

Autumn 2024

Report

Water Services Strategic Plan 2050

Strategic Environmental Assessment
(SEA)

Environmental Statement

Safeguarding our water for our future

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	i
Acronyms and Abbreviations.....	ii
Glossary	iv
1 Introduction and Background.....	8
1.1 Context	8
1.2 SEA and the WSSP 2050	8
1.3 Strategic Environmental Assessment.....	8
1.4 Purpose of the SEA Environmental Statement.....	8
2 Overview of the WSSP 2050	13
2.1 Water Services Strategic Plan Requirements	14
2.2 WSSP 2050 Study Area	15
2.3 WSSP 2050 and the Policy and Regulatory Framework	15
3 How the SEA Environmental Report and Consultation Comments were taken into Account	17
3.1 Purpose of Consultation and Engagement	17
3.2 WSSP 20250 Consultation.....	17
4 How the SEA has Influenced the WSSP 2050.....	21
4.1 SEA Process and Integration with WSSP 2050	21
4.2 SEA Summary for the WSSP 2050.....	22
4.4 Cumulative Effects Assessment	36
4.7 SEA and Consultation Influence on the Final Plan	40
4.8 SEA Summary for the WSSP 2050.....	52
4.9 AA Summary for the WSSP 2050.....	52
4.10 Transboundary Effects for the WSSP 2050	53
4.11 Summary of SEA assessment of considering cumulative effects	53
5 Mitigation and Monitoring Plans	54
5.1 Mitigation Measures	54
5.2 Environmental Action Plan	54
5.3 Monitoring Plan.....	56
6 Next Steps.....	64
References.....	65

Acronyms and Abbreviations

Term	Definition	Term	Definition
AA	Appropriate Assessment	NMPF	National Marine Planning Framework
AQGs	Air Quality guidelines	NPF	National Planning Framework
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan	NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
CFP	Common Fisheries Policy	NUTS	Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics
CFRAM	Catchment-based Flood Risk Assessment and Management	NWRP	National Water Resources Plan
CRU	Commission for Regulation of Utilities	NWSMP	National Wastewater Sludge Management Plan
CSO	Central Statistics Office	OPW	Office of Public Works
CSO	Combined Sewage Overflows	PAHs	Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons
DAERA	Northern Ireland's Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs	PAPs	Pathway Action Plans
DAFM	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	pNHA(s)	Proposed National Heritage Area(s)
DECC	Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications	RBMP	River Basin Management Plan
DHLGH	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	RMP	Record of Monuments and Places
DHPLG	Department of Housing Planning and Local Government	RPS	Record of Protected Structures
DMA	District Meter Areas	RSEs	Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies
DWD	Drinking Water Directive	SAC	Special Area of Conservation
EAM	Environmental Assessment Methodology	SDB	Supply demand balance
EAP	Environmental Action Plan	SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
EEA	European Environment Agency	SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
EED	Energy Efficient Design	SEO	Strategic Environmental Objective
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency	SDB	Supply Demand Balance
EC	European Communities	SFP	Strategic Funding Plan
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment	SMR	Sites and Monuments Record
ELC	European Landscape Convention	SPA	Special Protection Area

Term	Definition	Term	Definition
EU	European Union	THM	Trihalomethanes
GHG	Greenhouse Gas	UÉ	Uisce Éireann
GSI	Geological Survey Ireland	UN	United Nations
IAS	Invasive Alien Species	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
IGH	Irish Geological Heritage	UWWTD	Urban Wastewater Directive
LAWPRO	The Local Authority Waters Programme	WFD	Water Framework Directive
LCA	Landscape Character Area	WHO	World Health Organisation
LMA	Leakage Management System	WRZ	Water Resource Zone
MSFD	Marine Strategy Framework Directive	WSSP	Water Services Strategic Plan
NAF	National Adaptation Framework	WSSP 2015	Water Services Strategic Plan 2015
NBAP	National Biodiversity Action Plan	WSSP 2050	Water Services Strategic Plan 2050
NBS	Nature Based Solutions	WTP	Water Treatment Plant
NDP	National Development Plan	WWTP	Wastewater Treatment Plant
NHA	National Heritage Area		
NIS	Natura Impact Statement		
NIAH	National Inventory of Architectural Heritage		

Glossary

Glossary Term	Definition
AA Screening Report	The report which provides information on and assesses the potential for the proposed plan to impact on European sites within the Natura 2000 network.
Abstraction	“Abstraction” means the doing of anything whereby water is removed or diverted by mechanical means, pipe, or any engineering structure or works from any part of the water environment, including anything whereby the water is so removed or diverted for the purpose of being transferred to another part of the water environment; [European Union (Water Policy) (Abstractions Registration) Regulations 2018 S.I. No. 261 of 2018].
Amenity	The social value or benefits that people derive from interacting with or being near a place. Amenity can include aesthetic and visual enjoyment, recreational opportunities, tranquillity and escape from urban stress, and cultural and spiritual significance. Amenity is influenced by the quality, quantity, and location of water assets.
Appropriate Assessment	An appropriate assessment is an assessment of the potential adverse effects of a plan or project (in combination with other plans or projects) on Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas. These sites are protected by National and European Law.
Asset	Item, thing or entity that has potential or actual value to an organization
Baseline Environment	The state of the environment in the absence of the Plan.
Biodiversity Net Gain	Biodiversity refers to the variety of living organisms including animals, insects, and plants. Net gain is the process of enhancing the overall biodiversity value.
Bioresource	Material that can be recovered from the treatment process such as sludge, which is rich in organic matter and nutrients. The components of sludge can be repurposed and used in beneficial ways such as a soil conditioner and fertiliser is any organic material that can be used as a source of energy or nutrients in a wastewater treatment process. Bioresources include wastewater sludge, food waste, agricultural residues, and microalgae.
Catchment	The area of land where surface water from rainfall converges at a lower elevation, in a river, lake or an estuary. The catchment includes all drainage channels, tributaries (smaller streams) and floodplains.
Catchment management	A process that recognises a catchment as the appropriate unit for understanding and managing land, water and ecosystems.
Circular economy	In a circular economy, the value of products and materials is maintained for as long as possible. Waste and resource use are minimised, and when a product reaches the end of its life, it is used again to create further value.
Climate change	A change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods
Community	The people who live, work or visit Ireland.

Glossary Term	Definition
Cumulative effect	The combined effects from several plans, programmes or policies.
Customer	“Customer” means, in relation to the provision of water services, the occupier of the premises in respect of which the water services are provided. [Water Services (No.2) Act 2013].
Demand management	Measures taken by water companies and others to manage households and non-household demand for water. Measures include leak management, water efficiency and metering.
District Meter Area (DMA)	A defined area of the distribution network that can be isolated by valves and for which the quantities of water entering and leaving can be metered.
Domestic water use	The amount of water consumed by households for various purposes, such as drinking, cooking, washing, gardening, and sanitation.
Emerging contaminants	Substances that are not regulated or monitored in drinking water but may pose a risk to human health or the environment. They include pharmaceuticals, pesticides, industrial chemicals and microplastics.
Habitat	The natural home or environment of a plant or animal.
Integrated water management	Integrated water management is an approach that considers all aspects of the water cycle to achieve the best outcomes for society, environment and economy when planning and delivering services. It also looks at how the water cycle relates to urban development and other land and resource management processes. Integrated water management takes advantage of the connections between these different components and develops solutions that have wider and longer-term benefits.
ISO55000	ISO 55000:2014 provides an overview of asset management, its principles and terminology, and the expected benefits from adopting asset management.
ISO55001	ISO 55001:2014 specifies requirements for an asset management system within the context of the organisation.
Invasive species	Non-native species that out-compete native species to the detriment of an ecosystem.
Level of Service	Statement or description of the service output for a particular activity or service area against which performance may be measured.
Megalitre (ML)	1 million (1,000,000) litres.
Nature-Based Solutions	Working with nature rather than trying to control it with the potential for achieving multiple benefits for water quality, quantity, biodiversity and climate adaptation and resilience.
Natura Impact Statement	A document which summarises the findings of the AA and how they were factored into the plan, the reason for choosing the preferred plan in light of alternatives considered and to state the likely significant effects.
Non-domestic water use	The consumption of water for purposes other than household or personal use. It includes water used by industries, agriculture, commerce, public services, and environmental purposes.

Glossary Term	Definition
Protected site	An area that has been designated as having a special ecological of conservation value under EU legislation such as Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Natural Heritage Areas (NHA).
Ramsar site	An international designation for an important wetland site under the Ramsar Convention.
Reliable water supply	The ability to provide sufficient and safe water to meet the needs of a population or a system without interruption or failure.
Remedial Action List (RAL)	A register of public water supplies with the most serious deficiencies and known to be most at risk, where the EPA is requiring Uisce Éireann to take corrective action to ensure the safety and security of the supplies. [EPA].
Residuals	The by-products of the water treatment process that remove suspended solids from raw water or sewage. They can be liquid or solid depending on the source of water and type of treatment.
SEA Environmental Report	The SEA report that documents the effects of investment priorities outlined in a plan.
SEA Screening statement	A summary of the SEA screening determining whether the proposed plan requires SEA.
SEA Scoping Report	The SEA report sets out the scope and objectives of the SEA.
SEA Post Adoption Statement	The document which details how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan, how the environmental report and consultation responses were taken into account, the reasons for choosing the plan as adopted in light of reasonable alternatives considered and the measures to be taken into account to monitor or mitigate the likely significant effects.
Sewerage	"Sewerage" is used to describe the pipes or network that convey sewage/ waste water. Uses of the term include "sewerage network", "Sewerage Scheme". While "Waste Water" and "Wastewater" are the preferred terms, "Sewerage" has been used historically in project names and continues to be used on this basis".
Smart meter	A digital device that records and communicates the amount of water used by a consumer.
Smart network	A system that uses data driven technologies to enhance the efficiency and reliability of water distribution, wastewater collection and treatment processes. Some examples are sensors which collect and transmit data from different points in the network and data analytics which provide insights and solutions for water management challenges.
Special Area of Conservation	An international designation for habitats and/or species under the EC Habitats Directive.
Special Protection Area	A site of international importance for birds, designated as required by the EC Birds Directive.
Stakeholder	Person or organisation that can affect, be affected by, or perceive themselves to be affected by a decision or activity

Glossary Term	Definition
Storm Water	Water that runs off impervious surfaces like roads and footpaths when it rains, that would have seeped into the ground and been taken up by vegetation before urban development. “Storm water” means run-off rainwater that enters any pipe. [Water Services Act 2007].
Storm Water Overflow	“Storm water overflow” means a structure or device on a sewerage system designed and constructed for the purpose of relieving the system of excess flows that arise as a result of rain water or melting snow in the sewered catchment, the excess flow being discharged to receiving waters.
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Objectives	Aims to achieve environmental policy or quality standards against which the effects of the plan can be tested.
Trihalomethanes	Trihalomethanes are formed as a by-product predominantly when chlorine is used to disinfect drinking water
Urban	Densely populated areas that are built up with dwellings, buildings and infrastructure.
Wastewater sludge	Organic by-product of the biological treatment of wastewater comprising a mixture of organic solids and water. Also known as sewage sludge.
Water conservation	The practice of using water efficiently and reducing unnecessary water wastage. It can be achieved by improving water infrastructure (leakage reduction), adopting water-saving technologies, implementing water policies and regulations, and promoting water awareness and education.
Water sector	Any organisation that has a role in water management. For example, water companies, catchment management authorities, local authorities and regulators.

1 Introduction and Background

1.1 Context

1.1.1 What is the Water Services Strategic Plan (WSSP)

The Water Services Strategic Plan (WSSP) presents Uisce Éireann's objectives for the next 25 years and the means by which they will be achieved. It is required to be prepared under the Water Services (No. 2) Act 2013 (as amended) ("the Water Services Act").

The Water Services Strategic Plan 2050 (WSSP 2050) is a long-term strategic plan which is required to be prepared under the Water Services No. 2 Act 2013. It sets out objectives and the means by which Uisce Éireann aim to achieve them in the context of the significant challenges likely faced over the next 25 years. The plan outlines Uisce Éireann's strategic direction and the actions that will be implemented to ensure sustainable public water services for Ireland. Once approved, it will replace the existing WSSP from 2015, which covered the period from 2015 to 2040.

Through the delivery of the WSSP 2050, Uisce Éireann will build on the legacy of their local authority water service heritage, collaborating with their customers, communities, and stakeholders to enhance the shared environment and support social and economic development. Once adopted, the WSSP 2050 will undergo regular reviews, every five years, to ensure it remains relevant. The reviews will allow Uisce Éireann to adapt to changing circumstances and evolving needs.

1.2 SEA and the WSSP 2050

The WSSP 2050 is subject to the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (Council Directive 2001/42/EC), the Birds Directive (Council Directive 2009/147/EC) and the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC). This document is part of meeting requirements under the SEA Directive and explains how they link to the requirements of the Birds and Habitats Directives.

1.3 Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.3.1 This Report

This is the SEA Environmental Statement which has been prepared to document the environmental assessment of the WSSP 2050. This report has been prepared having regard to the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) and its provisions that are transposed into Irish law by the SEA Regulations. This SEA Environmental Statement is published alongside the adopted WSSP 2050 and notice given in accordance with Article 16 of the SEA Regulations.

1.4 Purpose of the SEA Environmental Statement

The purpose an SEA Environmental Statement, in accordance with Article 16 of the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 435 of 2004) (as amended) (the "SEA Regulations") is to document how environmental considerations, the views of the consultees and the recommendations of the SEA Environmental Report have been taken into account in the final WSSP 2050. Therefore, the statement includes the following information in line with the Regulations:

- How the submissions and observations expressed in response to the consultation on the draft WSSP 2050 and the SEA Environmental Report have been taken into account (**chapter 3**);
- How potential for transboundary impacts have been considered (**chapter 4**);

- How environmental considerations and the SEA Environmental Report's recommendations have been integrated into the final WSSP 2050 (**chapter 4**);
- The reasons for choosing the final WSSP 2050 as adopted, in light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with (also in **chapter 4**); and
- The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the WSSP 2050 (**chapter 5**)

1.4.1 The Strategic Environmental Assessment Process

The SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) set out a process for the environmental assessment of plans and programmes and aims to provide for a high level of protection of the environment, to promote sustainable development and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes. It also sets out specific requirements with respect to the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and Birds Directive (2009/147/EC).

The SEA Directive is implemented in Ireland via the European Communities (EC) (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004, as amended by the EC (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendments) Regulations 2011 (known as the 'SEA Regulations'). Under the SEA Regulations, qualifying plans such as the WSSP 2050 are required to be subject to SEA screening as a first step to determine if SEA is required. A screening review has been undertaken in accordance with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (2021a)¹ screening guidance and this confirmed that the WSSP 2050 requires a mandatory SEA (the Screening Statement is provided in Appendix A of the Scoping Report). The subsequent stages include scoping, assessment, public consultation, publication of final documents then implementation and monitoring. The current stage is the publication of the final documents.

The aim is that the SEA process should influence and improve the plan. The process involves assessing the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan and considering reasonable alternatives for achieving plan objectives. Combined and cumulative effects of the plan as a whole and with other plans and programmes are also included as part of the assessment. The SEA Regulations set out specific requirements for consultation with Environmental Authorities and transboundary environmental authorities (listed in Section 0) at the scoping stage and for public consultation on the Draft plan and SEA Environmental Report (see Table 1-1 for the phases for developing the WSSP 2050 alongside the assessments). The SEA Environmental Report and consultation responses are also required to be taken into account in finalisation of the plan and for implementation monitoring.

Table 1-1 Work phases and consultations during the development of the WSSP 2050

Phase	Plans/Reports	Consultation
1	Issues Paper, SEA Scoping Report, Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report	Key stakeholder consultation including environmental authorities and transboundary environmental authorities
2	Draft WSSP 2050, SEA Environmental Report, Natura Impact Statement (NIS)	Public consultation including the key stakeholder and environmental authorities mentioned above
3	Final WSSP 2050, SEA Statement, Addendum to NIS (if required) and AA Determination	Plans/Reports updated to address consultation feedback

¹ EPA. 2021a. *SEA Screening Good Practice 2021*. Accessed: 23.07.2023. Available from: <https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring--assessment/assessment/strategic-environmental-assessment/sea-screening-good-practice-2021.php>

Under the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended (the ‘Habitats Regulations’) there is a requirement, under Regulation 42, for all public authorities to conduct a screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA). AA screening is the preliminary assessment of whether a plan or project, alone and in combination with other plans or projects, could have significant effects on a European site in view of a site’s conservation objectives. If the screening determines that likely significant effects cannot be excluded, then Uisce Éireann must determine that an AA is required. If an AA is required, Uisce Éireann must prepare a NIS, which is a report consisting of the scientific examination of a plan or project individually, or in combination with other plans or projects, in view of the conservation objectives of the site or sites, and any further information required to carry out the AA. The WSSP 2050, SEA and AA/NIS were developed in parallel through an iterative process.

The SEA is undertaken as a four-stage process as summarised in Table 1-2.

