

Appropriate Assessment Conclusion Statement of the Wild Mayo Destination and Experience Development Plan



April 2026



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE WILD MAYO DEDP	2
3.0 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT PROCESS	4
3.1 Methodology	4
3.2 Stage 1 Screening for Appropriate Assessment.....	4
3.3 Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment:.....	5
3.4 Stage 3 and 4 of the AA Process	6
4.0 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE AA THE SEA PROCESSES	8
5.0 REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE PLAN IN LIGHT OF OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED	9
6.0 CONCLUSION.....	10
7.0 REFERENCES	11
APPENDIX A Natura Impact Report	

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 August 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora ("the Habitats Directive"), Part 5 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended¹ (S.I. No.477 of 2011) ("the Habitats Regulations") the relevant case law, established best practice and the Precautionary Principle, Fáilte Ireland, has undertaken an Appropriate Assessment of the Wild Mayo Destination and Experience Development Plan (hereafter referred to as the 'Wild Mayo DEDP' or the 'DEDP').

This document contains the Appropriate Assessment Conclusion Statement, which has been prepared by Roughan & O'Donovan on behalf of Fáilte Ireland. This Conclusion Statement has been prepared in accordance with *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidance for Planning Authorities. Published 2009, revised 2010* (DEHLG, 2010). In accordance with this guidance this AA Conclusion Statement includes the following:

1. A summary of how the findings of the AA were factored into the plan (refer to Section 3).
2. Reasons for choosing the plan as adopted, in light of other reasonable alternatives considered as part of the AA process (Refer to Section 5).
3. A declaration that the DEDP as adopted will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site or sites (Refer to Section 6).
4. A copy of the NIR (Refer to Appendix A).

This document should be read in conjunction with the DEDP and the NIR (Appendix A).

¹ Including inter alia S.I. 290 of 2013; SI 499 of 2013; SI 355 of 2015; the Planning, Heritage and Broadcasting (Amendment) Act 2021, Chapter 4; SI 293 of 2021.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE WILD MAYO DEDP

The Wild Mayo DEDP is a five-year sustainable tourism development plan for the North Mayo region that stretches from the Mullet Peninsula to Ballina and Foxford. It has been developed through a programme of desk research, on-site appraisals; and extensive consultation incorporating the views of the tourism industry, local communities, local government, state and regional agencies. The plan has been prepared within the context of the wider tourism and sustainability policy environment, and has given consideration to relevant national and international best practices.

It will underpin the anticipated growth in the value of tourism while being focused on maintaining the environmental, social, and cultural integrity of the region. The proposed actions are grounded in the principles and policies of sustainability and the VICE model, thereby ensuring that full consideration is given to a balanced and synergistic approach that delivers on four key pillars: the Visitor experience, Industry growth, Community benefit, and Environmental protection. The model applies to all aspects of tourism planning, destination management, and policy making.

The core objectives of the DEDP are:

- Align with the Regional Development Strategy objectives.
- Leverage existing attractions and create new experiences to encourage year-round exploration.
- Strengthen towns and villages – developing them as animated, well-serviced hubs for all travel modes.
- Celebrate environment and heritage – fostering appreciation for North Mayo's natural and cultural legacy, and championing sustainable and slow tourism models.
- Elevate the Gaeltacht – positioning it as a cornerstone of cultural heritage.
- Create strong tourism infrastructure and well serviced amenities around the abundant natural assets to meet the demands of visitor and community users.

The Target Outcomes of the DEDP are:

- Increased levels of domestic and international visitors across the region.
- Growth in accommodation offering.
- Investment in visitor attractions and activities growing the appeal of the destination in international and domestic markets.
- Active collaborative tourism networks growing the profile and appeal through cohesive Wild Mayo marketing.
- Growth in the number of food experiences on offer and in the availability of local produce on restaurant menus.
- Improved connectivity for international tourists from Ireland West Airport, Knock and other regional bases.
- Interpretive experiences bring the region's stories to life, fostering emotional connections and cultural appreciation.
- Celebrated and immersive Irish language experiences.
- North Mayo becomes recognised as a spectacular outdoors destination offering immersive wilderness and adventure for all.

- Agreed approach to sustainable tourism development embraced by our visitors, tourism industry and local community.

The key performance indicators (KPI's) of the DEDP are:

- Increase tourism revenue by 10% measured through Key Account Management (KAM) data and business surveys.
- Maintain visitor satisfaction at 91% as measured by the Destination Attitudes Survey (DAS).
- Achieve 10% growth in visitation to attractions and activity providers, measured through KAM data and business surveys.
- Contribute to maintaining or increasing Co. Mayo residents' positive perception of tourism delivering benefits for host communities, within the social and environmental capacity of the destination, measured through Tourism Approval Rating (TAR) scores.

A plan area for the DEDP is presented in Figure 2-1 below.

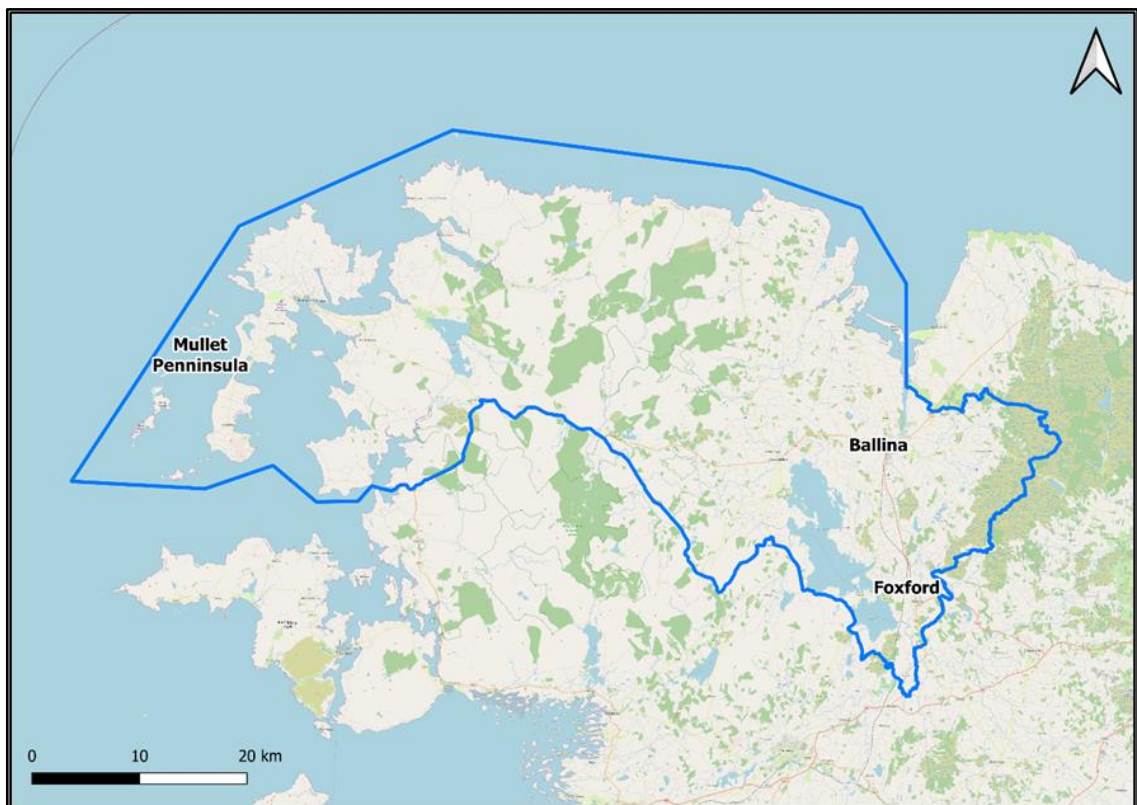


Figure 2-1 The plan area (outlined in blue) for the Wild Mayo DEDP.

3.0 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

3.1 Methodology

The following guidance documents informed the AA assessment methodology:

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

With regard to carrying out AA of Plans, EC (2018) states that “a distinction needs to be made with ‘plans’ which are in the nature of policy statements, i.e. policy documents which show the general political will or intention of a ministry or lower authority”. SNH (2015) expands on this: “Plans or parts of plans which are merely general policy statements, or which only show the general political will or intention of a public body, will not be likely to have a significant effect on a European site. However, it is a case-by-case decision as to whether a plan should be subject to appraisal, a critical test being whether it, or any part of it, would be likely to have a significant effect on a European site”. The Wild Mayo DEDP contains Strategic Objectives, Catalyst Projects and Enabler Projects.

Appropriate Assessment guidance (EC, 2002) promotes a four-stage process to completing AA. The four steps are summarised in the sections below as they relate to the development of the DEDP.

3.2 Stage 1 Screening for Appropriate Assessment

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

An AA Screening Report (January 2026) was prepared by ROD on behalf of Fáilte Ireland. The AA Screening Report concluded that in view of best scientific knowledge and the Conservation Objectives of the European Sites concerned, that the Draft DEDP, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have a significant effect on European sites, in view of their Conservation Objectives.

3.3 Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment:

Where the possibility of significant effects on one or more European site cannot be excluded, the process proceeds to Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment. This stage considers whether the plan, in this case the draft Wild Mayo DEDP, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, will adversely affect the integrity of one or more European site, and prescribes mitigation measures to avoid or reduce negative impacts.

3.3.1 Assessment and Preparation of Natura Impact Report of the Draft DEDP

To ensure that the AA was properly integrated into both the preparation of the Draft DEDP and the requirements of Article 3.2(b) the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive 2001/42/EC as transposed into Irish law which requires integration with the AA process, an NIR was prepared in relation to the Draft DEDP (January 2026). The Draft NIR on the Draft DEDP proposed mitigation measures and a conclusion based on the Draft DEDP.

