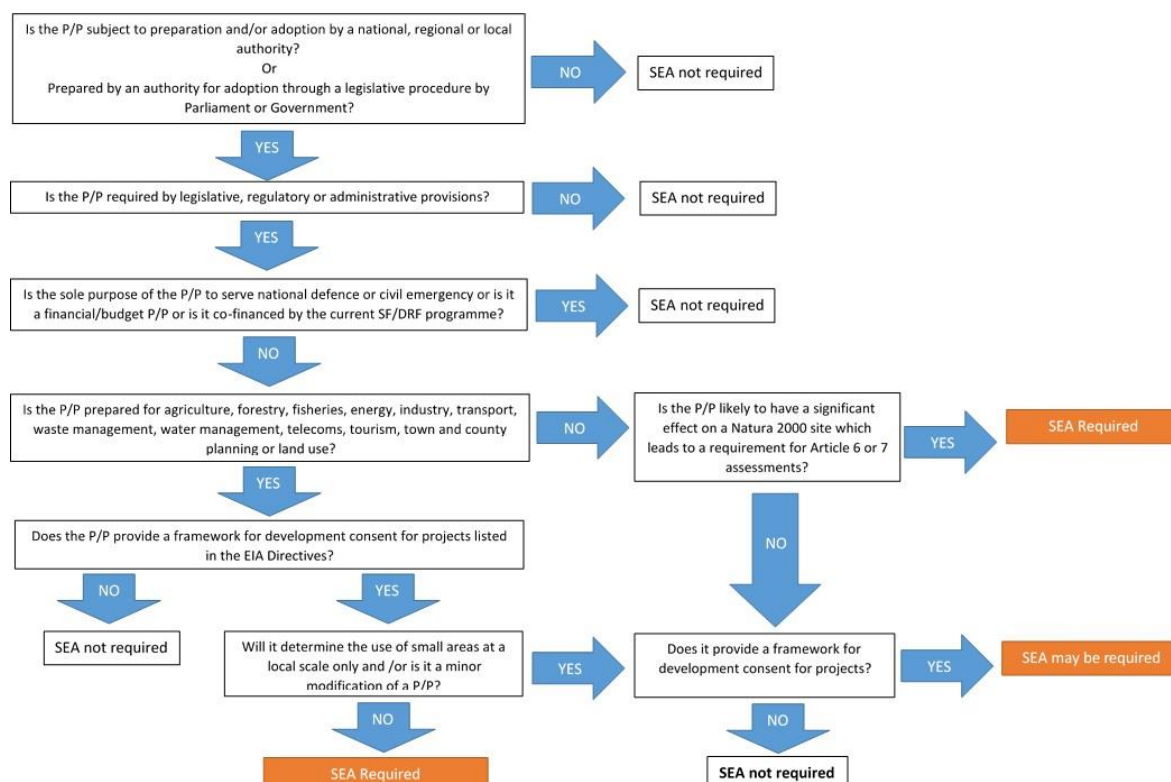
Introduction to pre-screening

The Environmental Protection Agency has developed a process to assist in determining if a plan requires SEA (Scott & Marsden, 2001). The pre-screening check is based on questions of an administrative nature in order to determine whether the plan requires SEA or not or if it requires a more detailed screening assessment. It allows rapid screening-out of those plans that are clearly not going to have any environmental impact.

The decision-tree used in this process (Figure 1) sets out the criteria in the SEA Directive in a logical sequence allowing a decision to be made quickly and efficiently. As a result of this pre-screening, the following outcomes can arise:

1. The plan applies to one or more of the sectors in the SEA Directive and provides a framework for development consent of projects requiring EIA. SEA is therefore required.
2. The plan is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site and, therefore, requires an assessment under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. SEA is therefore required.
3. The plan does not fall into any of the sectors covered by the Directive, it not likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site nor does it provide a framework for development consent. It is, therefore, screened out for SEA by the pre-screening check and no further consideration of its possible impacts is required.
4. The plan cannot be screened out for SEA and requires a more detailed screening assessment.

Figure 1: SEA decision-tree adapted from Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for plans and Programmes in Ireland (Scott & P. Marsden, 2001)



Pre-Screening for SEA of the Biodiversity Sectoral Adaptation Plan

Pre-screening was carried out using the decision-tree (see Figure 1) to determine whether the Biodiversity Sectoral Adaptation Plan required SEA. It is based on a systematic evaluation of the relevant criteria set out in the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004, as amended by the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations, 2011. The table below should be read in conjunction with the decision tree in Figure 1.

<p>Is the plan subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority?</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government</p>	<p>Yes. The Plan has been prepared by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht</p>
<p>Is the plan required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions?</p>	<p>Yes. The Plan has been prepared in response to the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act, 2015. The National Adaptation Framework published in January 2018 under Section 5 of that Act, identified biodiversity as a priority sector for the development of an adaptation plan.</p>
<p>Is the sole purpose of the plan to serve national defence or civil emergency or is it a financial/budget P/P or is it co-financed by the current SF/RDF programme</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Is the plan prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, management of Transport and Land Use. transport, waste management, water management, telecoms, tourism, town and country planning or land use?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Does the plan provide a framework for the development consent for projects listed in the EIA Directive?</p>	<p>No</p>

Is the plan likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site which leads to a requirement for Article 6 or 7 assessments?	No. Screening for Appropriate Assessment has been undertaken and it has been determined that there is no likely significant effect to any European site arising from the implementation of the Plan, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.
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Conclusion

The Biodiversity Sectoral Adaptation Plan does not fall into any of the sectors covered by the Directive, it is not likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site nor does it provide a framework for development consent. It is, therefore, screened out for SEA by the pre-screening process and no further consideration of its possible impacts is required.

Reference

Scott, P. & Marsden, P. (2001) Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for plans and Programmes in Ireland. *2001-EEP/DS-2/5* EPA 2003