Table 1-2 Stages of the SEA for WSSP 2050

Stage	Purpose and Requirements	Output – Progress to date/Current Status
Stage 1: Screening	Prior to starting the SEA process, a plan or programme undergoes ‘screening’ to determine whether it requires SEA (also if SEA is to be undertaken on a voluntary basis).	SEA Screening Statement – Uisce Éireann (as the responsible authority) determined that SEA would be undertaken for the WSSP 2050 (see Appendix A of the Scoping Report)
Stage 2: Scoping	Consideration of the context and objectives of the SEA, provides information on baseline data, identifies relevant environmental issues and trends, and defines the parameters of the scope of the SEA for the purpose of consultation.	SEA Scoping Report
Stage 3: Identification, Prediction, Evaluation and Mitigation of Potential Effects	Within the context and parameters identified at the Scoping Stage, identification and evaluation of likely significant effects of the WSSP 2050 is carried out, including consideration of alternatives and determination of measures to mitigate and monitor residual effects.	SEA Environmental Report (updated following consultation and finalisation of WSSP 2050)
Stage 4: Consultation, Revision and Post-Adoption	<p>Consultation with statutory consultees and the public. This may require changes to the WSSP 2050 in light of responses.</p> <p>Statement on how the SEA and consultation process has influenced the final WSSP 2050. The statement is required to include an environmental monitoring plan – this is intended to provide feedback on significant environmental effects. This will also aid any future review/revision of the WSSP 2050 and the SEA.</p>	<p>SEA Environmental Statement Implementation of the monitoring programme.</p> <div style="border: 2px solid red; border-radius: 10px; padding: 10px; text-align: center; margin-top: 20px;"> <p>Current Stage in the SEA Process</p> </div>

1.4.2 Appropriate Assessment

In addition to compliance with the SEA Directive, the preparation and implementation of the WSSP 2050 must comply with the requirements of the Birds Directive and European Union (EU) Habitats Directive.

The Habitats Directive requires that if a plan, policy or programme is likely to have a significant effect on one or more European sites (that is, a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or Special Protection Area (SPA), also referred to as “Natura 2000” Network), either alone or in combination with other schemes, plans or projects, then it must be subject to AA.

Uisce Éireann is a relevant ‘public authority’ as identified in the transposing Habitat Regulations. An AA screening was undertaken for the WSSP 2050 to determine if it is likely to have a significant adverse effect on a Natura 2000 site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects.

The AA screening concluded that as the WSSP 2050 is a national scale plan covering all regions in the country with potential transboundary implications and falls under the remit of the Habitats Regulations. It is therefore subject to the requirements of the Habitats Regulations to assess the implications of the plan on European sites in view of the sites’ conservation objectives.

At the screening stage of the AA process all European sites across Ireland and Northern Ireland were screened in. Given the strategic nature of the WSSP 2050, the screening for AA (Stage 1) concluded that there was potential for significant effects on one or more European sites in view of the sites’ conservation objectives. Therefore, it has been determined that, in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, Stage 2 AA of the WSSP 2050 is required.

There is a degree of overlap between the requirements of the SEA and AA and in accordance with best practice, an integrated approach has been applied between the development of the WSSP 2050, the SEA and the AA, such as sharing of baseline data, cohesive assessment of the potential ecological effects of the WSSP 2050 on European sites and clarification on more technical aspects of the WSSP 2050. These processes together shaped the development of the WSSP 2050. This SEA Statement also covers how account of the findings of the AA were taken into account in relation to the SEA, including the SEA cumulative effects assessment, the potential effects and mitigation relevant for Natural 2000 sites. The SEA also cover aspects of biodiversity, habitats and species that are not required to be covered in the AA.

The Natura Impact Statement (NIS), fully informs the AA Determination undertaken by Uisce Éireann and both are published alongside the WSSP 2050 and the SEA Environmental Report.

1.4.3 Development of the Water Services Strategic Plan (WSSP)

The first stage of the WSSP 2050 involved developing an Issues Paper which took account of aspects considered important for the environment as identified through the SEA scoping and AA screening stages. These documents were issued for consultation and the feedback has been used to inform further development of the WSSP2050 and the environmental assessments.

Iteration between the environmental assessments and the WSSP2050 has been an important part of the process and was continued through the development of the WSSP 2050 which was provided for public consultation alongside the SEA Environmental Report and NIS. Then as part of the consideration of consultation comments and responses developed through to the finalisation WSSP 2050 (See Figure 1-1).

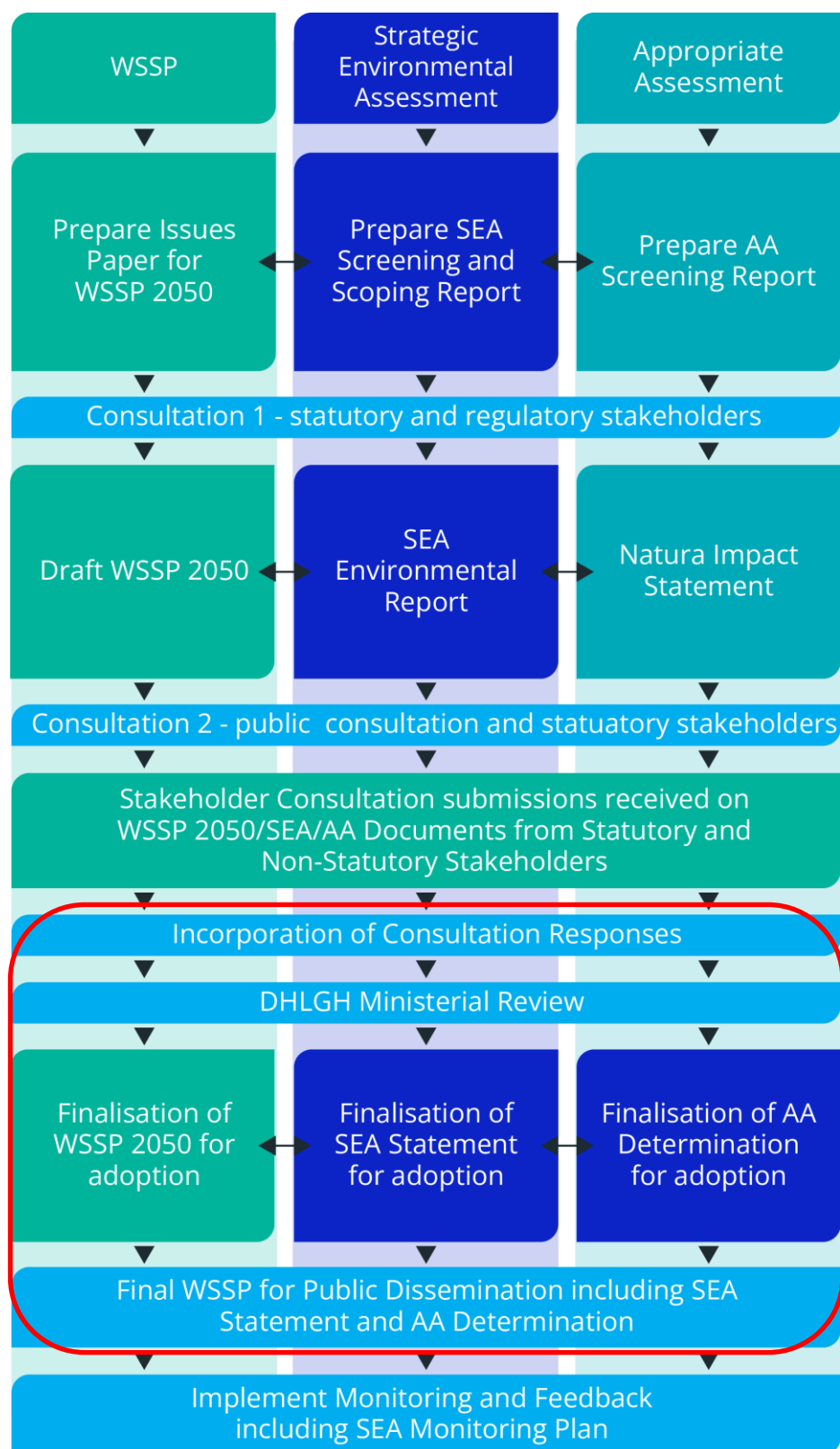


Figure 1-1 Process for the development of WSSP 2050 with the environmental assessments (current stage in red box)

The WSSP 2050 resulting from this process is a critical document that outlines the delivery of public water services in Ireland. It sets the course for safe drinking water provision and environmental protection from wastewater discharges (source: -Water-Services-Strategic-Plan-2050 (www.water.ie/wssp),

2 Overview of the WSSP 2050

On the 1st of January 2014, through the Water Services Act (No.1) 2013, Uisce Éireann (known as Irish Water at that time) assumed statutory responsibility for the provision of public water services and management of water and wastewater investment. Uisce Éireann's responsibility is to ensure that all its customers (households and businesses) receive a safe and reliable water supply and have their wastewater collected, appropriately treated and returned safely to the environment. Figure 2-1 shows some key facts about Uisce Éireann's services and infrastructure.

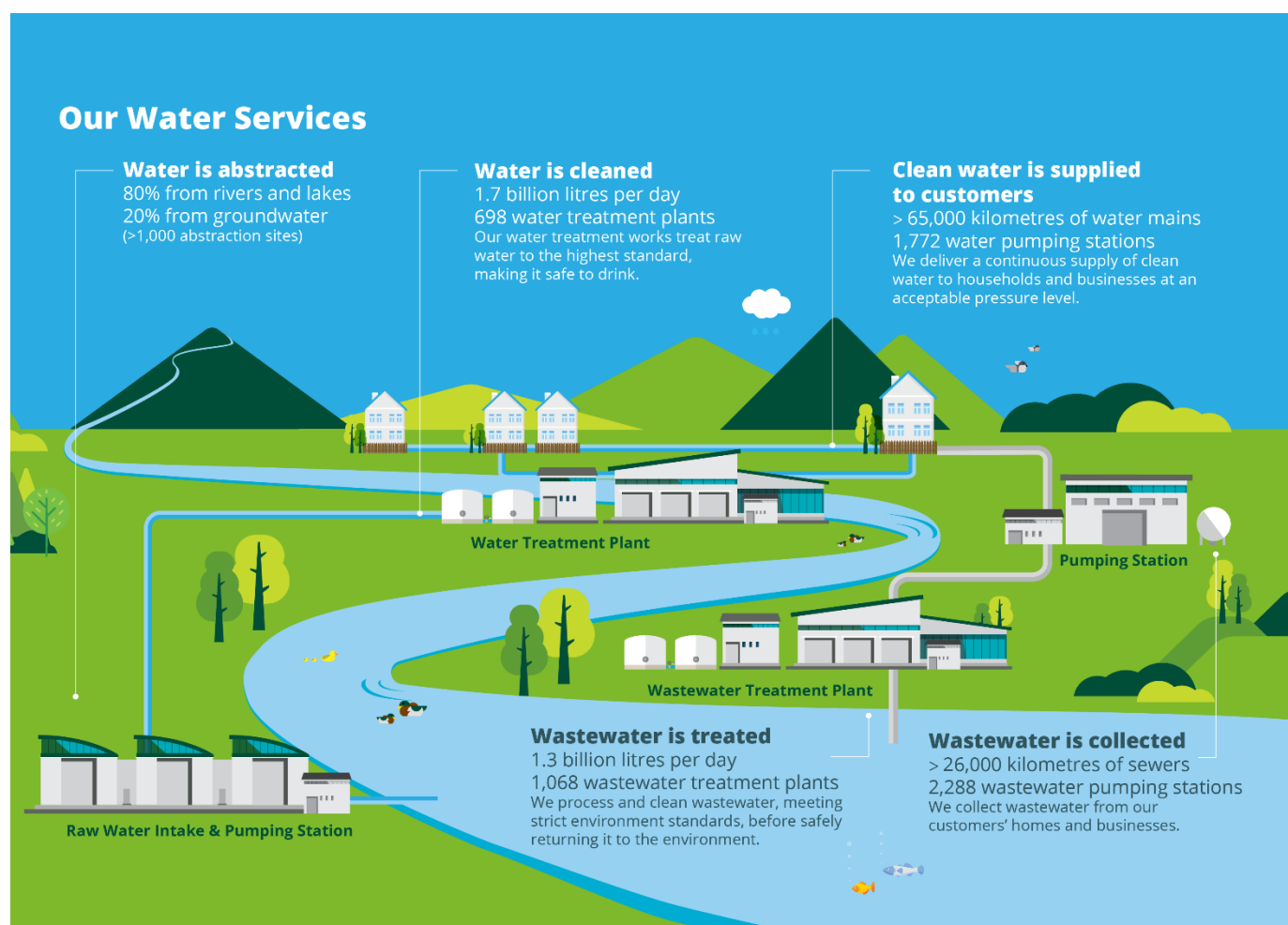


Figure 2-1 Uisce Éireann service and infrastructure

Uisce Éireann's vision is for *"A sustainable Ireland where water is respected and protected, for the planet and all the lives it supports."*

Uisce Éireann's service and infrastructure improvements since 2014 are outlined in Figure 2-2 (as reported in the WSSP 2050).



Figure 2-2 Uisce Éireann's service improvements since 2014

2.1 Water Services Strategic Plan Requirements

Article 33 (4) of the Water Services (No. 2) Act 2013 requires that the WSSP will state the objectives of Uisce Éireann in relation to the provision by Uisce Éireann of water services and the means by which Uisce Éireann proposes to achieve those objectives. The Water Services Act also specifies the aspects of water services which Uisce Éireann must address in the WSSP and are as follows:

- Drinking water quality;
- The prevention or abatement of risks to human health or the environment relating to the provision of water services;
- The existing and projected demand for water services;
- Existing and planned arrangements for the provision of water services by Uisce Éireann;
- Existing and reasonably foreseeable deficiencies in the provision of water services by Uisce Éireann;
- Existing and planned water conservation measures; and
- The management of the property of Uisce Éireann.

The WSSP sets the overarching framework for subsequent more detailed implementation plans including, for example, the National Water Resource Plan (NWRP) and National Wastewater Sludge Management Plan.

2.2 WSSP 2050 Study Area

Uisce Éireann's operating area is the Republic of Ireland. Uisce Éireann supplies 82% of people in Ireland with their drinking water and provides about two-thirds of households with wastewater services (DHLGH, 2022b). The infrastructure supporting this is widespread and abstraction, discharges of wastewaters and sludge spreading can affect wider areas.

The broad Study Area for the SEA covers the entirety of Ireland, including the surrounding coastal waters. There are river and groundwater catchments shared between Ireland and Northern Ireland in addition to the coastal and marine environment meaning that there are potential pathways for transboundary issues due to both proximity and connectivity. Therefore, the Study Area also includes the transboundary baseline environment.

The baseline environment and sources of information used for the environmental assessment of the plan proposals are provided in SEA Environmental Report Appendix C. This includes a section on the transboundary baseline environment and a list of the key sources considered.

2.3 WSSP 2050 and the Policy and Regulatory Framework

2.3.1 Hierarchy of Plans

Uisce Éireann is a publicly owned, regulated, commercial State body with responsibility for the provision of public water and wastewater services.

The **Water Framework Directive (WFD)** is the overarching Directive relating to water policy in the European Union (EU). It aims to protect and restore the water environment so that all water bodies are at 'Good Ecological Status' or better.

The **Drinking Water Directive (DWD)** is the EU's main law on drinking water. It concerns the access to, and the quality of water intended for human consumption to protect human health.

The **Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (UWWTD)** aims to protect human health and the environment through obligations for collection and treatment of urban wastewater.

The **Water Services Policy Statement (WSPS)** sets out the priorities of Government regarding the provision of water services during the period specified in the statement².

Economic regulation of public water services is by the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) who set Uisce Éireann's allowed revenue for each revenue control period, typically 5 years in duration.

Environmental regulation of public water services is by the EPA who provide Uisce Éireann's wastewater discharge authorisations and who will provide water abstraction authorisations once this regulatory framework is established.

Water Services Acts 2007 to 2022 which, *inter alia*, set out Uisce Éireann's functions and powers in relation to the delivery of water services.

The hierarchy of plans related to the WSSP is illustrated in the Figure 2-3 below. Under the Tier 1 WSSP 2050: these include:

- Tier 2 Strategic implementing plans and supporting strategies including
 - Supporting strategies such as on climate change or biodiversity

² The Water Services Policy Statement 2024 – 2030 was published in February 2024.

- Strategic plans such as plans for water and wastewater services or waste management - identifying targets and investment needs.
- Tier 3 including – risk and value based decision-making, Investment plans, operation and maintenance plans, and asset management plans.
- Delivery through programmes and projects.

Uisce Éireann's plans that are already in place will be subject to regular reviews and updating and this process will be influenced by the WSSP 2050. New plans including those in development will come under the WSSP 2050. Key Uisce Éireann plans and programmes most relevant to the WSSP 2050 are discussed below.

A variety of strategic Tier 2 strategic plans and supporting strategies guide how Uisce Éireann deliver their work, beneath which sit Tier 3 specific programmes, plans and projects which Uisce Éireann implement across the country.

This framework of strategies and plans creates a clear line of sight through Uisce Éireann, demonstrating how the WSSP 2050 Tier 1 plan can influence all tiers of the organisation.