It demonstrated that, in the absence of appropriate mitigation, the Wild Mayo DEDP, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, would adversely affect the integrity of European sites. In light of this finding, the Draft NIR prescribed appropriate mitigation to avoid or reduce such effects. The Draft NIR concluded that, given the full and proper implementation of the mitigation that the Wild Mayo DEDP, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not adversely affect the integrity any European site.

In-combination assessment

Given the strategic nature of the Draft DEDP and that the Catalyst Projects and Supporting Initiatives contained in the Draft DEDP do not contain specific locations, it is not possible to assess the Draft DEDP projects against specific locations relevant to Natura 2000 network. Therefore, the in-combination assessment has assessed the potential for in-combination effects with other, similar, strategic Plans.

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

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

Any future plans or projects that stem from the Draft DEDP will be subject to Appropriate Assessment at the project level, in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. Where potential adverse effects cannot be avoided, the mitigation measures presented in Table 5-1 (of the NIR) will apply and any other measures specified as part of the project level assessments, including AA, as appropriate.

Section 5.0 of the NIR contains the mitigation measures to avoid adverse effects on the integrity of European sites which could result from the Draft DEDP. These measures include application of the relevant and current best practice guidelines at all stages of the assessment of plans and projects that stem from Draft DEDP. In particular, the policies and objectives of the Mayo County Development Plan, the Clew Bay Destination & Visitor Experience Development Plan, relevant Fáilte Ireland guidance, TII publication, *Guidelines for Assessment of Ecological Impacts of National Road Schemes* (TII, 2009).

The NIR of the Draft DEDP concluded that given the full and proper implementation of the mitigation prescribed, that the Draft DEDP, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not adversely affect the integrity of one or more European site.

3.3.2 Consultation on the Draft DEDP, Draft NIR and SEA ER

The Draft DEDP was placed on public display from 28th April 2026 to 26th May 2026. It was accompanied by the associated environmental assessments including the Draft NIR, and the SEA ER. The statutory environmental authorities (under SEA legislation) were notified and the environmental reports issued to them for consultation.

The NIR of the Draft DEDP was submitted to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage for a period of six weeks in accordance with Regulation 42(10). No submission from the Minister was received during the consultation period.

3.3.3 Finalisation of the DEDP and NIR

Following the public consultation on the Draft DEDP, a review of any submissions and observations received was undertaken. There was a submission from one of the SEA statutory environmental authorities, namely the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), this submission did not influence the AA process. No material changes were made to the Final DEDP after consultation, and therefore, a new AA Screening was not required.

Following the public consultation, the NIR of the Draft DEDP was updated based on the Final DEDP. The NIR of the Final DEDP which was prepared in April 2026 concluded that the adoption of the DEDP will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site provided the mitigation identified in the NIR is implemented.

3.4 Stage 3 and 4 of the AA Process

Stage 3 Assessment of Alternative Solutions: Where adverse effects cannot be excluded, the plan, must proceed to Stage 3, the Assessment of Alternative Solutions. This stage examines alternative options or solutions which avoid adverse effects. Once an alternative solution is selected, the process returns to Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment. If after examines all alternatives and establishing that adverse effects remain, the process proceeds to Stage 4. The NIR concluded that given the full and proper implementation of the mitigation prescribed in the NIR, that the Wild Mayo DEDP, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site. It is therefore not necessary to proceed to Stage 3.

Stage 4 Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI): IROPI is a derogation process which allows a plan, to proceed despite the fact that it will have an adverse effect on one or more European sites. At Stage 4 it must be established that no alternatives exist. In addition to the mitigation measures permitted from Stage 2 of the process, at Stage 4 compensatory measures are also permissible. Where priority Annex I habitats are concerned, as defined in the Habitats Directive, the Competent Authority can only approve proposals relating to human health, public safety or beneficial consequences of primary importance to the environment. Stage 4 was not required to be undertaken as part of this process.

4.0 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE AA THE SEA PROCESSES

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

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

5.0 REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE PLAN IN LIGHT OF OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Fáilte Ireland considered the following alternatives:

- Alternative 1 – Do Nothing: Continue without developing a Destination Experience Development Plan (DEDP).
- Alternative 2A – Do Something (Without Environmental Consideration): Develop a DEDP without integrating environmental protections.
- Alternative 2B – Do Something (With Environmental Consideration): Develop a DEDP that incorporates environmental management and mitigation.

Alternative 1, proceeding without a DEDP, would allow tourism growth to continue in an unstructured manner. This could increase pressure on existing tourism sites and supporting infrastructure, potentially leading to negative impacts on European Sites. The implementation of a DEDP under Alternatives 2A and 2B would provide a more coordinated approach to tourism development. Alternative 2A, while likely to achieve economic growth and tourism expansion, does not include environmental safeguards, posing a risk of significant negative effects on European Sites. Alternative 2B balances economic growth with environmental protection, ensuring sustainable tourism development in North Mayo. As a result, Alternative 2B was selected as the preferred option.

Alternative 2B supports the objectives of the DEDP by encouraging the sustainable growth of tourism and economic potential of North Mayo. It is anticipated that Alternative 2B will result in more positive than negative environmental effects. This is due to the considerations of environmental effects as part of the preparation of the DEDP and opportunity for mitigation and monitoring of any potential negative effects. Alternative 2B is the preferred option from an environmental perspective and delivery of the DEDP objective

6.0 CONCLUSION

In accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, Part 5 of the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations, the relevant case law, established best practice and the Precautionary Principle, and considering the contents of the Wild Mayo DEDP and the NIR, it is the considered opinion of ROD, as the author of the NIR, that given the full and proper implementation of the mitigation prescribed in the NIR, that the Wild Mayo DEDP, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site.

The NIR has been prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Habitats Directive, the Habitats Regulations and the Planning and Development Act 2024, as well as the relevant case law and current guidance. It is the considered opinion of ROD, as the author of the NIR, that, in making its AA in respect of the Wild Mayo DEDP, Fáilte Ireland, as the Competent Authority in this case, may determine that, given the full and proper implementation of the mitigation prescribed in the NIR, the Wild Mayo DEDP, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not adversely affect the integrity any European site.

In carrying out an Appropriate Assessment under the Regulation 42(12) of the Habitats Regulations, the Competent Authority (public authority) shall take into account the matters detailed in Table 6.1 in completing their Appropriate Assessment of the Wild Mayo DEDP.

Table 6.1 Requirements under Regulation 42(12)

Requirement under Regulation 42 (12)	How this has been addressed by Fáilte Ireland
(a) the Natura Impact Report	An NIR has been prepared by ROD and is available alongside the DEDP. The NIR is appended to this AA Conclusion Statement (Appendix A) and will inform Fáilte Irelands AA.
(b) any other plans or projects that may, in combination with the plan or project under consideration, adversely affect the integrity of a European Site	Section 6.0 of the NIR (Appendix A) contains the assessment of the DEDP and it's potential to adversely affect the integrity of European sites, in-combination with other plans and projects.
(c) any supplemental information furnished in relation to any such report or statement	N/A
(d) if appropriate, any additional information sought by the authority and furnished by the applicant in relation to a Natura Impact Report	N/A
(e) any information or advice obtained by the public authority	N/A
(f) if appropriate, any written submissions or observations made to the public authority in relation to the application for consent for proposed plan or project	Ministerial Consultation was undertaken on the Draft NIR was undertaken; no submission was received from the Minister. A submission from the EPA was received on the Draft DEDP. The comments did not relate to AA process and did not result in material changes to the DEDP.
(g) any other relevant information	N/A

7.0 REFERENCES

Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 August 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the Habitats Directive). Official Journal of the European Communities, L206/7.

DEHLG (2010) *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities*. Published 2009, Revised 2010. Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin.

Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (the Birds Directive). Official Journal of the European Union, L20/7.

EC (1999) *Guidelines for the Assessment of Indirect and Cumulative Impacts as well as Impact Interactions*. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

EC (2018) *Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC*. European Commission, Brussels.

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

European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011. SI No. 477/2011.

European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) (Amendment) Regulations, 2013. SI No. 499/2013.

European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) (Amendment) Regulations, 2015. SI No. 355/2015.

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

Scottish Natural Heritage (2015) *Habitat Regulation Appraisals of Plans. Guidance for Plan-making Bodies in Scotland*. Version 3.0. January 2015.

APPENDIX A

Natura Impact Report



Natura Impact Report for the Mayo Destination and Experience Development Plan



April 2026



Natura Impact Report for the Wild Mayo Destination Plan & Experience Development Plan

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Legislative Context	2
1.2 Overview of the Appropriate Assessment Process.....	4
1.3 Methodology	4
2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE WILD MAYO DEDP	6
2.1 Overview.....	6
3.0 IDENTIFICATION OF ADVERSE EFFECTS.....	8
3.1 Potential effects on the Natural Environment	8
3.2 Establishing the Zone of Influence	9
3.3 Conservation Status and Site Integrity	12
4.0 ASSESSMENT OF ADVERSE EFFECTS.....	13
5.0 MITIGATION.....	65
5.1 Principles and Approach	65
6.0 IN-COMBINATION EFFECTS.....	78
6.1 Introduction	78
6.2 Methodology	78
7.0 CONCLUSION.....	87
8.0 REFERENCES	88

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Fáilte Ireland has prepared the Wild Mayo Destination and Experience Development Plan (hereafter referred to as the 'Wild Mayo DEDP' or the 'DEDP') which will provide strategic direction on further developing a sustainable tourism sector within North Mayo and leveraging the area's growing appeal as a destination offering a unique combination of adrenalin and quietude, adventure and wilderness. This Natura Impact Report ("NIR"), with respect to the Wild Mayo DEDP has been prepared independently by Roughan & O'Donovan ("ROD"), on behalf of Fáilte Ireland. It does not, in and of its own right, confer planning permission for any specific development but rather guides the tourism investment and decision making in Mayo.

The requirements arising out of Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora ("the Habitats Directive") in relation to Appropriate Assessment are transposed into Irish law by Part 5 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 (as amended) ("the Habitats Regulations") and, where planning permission is required, Part 6 of the Planning and Development Act, 2024 ("the Planning and Development Act"). In accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive and Part 6 of the Planning and Development Act, an Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report was prepared to assess whether or not the Plan, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, was likely to have a significant effect on one or more sites of Community importance for nature conservation ("European Sites").

In accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive and section 205 (1) of the Planning and Development Act, it is the Competent Authority – in this case Fáilte Ireland – which carries out the appropriate assessment (AA) which includes inter alia (i) an examination (ii) an analysis (iii) an evaluation (iv) the making of findings (v) the making of conclusions and (vi) the making of a final determination¹. In accordance with Regulation 42(9) of the Habitat Regulations, where a public authority conducts an Appropriate Assessment, they are required to submit the Natura Impact Report to the Minister no later than six weeks before the plan or project is adopted. Regulation 42(10) of the same Regulations states that the public authority shall take account of any submission made by the Minister before concluding Appropriate Assessment.

This NIR was prepared by Patrick O'Shea and Jane Stafford. Patrick is a Principal Ecologist with ROD and has 13 years' experience in Appropriate Assessment. He holds a B.A. in Natural Sciences from Trinity College Dublin, and an MSc in Ecological Management and Conservation Biology from Queen's University, Belfast. Patrick is a Full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). Jane has over three years' experience in ecological assessment. She holds a degree in BSc in Wildlife Biology from the University of Montana, and is a Qualifying member of CIEEM.

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

1.1 Legislative Context

Council Directive 92/43/EEC of the 21st May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats of wild fauna and flora (“the Habitats Directive”) and Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of the 30th November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (“the Birds Directive”) list habitats and species which are important for conservation and in need of protection. This protection is afforded in part through the designation of sites which support significant examples of habitats or populations of species (“European Sites”). Sites designated for birds are termed “Special Protection Areas” (SPAs) and sites designated for natural habitat types or other species are termed “Special Areas of Conservation” (SACs). The complete network of European Sites is referred to as “Natura 2000”.

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

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

The requirements arising out of Article 6(3) are transposed into Irish law by the Habitats Regulations.

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

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

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

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

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

The CJEU has made a relevant judgment on what information should be contained within documents supporting AA⁴ :

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

The High Court⁵ and Supreme Court⁶ have also provided clarity on how Competent Authorities should undertake AA and has stated that the following four matters require to be addressed:

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

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

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

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

1.2 Overview of the Appropriate Assessment Process

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

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

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

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

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

1.3 Methodology

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

With regard to carrying out AA of Plans, EC (2018) states that “a *distinction needs to be made with ‘plans’ which are in the nature of policy statements, i.e. policy documents which show the general political will or intention of a ministry or lower authority*”. SNH (2015) Expands on this: “*Plans or parts of plans which are merely general policy statements, or which only show the general political will or intention of a public body, will not be likely to have a significant effect on a European site. However, it is a case-by-case decision as to whether a plan should be subject to appraisal, a critical test being whether it, or any part of it, would be likely to have a significant effect on a European site*”. The Plan contains policy statements as well as investment priorities, interventions, and programmes.

The following guidance documents informed the assessment methodology:

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

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE WILD MAYO DEDP

2.1 Overview

The Wild Mayo Destination and Experience Development Plan (DEDP) is a five year sustainable tourism development plan for the North Mayo region that stretches from the Mullet Peninsula to Ballina and Foxford. It has been developed through a programme of desk research, on-site appraisals; and extensive consultation incorporating the views of the tourism industry, local communities, local government, state and regional agencies. The plan has been prepared within the context of the wider tourism and sustainability policy environment, and has given consideration to relevant national and international best practices.

It will underpin the anticipated growth in the value of tourism while being focused on maintaining the environmental, social, and cultural integrity of the region. The proposed actions are grounded in the principles and policies of sustainability and the VICE model, thereby ensuring that full consideration is given to a balanced and synergistic approach that delivers on four key pillars: the Visitor experience, Industry growth, Community benefit, and Environmental protection. The model applies to all aspects of tourism planning, destination management, and policy making.

A plan area for the DEDP is presented in Figure 2-1 below.

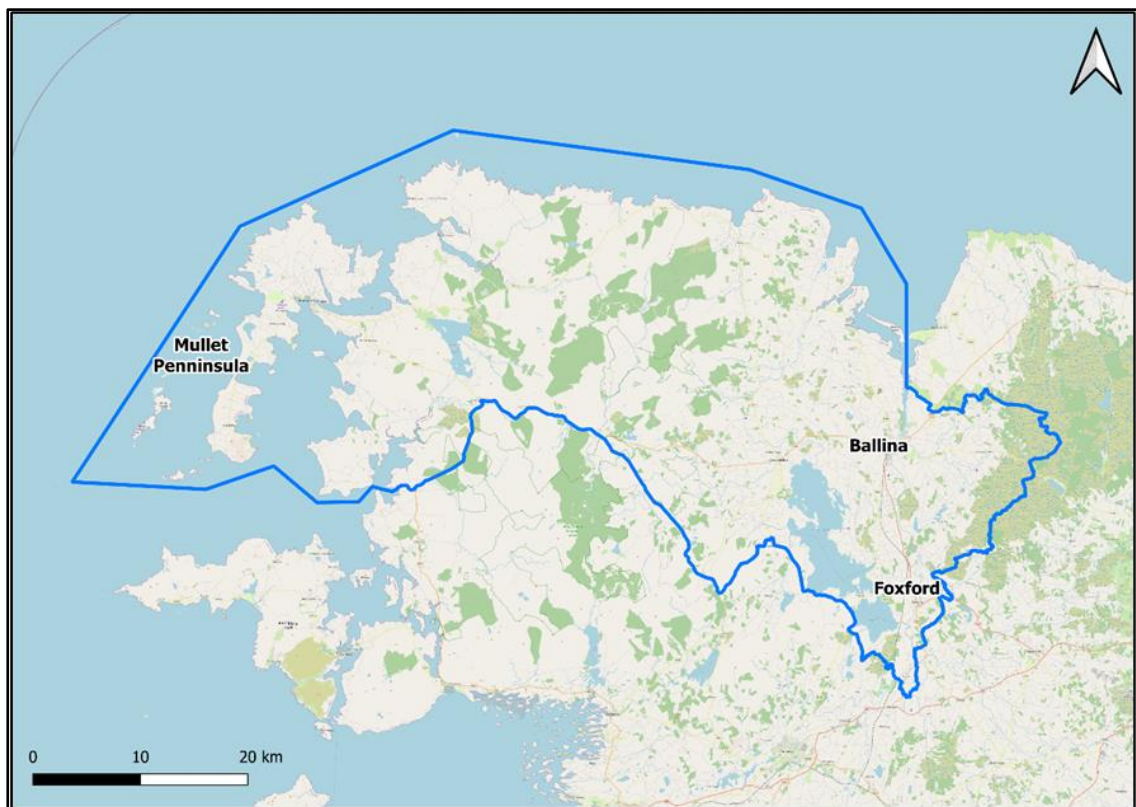


Figure 2-1 The plan area (outlined in blue) for the Wild Mayo DEDP.

The core objectives of the DEDP are:

- Align with the Regional Development Strategy objectives.
- Leverage existing attractions and create new experiences to encourage year-round exploration.
- Strengthen towns and villages – developing them as animated, well-serviced hubs for all travel modes.
- Celebrate environment and heritage – fostering appreciation for North Mayo's natural and cultural legacy, and championing sustainable and slow tourism models.
- Elevate the Gaeltacht – positioning it as a cornerstone of cultural heritage.
- Create strong tourism infrastructure and well serviced amenities around the abundant natural assets to meet the demands of visitor and community users.

The Target Outcomes of the DEDP are:

- Increased levels of domestic and international visitors across the region.
- Growth in accommodation offering.
- Investment in visitor attractions and activities growing the appeal of the destination in international and domestic markets.
- Active collaborative tourism networks growing the profile and appeal through cohesive Wild Mayo marketing.
- Growth in the number of food experiences on offer and in the availability of local produce on restaurant menus.
- Improved connectivity for international tourists from Ireland West Airport, Knock and other regional bases.
- Interpretive experiences bring the region's stories to life, fostering emotional connections and cultural appreciation.
- Celebrated and immersive Irish language experiences.
- North Mayo becomes recognised as a spectacular outdoors destination offering immersive wilderness and adventure for all.
- Agreed approach to sustainable tourism development embraced by our visitors, tourism industry and local community.

The key performance indicators (KPI's) of the DEDP are:

- Increase tourism revenue by 10% measured through Key Account Management (KAM) data and business surveys.
- Maintain visitor satisfaction at 91% as measured by the Destination Attitudes Survey (DAS).
- Achieve 10% growth in visitation to attractions and activity providers, measured through KAM data and business surveys.
- Contribute to maintaining or increasing Co. Mayo residents' positive perception of tourism delivering benefits for host communities, within the social and environmental capacity of the destination, measured through Tourism Approval Rating (TAR) scores.