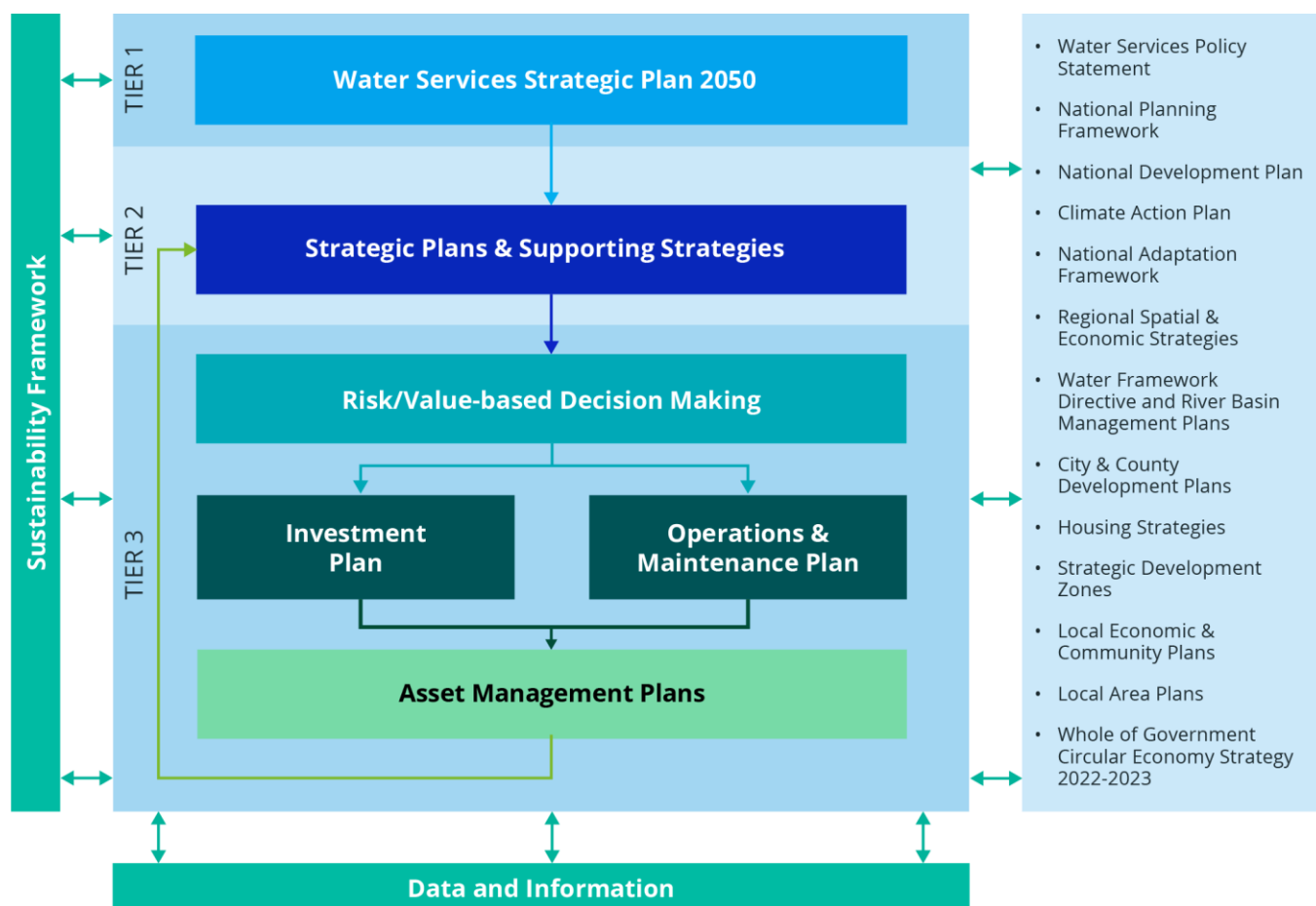


Figure 2-3 Hierarchy and interaction of plans and projects

A review of relevant policies, plans and programmes was undertaken as part of the SEA and this is included in the SEA Environmental Report in section 4 and Appendix B. The cumulative effects of the WSSP 2050 with other plans and programme are considered as part of the assessment and mitigation recommendations in the SEA Environmental Report section 8.

3 How the SEA Environmental Report and Consultation Comments were taken into Account

3.1 Purpose of Consultation and Engagement

Public consultation and stakeholder engagement is a key element in ensuring stakeholders and members of the public have an opportunity to contribute to the development of plans and projects in Ireland. Uisce Éireann has undertaken an accessible, meaningful, and accountable consultation and engagement process with stakeholders and members of the public throughout the development of the WSSP 2050.

3.2 WSSP 2050 Consultation

The WSSP 2050 has been developed taking account of the consultation received at key stages through the process. This includes two key formal Consultation stages: Consultation 1 and Consultation 2 described below and illustrated in Figure 3-1.

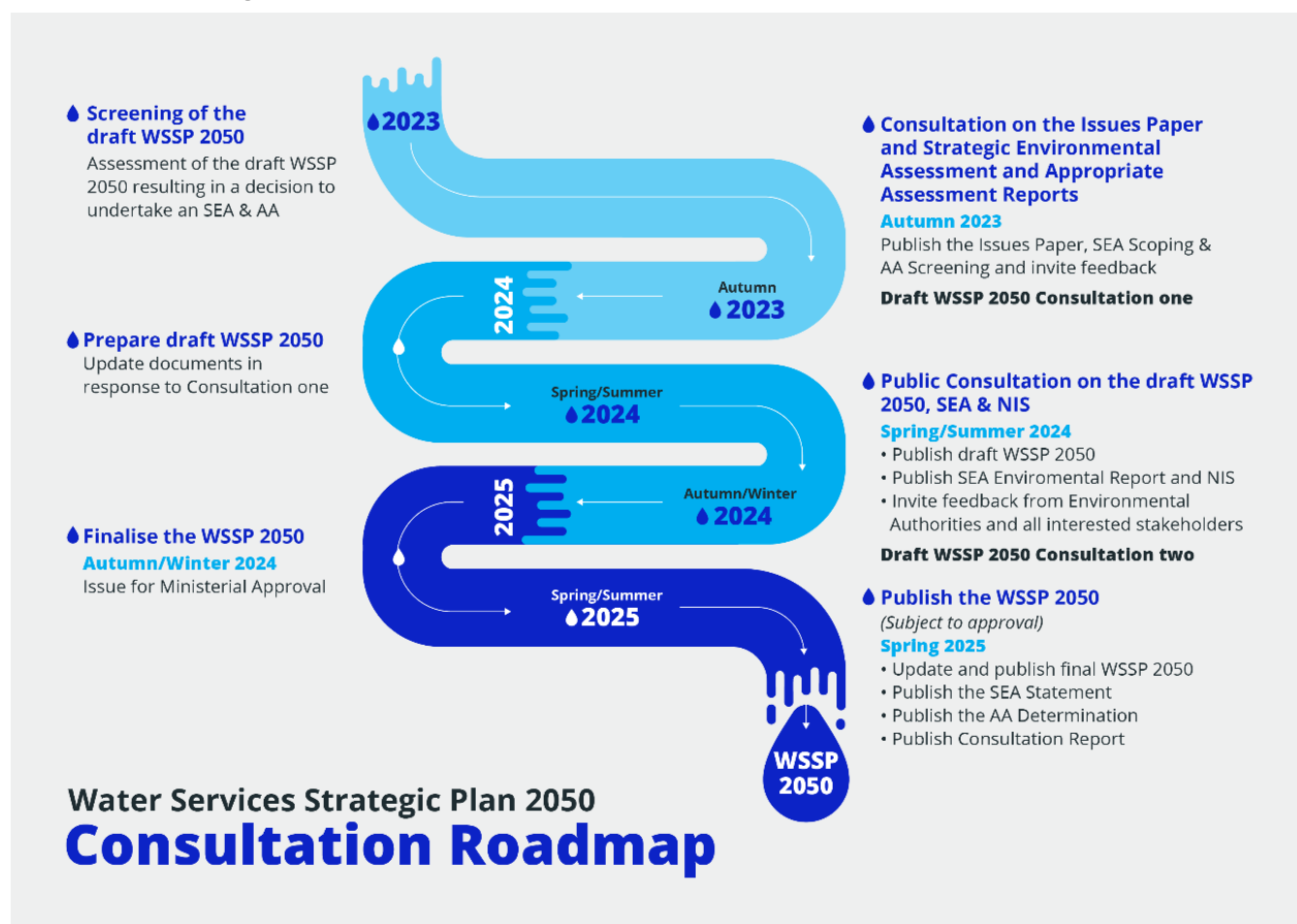


Figure 3-1 Consultation Roadmap

3.2.1 Consultation 1: Scoping Stage

An initial statutory consultation on the Issues Paper, SEA Scoping Report and the AA Screening Report took place between 19 September to 19 November 2023. For this period of consultation, Uisce Éireann engaged directly with key statutory and regulatory stakeholders.

In line with Article 9(5) of the SEA Regulations (S.I. No. 435 of 2004), the SEA Scoping Report was issued to the following statutory Environmental Authorities for their review and comment:

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);
- The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM);
- The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, including the Development Applications Unit; and
- The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC).

As there is the potential to interface with Northern Ireland and the possibility of transboundary impacts, the SEA Scoping Report was also issued to Northern Ireland's Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) for consultation on transboundary environmental effects.

A copy of the SEA Scoping Report was made available here: <https://www.water.ie/projects/strategic-plans/water-services-strategic/>.

The following key questions were prepared to guide consultees and stakeholders in making a submission on the SEA Scoping Report. However, responses and comments were not limited to responding to these questions.

1. Do you have any suggestions that you would like Uisce Éireann to consider in the preparation of the WSSP 2050?
2. Do you have any comments on the approach to the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the WSSP 2050?
3. Section 3 [of the Scoping Report] sets out the current baseline environment conditions and future trends. The key considerations for the environmental assessment of the WSSP 2050 and the proposed scope of the assessment is summarised in Section 3.20 [of the Scoping Report]. Do you have any comments on these?
4. Are there any further plans, policies and programmes not identified in Section 4 or in Appendix B [of the Scoping Report] that should be considered?
5. Do you have any comments on the SEA approach to considering plan alternatives at this stage? If so, please discuss these and provide specific recommendations for changes if possible.
6. Are there any additional or specific plans or programmes that you feel should be considered within the cumulative impact assessment?
7. How would you like Uisce Éireann to communicate with you as the development of the WSSP 2050 progresses?

Feedback received on the Issues Paper and the SEA Scoping Report and the AA Screening Report, has been reviewed and taken into account in the preparation of the WSSP 2050, the SEA Environmental Report and the NIS.

Overall, stakeholders agreed with the seven key issues and the four themes presented in the Issues Paper. In summary there was support for:

- The adaptive planning approach to ensure responses to the challenge of climate change;
- Commitment to a collaborative approach to work with our customers and communities, across sectors and with multiple stakeholders to instil the appreciation for the value of water, encourage behaviour change and deliver wider benefits to society;
- The focus on embedding circular economy principles in the delivery of water services;
- Increased investment in smart water solutions and technology;

- Commitment to protect and enhance the environment to support ecosystems and communities and emphasis on wastewater and stormwater management as part of an Integrated Urban Water Management approach to address the impact of pollution.

The stakeholders highlighted that the following matters were not sufficiently addressed in the Issues Paper:

- The discussion on the climate change key issue does not include sufficient detail on the impact of rising temperatures, reduced precipitation, and sea level rise on water services;
- Food security should be considered in the context of climate change, population growth, soil health and water quality;
- Drought resilience is an important consideration for current and future water supply development and Uisce Éireann should provide guidance to local authorities on sustainable water use and water conservation

These have been addressed in the WSSP 2050 as reported in the WSSP Appendix C.

Overall, the stakeholders supported the general methodology outlined in the scoping report. Key comments identified for amendment or clarification included:

- Need for the SEA, AA and plan processes to be fully integrated and include a commitment to implementing recommendations and monitoring in the plan
- Strengthening and simplification of the SEA objectives
- Use of the EPA guidance on SEA methodology
- Addition of Policy and plans identified for the policy review
- Additional baseline information sources
- Inclusion of Diagram of interaction with other plans and programmes

The full list of Scoping comments and responses for the WSSP 2050 and SEA are provided in SEA Environmental Report Appendix A.

3.2.2 Consultation 2: Draft WSSP and Environmental Report

As part of the second phase of consultation, Uisce Éireann carried out a public consultation on the Draft WSSP 2050 together with the SEA Environmental Report and NIS. The SEA Environmental Report was published on the Uisce Éireann website (<https://www.water.ie/projects/strategic-plans/water-services-strategic/>) alongside the Draft WSSP 2050 and the NIS. The SEA Environmental Report outlined the assessment of the Draft WSSP 2050, including effects on the environment and proposed mitigation. In accordance with Article 11 of the SEA Regulations, the SEA environmental authorities, and DAERA (as the relevant transboundary authority) were notified so that they may make a submission or observation in relation to the SEA Environmental Report or the Draft WSSP 2050 to Uisce Éireann.

Uisce Éireann have referred to the SEA Environmental Report and the NIS when preparing the Draft WSSP 2050. The reports were published for statutory public consultation. The authorities/consultees listed in Section 0 above and the public were consulted again at Stage 3 – SEA Environmental Report as required under the SEA Regulations.

The comprehensive approach applying good practice for consultation and engagement is set out in detail in the Consultation Report. This includes a full account of the consultation process and materials provided and detailed analysis of the comments provided and the responses to them in terms of changes made to the

plan. The Consultation Report is published alongside the final WSSP 2050 and this SEA Environmental Statement, and the AA Determination,

A total of 110 responses were received. 63 Feedback forms and 47 email submissions. Responses received covered the plan and the environmental assessments and the Consultation Report address these comments grouped as follows:

- Challenges (44 submissions)
- Strategic Objective 1 (101 submissions)
- Strategic Objective 2 (86 submissions)
- Strategic Objective 3 (78 submissions)
- Strategic Objective 4 (54 submissions)
- Long term Challenges (36 submissions)
- Implementation (17 submissions)
- SEA (21 submissions)
- AA (4 submissions)
- Out of scope (32 submissions)

The submissions included a wide range of types of comments and responses from Uisce Éireann can be categorised as follows:

- Acknowledgment and welcoming the positive comments received on issues and approaches proposed;
- Clarification and supporting explanations provided through the comment responses in the Consultation Report;
- Text amendments to the plan or environmental assessments to include additional clarification or updates; and
- Amendments to the plan proposals to take account of comments including in relation to comments related to the SEA and NIS and amendment to the environmental assessments.

Consultation comments related to the SEA and AA and the responses and actions taken in the WSSP 2050 and environmental assessments are summarised in section 4.

4 How the SEA has Influenced the WSSP 2050

4.1 SEA Process and Integration with WSSP 2050

The purpose of SEA is to enable plan-making authorities such as Uisce Éireann to incorporate environmental considerations into decision-making at an early stage and in an integrated way throughout the plan-making process (Figure 1-1 Chapter 1) summarises how the SEA processes have been integrated into development of the WSSP 2050). The aim has been to ensure that environmental objectives and sustainability principles are a part of the preparation of the WSSP 2050 as well as providing an overall assessment of the Plans' proposals and making recommendations for implementation. The SEA approach aimed to:

- Contribute to the development of the plan taking account of the full range of environmental protection and enhancement policy and regulatory requirements so that the plan provides a framework for meeting water and wastewater service responsibilities while minimising environmental impacts and contributing to objectives for environmental enhancement and restoration;
- Embed principles governing sustainable abstraction and wastewater discharge, so the objectives of the RBMP and Uisce Éireann's biodiversity obligations can be achieved;
- Provide weight to the need to consider long term environmental resilience in water resource planning taking into account climate change; and
- Integrate environmental protection, enhancement and sustainability objectives into each stage of the plan development considering the whole lifecycle of activities that the plan implementation covers including the lower tier plans, the planning, approval and licencing processes as well as operational management and maintenance, monitoring, review and feedback.

In addition to compliance with the SEA Directive, the preparation and implementation of the WSSP 2050 must meet the provisions of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and transposing legislation. The Habitats Directive requires that if a plan, policy or programme is likely to have a significant effect on one or more European sites (that is, a SAC or SPA), also referred to as the "Natura 2000" Network), either alone or in combination with other schemes, plans or projects, then it must be subject to AA.

The key stages where the environmental assessments provided inputs and influenced the development of the plans included:

- **Scoping** the assessment including the identifying the baseline environmental and key challenges and opportunities, reviewing the policy and plan context and development of the SEA objectives and though these input to the challenges in Issues Paper which set out the direction for the WSSP 2050.
- **Consultation 1 feedback** through the SEA Scoping and Issues Paper which influenced the development o the WSSP 2050.
- **Development and refinement of the WSSP2050** proposals including through careful consideration of alternatives actions recognising existing, commitments and current and future obligations.
- **Assessment of the proposed draft plan** including with cumulative effect identifying mitigation actions to support meeting SEA and plan objectives.
- **Consultation 2 feedback** including on the SEA Environmental Report and NIS.
- **Finalisation of the WSSP 2050** and including addressing comments from the consultation process strengthening actions to protect the environment and clarifying commitment to the implementation of the SEA environmental mitigation and enhancement actions.
- **Monitoring plan implementation** as part of the feedback and review process (this will be the next stage)

4.2 SEA Summary for the WSSP 2050

4.2.1 Methodology

The methodology and full assessment for the SEA is reported in SEA Environmental Report published with this SEA Environmental Statement and is summarised here.

Key guidance taken into account in the approach to the SEA includes:

- SEA pack (EPA, 2021b)³;
- Developing and Assessing Alternatives in SEA (EPA, 2015)⁴;
- Guidance on SEA Statements and Monitoring (EPA, 2023a)⁵;
- Integrating Climatic Factors into SEA in Ireland – A Guidance Note (EPA, 2019)⁶;
- Good practice guidance on Cumulative Effects Assessment in SEA (EPA, 2020b)⁷;
- EPA guidance 'The Tiering of Environmental Assessment – The influence of Strategic Environmental Assessment on Project-level Environmental Impact Assessment' (EPA, 2021c)⁸; and
- Good Practice Guidance Strategic Environmental Assessment in the Water Sector (EPA, 2022).

The assessment covered the proposals that were put forward in the WSSP 2050 comprising:

- Overall approach and alternatives considered in the development of the proposed plan;
- Assessment of the selected plan proposals including:
 - Assessment and recommendations for amendment of proposed WSSP 2050 objectives and identified actions or measures as means of achieving them;
 - Overarching comparative assessment of the proposed plan considering all the proposals compared to a no plan scenario assuming no update to the current WSSP;
 - Assessment of cumulative impacts of the proposed WSSP 2050 with other plans and programmes; and
- Identification of mitigation measures and recommended actions and monitoring requirements for the plan implementation.

³ EPA. 2021b. *SEA Pack*. Accessed: 28.07.2023. Available from: <https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring--assessment/assessment/strategic-environmental-assessment/SEA-Pack-2022.pdf>

⁴ EPA. 2015. *Developing and Assessing Alternatives in Strategic Environmental Assessment*. Accessed: 28.08.2023. Available from: https://www.epa.ie/publications/research/biodiversity/EPA-157_web.pdf

⁵ EPA. 2023a. *Guidance on SEA Statements and Monitoring*. Accessed: 28.08.2023. Available from: <https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring--assessment/assessment/strategic-environmental-assessment/guidance-on-sea-statements-and-monitoring.php>

⁶ EPA. 2019. *Integrating Climatic Factors into Strategic Environmental Assessment in Ireland - A Guidance Note*. Accessed: 25.09.2023. Available from: <https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring--assessment/assessment/strategic-environmental-assessment/EPA-SEA-Climatic-Factors-Guidance-Note.pdf>

⁷ EPA. 2020b. *Good Practice Guidance on Cumulative Effects Assessment in Strategic Environmental Assessment*. Accessed: 28.08.2023. Available from: <https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring--assessment/assessment/strategic-environmental-assessment/EPA-Good-Practice-Guidelines-SEA.pdf>

⁸ EPA. 2021c. *Research 391: Tiering of Environmental Assessment – The Influence of Strategic Environmental Assessment on Project-level Environmental Impact Assessment*. Accessed: 28.09.2023. Available from: <https://www.epa.ie/publications/research/epa-research-2030-reports/research-391-tiering-of-environmental-assessment--the-influence-of-strategic-environmental-assessment-on-project-level-environmental-impact-assessment.php#:~:text=Improving%20impact%20assessment%20tiering%20involves,visited%20for%20each%20subsequent%20project.>

The assessment of the effects that are expected to occur from the implementation of the WSSP 2050 have been based on technical judgement and knowledge of similar schemes. The significance of the effects has been determined based on the sensitivity of the receptor and the scale of the change. Using this method, a sensitive receptor, such as a European designated site, may only require a small change to be considered as a significant effect. The effects can be beneficial or adverse as indicated by colour and by the symbology indicated (see section 4.2.4). The effects have assumed the inclusion of standard mitigation good practice measures. The magnitude of the predicted effect takes into account the likelihood of the effect occurring, the severity of the effect and the spatial extent (i.e., how large an area, or size of population) that would be affected.

4.2.2 SEA Geographical and Temporal Scope

Uisce Éireann's operating area is the Republic of Ireland. Uisce Éireann supplies 82% of people in Ireland with their drinking water and provides about two-thirds of households with wastewater services (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2022). The infrastructure supporting this is widespread, and abstraction, discharges of wastewaters and sludge spreading can affect wider areas.

The broad geographical scope for the SEA covers the entirety of Ireland, including the surrounding coastal waters. There are river and groundwater catchments shared between Ireland and Northern Ireland in addition to the coastal and marine environment, meaning that there are potential pathways for transboundary issues due to both proximity and connectivity. Therefore, the scope also includes the transboundary baseline environment.

The time frame for the SEA covers the 25 year period to 2050 and is aligned with the plan period. The environmental assessment will also be updated periodically alongside periodic updates to the plan. The plan is required to be reviewed every 5 years and should the plan require an update, the update will be subject to SEA.

4.2.3 Strategic Environmental Assessment Objectives

During the scoping stage of the SEA process a set of Strategic Environmental Objectives and assessment criteria were developed based on the key considerations from the baseline review and the policy, plan and programme review and consultation 1 responses. These objectives provided the framework for assessing alternative proposals and for the selected WSSP 2050 proposals. The Strategic Environmental Objectives and assessment criteria have also been updated to respond to consultation 2 comments (see highlighted text) and are provided in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1 SEA Objectives

SEA Topic	SEA Objectives - in relation to Uisce Éireann's provision of water and waste water services
Water Environment	<p><i>Water quality and quantity</i></p> <p>Restore and improve rivers, lakes, transitional and coastal waters, and groundwater to meet Water Framework Directive, Marine Strategy Framework Directive and River Basin Management Plan objectives where possible, and prevent status deterioration, in relation to the provision of water and wastewater services.</p> <p><i>Flood risk</i></p> <p>Protect and, where possible, reduce risk from flooding as a result of provision of water and wastewater services.</p>

SEA Topic	SEA Objectives - in relation to Uisce Éireann's provision of water and waste water services
Population, Economy, and Tourism and Recreation (including angling)	Protect and support sustainable economic and population growth, including housing provision and recreation, through the provision of reliable good quality water supply and wastewater services.
Health and Wellbeing	Improve access to reliable good quality water supply and to wastewater services including protecting bathing waters.
Climate Change	<p><i>Climate change mitigation</i></p> <p>Minimise contributions to greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency and measures contributing to meeting carbon reduction targets, related to the provision of water and wastewater services.</p> <p><i>Climate change adaptation</i></p> <p>Promote measures supportive of climate change resilience for the environment and resilience for the provision of water and wastewater services.</p>
Biodiversity	Protect and enhance terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity and habitat connectivity; particularly European sites and national sites (including proposed and candidate sites), and for protected species and the achievement of national and Uisce Éireann Biodiversity Action Plan commitments, related to the provision of water and wastewater services.
Fisheries	Protect marine and freshwater fisheries including shellfish waters, related livelihoods and safety for human consumption and support measures contributing to restoring or improving fisheries and fish/eel passage in relation to provision of water and wastewater services.
Material Assets	<p><i>Resource use and waste management</i></p> <p>Seek to apply circular economy principles across lifecycle decision making for resources and wastes including minimising resource use and waste generation from provision of water and wastewater services including management of sludge and residuals.</p> <p><i>Asset use</i></p> <p>Minimise impacts on other material assets and infrastructure, optimise use of existing assets and support capacity and upgrades of existing sites and assets in relation to provision of water and wastewater services.</p>
Landscape, Townscape and Seascape	Protect and, where possible, contribute to enhancing designated and valued landscapes, townscapes and seascapes and visual amenity in relation to the provision of water and wastewater services.
Cultural Heritage – Archaeological and Architectural	Protect, conserve and where possible enhance cultural heritage assets in terms of their condition, settings or access - including for designated sites, undesignated heritage and archaeological interest (including terrestrial and underwater heritage) related to the provision of water and wastewater services.
Geology and Soils	Protect soils and geological heritage sites and contribute towards improved management of soil resources related to the provision of water and wastewater services.

SEA Topic	SEA Objectives - in relation to Uisce Éireann's provision of water and waste water services
Air Quality	Improve performance on odour emissions, where possible, in relation to the provision of wastewater services.

4.2.4 Summary of Alternatives Assessment

The SEA Directive requires the SEA process to identify and describe 'reasonable alternative' means of achieving the objectives of the WSSP 2050. The reasons for selecting (a) the alternatives and (b) the preferred approach for the plan must be documented, together with a description of how this assessment of alternatives was undertaken.

An iterative process has been undertaken to develop the best proposed approach for the WSSP 2050. This was completed through a series of internal workshops held with the departments across Uisce Éireann which will be implementing the plan and delivering water and wastewater services and supporting activities. The workshops identified the strategic objectives and aims and also the actions required to achieve these.

SEA requires a consideration of reasonable alternatives for meeting plan objectives and this was achieved by taking each of the potential actions identified for the WSSP 2050 and testing them against the following:

- Continue current approach - Business as usual (BAU) based on existing including recently established practice?
- Could less be undertaken while still meeting requirements but involving less resources – do minimum?
- Could actions go beyond to reach targets sooner or go further?
- Could different approaches be used to meet objectives such as used by other water agencies/ companies?

In many cases it was recognised that there was a continuity of actions across the alternatives. For example, approaches had developed since the previous WSSP (2015) in response to changing legislation, emerging policy and challenges, with new practices already starting which would be built upon and implemented through the proposed WSSP 2050 actions. So the alternative actions considered could be seen as being on a sliding scale from a do minimum, to the BAU reflecting how practice has developed within Uisce Éireann including for example publication of the National Water Resources Plan (NWRP) in 2023, and a range of new initiatives that have recently started. For many actions, scope was identified to build on this further for the WSSP2050 to meet vision and challenges ahead. Scope to either go further or consider different approaches was also explored.

Uisce Éireann has developed and evolved considerably since the WSSP 2015 and therefore, under some actions the BAU is very much aligned or is the objective for the WSSP 2050, for instance, in the drinking water compliance space new legislative requirements will require significant investment and activities to be undertaken. Uisce Éireann would be undertaking this as part of its BAU. Other actions the WSSP 2050 would go above legislative requirements and the implementation of exiting plans, and this is reflected in the assessments.

The proposed alternatives were considered first in terms of if they could be reasonable alternatives at this stage for meeting the plan objectives. The 'do minimum' alternative was not considered for some actions as in many cases it represented a backward step from the BAU and would not meet plan objectives or legislative requirements or would involve not implementing existing plans. Therefore, the do minimum was only considered for actions where it might be possible while complying with the current legal framework. In some cases while actions to go further and do more or different approaches were identified as potentially

beneficial, these were used through the iterative discussions to help clarify and develop the WSSP 2050 actions. In some cases, the alternatives identified were not considered feasible without proposed WSSP 2050 steps being taken and embedded first, or other reasons such as being reliant on outside parties to take forward. However, in many cases the process identified actions that could be revisited and considered further through later plan iterations and were considered useful to raise as part of the forward looking approach.

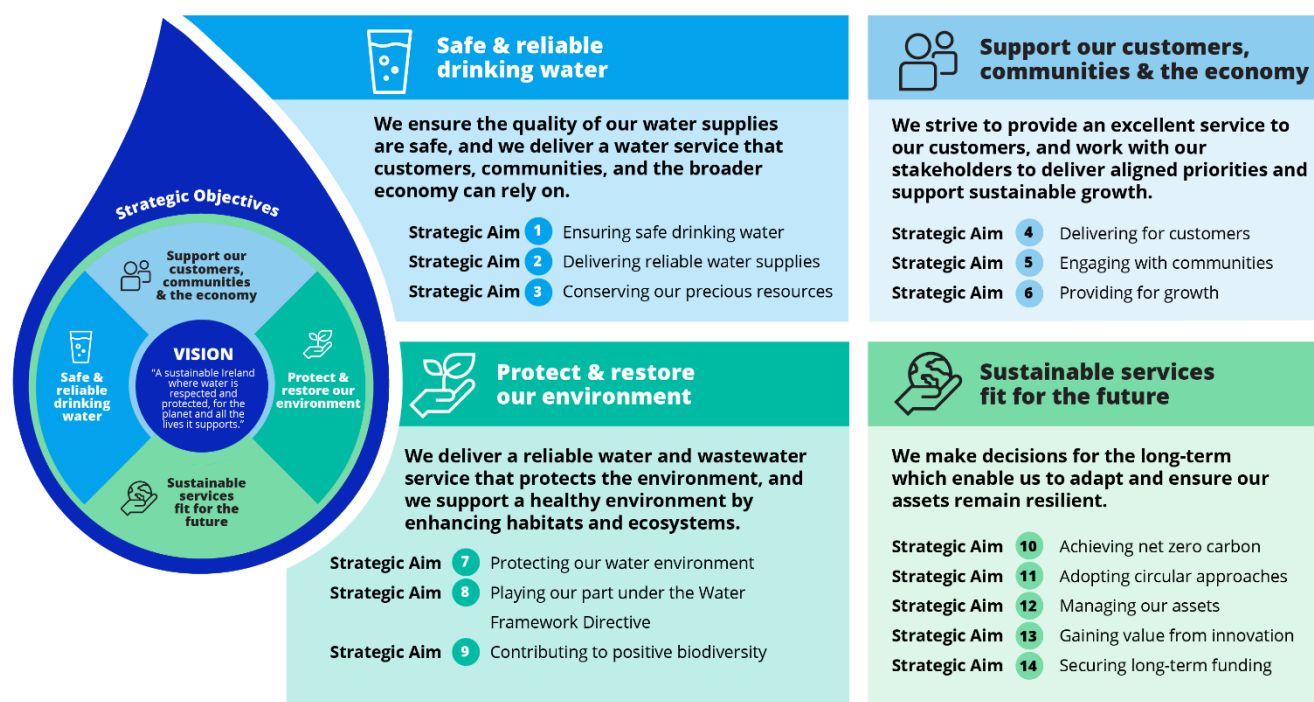


Figure 4-1 WSSP 2050 strategic objectives and associated aims

Five main alternatives for consideration were identified as:

Alternative 0: Do minimum for actions where this could meet current legislative requirements

Alternative 1: BAU: Continue with current approach – involving implementing existing plans and meeting legislative requirements

Alternative 2: BAU+ : Approach proposed for WSSP 2050 to meet plan objectives – this builds on the BAU actions

Alternative 3: WSSP 2050 +: Do more, or reach targets quicker than the proposed WSSP 2050 actions

Alternative 4: Different: Take a different approach to the proposed WSSP 2050

The alternatives were defined for each action and where no reasonable alternative was identified this was also recorded.

The assessment undertaken for the aims and actions against the SEA objectives under each of the four WSSP 2050 objectives is summarised in Sections 7.2 to 7.6 of SEA Environmental Report. These include assessment tables for each action against the SEA objectives.

The assessment scoring applied for the actions and alternatives is provided below:

Description of Comparison of Effect	Effect score	Description of Comparison of Effect	Effect score
Plan approach/alternative is likely to make a considerable positive contribution to Strategic Environmental Objectives or greatly improve likelihood of delivery of positive effects and reduce risk of adverse effects.	++	Plan approach/alternative has potential to conflict to a greater extent with Strategic Environmental Objectives or increase risk of adverse effects.	-
Plan approach/alternative has potential to provide a positive contribution to Strategic Environmental Objectives or improve likelihood of delivery of positive effects and reduce risk of adverse effects.	+	Plan approach/alternative has potential to conflict to a greater extent with Strategic Environmental Objectives or increased risk of adverse effects.	--
Plan approach/alternative has no identifiable difference from other alternatives in terms of actual or potential contribution or conflict with Strategic Environmental Objectives or risk of effects. Or the outcome is too uncertain at this stage to indicate how SEA Objectives will be supported.	0/?	Plan approach/alternative has potential to provide mixed effects so both positive and negative contribution to Strategic Environmental Objectives or in terms of likelihood of delivery of beneficial effects or risk of adverse effects.	+/-

The proposed alternatives were considered first in terms of if they could be reasonable alternatives at this stage for meeting the plan objectives. The 'do minimum' (Alternative 0) was not considered for some actions where, in many cases, it represented a backward step from the Business as Usual, would not meet plan objectives or legislative requirements or would involve not implementing existing plans. Therefore, Alternative 0 was only considered for actions where the approach might be possible while complying with the current legal framework.

Table 4-2 provides a summary of the alternative actions taken forward (highlighted) for all the Strategic Aims and Objectives. Further detail and reasoning is provided in the SEA Environmental Report.

Table 4-2 Summary of alternatives assessment

Strategic Objectives	Alternatives				
	Alternative 0 – Do minimum	Alternative 1 – Continue current approach (Business as Usual)	Alternative 2 – Proposed WSSP 2050 (Business as Usual +)	Alternative 3 – Do more/faster (WSSP 2050+)	Alternative 4 – Do things differently
Strategic Objective 1: Safe and Reliable Drinking Water	No reasonable alternatives were identified that would meet legislative requirements for Actions 1.1-1.6 and 1.9.	Considered for all Actions (1.1-1.9)	Taken forward in the WSSP 2050 for all Actions (1.1-1.9).	No reasonable alternatives identified for Actions 1.1, 1.6, 1.8 and 1.9. Considered for Actions 1.2-1.5 and 1.7	No reasonable alternatives identified for Actions 1.1-1.7 and 1.9. Considered for Action 1.8.