3.0 IDENTIFICATION OF ADVERSE EFFECTS

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

3.1 Potential effects on the Natural Environment

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

Habitat loss and fragmentation

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

Direct species mortality

Direct species mortality is possible as a result of site clearance, tree felling and vegetation removal as part of any infrastructure construction required to achieve the core objectives of the plan.

Disturbance (noise, vibration, movement, lighting)

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

Changes in water quality and hydrology

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

Introduction and spread of invasive species

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

3.2 Establishing the Zone of Influence

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

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

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

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

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

A geographical representation of the Zone of Influence was produced in QGIS 3.28.8-Firenze using publicly available Ordnance Survey Ireland maps. This is used in combination with NPWS SAC and SPA shapefiles to identify the boundaries of European Sites in relation to the Zone of Influence. The Zone of Influence is presented in Figure 3-1 below.

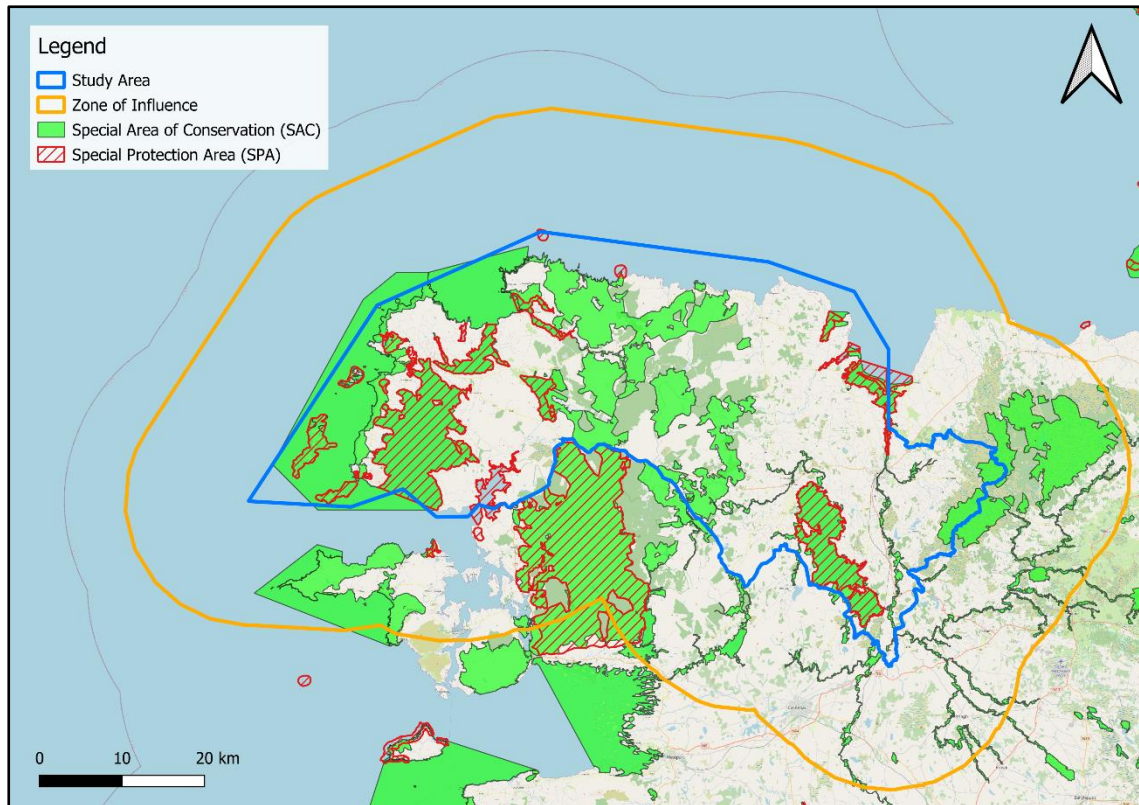


Figure 3-1 Zone of Influence for the Wild Mayo DEDP.

There are 44 European sites within the Zone of Influence. Table 3-1 presents the number of SACs and SPAs in the Zone of Influence and Table 3-2 lists the names and site codes of the European sites.

Table 3-1 European Sites within the Zone of Influence

European Sites	No. sites
Special Areas of Conservation	31
Special Protection Areas	13
Total	44

Table 3-2 European Sites within the Zone of Influence

Site Code	Site Name
Special Protection Area	
004004	Inishkea Islands SPA
004036	Killala Bay/Moy Estuary SPA
004052	Carrowmore Lake SPA
004072	Stags of Broad Haven SPA
004074	Illanmaster SPA
004084	Inishglora and Inishkeeragh SPA
004093	Termoncarragh Lake and Annagh Machair SPA
004098	Owenduff/Nephin Complex SPA

Site Code	Site Name
004111	Duvillaun Islands SPA
004227	Mullet Peninsula SPA
004228	Lough Conn and Lough Cullin SPA
004235	Doogort Machair SPA
004037	Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA
Special Area of Conservation	
000458	Killala Bay/Moy Estuary SAC
000463	Balla Turlough SAC
000466	Bellacorick Iron Flush SAC
000470	Mullet/Blacksod Bay Complex SAC
000472	Broadhaven Bay SAC
000476	Carrowmore Lake Complex SAC
000495	Duvillaun Islands SAC
000500	Glenamoy Bog Complex SAC
000507	Inishkea Islands SAC
000516	Lackan Saltmarsh and Kilcummin Head SAC
000522	Lough Gall Bog SAC
000534	Owenduff/Nephin Complex SAC
000542	Slieve Fyagh Bog SAC
000633	Lough Hoe Bog SAC
000634	Lough Nabrickkeagh Bog SAC
001482	Clew Bay Complex SAC
001497	Doogort Machair/Lough Doo SAC
001501	Erris Head SAC
001513	Keel Machair/Menaun Cliffs SAC
001669	Knockalongy and Knockachree Cliffs SAC
001898	Unshin River SAC
001922	Bellacorick Bog Complex SAC
001955	Croaghaun/Slievemore SAC
002005	Bellacragher Saltmarsh SAC
002006	Ox Mountains Bogs SAC
002081	Ballinafad SAC
002144	Newport River SAC
002177	Lough Dahybaun SAC
002268	Achill Head SAC
002298	River Moy SAC
002998	West Connacht Coast SAC

3.3 Conservation Status and Site Integrity

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

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

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

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

The conservation status will be taken as “favourable” when:

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

EC (2018), the European Commission stated that “the integrity of a site involves its constitutive characteristics and ecological functions”. The site’s integrity is therefore based on the Qualifying Interests for which the site is designated, along with their ecological requirements. When undertaking Appropriate Assessment, the integrity of a site is not affected as long as the conservation objectives for the site are not undermined.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF ADVERSE EFFECTS

Tables 4-1 to 4-6 below identify the Vision, Objectives, Catalyst Projects, Supporting Initiatives, target Outcomes, and Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) contained within the DEDP and assesses their potential to adversely affect the integrity of the European sites listed in Table 3-2.

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

Wild Mayo Vision	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
<i>“WILD MAYO: A place that captivates the soul, Wild Mayo is recognised as a spectacular outdoors destination offering immersive wilderness and adventure for all.</i> <i>From its stunning coastlines to its rugged boglands, the region offers a landscape that inspires creativity and invites exploration. Rich in history, heritage, and culture, Wild Mayo brings its stories to life through immersive trails, vibrant communities, and celebrated traditions.</i> <i>The Irish language is protected and proudly spoken, adding depth and authenticity to every experience.</i> <i>Whether walking ancient paths, connecting with local craftspeople, or simply breathing in the wild Atlantic air, visitors leave with a sense of wonder, and a longing to return.”</i>	The Vision is a high-level policy statement, and therefore it can be concluded that it will not lead to an adverse effect on any European site.	No

Table 4-2 Evaluation of Potential Adverse Effects as a result of the Wild Mayo DEDP Objectives.

Objective	Summary	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
Objective 1	Align with the Regional Development Strategy objectives: growing year round appeal; raising international profile; increasing revenue, dispersion, and season extension; protecting authenticity and wildness; building capacity and capability; and fostering strong coalitions of industry and stakeholders.	The Key Objectives are a set of high-level policy statements, and therefore it can be concluded that they will not lead to an adverse effect on any European site.	No
Objective 2	Leverage existing attractions and create new experiences to encourage year-round exploration.		
Objective 3	Strengthen towns and villages – developing them as animated, well-serviced hubs for all travel modes.		
Objective 4	Celebrate environment and heritage – fostering appreciation for North Mayo's natural and cultural legacy, and championing sustainable and slow tourism models.		
Objective 5	Elevate the Gaeltacht – positioning it as a cornerstone of cultural heritage.		
Objective 6	Create strong tourism infrastructure and well serviced amenities around the abundant natural assets to meet the demands of visitor and community users.		