Strategic Objectives	Alternatives				
	Alternative 0 – Do minimum	Alternative 1 – Continue current approach (Business as Usual)	Alternative 2 – Proposed WSSP 2050 (Business as Usual +)	Alternative 3 – Do more/faster (WSSP 2050+)	Alternative 4 – Do things differently
	Considered for Actions 1.7 and 1.8				
Strategic Objective 2: Support our Customers, Communities and the Economy	No reasonable alternatives were identified that would meet legislative requirements for Actions 2.4-2.8. Considered for Actions 2.1-2.3	Considered for all Actions (2.1-2.8)	Taken forward in the WSSP 2050 for all Actions (2.1-2.8).	No reasonable alternatives identified for Actions 2.1 and 2.3. Considered for Actions 2.2 and 2.3-2.8	No reasonable alternatives identified for Actions 2.1-2.3 and 2.5-2.8. Considered for Action 2.4.
Strategic Objective 3: Protect and Restore the Environment	No reasonable alternatives were identified that would meet legislative requirements for Actions 3.1-3.6. Considered for Actions 3.7 and 3.8	Considered for all Actions Taken forward in the WSSP 2050 for Actions 3.3 and 3.7. Note Action 3.3 has been updated following consultation to also more clearly cover programmes of operational management including risk assessment and contingency planning to protect the environment.	Taken forward in the WSSP 2050 for Actions 3.1, 3.2, 3.4-3.6 and 3.8. (Actions 3.3 and 3.7 in Alternative 2 are the same as for Alternative 1).	No reasonable alternatives identified for Actions 3.1, 3.3, 3.5 and 3.7. Considered for Actions 3.2, 3.4, 3.6 and 3.8	No reasonable alternatives identified.
Strategic Objective 4 Sustainable Services Fit for the Future	No reasonable alternatives were identified that would meet legislative requirements for Actions 4.3-4.10. Considered for Actions 4.1 and 4.2	Considered for all Actions Taken forward in the WSSP 2050 for Action 4.3 and 4.6.	Taken forward in the WSSP 2050 for Actions 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5 and 4.7-4.10. (Action 4.3 and 4.6 within Alternative 2 is the same as in Alternative 1)	No reasonable alternatives identified for Actions 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6 and 4.10. Considered for Actions 4.2, 4.5 and 4.7-4.9.	No reasonable alternatives identified. ⁹

For Actions 3.3, 3.7, 4.3 and 4.6, Alternative 1 (Business as Usual) has been incorporated into the WSSP 2050. This reflected areas where it was recognised that current processes or plans had already been developed to meet and go beyond requirements with the aim to meet future pressures and challenges. For most actions, Alternative 2 (Business as Usual plus+) has been identified as the proposed approach for the WSSP 2050 as there is recognition of opportunities to enhance and address future challenges. In some cases Alternative 2 (Business as Usual plus) was also largely based on current process or plans, such as for Action 1.4 including the implementation of the National Water Resources Plan. This is already part of the Business as Usual (Alternative 1) but additional supporting elements had been identified for Business as Usual + (Alternative 2).

For some actions, scope for going further to support plan and SEA objectives was identified in Alternatives 3 and 4. These were not included as part of the WSSP 2050 as they were either; outside current Uisce Éireann scope of activities, based on technology not yet available, not considered feasible to apply or needing other priority actions to be undertaken as a first next step but they could be part of future reviews.

This process added to the extensive iteration to develop the WSSP 2050 actions to provide a balance of ambition in achieving the Strategic Objectives and supporting SEA Objectives while being pragmatic and deliverable within the scope of Uisce Éireann's responsibilities for water and wastewater services, and access to resources.

4.3 Summary of Environmental Assessment of WSSP 2050

The proposed Final WSSP 2050 Actions for each Strategic Objective are set out in Tables 4.3 to 4.6 below.

Table 4-3 Strategic Objective 1 - Actions

Strategic Objective 1: Safe and Reliable Drinking Water
Action 1.1: Undertake risk assessments across our supplies and implement appropriate measures to manage risk.
Action 1.2: Conform with the Drinking Water Directive and other legislative requirements relating to drinking water quality.
Action 1.3: Coordinate catchment management measures and champion nature-based solutions for improving source water quality.
Action 1.4: Implement and continue to review our National Water Resources Plan, delivering improvements in water supply infrastructure to ensure resilient supplies into the future.
Action 1.5: Develop contingency plans to improve reliability of our water supplies.
Action 1.6: Improve operational resilience through preventative measures and developing and implementing improved incident response processes.
Action 1.7: Use less water through promoting water conservation to help customers reduce their use.
Action 1.8: Use less water through developing and implementing an enhanced Water Stewardship Programme.
Action 1.9: Lose less water through delivering leakage reduction.

Table 4-4 Strategic Objective 2 - Actions

Strategic Objective 2: Support our Customers, Communities and the Economy
Action 2.1: Understand customer needs and expectations.

Strategic Objective 2: Support our Customers, Communities and the Economy

Action 2.2: Enhance customer communications to address our customer expectations and provide real-time information to customers on usage, incidents, and water quality.

Action 2.3: Support our customers to play their part in protecting water as a precious resource and enabling better water services.

Action 2.4: Develop a community education and engagement programme to raise awareness on the value of water and the water services we provide.

Action 2.5: Continue to develop amenity value in our assets with local communities, where safe and appropriate.

Action 2.6: Engage and collaborate with key stakeholders to support national, regional and local planning policy.

Action 2.7: Engage with housing and industry stakeholders to support delivery of new homes and economic growth.

Action 2.8: Develop and embed demand analysis capability to inform, forecast and plan for future investment requirements.

Table 4-5 Strategic Objective 3 - Actions

Strategic Objective 3 Protect and Restore our Environment

Action 3.1: Work with regulators and stakeholders to develop a Wastewater Strategy Framework.

Action 3.2: Develop and implement Integrated Urban Wastewater Management Plans.

Action 3.3: – Manage our water service assets and operations to reduce the risk of impacts to water bodies

Action 3.4: Protect and restore water bodies through collaboration.

Action 3.5: Manage wastewater services to achieve regulatory requirements.

Action 3.6: Manage drinking water services to achieve regulatory requirements.

Action 3.7: Manage our assets to have biodiversity 'net gain'.

Action 3.8: Champion nature-based solutions and integrated catchment measures in the delivery of water and wastewater projects.

Table 4-6 Strategic Objective 4 - Actions

Strategic Objective 4 Sustainable Services Fit for the Future

Action 4.1: Develop and implement a Net Zero Road Map.

Action 4.2: Work with our supply chain to embed sustainability in the delivery of water and wastewater infrastructure.

Action 4.3: Review and implement the National Wastewater Sludge Management Plan.

Action 4.4: Maximise circular economy benefits.

Action 4.5: Manage activities on our assets in a coordinated manner across their full lifecycle, with the aim of achieving ISO 55000 certification.

Action 4.6: Ensure risk and value-based decision making across the lifecycle of assets.

Strategic Objective 4 Sustainable Services Fit for the Future	
Action 4.7: Develop a culture of innovation in the water services sector to enable a sustainable future.	
Action 4.8: Continue to develop foresight and horizon scanning capability.	
Action 4.9: Quantify and articulate long-term capital and operational financial investment needs for our water and wastewater assets.	
Action 4.10: Secure multi-annual funding approach.	

Table 4-7 provides a summary of the assessment provided in the SEA Environmental Report. The SEA Environmental Report assesses each of the 35 Actions within the 14 Strategic Aims and four SEA Objectives. Table 4-7 below takes the assessment from each Action and provides the range of this assessment, presenting lowest and best score across the four Strategic Objectives.

Table 4-7 WSSP 2050 SEA assessment summary

SEA Topic	Strategic Objective 1 (Strategic Aims 1-3)		Strategic Objective 2 (Strategic Aims 4-6)		Strategic Objective 3 (Strategic Aims 7-9)		Strategic Objective 4 (Strategic Aims 10-14)		Comments on assessment Note reference to identification of mitigation and supportive measures in the Environmental Action Plan (EAP) (See Table 8.1)
	Actions 1.1-1.9		Actions 2.1-2.8		Actions 3.1-3.8		Actions 4.1- 4.10		
Water Environment – Water quality and quantity	+/-	++	+/-	++	+/-	++	+/-	++	Most actions across all Strategic Objectives 1-4 specifically support meeting SEA water environmental objectives for water quality and resource objectives. Actions related to implementing contingency plans such as drought and supporting growth, wastewater plans, sludge management could have both positive and negative effects depending on the resources and locations involved. Mitigation measures EAP1 to EAP 4 and EAP 6 & 7
Water Environment – Flood Risk	0		0		+/-	+	+		Most actions are expected to be neutral with respect to flood risk. Actions related to wastewater services could have potentially positive or negative effects depending on proposals and location but these actions also include opportunities to reduce flood risk through the implementation of integrated drainage plans and collaboration with local authorities. Actions on supporting use of nature-based solutions and wider catchment measures can also provide benefits in retaining water in the

SEA Topic	Strategic Objective 1 (Strategic Aims 1-3)		Strategic Objective 2 (Strategic Aims 4-6)		Strategic Objective 3 (Strategic Aims 7-9)		Strategic Objective 4 (Strategic Aims 10-14)		Comments on assessment Note reference to identification of mitigation and supportive measures in the Environmental Action Plan (EAP) (See Table 8.1)
	Actions 1.1-1.9		Actions 2.1-2.8		Actions 3.1-3.8		Actions 4.1-4.10		
									catchment depending on the specific measures proposed and their location. Actions supporting management of operations to reduce the risk of pollution events are considered positive. Mitigation measures EAP 1-4 and 6, 7, 10.
Population, Economy, and Tourism and Recreation	+	++	+	++	+		+	++	Actions contribute to meeting SEA objectives for the provision of reliable good quality water supply and wastewater services for economic and population growth and supporting housing and tourism/recreation.
Health and Wellbeing	+	++	+	++	+	++	+	++	Actions contribute to meeting SEA objectives for supporting health and wellbeing in terms of access to reliable good quality water supply and wastewater services and also amenity access provision where appropriate.
Climate Change Mitigation	+/-	++	0	+	+/-	++	+/-	++	Actions include those involving investments requiring materials and energy use but also with potential to improve energy efficiency and provide rationalisation. Actions contributing to reduction in carbon emissions include support for use of nature-based solutions and catchment management measures, circular economy approaches, awareness raising on water conservation and the development of the Net Zero Road map will develop further actions for working to meeting the ambition for net zero carbon by 2040. Mitigation measures EAP 1, 4, 6 , 8 &10
Climate Change Adaptation	+	++	0	+	+/-	++	+		Most proposed actions support the SEA objective on climate change adaptation both in terms of supply resilience and environmental resilience both are linked, including developing contingency plans and operational resilience, managing risks and engaging with stakeholders on water conservation, supporting Use Less, Loose Less approaches for water supply meeting

SEA Topic	Strategic Objective 1 (Strategic Aims 1-3)		Strategic Objective 2 (Strategic Aims 4-6)		Strategic Objective 3 (Strategic Aims 7-9)		Strategic Objective 4 (Strategic Aims 10-14)		Comments on assessment Note reference to identification of mitigation and supportive measures in the Environmental Action Plan (EAP) (See Table 8.1)
	Actions 1.1-1.9		Actions 2.1-2.8		Actions 3.1-3.8		Actions 4.1- 4.10		
									<p>Actions supporting planned growth are identified as mixed positive and negative as there will be opportunities for improving sustainable services but also increased demand in some localities. Actions supporting provision of biodiversity net gain, nature-based solutions and catchment management can all contribute to environmental resilience to climate change.</p> <p>Mitigation measures - EAP 1, 4 & 6</p>
Biodiversity	+/-	++	+/-	+	+/-	++	+/-	+	<p>Most actions supporting meeting SEA water environmental objectives for water quality and resources can also benefit aquatic biodiversity. Actions related to implementing contingency plans such as drought and supporting growth, wastewater plans, sludge management could have both positive and negative effects depending on the resources and locations involved and potential for increased pressure for abstraction or on water quality and investment requiring construction. The WSSP 2050 includes Actions that address potential negative effects including the commitment to biodiversity net gain, use of nature-based solutions and support for catchment management. Actions to protect and improve source water quality and meet future recast UWWTD requirements can also support the SEA objective for Biodiversity.</p> <p>Mitigation measures EAP 1-4, 5, 6 & 7, 9</p>
Fisheries	+	++	+/-	+	+	++	+/-	+	<p>Pressures on water resources from meeting growth and from sludge disposal including land spreading could have positive or negative effects depending on proposals and locations. Most actions support meeting SEA water environmental and biodiversity objectives for water quality and quantity also benefit aquatic biodiversity and fisheries particular the</p>

SEA Topic	Strategic Objective 1 (Strategic Aims 1-3)		Strategic Objective 2 (Strategic Aims 4-6)		Strategic Objective 3 (Strategic Aims 7-9)		Strategic Objective 4 (Strategic Aims 10-14)		Comments on assessment Note reference to identification of mitigation and supportive measures in the Environmental Action Plan (EAP) (See Table 8.1)
	Actions 1.1-1.9		Actions 2.1-2.8		Actions 3.1-3.8		Actions 4.1- 4.10		
									commitment to sustainable abstraction, wastewater treatment and removal of barriers to fish migration, will be supportive to freshwater, estuarine and marine fisheries. Mitigation measures EAP 1-4, 6 & 7
Material Assets – Resource Use and Waste Management	+/-	++	+		+	++	+	++	Actions involving significant infrastructure investment are associated with resource use and waste generation, some of this investment also provide rationalisation and efficiency improvements. Actions specifically addressing net zero carbon and developing circular economy approaches can help to address potential negative effects. Mitigation measures EAP 4, 7, 11
Material Assets – Asset use	+/-	++	+	++	+		+	++	Actions involving significant infrastructure investment include developing new assets, rationalisation and upgrading existing assets and can have mixed beneficial and negative effects. Actions specifically addressing asset management and the net zero road map and circular economy approach will support overall beneficial contribution to SEA objective. Mitigation measures EAP 4, 11
Landscape, Townscape and Seascape	+/-	+	+/-	0	+/-	++	0		Actions involving significant infrastructure investment include developing new assets, rationalisation and upgrading existing assets and decommissioning and can have mixed beneficial and negative effects on the SEA landscape objective. There are also potential benefits from actions supporting water source quality protection, nature -based solutions and catchment management and provision of biodiversity net gain. Mitigation measures EAP 1 and 4 and 7
Cultural Heritage – Archaeological	+/-	0	+/-	0	+/-	+	0		Actions involving significant infrastructure investment include developing new assets, rationalisation and upgrading existing assets can have mixed beneficial and

SEA Topic	Strategic Objective 1 (Strategic Aims 1-3)		Strategic Objective 2 (Strategic Aims 4-6)		Strategic Objective 3 (Strategic Aims 7-9)		Strategic Objective 4 (Strategic Aims 10-14)		Comments on assessment Note reference to identification of mitigation and supportive measures in the Environmental Action Plan (EAP) (See Table 8.1)
	Actions 1.1-1.9		Actions 2.1-2.8		Actions 3.1-3.8		Actions 4.1-4.10		
and Architectural									negative effects on cultural heritage and archaeological assets. Mitigation measures EAP 1 and EAP 4
Geology and Soils	+/-	+	0		+		+	++	Actions involving significant infrastructure investment include developing new assets, rationalisation and upgrading existing assets can have mixed beneficial and negative effects on soils and geological asset assets. However, actions supporting catchment management, nature-based solutions and treated sludge disposal through land spreading and circular economy approached can support SEA objectives in relation to Mitigation measures EAP 1, 4 and 7
Air Quality	0		0		+/-	+	+		Actions involving wastewater treatment can have mixed to positive contribution to the SEA objective in terms of odour. Mitigation measures EAP 1 and EAP 4

Many of the proposed actions aimed at improving delivery of sustainable water are closely linked or supported by other actions across the Strategic Objectives and Aims. These include the commitment to cross cutting actions on Biodiversity Net gain, Nature-based solutions and catchment management, Net zero carbon road map and the circular economy.

The WSSP 2050 recognises the need to plan for unprecedented changes, potentially driven by climate change, population growth, environment and biodiversity crises, ageing infrastructure, regulation and policy changes, and economic conditions. New approaches and ways of working identified to support and facilitate addressing this level of change are identified as Collaboration, Systems thinking and Adaptive management:

Collaboration – We collaborate with stakeholders to deliver outcomes for Ireland which could not be achieved while working in isolation.

New collaborative approaches between stakeholders are recognised as being needed across several actions. These include for example Action 3.2 to enable compliance with the new recast Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive in relation to addressing storm overflows, for Action 1.3 and 3.8 which will benefit from collaboration to deliver catchment management measures, and for Action 3.4.

This approach is considered to be supportive to meeting SEA objectives.

Systems thinking - We recognize the complexity of the water cycle and aim to take a holistic view in determining optimal for the long term.

The WSSP recognises dependence on wider systems, for example the hydrological and ecological systems of the water environment which provide raw water sources and receive treated wastewater discharges. In order to determine optimal solutions for water and wastewater services, a whole system view is required.

This approach is considered to be generally supportive to meeting SEA objectives. SEA recommendation to help realise benefits is to apply natural capital and ecosystems services assessment and valuation approaches to facilitate incorporation of wider environmental benefits into decision making processes.

Adaptive Planning - *We plan for the future using an adaptive approach so that we can respond to changing trends and needs*

Adaptive planning is an approach which identifies possible future scenarios, tracks appropriate trend indicators and identifies trigger points in the indicators which would lead us to adapt our plan to the emerging likely scenario.

This approach is considered to be supportive to meeting SEA objectives. The SEA recommendation is to use information generated from monitoring plan reporting and the review and updating process for the WSSP 2050 and lower tier plans.

4.4 Cumulative Effects Assessment

4.5 Intra-plan Effects

Many of the WSSP 2050 proposed actions combine to be supportive in contributing to SEA objectives, especially SEA Objectives for Water, Biodiversity, Fisheries, Climate Change Mitigation, Climate Adaptation, Population and Economy, and Health and Wellbeing.

While there could be potential for adverse in combination and cumulative effects from implementation of the plan, the actions are high level with no site-specific, location based or timing information for proposals. Therefore, these effects will need to be considered as part of the lower level of plans and strategies.

Interaction between actions with potential for cumulative effects on SEA Objectives have been assessed. The majority of the actions identified to have a combined effect are supportive of the SEA Objectives, with some actions identified to have combined mixed negative and positive effects. The potential additional impacts are addressed through the mitigation measures in the Environmental Mitigation Action Plan, Table 5-1.

4.6 Inter-plan Effects

The interaction between the WSSP 2050 and other plans is considered against the SEA Objectives to identify potential for inter-plan cumulative effects and is summarised in Table 4-8.

The inter-plan assessment identifies largely supportive and positive interaction between the WSSP 2050 proposals and the plans considered in relation to the SEA objectives. These plans are generally high level and aspirational national plans and, in many cases, are also reliant on lower level plans and programmes for implementation.

Table 4-8 Cumulative assessment for other plans against the SEA Objectives

Plan/Project	SEA Objectives													
	Water quality and quantity	Flood risk	Population and economy	Health and wellbeing	Climate change mitigation	Climate change adaptation	Biodiversity	Fisheries	Resource use and waste management	Asset use	Landscape, Townscape and Seascape	Cultural heritage – archaeological and architectural	Geology and soils	Air quality
Climate Action Plan 2024 draft for consultation (Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, 2024a)	+				+	+	+	+	+	+				+
Ag Climatise – A Roadmap towards Climate Neutrality (Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, 2020)	+				+	+	+	+	+	+				+
National Adaptation Framework (Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, 2018)	+	+			+	+	+	+	+	+				+
Water Quality and Water Services Infrastructure, Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2019)	+	+			+	+	+/-	+/-	+	+				+
National Biodiversity Action Plan 4th 2024 (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2024a)	+						+		+					
National Development Plan 2021-2030 (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, 2021)	+/-		+	+			+/-		+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-
National Planning Framework, Project Ireland 2040 and draft for consultation 2024 (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2018b, 2024b)	+/-		+	+			+/-		+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-
River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027 (Department	+/-	+					+/	+/	+/					

Plan/Project	SEA Objectives													
	Water quality and quantity	Flood risk	Population and economy	Health and wellbeing	Climate change mitigation	Climate change adaptation	Biodiversity	Fisheries	Resource use and waste management	Asset use	Landscape, Townscape and Seascape	Cultural heritage – archaeological and architectural	Geology and soils	Air quality
of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2024)														
Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Programme (Office of Public Works, 2018)		+					+/-	+/-						
National Marine Planning Framework (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2023)							+/-	+				+/-		
National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development 2030 (Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, 2023b)	+/-		+				+/-	+	+/-			+/-		
Forestry Programme 2023-2027 (Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, 2023a)	+/-						+				+/-		+/-	
National Peatlands Strategy (National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2015)	+					+	+				+		+	
Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy (Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, 2020)									+	+				
Draft Environment Strategy for Northern Ireland (Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs of Northern Ireland, 2021a)	+						+	+			+	+	+	
Our Strategy 2021-2046 (Northern Ireland Water, 2021)	+	+					+/-	+	+	+				

Plan/Project	SEA Objectives													
	Water quality and quantity	Flood risk	Population and economy	Health and wellbeing	Climate change mitigation	Climate change adaptation	Biodiversity	Fisheries	Resource use and waste management	Asset use	Landscape, Townscape and Seascape	Cultural heritage – archaeological and architectural	Geology and soils	Air quality
Water Resource and Supply Resilience Plan (Northern Ireland Water, 2020) and Draft Water Resource and Supply Resilience Plan (Northern Ireland Water, 2024)	+						+	+	+	+				
Sustainable Water – A Long term water strategy for Northern Ireland (2015 – 2040) (Department for Regional Development, 2014)	+	+				+	+	+	+	+				
Draft Northern Ireland Flood Risk Management Plan 2021–2027 (Department for Infrastructure, 2021)		+						+/-	+/-					
United Kingdom Marine Policy Statement (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2011)	+						+/-	+/						
Draft 3rd cycle River Basin Management Plan 2021-2027 (Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs of Northern Ireland, 2021b)	+		+				+	+						
Marine Plan for Northern Ireland Marine Strategy Regulations 2010 and Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009														
The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022														
Integrated Coastal Zone Management Strategy for Northern Ireland 2006-2026														

4.7 SEA and Consultation Influence on the Final Plan

Having carefully reviewed the submissions received on SEA Uisce Éireann have considered the following recommendations and clarifications that should be provided in the WSSP 2050 and the Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report.

Table 4-9 provides a summary of the consultation responses and the actioned changes to the SEA Environmental Report and WSSP 2050.

4.7.1 Clarifications on SEA Feedback

The majority of responses to consultation comments related to the SEA Environmental Report for the WSSP2050 are clarifications or updates including:

- Adding new or updated policy, plans and legislation informing the context of the plan and the environmental assessment. We note also that the process of review will continue as part of the plan implementation as addressed in section 9 and 10 of WSSP 2050 and as set out in section 6.11 of this consultation report.
- Clarification on High Status water bodies, Blue Dot catchments, freshwater pearl mussel, bathing waters and shellfish waters in the SEA assessment and plan commitments.
- Collaboration and engagement for the implementation of the plan, abstraction licencing requirements and environmental assessments.
- Providing for growth and taking account of environmental capacity
- Transboundary effects to align with Northern Ireland policy and data more clearly in specific cases and to consider future baseline trends and also potential for water and air pollution effects from sludge spreading.
- Clarifications on how assessment including cumulative assessment have been incorporated into the mitigation recommendations.

4.7.2 Recommendations on SEA Feedback

The main recommendations related to the SEA are:

- Inclusion of a number of policies, acts and strategies relating to marine matters in Northern Ireland, in the cumulative assessment.
- Biodiversity actions and mitigation for existing operations recommendations included making amendments to the WSSP Action 3.3 to include the preparation of comprehensive risk assessments, contingency plans and incident response procedures and the updates to the SEA for this action include recommendations to prioritise the implementation of these measures for sensitive sites for example high status water bodies, European Sites and drinking water abstractions.
- Update of the WSSP 2050 to strengthen links to more clearly commit to the environmental assessment mitigation recommendations and the implementation of the monitoring plan.

4.7.3 Updates to the WSSP 2050

The main updates as part of finalising the WSSP 2050 including adding additional clarifications and strengthen supporting text and commitment to implementing the SEA and NIS recommendations. One action change was made to Action 3.3 to take account of comments on the need to address the risks to

water quality and protected sites from operational activities including chemicals handling and residuals discharge. The SEA Environmental Report and NIS have been updated to consider the changes made to the WSSP 2050 and are reflected in the summary of the assessment provided in this SEA Statement including the Environmental Mitigation Action Plan and Monitoring Plan,

Table 4-9 Summary of Consultation Responses and Changes to SEA and WSSP 2050

Key issues/themes raised	SEA response	Summary of action taken
Biodiversity Actions & Mitigation for Existing Operation		
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage		
<p>The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage notes that “it is imperative that any positive biodiversity actions are appropriate to the location with appropriate ecological advice available at all stages in the project; the design stage, the implementation stage and the subsequent monitoring,” and emphasises the importance of monitoring biodiversity projects in supporting the NBAP. “Monitoring biodiversity projects is essential and will be required to support objective four of the NBAP, “Enhance the Evidence Base for Action on Biodiversity”.</p> <p>“The Department recommends updating the ER, Table 9.2-Draft Monitoring Plan, under the SEA topic for biodiversity to include a commitment to ensure compliance with the legislative requirement to monitor and report on the actions undertaken for biodiversity, in accordance with the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2023.”</p> <p>The Department also made recommendations for the NIS in relation to “additional mitigation measures required to ensure the protection of European sites due to existing operations. This also needs to be taken into account in the SEA and the Monitoring Plan.</p>	<p><i>The NBAP and UE's BAP are specially referenced and inform the SEA and WSSP 2050. An amendment has been made to SEA Environmental Report, Table 9.2-Draft Monitoring Plan, under the SEA topic for biodiversity to clarify that this includes a commitment to ensure compliance with the legislative requirement to monitor and report on the actions undertaken for biodiversity conservation, in accordance with the Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023–2030 as required by Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2023</i></p> <p><i>WSSP Action 3.3 has been updated to take into account the preparation of comprehensive risk assessments, contingency plans and incident response procedures. The SEA Environmental Report has been updated to reflect the Action amendment the commitment set out on WTP Site Spill risk assessments and prioritization and takes these through to the SEA Environmental Action Plan and monitoring plan.</i></p>	<p>Clarification included in the SEA Environmental Report Monitoring Plan and the WSSP 2050 text</p> <p>Amendment made to the WSSP 2050 for Action 3.3 and related SEA Environmental Report assessment, mitigation and monitoring plan and NIS</p>
Providing for Growth		
Irish Home Builders' Association, Construction Industry Federation, EPA and EirGRID		
Irish Home Builders' Association and Construction Industry Federation welcomed “the references made to forthcoming policies and legislative changes, including the	<i>In relation to the challenges identified in the SEA ER sections on Population, Economy and Tourism &</i>	Clarification including to text in the WSSP 2050

Key issues/themes raised	SEA response	Summary of action taken
<p>Planning & Development Bill, the National Development Plan and the National Planning Framework – Project Ireland 2040” in the SEA. The submission stated that it is “vital that services provide for this growth, and support housing delivery (as emphasised throughout this submission).” The submission welcomed the inclusion “of “Population, Economy and Tourism & Recreation” within the SEA, and agree with the challenges referenced here. However, further reference should be made to how these challenges will be addressed and overcome.”</p> <p>The EPA commented that “while Uisce Éireann indicates that it will work with stakeholders to plan forward for capacity, it should specifically note that this planning is done within the constraints of the local receiving environment and in compliance with existing legislative requirements, including those under the WFD to prevent deterioration of water body status”.</p> <p>The EPA also noted that “it will be critical that clear communication structures are established and maintained, so that in implementing the Plan, opportunities to avoid conflicts with other related sectoral policy commitments (e.g. tourism and local authority land use planning) are considered”.</p> <p>EirGrid considered that “explicit reference to such collaboration between state authorities (possibly naming EirGrid and others), would be a useful insert into the Plan, and also into the SEA documents”. They continued this point stating that this “will allow for the sustainable provision of infrastructure, perhaps in shared corridors, in the context of good planning practice, minimising impact on receiving human and natural communities and the wider natural, human and built environments, and the principles of proper planning and sustainable development”.</p>	<p><i>Recreation Uisce Éireann note that actions to address challenges are identified in section 2 of the Plan and are reflected in section 7.3 and 7.6 of the SEA Environmental Report.</i></p> <p><i>In response to the EPA's and EirGrid's comments on the commitment to work with stakeholders has been further clarified across plan actions in relation to Uisce Éireann working with stakeholders to plan forward for capacity, this planning will be undertaken with consideration of the constraints of the local receiving environment and in compliance with existing legislative requirements, including those under the WFD to prevent deterioration of water body status and this approach is consistent with the SEA objectives and with WSSP 2050 strategic aims.</i></p>	
High Status/Blue Dot Sites/Freshwater Pearl Mussel		
Tipperary County Council, LAWPRO, SWAN		

Key issues/themes raised	SEA response	Summary of action taken
<p>The submission by Tipperary County Council noted “there is reference within the environmental reports to European site designations, but the reports do not refer to high status objective/Blue Dot waterbodies. This should be addressed in the final Plan.”</p> <p>LAWPRO noted that “in the Plan, SEA and NIS, the requirements of high-status objective waters or Blue Dots, are omitted”. They requested that “this is acknowledged in all documents to reflect the sensitivity of these waters, and the higher standards required in terms of wastewater discharges”. They commented that “a commitment to resolving all pressures on HSO waters, which will also in turn support protected habitats and species with a high-status requirement”, would be welcomed. They also welcomed reference to the “Sectoral action plans within the 46 Catchment Management Plans (sub plans of the RBMP, yet to be developed)” in the SEA.</p> <p>SWAN recommends more emphasis should be placed in the WSSP on measures to address particularly sensitive sites, especially catchments of High-Status Water Bodies and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and that there is a far clearer commitment in the WSSP to conduct UE operations in a way that fully protects these sites. Very particularly we are calling for a commitment to protect the endangered Freshwater Pearl Mussel through extremely robust discharge prevention in rivers which have population of FWPM. We note that there are no specific actions in this regard in the UE Biodiversity Action Plan.</p>	<p><i>SEA Environmental Report has been updated to provide additional references to high status Waterbodies and blue dot catchments –so these are specifically recognized rather than generally included. We note that these are already being addressed through the NWRP commitment to sustainable abstractions.</i></p> <p><i>There is a commitment to protection of High-Status Water Bodies and European Sites including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and this includes consideration of Freshwater Pearl Mussel. We are fully committed to the AA process at plan and project levels and these aspects will be considered as part of that process (See also response on AA section). We note that our BAP will be updated to reflect the 4th National BAP and requirements under the Nature Restoration Law</i></p>	<p>Clarification</p>
Peatland archaeological investigations		
Irish Peatland Conservation Council (IPCC)		
<p>Irish Peatland Conservation Council (IPCC) noted that there needs to be “scientific supervision from an independent body that will evaluate any infrastructural development, habitat restoration/creation project for its archaeological importance.” The IPCC also highlighted that they could not support the development before a “full archaeological survey is undertaken, and the necessary precautions and mitigations are in place to ensure that no loss of cultural archaeological information occurs as an outcome of development.”</p>	<p><i>In response to the Irish Peatland Conservation Council, we will comply with all legislative requirements with regard to the NIS as well as the SEA, the WSSP itself, and any further environmental assessments including archaeological investigations that are outcomes of the WSSP.</i></p>	

Key issues/themes raised	SEA response	Summary of action taken
Transboundary effects		
DAERA, NIEA NED , HED		
<p>DAERA in their submission “is content that the environmental report and the process of consultation follow the SEA Directive” and “that previous consultations, including the SEA scoping have been considered as part of the Environmental Report”. DAERA noted that “as detailed under Section 6.4 that “more detailed consideration of environmental effects is expected to be undertaken on the lower tier plans and programme through SEA and AA where applicable and also through EIA and AA are project level where required”. In light of this, DAERA requested that “should any changes which are likely to impact Northern Ireland be included, then DAERA should be re-consulted”. NIEA Natural Environment Division (NED) were also of the opinion that “should there be any changes to the current plan which results in the potential for transboundary impacts then the relevant authorities in NI should be consulted”.</p> <p>NED “welcome the acknowledgement and consideration of transboundary environmental effects within the SEA”. NED would welcome the inclusion in Appendix C of details of future trends, aquatic habitats, invasive species and species status as had been carried out for the Republic of Ireland”. NED noted Section 6.4 regarding lower tier plans and programmes and advised that “this should include relevant authorities in NI should there be the potential for impacts in Northern Ireland”.</p> <p>The submission pointed out a statement on page 86 of the SEA which stated, “Agricultural use of wastewater sludge is considered positive for SEA objectives for soils and resource use although mixed in terms of water, biodiversity and fisheries given potential for nutrient rich run-off which can contribute to water pollution.” The submission requested that Uisce Éireann note that “there are also potential air pollution impacts, via ammonia emissions from sludge application to soils, on plant health and biodiversity in nearby nutrient-poor habitats (such as peatlands)” and that “sewage sludge application can have transboundary effects via atmospheric transport of ammonia emissions to other jurisdictions”. They continued to state</p>	<p><i>Reference to the highlighted legislation, organisations, sources and plans have been added, where not already identified, to the relevant SEA transboundary sections in response to comments from DAERA as relevant in SEA Environmental Report section 4. Appendix B and C -In Appendix C.13.1, DAERA M&FD is listed as a key organisation. Commentary on future trends has been clarified in relation to the environment in Northern Ireland has also been added to Appendix C.</i></p> <p><i>In Appendix C.13.2, the consideration of East Coast Marine pSPA and Carlingford Marine pSPA has been clarified to confirm they are both still pSPA not SPAs (We note for the purposes of our assessment that proposed and candidate sites are considered as for confirmed sites). Amendment on the number of marine protected areas to 48 (https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/marine-protected-areas)”.</i></p> <p><i>The draft Marine Plan for Northern Ireland has been added to the list of proposed NI and UK plans considered in the cumulative assessment for the transboundary environment.</i></p>	<p>Clarifications and Updates to the Policy Plan Programme Review Appendix C and the SEA Environmental Report section 4.</p> <p>Amendment to the Cumulative Assessment in SEA Environmental Report Section 8 to include additional plans/legislation recommended.</p>

Key issues/themes raised	SEA response	Summary of action taken
<p>that this “would also be an issue for consideration in the review and update of the Ireland’s second National Waste Sludge Management Plan”.</p> <p>DAERA’s submission highlighted a number of items within the SEA that they welcomed and also included a number of items that they recommended to be considered in the SEA. DAERA welcomed the inclusion marine policy documents, but also DAERA recommended Uisce Éireann “reference the draft Marine Plan for Northern Ireland in the list of proposed NI and UK plans in the cumulative assessment for the transboundary environment”.</p> <p>They stated that the “SEA Report has largely been accomplished in a comprehensive manner as the baseline information and effects on the marine environment have been considered and drawn out in a transparent manner within the assessment. The transboundary assessment is particularly welcomed”.</p> <p>The submission by the Historic Environment Division “reiterates the suggestion that the Cultural Heritage objective outlined in Table 6.1 is amended to better align with NI strategic policy and guidance¹ as follows: ‘Protect, conserve and enhance cultural heritage assets; their condition, settings and access - including for designated sites and, undesignated heritage and archaeological sites of interest related to provision of water and wastewater services.’”</p> <p>The HED also notes “the potential interrelationships between cultural heritage and health & wellbeing particularly in the context of this plan and suggests that Table 5.3 is updated</p>	<p><i>The Cultural Heritage objective outlined in Table 6.1 is amended to ‘Protect, conserve and enhance cultural heritage assets; their condition, settings and access including for designated sites and, undesignated heritage and archaeological sites of interest related to provision of water and wastewater services. There are no changes to the assessments undertaken against the objective.</i></p> <p><i>The potential interrelationships between cultural heritage and health & wellbeing are included in the table 5.3 highlighting key interrelated topics.</i></p>	
IFI Comments on the WSSP 2050 Actions		
Inland Fisheries Institute (IFI)		
<p>IFI comments identified key works relating to the Environmental Mitigation Actions and the WSSP 2050 Action comments (see Consultation Report)</p>	<p><i>SEA Environment Action Plan Table 9.1 actions have been amended to reflect where plan amendments have been made responding to comments on the UÉ’s Strategic Objectives, Aims and Actions where relevant to the SEA actions.</i></p> <p><i>Many of the Environmental Mitigation Actions and WSSP Actions are recognised to be cross linked so the</i></p>	<p>Clarifications to the plan and on action links to the EAP Table 9.1 where relevant</p>