Table 4-3 Evaluation of Potential Adverse Effects as a result of Catalyst Projects

Catalyst Project	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
The Céide Coastal Path and Downpatrick Head	The Céide Coastal Path: The initiative has been granted Part 8 planning approval and initial funding to begin the development of the trail. It will provide a new opportunity to access a series of key geological sites, including the Glenurla Valley Waterfall, the Polladarky Blow Hole, the Léam Giant Stepping Stones, the Doonfeeney Sea Arch, and Ballynacashlan Castle ruins. Funding is in place to commence the initial phase of development. • Work towards securing the necessary capital funding and continue to liaise with the Fáilte Ireland WAW Coastal Trails team on the initiative. Proceed with the installation of the eleven footbridges and the associated trail infrastructure that are required along the route – including the installation of trailheads, trailhead signage, safety and way marker signage, safety fencing, gates and stiles and boardwalks (where required). • Continue to work closely with the land owners to develop the management model for the path.	The installation of footbridges, trails, and the associated infrastructure have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes

	Downpatrick Head / Ballycastle Masterplan: The Signature Discovery Point already attracts approximately 50,000 visitors annually. Visitor use management issues have been identified, particularly in relation to the maintenance of the portalooos and the impact of trampling. The Discovery Point is currently accessed by road from Ballycastle – a distance of 6 kms. • Develop a Masterplan for Downpatrick Head and Ballycastle. This plan should focus on strengthening the visitor experience and site management associated with Downpatrick Head, as a standalone site and as a core experience of the Céide Coast Path. The masterplan must also highlight the strategic relationship between the Discovery Point and Ballycastle, and should identify priorities that ensure the local community further benefits from its location on the Wild Atlantic Way. • In relation to Downpatrick Head and the access route from Ballycastle: ○ Undertake a comprehensive assessment of required parking upgrades and toilet needs at Downpatrick Head. Improving access to toilet facilities in Ballycastle should reduce the infrastructural demand at the visitor site. A cleaning and maintenance plan is essential for fixed or temporary facilities at the headland to address current unsatisfactory conditions. ○ Identify required upgrades to the access route from the R314. ○ Address the trampling issues and the development of informal paths identified in the 2024 Fáilte Ireland Downpatrick Head Report undertaken as part of the National Environmental Monitoring programme, through options such as a formal path linking the car park and points of interest across the headland, and the development of marked pathways. Board walk sections may be required in more sensitive habitat zones. ○ Conduct an audit of existing signage, and address the current deficiencies in interpretive and safety/instructional signage, including directional signage in from the R314. In addition to the geological features and stunning cliff line, the Signature Discovery Point has the remnants of the 'Eire 64' markings, the ruins of a church building and a statue of St. Patrick. The interpretive messaging should support the wider St. Patrick story and ecclesiastical theme. ○ Establish a suitable cleaning and maintenance regime for the Spirit of Place installation at the 'Poll na Seantainne' blowhole.	Plans and projects stemming from the Downpatrick Head / Ballycastle Masterplan, (such as the development of visitor and service centres, parking and toilet facility upgrades, cycling and walking paths, trails and boardwalks and associated infrastructure, upgrades to the access route from the R314), as well as potential increased visitor numbers, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes
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Catalyst Project	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
	○ During periods of high visitation, assess the potential to develop a park and ride system from Ballycastle. A proactive approach will reduce site management issues that may well arise as visitor numbers grow, and a shuttle service to Ballycastle will be needed to facilitate transportation back to the Céide Fields car park for those arriving by the Céide Coast Path. ○ Complement this through exploring/supporting a cycling hub in Ballycastle with drop off/collection points at Downpatrick Head and Céide Fields car park to allow greater flexibility to explore the area. ● In relation to Ballycastle and its development as a service centre, use the master-planning process to build on the village's potential to be a strategic service centre for the Céide Coast and a viable base for outdoor adventure. ○ Identify a strategy to improve the delivery of visitor information services and the provision of toilet facilities, food and drink, and retail. Continue to work with the Céide Coast Eco Campus and other potential venues to assess suitable location for visitor services, and ways of developing new synergies with existing activities. ○ Work with the community to develop a self-guided walk within the village that will highlight its history and areas of cultural significance, such as 'The Shambles'. ○ Work with existing businesses, including the Ballinglen Museum of Art and local artisans to ensure that the masterplan elevates the importance of the creative arts to Ballycastle and the strong linkages between landscape and the arts. ○ Position Ballycastle as a northern access point to the Mayo Dark Sky Park. Undertake discussions on following Newport's lead to become an International Dark Sky Community. This will involve preparing a lighting policy and retrofitting publicly owned lighting within five years. Work with the Dark Sky partners to highlight the coastal dark skies – particularly at Downpatrick Head.		

The Western Way and North Mayo Trails Network	The Western Way: • Continue to progress the strategic development of Western Way within North Mayo. Identify locations where connections with existing trails are required and where additional work is needed to establish new off-road sections. The key objective is to link the trail from Letterkeen through to Ballycastle, Ballina and eastwards to Bonnicolnlon, to facilitate connection with the Sligo Way, including the National Mountain Bike Centre at Coolaney. Identify where further feasibility analysis is needed to determine the projected route ○ Continue to assess directional and interpretive signage, accommodation options, trail infrastructure, naming protocols in areas where it connects with existing recreational trails, and branding for the proposed 300 km+ trail. ○ In looking at trail infrastructure, assess the feasibility of installing a new suspension bridge where the trail approaches Ballycastle. This would open up a viewpoint towards Downpatrick Head and would create visual connection with the Céide Coastal Path. • Continue working collaboratively to upgrade the trail through Wild Nephin National Park and reroute through Oweninny (including addressing the need for an underpass at Oweninny). Explore options for linking through Bellacorick via an off-road section. ○ Address requirements for cyclists, including removing board walk sections where necessary. • Continue to explore and pursue relevant options for the development of accommodation that can meet the requirements of different trail users. ○ Work with National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) to advance the development of the string of bothies (overnight shelters left unlocked) across the Nephin Beg Range and establish a model for the care and maintenance of these structures. This could be achieved through an existing or new voluntary organisation. (Similar hut to hut trail structures in British Columbia on the Sunshine Coast and in the Shuswap are maintained through local groups.) ○ Continue to assess the feasibility of creating hostel accommodation in existing disused buildings that are located in close proximity to the trail, including the barracks building at Bellacorick.	Plans and projects stemming The Western Way, (such as the development and upgrade of cycling and walking paths, trails, and boardwalks and associated infrastructure, the development of a suspension bridge, overnight shelters, and accommodation), as well as increased visitor numbers, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes
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Catalyst Project	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
	Work with existing accommodation businesses to identify options representing different levels of comfort, and the capacity of these businesses to transfer luggage for visitors.		
	North Mayo Trails Strategy: - Consider developing a county-wide trails strategy as a policy document that will align with and support the implementation of the forthcoming Mayo Outdoor Recreation Plan. This should be a working document that can reflect and respond to arising opportunities, and should seek to address the current fragmented approach to trails development – particularly at the community level. - Establish a North Mayo trails forum/working group that will work with Mayo County Council on an ongoing basis to determine strategic priorities in developing, managing and leveraging recreational trails and greenways. This forum could be the same as the structure being established by the Outdoor Recreation Committee and should allow for the representation of local community groups. - Use the forum and the county-wide strategy planning process to identify all existing trails networks, proposed projects and aspirational initiatives, including route options for the Western Way and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) interurban greenway concept (connecting Ballina to Castlebar and onward to Westport). - Work towards identifying priorities and development opportunities in a way that can leverage local commitment and use the proposed outdoor recreation knowledge hubs (forthcoming Outdoor Recreation Plan) to streamline grant applications and related development studies.	Plans and projects stemming from the North Mayo Trails Strategy, (such as the development of visitor facilities and associated infrastructure, the development and upgrade of greenways, and walking paths, trails, and boardwalks and associated infrastructure), as well as increased visitor numbers, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required	Yes

Catalyst Project	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
	Local Initiatives: There are a wide range of trails-related initiatives that need to be stitched together to strengthen <i>our wild adventure offering</i>, and should be further assessed for their capacity to enhance the visitor's appreciation of <i>our heritage of life, land and sea</i>. The following are examples of current and/or proposed projects that need to be supported in an appropriate manner.	This is a high-level statement regarding initiatives, and does not refer to any specific changes on the ground. Therefore it can be concluded that they will not lead to an adverse effect on any European site.	No
	Erris/Mullet looped trails: proceed with the recommendations outlined in <i>the Erris Coastal Walks 2023 Site Assessment Report</i>, including work on a full feasibility study. The report outlines a series of recommendations relating to stiles and gates, and the establishment of trail heads; evaluation of traffic volumes; ensuring that the road surface is suitable in bog areas and extending boardwalks where necessary; appropriate waymarking and information boards; evaluating and addressing safety concerns at the blowhole, and the need for a management and maintenance plan. Work with the Comhar Dún Chaocháin Teo to establish Carrowteige – An tSeanscoil as a prominent staging area for the looped trails in Cill Chomáin. The Sliabh Sneacht Centre in Inishowen provides a model for a rural-based staging area, offering a base for hill-walking and hiking, bird-watching, photography, washrooms, food and drink, and retail; while also acting as a community resource and heritage centre.	Plans and projects stemming from the Erris/Mullet looped trails, (such as the development and upgrade of walking paths and trails, and boardwalks and associated infrastructure, and any upgrades to the Sliabh Sneacht Centre), as well as increased visitor numbers, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required	Yes

Catalyst Project	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
	Bangor Trail / Bangor Erris trail head: explore options to strengthen the role of Bangor Erris as a hub within a wider trail network through assessing opportunities to develop a trail system westwards to Geesala and eastwards to the Western Way. This would enhance the wider adventure experience in the Bangor Erris and Carrowmore Lake area.	The development of trail systems associated with the Bangor Trail / Bangor Erris trail head, as well as increased visitor numbers, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes
	Céide Coastal Path extensions: explore the opportunity to extend the Céide Coastal Path.	The extension of the Céide Coastal Path, as well as increased visitor numbers, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required	Yes

Catalyst Project	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
	Crossmolina to Enniscoe cycle trail: this initiative is part of a longer trail project that would connect Crossmolina with Keenagh. It has the capacity to strengthen the role of Crossmolina as a hub to explore Enniscoe and Lough Conn. With further extensions of the trail system beyond Keenagh, there is the potential to ultimately connect Crossmolina to Nephin Beg and the wider wilderness area, which is much in keeping with the community's vision of its role as a 'gateway' to the mountain.	The extension of the Crossmolina to Enniscoe cycle trail system, as well as increased visitor numbers, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required	Yes