Key issues/themes raised	SEA response	Summary of action taken
	<i>key action relevant for the EAP is identified in the EAP table 9.1.</i>	
Collaboration and Abstraction consultation		
An Taisce		
<p>An Taisce noted that “with regard to securing SDG 12 Responsible consumption and production, in the SEA Environmental Report, we would encourage a commitment to greater collaboration with the EPA and other stakeholders in monitoring unregulated abstractions. In particular, the cumulative impacts of lower level, unregulated abstractions throughout the country, those which are not above the licencing/registration thresholds stipulated in the Water Environment (Abstractions and Associated Impoundments) Act⁴ are in urgent need of greater monitoring and oversight to assess the potential environmental impacts, particularly in cumulation with licenced abstractions.</p> <p>An Taisce also noted “Uisce Éireann’s statutory obligations under Part 6 of the Abstractions Act with regard to carrying out abstractions, particularly: 62. (1) Irish Water shall, not less than 42 days before the date on which it proposes to commence carrying out a public abstraction, give notice of the proposal in accordance with this section.</p> <p>They noted that this “ensures maximum transparency regarding abstraction needs and quantities and allows for effective monitoring on water levels in the targeted water body which is important for securing the objective of the Water Framework Directive for all water bodies to achieve good status by 2027”. Furthermore, they noted that it “would assist in achieving Action 3.3: Environmentally sustainable water supplies – Ensure sustainable abstractions and manage water treatment residuals”.</p>	<p><i>Uisce Éireann note that information on unregulated abstractions outside UE responsibility is held by EPA and not available directly to UE and is outside its direct responsibility. Collaboration with the EPA would be expected as part of any abstraction licensing process to consider potential for combined effects with unregulated abstractions.</i></p> <p><i>Recognition of Uisce Éireann’s statutory obligations under Part 6 of the Abstractions Act with regard to carrying out abstractions, particularly: 62 and notification and information provision requirements in relation to proposals to commence carrying out a public abstraction is included in Plan Action 3.8 and is part of our compliance commitments.</i></p>	Clarification
Riparian Health		
Individual stakeholder		

Key issues/themes raised	SEA response	Summary of action taken
A stakeholder commented that “the mitigations and impacts are understated and not explored in any detail for any of the items such riparian health etc.” They also noted that “it does not seem sensible that the standard response is that we will deal with it in another plan”.	<i>The WSSP 2050 is a high level of plan which provides direction for implementing plans which identify specific project and programme options to take forward in specific locations. The approach taken to identify actions for these plans is considered appropriate and is also accepted by the environmental authorities. Aspects such as riparian health would be covered by the commitments to meeting SEA objectives on water environment and biodiversity.</i>	Clarification
Protection of Shellfish Waters		
Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM)		
<p>Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) noted that “in response to consultation comment no.33 (Appendix C), BIM feel the response should be extended to potential impacts of water quality deterioration on Shellfish waters”. In response to consultation comment no.34, BIM noted that food security is addressed from an agricultural perspective but advised that “it also needs to be explicitly referenced to the impacts on aquaculture production”. In response to consultation comment no.36, within the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report, BIM welcomed the “inclusion and reference to National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development 2030 (DAFM 2023)”. They also welcomed “under SEA topics of “Fisheries” that shellfish waters have been included within the strategic environmental objectives and that WWDA Shellfish Water requirements compliance been indicated as a SEA Target”. BIM noted that “Appendix D did not include a list of Shellfish waters as requested and that this be rectified”.</p> <p>BIM welcomed that “under the types of impacts that could give rise to significant effects on the environment within discharge of treated wastewater and stormwater and untreated discharges, reference to “fisheries impacts including on Shellfish Waters Protected Areas and associated users and livelihoods” has been included”. However, BIM noted “in the response (Appendix C, p 83 responses) to fisheries and aquaculture that UE commit to meeting wastewater treatment standards..”. And also note that the integration of the Shellfish Waters Directive into the WFD</p>	<p><i>In response to the above, Appendix C has been amended to reflect Bord Iascaigh Mhara consultation comment no.33 on the potential impacts of water quality deterioration on Shellfish” We also note that addressing water quality impacts on Shellfish Waters are part of our commitment to meeting water quality objectives as set out in the WSSP 2050 under Objective 3.</i></p> <p><i>BIM’s comment on SEA Environmental Appendix C, on food security is addressed has been amended to also explicitly reference the impacts on aquaculture production.</i></p> <p><i>A list of the Shellfish Waters has been added as Appendix E and reference in the Appendix C comment has been amended from Appendix D to Appendix E.</i></p> <p><i>Response to Appendix C, p 83 section on Shellfish Waters recognises the integration of Shellfish Waters Directive into the WFD and that this remains at the centre of protection of water quality within Shellfish</i></p>	Clarification and Updates

Key issues/themes raised	SEA response	Summary of action taken
<p>remains at the centre of protection of water quality within Shellfish production areas.</p> <p>As part of the SEA assessment of the WSSP 2050 under Strategic Objective 3 (Protect and Restore our Environment) Action 3.5 commentary states “UÉ will also collaborate with stakeholders to develop and implement a monitoring programme to understand the water quality risks to bathing waters and shellfish habitats.” BIM suggested that “this can be strengthened by going beyond understanding to explicitly state that water quality risks to bathing waters and shellfish habitats are actively mitigated as part of RBMPs and Pollution Prevention Reduction Plans (PPRPs)”. They also recommended that “the protection of shellfish waters should be specifically included within the Strategic Objective 3 actions under Aim 7 – Protecting our water environment”. Finally, BIM welcomed “the inclusion of monitoring of shellfish related environmental impacts from wastewater discharges as part of the SEA monitoring”.</p>	<p><i>production areas. The requirements for the assessment of the impacts of wastewater discharges on specific designated Shellfish Waters are also noted.</i></p> <p><i>SEA assessment for Strategic Objective 3 (Protect and Restore our Environment) Action 3.5 commentary states “UÉ will also collaborate with stakeholders to develop and implement a monitoring programme to understand the water quality risks to bathing waters and shellfish waters.” The SEA assessment has been amended to add that water quality risks to bathing waters and shellfish habitats are actively mitigated as part of RBMPs and Pollution Prevention Reduction Plans (PPRP). The protection of shellfish waters is included within the Strategic Objective 3 actions under Aim 7 –Protecting our water environment”</i></p> <p><i>We also note that the 3rd RBMP has been published as the Water Action Plan 2024 and references to this and other recently published plans are included in the updates to the SEA Environmental Report.</i></p>	
Clarification and strengthening Plan/environmental assessment links		
EPA		
<p>In regard to the integration of environmental considerations into the Plan, EPA acknowledged that “environmental considerations are reflected in the policy objectives for the Plan” and welcomed “the commitments associated with mitigation of potential adverse effects, ongoing environmental monitoring, and stakeholder engagement”. They stated that “integrating environmental considerations is essential to ensure the Plan successfully advances the provision of the necessary water services over the plan period, while also protecting and improving water quality, biodiversity, and considers wider environmental aspects, such as landscape sensitivity”. They recommended that “the Plan should reflect and incorporate the recommendations and mitigation measures identified in the</p>	<p>We note that <i>SEA Environmental Report Tables 7.17 to 7.20 are four tables providing a summary of the SEA assessment of the WSSP 2050 covering each WSSP aim and action under the four WSSP Strategic Objectives. These include identifying potential positive and mixed negative and positive effects. We have provided a summary of the tables in the SEA NTS. The Plan has been updated to refer to the SEA assessment in section 9.3.</i></p>	<p>Clarification and additional strengthening commitment in the WSSP 2050 to mitigation and monitoring and supporting cross references with the SEA Environmental Report and SEA Statement.</p>

Key issues/themes raised	SEA response	Summary of action taken
<p>SEA Environmental Report and the Appropriate Assessment (AA) Natura Impact Statement”. They also advised that “it should also include a clear commitment to implement these recommendations and mitigation measures. Including this as a table within the plan would assist with better integration between the plan making and SEA processes and will help provide for better overall positive environmental outcomes”. The EPA noted that the Plan acknowledges and refers to the proposed SEA and AA recommendations, but recommended “including a table in the Plan, showing how these recommendations are reflected in the Plan”.</p> <p>The EPA acknowledged “the comprehensive approach taken to considering alternatives in the SEA set out in chapter 7 of the SEA environmental report” and welcomed “that the EPA guidance on developing and accessing alternatives was considered”. They suggested that “Table 7.19 SEA assessment of the WSSP 2050 Strategic Objective 3 Actions mitigations should be included in the Plan”. They also refer to Table 8.1 these and Objective 1 and recommend that “where the SEA identifies potential for negative or uncertain effects, including cumulative effects, the Plan should ensure that appropriate measures are provided to monitor for these, and provide the relevant mitigation measures where and when necessary”.</p> <p>EPA’s comments on the SEA noted with regards to Chapter 9 of the SEA, the EPA recommended that “Uisce Éireann tabulate the various commitments of the Plan (4 Strategic objectives, 14 aims and 35 actions) and compares these against the Strategic Environmental Objectives set out in Chapter 6 of the SEA: Environmental Report”. They commented that “this would help set the context for the assessments in chapters 7 and 8”. In reference to Table 9.1 Environmental Mitigation Action Plan, the EPA suggested that “further information could be provided on which measures or actions of the Plan require specific mitigation measures to be introduced. This information would be useful to inform environmental assessments of projects arising out of the Plan and in monitoring how effective the Plan is at, implementing the necessary mitigation measures”.</p> <p>In regards Mitigation and monitoring consideration the EPA also recommended that “the Monitoring Framework set out in Table 9.2 Draft Monitoring Plan: indicators and targets should be further developed in consultation with the relevant statutory environmental authorities”. They noted that the “monitoring programme should be flexible to consider other ongoing national level monitoring programmes, such as those associated with the Draft Third River Basin</p>	<p><i>SEA ER Table 8.1 identifies potential for negative or uncertain effects, including cumulative effects. The SEA ER identifies the mitigation measures to address and monitor these in section 9 and tables 9.1 and 9.2 and these are committed to in the Plan in section 9.3.</i></p> <p><i>In relation to the EPA’s comments on the SEA with regards to Chapter 9 of the SEA, recommending that Uisce Éireann tabulate the various commitments of the Plan (4 Strategic objectives, 14 aims and 35 actions) and compares these against the Strategic Environmental Objectives set out in Chapter 6 of the SEA: Environmental Report, we note that this has already been provided in Tables 7.17 to 7.20 which set out the assessment against each of the 35 actions, grouped by the 14 aims and 4 strategic objectives. The tables also identify the mitigation measures and actions that are then covered further in section 7 on the plan assessment and section 8 on the cumulative assessment and then the action specific mitigation measures that are summarized in section 9 table 9.1 EMAP. To support the cross referencing and to address the EPA’s recommendation Table 9.1 EMAP r references have also been added to table 7.17 -7.20</i></p> <p><i>In reference to EPA comments on Table 9.1 Environmental Mitigation Action Plan that further information could be provided on which measures or actions of the Plan require specific mitigation measures to be introduced we note that the table 9.1 already identifies the relevant plan actions for each mitigation measure. We have added further clarification for the cross referencing with the plan actions and for monitoring implementation to further inform environmental assessments of projects arising out of the Plan and in monitoring how effective the</i></p>	

Key issues/themes raised	SEA response	Summary of action taken
<p>Management Plan and the EPA's State of the Environment for example" and that "the environmental monitoring should be linked with Plan Implementation monitoring and reporting". The EPA also commented that "it would be useful to include information on any relevant thresholds for when unforeseen adverse environmental effects would trigger appropriate remedial action where required". They recommended that "the outcome of monitoring should be reviewed at the 5 yearly review period. This can help inform future reviews of the Plan and any additional mitigation or monitoring requirements that may be necessary".</p> <p>The further stated that "the monitoring programme should set out the various data sources, monitoring frequencies and responsibilities. If the monitoring identifies adverse impacts during the implementation of the Plan, it should be ensured that suitable, effective and timely remedial action is taken. Monitoring of both positive and negative effects should be considered". They also commented that "the scope of any transboundary related monitoring and datasets should be developed in consultation with the relevant Northern Ireland authorities, where appropriate and relevant".</p> <p>In regards future modifications to the Plan, the EPA requested that "any future amendments to the Plan should be screened for likely significant effects, using the same method of assessment applied in the "environmental assessment" of the Plan".</p> <p>The EPA also made standard recommendations on the requirements for the SEA process.</p>	<p><i>Plan is at, implementing the necessary mitigation measures.</i></p> <p><i>In relation to the EPA comment that the Draft Monitoring Plan: indicators and targets should be further developed in consultation with the relevant statutory environmental authorities, we are committed to taking on board comments through the current consultation process in the final Monitoring Plan to be included in the SEA Statement which will be committed to and published alongside the adopted Plan.</i></p> <p><i>We will undertake consultation on delivering the monitoring identified through the Tier 2 plans with the key relevant stakeholders, including the EPA. These Tier 2 plans include further development to the Monitoring Plans' indicators and targets and the consultation with stakeholders will be part of any SEA process applied and will inform monitoring of the WSSP and 5 year review.</i></p> <p><i>We have explicitly linked environmental monitoring with Plan Implementation monitoring and reporting – see section 9 of the SEA and the Plan with reporting commitments identified to support the Plan on a 5 yearly basis.</i></p> <p><i>The commitment provided in section 9 of both the SEA and the Plan is for the outcome of monitoring should be reviewed at the 5 yearly review period to help inform future reviews of the Plan and any additional mitigation or monitoring requirements that may be necessary. This is already part of the Plan.</i></p>	

4.8 SEA Summary for the WSSP 2050

4.8.1 SEA Summary for the WSSP 2050

For some actions (Actions 3.3, 3.7, 4.3 and 4.6) presented in the SEA Environmental Report, Alternative 1, the BAU, has been incorporated into the WSSP 2050. This reflected areas where the current processes or plans had already been developed to meet and go beyond requirements with the aim to meet future pressures and challenges. For most actions, Alternative 2 BAU+ was identified as the proposed approach for the WSSP 2050 where opportunity to enhance and address future challenges had been identified. In some cases, Alternative 2 BAU+ was also largely based on current process or plans such as for Action 1.4 implementation of the NWRP which is now part of the BAU but additional supporting elements had been identified for the BAU+.

For some actions, scope for going further to support plan and SEA objectives was identified in Alternatives 3 and 4 but were not included as part of the WSSP 2050 due to either being outside current Uisce Éireann scope of activities, based on technology not yet available or feasible to apply or needing other priority actions to be undertaken as a first next step. This followed extensive iteration to develop the WSSP 2050 actions to provide a balance of ambition in achieving the Plan's strategic objectives and supporting SEA objectives while being pragmatic and deliverable within the scope of Uisce Éireann's responsibilities for water and wastewater services and access to resources.

The SEA assessment of the WSSP 2050 for each action is summarised in Chapters 7 and 8 of SEA Environmental Report, including identification of lower tier plans and interventions and action specific mitigation recommendations.

4.9 AA Summary for the WSSP 2050

The NIS section 8 concluded that mitigation measures presented in the AA are proposed to ensure that the WSSP 2050 will have no adverse effects on any European Site(s) either alone or in-combination with other plans and programmes.

For 18 actions it was concluded that there would be no conceivable effects on European Sites and no actions were identified as resulting in adverse effects. However, 15 actions were associated with the production of lower tier plans, the development of interventions, or the identification of a need for interventions, and it was conceivable that such lower tier plans/interventions could result in effects on sites and, as a result, the need for a requirement to comply with the Habitats Regulations was identified as mitigation i.e. undergo AA Screening/AA where identified and appropriate. Two actions (1.4 and 4.3) were identified where mitigation measures were already in place to prevent adverse effects. Seven actions were also identified where it was concluded that beneficial effects on European Sites were likely, although outcomes of three of these actions could also conceivably result in adverse effects on European sites.

Mitigation measures identified to address actions where adverse effects were conceivable were:

- Lower tier plans and/or interventions to be required to comply with the Habitats Regulations and undergo AA where necessary.
- Existing mitigation measures within the NWRP and NWSMP should be adhered to.

The conclusion of the NIS for the WSSP 2050 is that the WSSP will have no adverse effects on any European Site(s), either alone or in-combination with other plans and programmes.

This conclusion does not remove the need for any other plans, strategies or projects, or permissions associated with, or arising from the WSSP 2050 to be subject to Screening for AA/AA where appropriate. Furthermore, any project(s) etc. arising from the implementation of the WSSP 2050 will be required to

conform to the mitigation measures and key principles for protecting European Sites identified within this NIS.

4.10 Transboundary Effects for the WSSP 2050

There are considered to be potential for transboundary impacts from the implementation of the WSSP 2050. For the WSSP 2050 specific proposals and locations of actions are not known. The potential for significant transboundary effects for each action in terms of whether positive, or negative or mixed is therefore considered based on types of action and potential pathways for an effect to occur are identified and provided in Appendix D to SEA Environmental Report. Any lower tier plans that have already assessed or will assess transboundary effects are also highlighted and where appropriate additional mitigation is recommended for this high-level plan.

4.11 Summary of SEA assessment of considering cumulative effects

Overall potential for cumulative effects within the WSSP 2050 are largely positive and supportive of SEA objectives but there is potential for combined mixed positive and negative effects. These can be addressed through both cross cutting Actions that are included in the WSSP2050 and also the mitigation measures identified in the SEA. These are summarised in Table 5.1 and include the implementation of lower tier plans together with the process of monitoring and feedback into future WSSP iterations and SEA as described in section 5.

5 Mitigation and Monitoring Plans

This Section sets out the recommended actions for mitigation and enhancement within an Environmental Action Plan (EAP) and provides a Draft Monitoring Plan which is required to meet SEA regulations. The approach takes account of EPA SEA monitoring guidance and comments at the scoping stage.

5.1 Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures identified aim to support beneficial effects in terms of meeting SEA objectives and to avoid the risk of significant adverse effects. The assessment also assumes the application of good practice mitigation measures.

5.2 Environmental Action Plan

The Environmental Action Plan (EAP) set out in **Table 5-1** summarises the actions and areas of further study identified in the SEA Environmental Report. The EAP provides a basis for tracking recommendations from the SEA during the WSSP implementation.

The EAP focuses on two aspects, the first being the options and approach appraisal process and the second is how environmental considerations are integrated with other supporting areas.

Table 5-1 Environmental Mitigation Action Plan

Ref no.	Recommended Action for Mitigation/Further Study	Progress Monitoring Not started N In progress P Completed C
EAP1	Ensure mitigation hierarchy, enhancement aims and sustainability targets are included in approaches for developing lower tier plans (Actions 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.3)	
EAP2	Source protection - embed processes to consider environmental baseline and quality objectives in assessment of risk to sources and assets. Develop guidance and processes for identifying risk solutions, consider relevant stakeholder engagement, wider catchment management measures and nature-based solutions where appropriate (Actions 1.1, 1.3, 1.7 and 3.4)	
EAP3	Contingency planning - develop procedures to ensure drought and contingency planning (including for extreme weather events, flood risk and freeze thaw) and operation resilience measures take account of environmental constraints and objectives. Implementation and prioritisation of Site Spill risk assessments and incident response planning. (Actions 1,4 1.5, 1.6, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.6),	
EAP 4	Monitoring and review of lower tier plans- implementation progress and environmental effects including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NWRP (including WTP Residuals Strategy) EAP/monitor plan implementation (Action 1.4) • IWSMP monitoring plan for updated plan (once developed) (Action 4.3) • Wastewater framework monitoring plan (once developed) Action 3.1) 	

Ref no.	Recommended Action for Mitigation/Further Study	Progress Monitoring Not started N In progress P Completed C
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated Urban Wastewater Management Plans (once developed) (Action 3.2) 	
EAP 5	As part of assessment of suitability for amenity use consider environmental and social impacts including European sites, biodiversity, transboundary effects, cultural heritage and landscape impacts (Action 2.5)	
EAP 6	Consider strengthening collaboration and analysis on land use and economic planning to encourage balanced growth avoiding either unsustainable water and wastewater provision or additional cost and infrastructure requirements to address this, including Water Conservation (Action 1.7) and Sustainable Development (Action 2.6 & 2.7)	
EAP 7	Catchment Management and Nature Based solutions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop guidance and processes to consider relevant stakeholder engagement, wider catchment management measures and nature-based solutions where appropriate (Action 3.8) Potential link to Biodiversity Net Gain (Action 3.7) 	
EAP 8	Net Zero Road Map - ensure Net Zero road map actions are also linked across all investment plans, programmes and projects (Action 4.1)	
EAP 9	Development of environmental valuation/quantification approaches to support existing qualitative assessments, for example, natural capital and ecosystems services and carbon calculation tools and use of automated and map based digital tools to support systems based approaches and actions decision making (Action 4.6 & 4.9) and potentially supporting Biodiversity Net Gain (Action 3.7) and Nature Based Solutions (Action 3.8) and Net Zero (Action 4.1).	
EAP 10	Transboundary- consideration of potential for additional collaboration on innovation and research with relevant Northern Ireland bodies, especially in relation to shared challenges, monitoring and sharing data sets (Action 4.7)	
EAP 11	Adaptive planning - use information generated from monitoring plan reporting and the review and updating process for the WSSP 2050 and lower tier plans to support adaptive planning.	

5.3 Monitoring Plan

The monitoring plan covers the integration of environmental and sustainability considerations throughout implementation of the WSSP 2050. As this plan is implemented through investment or cross cutting subject plans more detailed monitoring actions are included in those plans and are not repeated here.

The Monitoring Plan provided in **Table 5-2** will be updated following consultation on this Environmental Report. It will form part of the SEA statement to be published with the Final WSSP 2050.

Monitoring Plans provide a means to demonstrate the effectiveness of the adopted plan/programme approach using environmental and sustainability objectives, targets and indicators. They also permit the early identification of emerging significant effects to enable corrective actions to be taken during Plan implementation. Monitoring can also identify how a plan is supporting positive outcomes and contributing to meeting its objectives.

Recent EPA Guidance on SEA Statements and Monitoring (EPA, 2023b) covering monitoring plans identifies that monitoring can help evaluate whether SEA is fulfilling its core objective of providing for a high level of protection of the environment and the promotion of sustainable development (Article 1 of the SEA Directive) and notes the following benefits:

- Potential to demonstrate the effects of implementing a plan/programme - the plan's environmental performance.
- Identifying knowledge gaps and collecting new data over time and thereby reduce uncertainties in the assessment – so that data gaps can be addressed.
- Measuring indicators over time can identify long-term positive or negative changes and trends in the environment.
- Identifying unforeseen effects or impacts that may not have been identified during the assessment.
- Identify the need for additional mitigation measures or for appropriate remedial action to be undertaken where issues are identified, as well as to inform project level assessments.
- Providing the basis to inform the review and preparation of subsequent iterations of plans/programmes.
- Supporting streamlining of future SEA processes by changing the starting point in the baseline.

The EPA guidance recommendations for monitoring include that:

- Actions are appropriately targeted and focused and relevant to the potential significant effects.
- Makes use of any existing monitoring to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort.
- Environmental monitoring is integrated into the plan implementation monitoring and review process.
- Regular reporting on monitoring and implementation is provided.

Future plan iterations take account of monitoring findings.

The SEA monitoring is integrated into the WSSP 2050's overall monitoring framework to ensure that environmental considerations are evaluated alongside other key performance measures. This process will involve assessing the environmental impacts of the plan's implementation, with a focus on the sustainability of water services and the protection of ecosystems, shellfish, and bathing waters from wastewater discharges. The findings from SEA monitoring will contribute to the five-yearly reviews of the WSSP, as well as the annual sustainability reporting obligations under the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) reported in the Annual Report. This will ensure that the plan remains responsive to environmental legislation and our commitment to environmental protection and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The WSSP will undergo regular reviews, at least every five years, as required by legislation. These reviews will allow adaptation to changing circumstances and evolving needs. Updates to the WSSP will be informed by changes in legislation and government policy related to water services and better information, especially on asset performance, demographics, and climate change. The SEA monitoring plan reporting will feed into this process on environmental performance.

The five-yearly assessment will be used to check that progress is being made towards meeting the WSSP 2050 objectives through implementation. If the five-yearly assessment finds that the WSSP 2050 objectives may not be achieved and/or a new approach is needed to meet secure, safe and reliable water and wastewater services for Ireland, actions in the strategy will be updated as needed.

SEA monitoring against SEA targets will also inform the identification of changes to the plan where remedial action is identified. The Monitoring Plan will also be reviewed and updated to ensure flexibility to meet changing requirements and data availability.

When a change to the WSSP 2050 is needed, this will be evaluated for environmental impact according to SEA and AA regulations. Consultations with the EPA and government departments are part of this process, as mandated by EU regulations. If the change is deemed to have a significant environmental impact, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) will be conducted. Additionally, an Appropriate Assessment (AA) will be performed if the change could significantly affect European sites, unless essential for site management and significant effects can be scientifically ruled out.

Table 5-2 Draft Monitoring plan: indicators and targets

SEA Topics	Strategic Environmental Objectives	SEA Indicators	SEA Targets	Source information/ organisation	Reporting and timescale
Cross topics	<i>All objectives</i>	Progress implementing WSSP 2050 actions, SEA EAP and monitoring plan	See below	See below	<p>Uisce Éireann</p> <p>Summary of performance against SEA indicators /targets to be reported in the WSSP 2050 5 year review.</p> <p>Tier 2 Plans - NWRP and National Wastewater Framework and related plans and other Tier 2 plan reviews and monitoring reporting</p>
Water Environment	<i>Water quality and quantity</i> Restore and improve rivers, lakes, transitional and coastal waters, and groundwater to meet, WFD, MSFD and RBMP objectives where possible, and prevent status deterioration, in relation to the provision of water and wastewater services.	<p>River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) Significant Pressures - Categories Urban Wastewater, Abstraction & Water Treatment</p> <p>Number of Site Spill risk assessments completed for existing assets for sensitive sites</p>	<p>Implementation of Measures identified for Uisce Éireann in the RBMP and sectoral action plans "</p> <p>Implementation of Site Spill risk assessments for existing assets for all sensitive sites</p>	<p>Significant pressures lists in the EPA WFD Application on EDEN</p> <p>EPA WFD https://gis.epa.ie/GetData/Download</p> <p>DWSPs prepared by Uisce Éireann</p> <p>Sectoral action plans within the 46 Catchment Management Plans (sub plans of the RBMP, yet to be developed)</p>	<p>Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) WFD Application - annual reports against KPIs (yet to be developed)</p> <p>DWSP related reporting to EPA</p>

SEA Topics	Strategic Environmental Objectives	SEA Indicators	SEA Targets	Source information/ organisation	Reporting and timescale
	<i>Flood risk</i> Protect and, where possible, reduce risk from flooding as a result of provision of water and wastewater services	See Tier 2/3 Plans programmes & projects (location specific information) National Water Resources Plan (NWRP) & National Wastewater Strategy Framework	See Tier 2/3 Plans programmes & projects (location specific information) NWRP & National Wastewater Strategy Framework Implementation (to be confirmed)	Uisce Éireann	See Uisce Éireann Tier 2/3 Plans programmes & projects (location specific information) NWRP & National Wastewater Strategy Framework Monitoring reporting – to be confirmed
Population, Economy, and Tourism and Recreation (including angling)	Protect and support sustainable economic and population growth, including housing provision and recreation, through the provision of reliable good quality water supply and wastewater services.	Performance assessment metrics reported to CRU NWRP & National Wastewater Strategy Framework	Performance assessment metric targets Implementation of NWRP & National Wastewater Strategy Framework (to be confirmed)	Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) performance assessment report EPA annual report Drinking Water Quality in Public Supplies EPA annual report Urban Wastewater	CRU performance assessment report EPA annual Drinking Water Quality in Public Supplies report EPA annual Urban Wastewater report NWRP & National Wastewater Strategy Framework Monitoring reporting (to be confirmed)
Health and Wellbeing	Improve access to reliable good quality water supply and to wastewater services including to protect bathing waters	Drinking water and wastewater regulation compliance NWRP & National Wastewater Strategy Framework	Compliance with Drinking Water & wastewater regulations WWDA Bathing waters requirements compliance	EPA Remedial Action List Uisce Éireann WWDA Annual Environmental report	CRU Performance Assessment Report WWDA Annual Environmental Reports EPA Annual drinking water report

SEA Topics	Strategic Environmental Objectives	SEA Indicators	SEA Targets	Source information/ organisation	Reporting and timescale
		Wastewater Discharge Authorisation (WWDA) Bathing water requirements		Uisce Éireann Drinking water & wastewater annual returns Uisce Éireann Sectoral action plans within the 46 Catchment management plans.	EPA Annual urban wastewater treatment report EPA WFD Application - annual reports against KPIs (yet to be developed)
Climate Change	<i>Climate change mitigation</i> Minimise contributions to greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency and measures contributing to meeting carbon reduction targets, related to the provision of water and wastewater services.	CSRD metrics CRU performance assessment metrics	Net zero carbon ambition for 2040 CSRD targets CRU Performance metric targets	CRU Performance assessment report Uisce Éireann - Annual report: CSRD metrics	Uisce Éireann - Annual Report - Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) metric reporting (to be confirmed) Uisce Éireann Annual report CRU- Performance assessment report
	<i>Climate change adaptation</i> Promote measures supportive of climate change resilience for the environment and resilience for the provision of water and wastewater services.	NWRP/ National Wastewater Strategy Framework CSRD metrics (to be confirmed) CRU performance assessment metrics	NWRP & National Wastewater Strategy Framework (to be confirmed) CSRD targets CRU Performance Targets	CRU Performance assessment report Uisce Éireann Annual report: CSRD metrics	NWRP & National Wastewater Strategy (to be confirmed)
Biodiversity	Protect and enhance terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity and habitat	Biodiversity net gain metrics	Biodiversity net gain targets	Uisce Éireann monitoring for BAP	Uisce Éireann Annual Report and-CSRD metrics (to be confirmed)

SEA Topics	Strategic Environmental Objectives	SEA Indicators	SEA Targets	Source information/ organisation	Reporting and timescale
	connectivity; particularly European sites and national sites (including proposed and candidate sites), and for protected species and the achievement of national and Uisce Éireann Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) commitments, related to the provision of water and wastewater services.	CSRD metrics (to be confirmed) Biodiversity conservation incorporated into decision making	Compliance with the requirements for biodiversity conservation under Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2023	Uisce Éireann Annual Report	
Fisheries	Protect marine and freshwater fisheries including shellfish waters, related livelihoods and safety for human consumption and support measures contributing to restoring or improving fisheries and fish/eel passage in relation to provision of water and wastewater services.	Wastewater Discharge Authorisation (WWDA) Shellfish water requirements RBMP Significant Pressures - Categories Urban Wastewater, Abstraction & Water Treatment	(WWDA Shellfish Water requirements compliance Implementation of Measures identified for Uisce Éireann in the RBMP and sectoral action plans	Uisce Éireann WWDA Annual environmental Reports Significant pressures lists in the EPA WFD Application on EDEN EPA WFD https://gis.epa.ie/GetData/Download Sectoral action plans within the 46 Catchment Management Plans (sub plans of the RBMP, yet to be developed)	Uisce Éireann WWDA Annual Environmental Reports EPA Urban wastewater annual report EPA WFD app annual reports against KPIs (yet to be developed)
Material Assets	<i>Resource use and waste management</i>	CSRD metrics (in development)	CSRD targets	Uisce Éireann CSRD Metrics (to be confirmed)	Uisce Éireann Annual Report

SEA Topics	Strategic Environmental Objectives	SEA Indicators	SEA Targets	Source information/ organisation	Reporting and timescale
	Seek to apply circular economy principles across lifecycle decision making for resources and wastes including minimising resource use and waste generation from provision of water and wastewater services including management of sludge and residuals.				CSRD metric reporting (to be confirmed)
	<i>Asset use</i> Minimise impacts on other material assets and infrastructure, optimise use of existing assets and support capacity and upgrades of existing sites and assets in relation to provision of water and wastewater services.	Good practise Asset Management	ISO 55000 compliance	Certification of approval	Certification of approval Uisce Éireann Annual Report (to be confirmed)
Landscape, Townscape and Seascape	Protect and, where possible, contribute to enhancing designated and valued landscapes, townscapes and seascapes and visual amenity in relation to the provision of water and wastewater services.	See Tier 2/3 Plans programmes & projects (location specific information)	See Tier 2/3 Plans programmes & projects (location specific information)	Uisce Éireann	See Tier 2/3 Plans programmes & projects (location specific information)
Cultural Heritage –	Protect cultural heritage assets in terms of their	See Tier 2/3 Plans programmes & projects	See Tier 2/3 Plans programmes & projects	Uisce Éireann	See Tier 2/3 Plans programmes & projects

SEA Topics	Strategic Environmental Objectives	SEA Indicators	SEA Targets	Source information/ organisation	Reporting and timescale
Archaeological and Architectural	condition, settings or access - including for designated sites, undesignated heritage and archaeological interest (including terrestrial and underwater heritage) related to the provision of water and wastewater services.	(location specific information)	(location specific information)		(location specific information)
Geology and Soils	Protect soils and geological heritage sites and contribute towards improved management of soil resources related to the provision of water and wastewater services.	See Tier 2/3 Plans programmes & projects (location specific information)	See Tier 2/3 Plans programmes & projects (location specific information)	Uisce Éireann	See Tier 2/3 Plans programmes & projects (location specific information)
Air Quality	Improve performance on odour emissions, where possible, in relation to the provision of wastewater services.	No. of upgraded wastewater treatment and new plants meeting odour standards See Tier 2/3 Plans programmes & projects (location specific information)	Wastewater treatment measures and new plants meeting required odour standards See Tier 2/3 Plans programmes & projects (location specific information)	Uisce Éireann reporting requirements under SI No. 787 2005 See Tier 2/3 Plans programmes & projects (location specific information)	Uisce Éireann annual submission as required by SI. No. 787 of 2005 See Tier 2/3 Plans programmes & projects (location specific information)

6 Next Steps

SEA requirements and consultation comments have been taken into account in finalising the WSSP 2050. Consultation responses and how the SEA has been taken into account are reported in this SEA Statement published with the final WSSP 2050. Responses to the consultation are also reported in the Post Consultation Report. In addition, the SEA Environmental Report has been updated to take account of amendments to the WSSP 2050 and comments received through the consultation process.

This SEA Statement is published with the final adopted WSSP and the updated SEA Environmental report (including the appendices), along with the AA determination and all the documents are available online at the following website: www.water.ie/wssp ,

The next steps in the process will be the implementation of the WSSP 2050 along with the lower tier plans identified and application of the Environmental Mitigation Action Plan

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