Catalyst Project	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
	Pontoon to Knockmore: the proposition for a trail along the shores of Lough Conn and Lough Cullin has been at the proposal stage for some time. It is a project that has faced issues arising from the conservation values of the Lough Conn and Lough Cullin SPA. Ideally, the potential to move forward or not, should be clearly determined through a facilitated discussion with all stakeholders. Its location vis-à-vis the proposed intra-urban cycle network, the prospective development at the site of the former Healy's Hotel and the Pontoon Bridge Hotel (contracted to the State at present), and its capacity to link with other trail systems and activity bases should all be carefully considered in the decision making. Currently, the road is regarded as too dangerous as an alternative walking option. Assist the local community with further environmental studies if this is required.	Plans and projects stemming from the Pontoon to Knockmore, such as the development of walking and cycling paths, trails, and boardwalks and associated infrastructure, as well as increased visitor numbers, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required	Yes

Catalyst Project	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
	Foxford trails: strengthen the profile of the Ox Mountain trails. These trails are favoured by cyclists but are not promoted to this activity group. The Foxford area is likely to increase in its cycling appeal with the development of the proposed National Cycle Network corridor through Co. Mayo (the route of the intraurban greenway). Passing through or close to Foxford, provides the community with new opportunities to develop and promote looped spurs and to position the town as a cycling destination.	The development of and upgrade to cycling tracks and associated infrastructure on the Foxford trails, as well as increased visitor numbers, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required	Yes

Catalyst Project	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
	Killala to Ballina – the Monasteries of the Moy recreational trail: this 14 km trail is well advanced. Continue to identify options to deliver a complete off-road experience. This trail is of particular importance given its strategic route between the two towns via two of the monasteries and through Belleek Woods. In time it will become part of the Western Way as it connects through to the Sligo Way. Explore ways of extending the trail westwards to link through to the Céide Coastal Path.	Plans and projects stemming from the Monasteries of the Moy recreational trail, such as the extension of the trail, as well as increased visitor numbers, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes
	Ballina to Enniscrone – continue to progress the development of the proposed recreational trail between the two communities through advancing the implementation of the 2022 feasibility study.	The development of the proposed recreational trail between Ballina to Enniscrone as well as increased visitor numbers, have the potential to adversely affect European sites.	Yes

Catalyst Project	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
		This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes

The Gaeltacht	STRENGTHEN BELMULLET AS A CORE HUB AND DESTINATION TOWN WITHIN THE GAELTACHT The town, which was the last of Ireland's planned towns, is located on an isthmus between two bays – Blacksod Bay and Broadhaven Bay, and is a destination hub offering ease of access various experiences adventure and cultural experiences within the Mullet Peninsula, the northern area of Erris, Geesala and beyond the Gaeltacht into Wild Nephin National Park. Its role can be considerably strengthened through the following initiatives. • Belmullet Tidal Pool: Work is set to commence on re-lining the three external faces of the tidal pool. Completion of this project will provide a memorable 'adventure' experience year-round, regardless of tide levels. The pool's orientation with the western skies and evening sunsets adds to its celebrated acclaim. ○ Explore opportunities through capital investment programmes to further improve the experience with the addition of toilet, shower and change facilities. Currently there is nowhere to change in an area that is very open and offers no privacy. Consider the potential to add a seating/refreshment area. • Work with the community to expand the appeal of Belmullet as a core hub and destination town within the Gaeltacht. Continue to undertake planning discussions that are focused on bringing new concepts forward. ○ Develop the proposed looped walk around the town, taking in the seascapes of both bays. Integrate this with the work that was initiated through the Destination Town initiative and continue efforts to strengthen sense of place at the harbour front as part of this circular walk. • Belmullet Water Towers: the three towers, which are still in use, are a prominent landmark in the local landscape. As a blank 'canvas', the towers offer an opportunity to become a visual statement of aspects of life in the Gaeltacht – making them an attraction in their own right. ○ Consider working with Irish Ways and the community to identify themes that could be illustrated on the towers. Use community discussions to illustrate how art of this nature can enhance identity. ○ Assess opportunities for developing trail access to the towers.	Plans and projects associated with the Monasteries of the Moy, (such as works to Belmullet Tidal Pool and the development of associated infrastructure and a looped walk), as well as potential increased visitor numbers, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes
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Catalyst Project	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
	GOLF is a significant demand generator within the Belmullet area. Carne Golf Links attracts 14,000 visitors per annum, with North America being core to its international market. For many of these overseas visitors, playing golf on the Mullet Peninsula is both an experience of wild adventure and an opportunity to become further immersed in the culture of the Gaeltacht. The activity has considerable potential to grow further and to contribute to the growth of the local economy. - Support the plans to develop on-site accommodation at Carne Golf Links. Bed space is limited within the area, particularly in light of the size of the wedding market in Belmullet, and new accommodation is required to grow this sector. - Work with Carne Golf Links in its aspirations to host the Irish Open. - Explore ways of elevating the Irish language within the Gaeltacht golf experience - Highlight the small course at Doohoma as a distinctive experience in a stunning setting, and encourage new approaches to packaging it with a wider regional offering.	Plans and projects associated with Golf in the Gaeltacht, (such as the development of accommodation), as well as potential increased visitor numbers, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes

	PRESENTING LOCAL LIFE IN THE GAELTACHT This initiative is primarily about stimulating a greater level of awareness on how to make experiences within the Gaeltacht distinctive. It is about bringing the language and local identity forward. It is further supported by subsequent actions relating to interpretive / visitor centres and aspects of storytelling, experience development in agritourism, the creative sector and the emphasis on biodiversity and sustainability – all elements that relate to North Mayo as a whole. • Develop a cluster-based approach to enriching existing and developing new experiences. ○ Mullet Peninsula – continue to promote well-established activity operators within the peninsula and Blacksod that have a strong language focus as best practices, and support their ongoing development where feasible. In particular, assist with developing winter offerings. ○ Gaoth Sáile / Geesala – work with the community to build up the growing sport tourism element. For many, the existing work on developing specialist training programmes and attracting clients offseason may not be regarded as tourism. Assist organisers to enhance the programming through local visits, a heightened use of Irish, and packaged experiences for family members. ○ Cill Chomáin – work with the community to realise their aspirations for developing ecotourism and creating experiences that exemplify the local culture and traditional skills. ▪ Identify mechanisms for assisting with the implementation of tourism actions outlined in the Cill Chomáin Development Plan 2022-2026 ▪ Support Comhar Dún Chaocháin Teo in developing a stronger cultural-heritage / outdoor activity base at Carrowteige. ▪ Explore new ways of animating the Táin Bó Flíodhais / Cattle Raid of Mayo story. ○ Rosspport – work with Seirbhísí Curam Chill Chomáin Cuideachta Faoi Theorainn Rathaíochta to assist in advancing the proposed glamping and organic gardening initiative. This is being positioned as a training centre for organic food production and has the capacity to build a distinctive niche market.	Plans and projects associated with Presenting Local Life in the Gaeltacht, (such as the development of ecotourism, the advancement of glamping in Rosspport, the development of a Inishkea Islands visitor experience and associated trails and facilities, and any works to the toilet facilities at Blacksod Pier), as well as potential increased visitor numbers, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes
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Catalyst Project	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
	• Work with businesses and residents that are currently involved in hosting Irish language students and delivering related educational programmes, to deepen their awareness of this activity as an element of tourism and one that can be further leveraged in terms of its value to the community. • Ensure local festivals that highlight Gaeltacht traditions, sport and language are promoted as visitor experiences • Review directional signage across the Gaeltacht and engage with communities and visitors to determine the consensus regarding Irish only or bilingual signs. ○ Install welcome signage on key access routes. • Inishkea Islands – work with boat tour operators, the commonage owners, NPWS, the LIFE on Machair programme representatives, MCC and FI to agree on a sustainable approach to facilitating visits to the islands. The ground work has been established through the recent Inishkea Islands Visitor Management Assessment conducted through the LIFE programme, which highlights the environmental sensitivity of the islands, the impacts of recreational activity and concerns regarding visitor management, and potential measures that should be taken to address the related issues. ○ Action the management plan through establishing consensus on the recommendations that should be progressed, and set agreements in place with relevant stakeholders. Proposed initiatives relate to signage, education, wardening of the islands, capacity decisions, the development of waymarked trails and related visitor facilities. ○ Work through the recommendations for Blacksod Pier area, particularly the action relating to toilets, to implement initial steps to manage visitor impact on the islands. ○ Ensure that the Irish language is incorporated into the experience, and woven into the storytelling.		

Ballina Town	BALLINA QUAY Plans to regenerate the Quay area have been in progress for a number of years. The actions recommended below reinforce existing initiatives, and present them in a broader context of regional destination development. • Amenity area: Continue to work on developing the amenity value of the area and its potential to become a strong micro-destination recognised for its access to water sports, quality food offerings, and distinctive business outlets with a high level of visitor appeal. A feasibility assessment may be required to fully maximise the Quay as a new amenity resource. (EXAMPLE: the new Surf Centre at Strandhill illustrates the way in which the right mix of visitor offerings and support services can have a significant catalytic impact within a destination). ○ Ensure that the public realm hard landscaping and design will draw visitors to the quay and will improve access to the water. Work towards separating motorised and foot access to heighten safety and the overall ambiance of the area. ○ Install a pontoon at the southern end to complement the new northern pontoon. This will improve access to boating, kayaking, SUP, and to dragon boats. ○ Continue to look at options to separate water access for boats from access to non-motorised craft through the development of a new slipway. ○ Continue to look at options for boat storage, including containers and/or the Kennedy Glasgow House. • Connectivity: Develop a summary plan that presents the active transportation routes designed to connect the Quay with the proposed pedestrian/cycle link to Belleek Woods and to the town centre, and work towards improving the linkages as project funding becomes available. ○ Explore use of the embankment for pedestrian access, as an alternative to the public road. • New attractions: Work with partners to develop a kayaking trail along the Moy Estuary linking the Quay to Killala. This in turn could be used to develop a kayak and cycle trail between the two harbour areas, where visitors could kayak one way and return by bike along the Monasteries of the Moy recreational trail through Belleek Woods.	Plans and projects associated with Ballina Quay, (such as landscaping works and works to improve water access, the installation of a pontoon, the development of a new slipway, installation of boat storage, the development and upgrades to walking, cycling, and kayaking links and trails to and within the area, and the development of the Salmon Life Centre and associated infrastructure and visitor activities), as well as potential increased visitor numbers, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes
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Catalyst Project	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
	• Salmon Life Centre Concept: Re-assess the concept of the Salmon Life Centre as a new visitor experience that has the potential to fit well with The Ballina Quay development – possibly within the Kennedy Glasgow House. This concept has scored highly on Fáilte Ireland's platform for growth indices, and the centre would have the opportunity to present many themes that would resonate with the visitor, and would complement other interpretive themes in the interpretive/visitor centre network. Examples include the story of climate and environmental change on the salmon, scientific research on the salmon and sea trout, mythology of the salmon, and the story of salmon around the world. Connecting with live under-water camera links at the new 'ship to reef' diving experience in Killala Bay would add a distinctive element to the attraction. An attraction of this nature would solidify Ballina's position as Ireland's salmon capital and would provide new opportunities to twin with other wild salmon capitals, such as Ketchikan, Alaska and Campbell River in British Columbia, Canada; and Norway as the global capital in salmon farming. It is also likely to generate demand in salmon fishing and salmon charters. ○ Establish a small working group to re-define the concept. Consider including IFI, and relevant academic / scientific representatives.		

	CURLTUAL QUARTER The Cultural Quarter is a multi-faceted experience that is ideally located in the centre of Ballina adjacent to the River Moy. It has the capacity to connect the future to the past, and offers a range of themes that will have wide appeal. • The Military Baracks: Continue to work collaboratively to animate the Square through a programme of events. ○ Highlight the story through interpretation as part of a Cultural Quarter Trail that focuses on pulling the attractions together into a more holistic cultural experience. ○ Highlight examples of innovation through temporary exhibits to create interest and pride in the achievements of the Ballina business sector. ○ Use temporary exhibits to promote progress of Ballina in other areas of advancement such as active transportation plans and achievements, or sustainability objectives. • Mary Robinson Centre: consider repositioning the concept to heighten the significance of the centre in relation to leadership, sustainability, climate change, and human rights. As a centre focused on the principle of meitheal, it has the capacity to be an international gathering place for discussions of global significance – a centre of dialogue in all the areas of life that have been core to Mary Robinson. ○ Work with partners to develop a programme of events and research that will attract new markets to Ballina. ○ Support events at the centre with a packaging of North Mayo experiences that reflect event themes. ○ Highlight the connectivity with the river, and continue to develop the garden area as a reflective space. • Garda Building: continue to work towards developing the Garda Building as a new cultural centre with a focus on the visual arts. ○ Work with the Mary Robinson Centre to build connectivity between the two buildings. Physical connections can be further enhanced through programming that brings the two facilities together.	Plans and projects associated with Ballina Flood Relief Scheme, (such as enhancements of the riverside area treed space), and as well as potential increased visitor numbers, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes
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Catalyst Project	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
	• Clarke Museum of Irish History: work towards updating the brand proposition to create greater resonance with the marketplace, particularly international markets. ○ Highlight the success of the award-winning heritage garden for its excellence in sustainability practices and as an oasis within an urban setting, and continue to promote its educational role. • Ballina Arts Centre: the centre contributes significantly to the cultural vibrancy of Ballina through a wide range of arts from contemporary to classical, and has a stunning location overlooking the river towards the weir. Nevertheless, it has virtually no pedestrian footfall from the street and is unlikely to be readily perceived as part of the Cultural Quarter. A trail initiative and new branded signage should be carefully designed to integrate this important offering into the wider cultural concept. • Beckett House: continue to explore options for this building that complement the Cultural Quarter experiences. • Work with MCC to review amenity and conceptual design for the proposed redevelopment site at the back of Tesco. Work towards creating connectivity between any tourism elements and the Cultural Quarter, to create an integrated Ballina visitor space. • Work through Ballina Flood Relief Scheme to maximise the enhancements of the riverside area and its connections through treed space back into the Cultural Quarter. • Festivals: Use events such as the Ballina Salmon Festival, the longest running community event on the Wild Atlantic Way, to highlight the community's heritage and cultural neighbourhoods, and to elevate Ballina's position on the Wild Atlantic Way.		

Catalyst Project	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
	BELLEEK WOODS The 200-acre site is one of Europe's largest urban woodlands. It offers an exceptional experience of Irish woodlands and their native wildlife within walkable access of the centre of Ballina, with walking and cycle trails that connect through to the Monasteries of the Moy recreational trail. The rich cultural heritage of the area, Belleek Castle and the associated restaurants, the Distillery, and the intent to prioritise an active transportation cycling link between the Quay and Belleek Woods Work are all working together to position Belleek Woods as a core tourism asset of Ballina and North Mayo. • Undertake an assessment of the arrival experience into the Woods and determine whether there is potential to create a stronger tree-lined arrival route. The current access route provides an underwhelming approach. • Explore new uses of the restored Gate Lodge that complement Ballina's heritage of life, land and sea. • Continue to work on trail maintenance, signage and general orientation (particularly at point of arrival). • Continue to work on the restoration of the pond, and develop interpretive panels that will highlight the related themes of sustainability and biodiversity. • Continue to work on the preservation and presentation of local heritage elements, including the Hermitage, the boathouse and the graveyard.	Plans and projects associated with Belleek Woods (the development and maintenance of trails and associated infrastructure, and pond restoration), as well as potential increased visitor numbers, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes

Catalyst Project	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
Killala Town	TOWER HUB INITIATIVE - Support the re-imagination of the Tower Bar as an orientation point to the town's heritage, biodiversity and its perspective on sustainability; and, as a community hub that will stimulate social engagement and learning. - Assist with developing interpretive themes for its integrated Killala Story Space. This will provide an ideal opportunity to bring forward the themes relating to Killala, including the Souterrain, the Humbert theme and the story of the French invasion, the monastic heritage and neolithic archaeology. Killala sits adjacent to the largest monastic cluster in the country and within an area that has a high density of ring forts, and is therefore well located to bring these themes to life through static and audio-visual interpretation, guided activities, events and storytelling. - Similarly, the town's emphasis on wind power and its diversity of ecosystems and designated sites provides a strong basis for bringing these themes to the fore, and celebrating local aspirations and achievements. - Work with partners to develop a programme of tourism education and training. - Position the Tower Hub as a staging point for new guided experiences within Killala and beyond. Work towards developing new guides and provide the mechanisms for promoting and booking local experiences.	The actions associated with the Tower Hub Initiative are centred around the Tower Bar and Killala's heritage, and will not result in any changes beyond the town itself, or impacts to the sensitive habitats. The celebration of the town's emphasis on wind power and its diversity of ecosystems and designated sites is a high-level action, and therefore it can be concluded that it will not lead to an adverse effect on any European site.	No

Catalyst Project	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
	KILLALA PIER AREA The Killala Town Centre First Plan has a series of recommendations designed to revitalise the harbour area, improve the public realm and strengthen connectivity with the town centre. All of these actions will support the objectives of this DEDP. In particular, the following are highlighted: - Continue to explore options for the sensitive development of the community council owned land on Geyerris Head as a small-scale campervan and camping site, with shower and toilet facilities. These facilities could also be used to service visitors arriving by yacht and those using the pier area to access water sports. - In the short term, develop provisional camping facilities at the Community Centre. (In both cases consider the Rosses Point and Strandhill model which sees user fees being invested back into maintenance of the site and into wider aspects of community tourism). - Support the feasibility and environmental assessments that will arise from pursuing this initiative given that the community land is located within the Killala Bay / Moy Estuary Special Area of Conservation. Elements of the site are reclaimed land from former dredging activity – careful attention needs to be directed towards mitigating any likely environmental impact on the adjacent sand and mudflats. - Explore options to purchase fresh catch at the pier and/or a seafood experience. - Continue discussions regarding accessibility from the sea into the harbour area. A preliminary dredging report has been prepared. The last dredging maintenance took place in the 1990s. With some degree of dredging, it would be possible to open up Killala to additional boat traffic and to create boating access to Moyne Abbey. This in turn could strengthen the concept of a water recreational trail between Ballina Quay and Killala. It would also provide an opportunity for tender vessels to transport passengers from smaller berthed cruise ships in the Bay, as a more sheltered option to Kilcummin. The development of a walking trail and boardwalk to Ross Beach would further strengthen the pier area as the starting point.	Plans and projects in the Killala Pier Area, (such as the development of a campervan and camping site and associated facilities at Geyerris Head, a seafood experience, increased water vessels and associated dredging in the harbour, and a walking trail and boardwalk to Ross Beach), as well as potential increased visitor numbers, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes

Catalyst Project	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
	MONASTERIES OF THE MOY The monasteries represent one of the most concentrated monastic archaeological clusters in the country and a key asset in the story of North Mayo. • Work with partners, including MCC and OPW to prepare a strategy for the ongoing development of the visitor experience, including access, interpretation, directional signage, infrastructure for cyclists, and the potential for outdoor events. Establish a strong vision for this experience. • Link the story back to the ruined Augustinian Abbey beside St Muiredach's Cathedral in Ballina. • Work through the proposed Killala Tower Hub initiative to support storytelling, both at the hub building and through guided services. • Progress the work on improving access and parking at Moyne Abbey, and improve access to Rosserk Abbey.	Plans and projects associated with the Monasteries of the Moy, (such as the development infrastructure for the visitor experience including that relating to cyclists, and improved access and parking at Moyne Abbey and Rosserk Abbey), as well as potential increased visitor numbers, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes

Catalyst Project	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
Accommodation	Strategic Partnership Focus To position North Mayo as a premier destination along the Wild Atlantic Way, Fáilte Ireland will work closely with the local authority to support the stimulation of new accommodation across North Mayo. This will involve actively pursuing the development of distinctive, high-quality accommodation offerings that reflect the region's unique character through focusing on the following: - Identifying and enabling strategic sites for eco-lodges, boutique guesthouses, and heritage conversions that align with the area's natural and cultural assets. - Engaging with investors and developers to promote innovative models such as glamping, wellness retreats, and experiential stays that appeal to emerging market segments. - Supporting planning and infrastructure readiness to fast-track viable projects, particularly in underutilized or high-potential areas. - Collaborating with local communities to ensure developments are sustainable, inclusive, and contribute to year-round tourism. Collaborating with An Bord Pleanála and MCC to address the growing interest in nature-immersed accommodation experiences in remote areas. Opportunities exist for innovative glamping facilities, often as a form of agritourism, though current planning policies may limit potential.	Plans and projects associated with accommodation in North Mayo, (such as the development of new accommodation sites and establishment, the development of eco-lodges, boutique guesthouses, and heritage conversions, and the development of glamping facilities), and as well as potential increased visitor numbers, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes

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	Serviced, Outdoor And Holiday Let Accommodation Additional specific initiatives include: - Encouraging current accommodation businesses to invest in upgrades and extensions, such as those needed to support the golf market and Carne Golf Links. - Identify strategies to reopen or redevelop stalled projects or closed premises. - Highlight options for increasing hostel accommodation in areas offering wild adventure, focusing on communities like Killala, Ballycastle, Belmullet, and Bangor Erris. This includes regenerating and repurposing buildings no longer in commercial use, such as the old grain store in Killala and the disused building at Bellacorick. Support the proposed renovation and development of Kilmurray Yards as a multi-faceted accommodation concept, recognising that it strongly aligns with the experiential themes in this plan and has the potential to strengthen the offering in the Crossmolina area with its distinctive focus on wellness.	Plans and projects associated with Serviced, Outdoor And Holiday Let Accommodation, (such as upgrades and extensions at and near Carne Golf Links, and increased accommodation and development to buildings not in use), and as well as potential increased visitor numbers, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes

Catalyst Project	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
	Camping and Motorhome Infrastructure There is a distinct shortage of camping infrastructure across North Mayo and a growing issue of wild camping in sensitive and scenic areas, such as Rinroe Beach. The lack of managed toilets or waste disposal services in many areas exacerbates the situation and increases the negative environmental impact. Support communities and private investors in increasing camping facilities from a policy perspective, such as proposed initiatives for Killala Pier, Rossport, and Belmullet. • Encourage further development of facilities at informal field sites, particularly those near towns and villages with supporting food and drink options, such as in Ballycastle. • Promote the development and use of legitimate waste management ('sani-dump') facilities for campervans. For example, RV Dump Sites (https://rvdumpsites.net/) provides a searchable database of facilities across North America with user-generated content.	Plans and projects associated with Camping and Motorhome Infrastructure, (such as the development of camping facilities, and the development of waste management facilities for campervans), and as well as potential increased visitor numbers, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes

Catalyst Project	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
Building capacity	LEADERSHIP AND NETWORKING - Establish a North Mayo Implementation Working Group that can assess the implementation of the DEDP and determine the necessary actions to secure success on an ongoing basis. The structure and approach taken in Clew Bay with the establishment of the Clew Bay Tourism Network (CBTN) should be mirrored in North Mayo with cross-sector representation to enable good dialogue between all key tourism actors. - Ensure that the two groups work together on projects that benefit both regions, such as Dark Skies, the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve initiative, and inter-regional trails projects. - Adopt a similar approach to the Clew Bay Tourism Network in areas relating to networking, reporting of progress and overall communication. The monthly news bulletins that the CBTN produces on industry-related news, the progress reports on the DEDP's implementation, and the online posting of the reports and initiatives arising from the implementation of the DEDP keeps everyone up to date, and generates both pride in overall accomplishment and a sense of momentum arising from such progress. o Hold an annual North Mayo networking meeting to review implementation of the DEDP. - Continue to build on the initiation of county-wide networking events – both across the county and within the North Mayo region. Creating a networking platform will foster partnerships and provide new opportunities for cross-selling between sectors – particularly between accommodation businesses and activity operators. - Combine networking events with local familiarisation tours to increase industry knowledge.	The actions associated with Leadership and Networking do not involve any physical changes on the ground, and concerned with networking, engagement and promotion. Therefore it can be concluded that it will not lead to an adverse effect on any European site.	No

	CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT • Work with Fáilte Ireland to engage industry in business support programmes relating to climate, digitisation, accommodation development, people and performance and commercial resilience. ○ In particular, encourage uptake in Fáilte Ireland's industry digitalisation initiatives to improve visibility of North Mayo's visitor experiences, and to enhance bookability. The national emphasis on encouraging the establishment of national booking platforms will boost operational efficiencies. Businesses will be assisted in developing a bespoke digital transformation roadmap and action plan, and will be given one-to-one support designed to move entrepreneurs along the journey of maturity. • Encourage increased participation on existing booking platforms. • Adopt a cluster development approach to support emerging new niche sectors. Three key areas include: ○ Agri-tourism: this potential sector needs an entrepreneurial development programme that will highlight new opportunities and nurture innovative thinking and business development on a one-to-one basis. ○ The Gaeltacht: work with Údarás na Gaeltachta to facilitate the initiatives recommended for supporting adventure operators and community groups seeking to strengthen local heritage experiences. ○ Activity operators bring value to the overall development of tourism. Target special interest groups, such as local walking and hiking groups, other activity groups, heritage groups and conservation groups to identify potential opportunities for promoting new and strengthening existing business development. Here again, niche sector training will be required. • Work through networking and mentorship programmes to create composite offerings and to strengthen emerging clusters. These programmes should also address succession planning and ways of attracting the next generation into the tourism industry. • Strengthen existing image banks with imagery that depicts the sense of wildness and wilderness found in North Mayo, and ensure that images relating to all aspects of our heritage of life, land and sea are maximised to portray the dynamic offering that is available.	The actions associated with Capability Development do not involve any physical changes on the ground, and concerned with networking, engagement and promotion. Therefore it can be concluded that it will not lead to an adverse effect on any European site.	No
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Catalyst Project	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
	○ Ensure that there is representative imagery of accessible and inclusive tourism. • Work across industry to encourage participation in Fáilte Ireland's Climate Action Programme. • Encourage industry's participation in training that relates to accessibility and inclusion. • Work with communities and businesses to explore ways of strengthening niche markets. Many communities are already tapping into such markets (education and field studies, diaspora and genealogy, Argentina, the UK angling market). It is likely that with a more strategic approach, these markets could be further leveraged. • Continue to work closely with Mayo North Tourism to build a strong regional marketing voice, and work collaboratively to strengthen a coordinated approach at trade shows and events such as Meitheal.		

Table 4-4 Evaluation of Potential Adverse Effects as a result of Supporting Initiatives

Catalyst Project and Objective	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
Infrastructure to support water-based activities	• Conduct a comprehensive assessment of all piers and slipways that are being used for leisure and amenity purposes, with an emphasis on pier maintenance and safety issues, parking requirements, supporting facilities, and how leisure usage can be managed alongside other forms of traditional commercial usage. • Develop ongoing maintenance plans for the piers and slipways. The following piers should be addressed as a priority given their immediate potential to support water-based activity and adventure.	Plans and projects associated with the development of piers and slipways and water-based activities, as well as potential increased visitor numbers, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes

Catalyst Project and Objective	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
	BLACKSOD PIER: • As a matter of urgency, develop an agreement between MCC and current users to address maintenance and cleaning issues that will improve visitor safety. • Develop visitor servicing facilities in line with the emerging role of the pier area for a range of activities: ○ Install portaloos during the main visitor season. These will service visitors to the Lighthouse, as well as visitors going to the Inishkea Islands (an important consideration identified in the Inishkea Management Plan). ○ Work with Comharchumann Forbartha Ionad Deirbhile (CFID) to install a portable service centre at the pier that will provide Wi-Fi connectivity, light refreshments and ticketing services for Blacksod Lighthouse, Solas, boat operators and other water activity providers. • Continue to assess infrastructural requirements to develop direct access to Doogort. The initial opportunity lies in providing cyclists with a link to Achill Island and the Great Western Greenway. • Re-evaluate the marina plans that were drawn up for Blacksod approximately five years ago. The deep water and the shelter than the harbour offers could be developed to attract a wider boating sector.	Plans and projects associated with Blacksod Pier, (such as infrastructural developments), as well as potential increased visitor numbers, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes

Catalyst Project and Objective	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
	KILLALA PIER The significance of Killala Pier as a tourism asset will grow substantially with the implementation of the Killala Town Centre First Plan. In summary, this DEDP supports the proposed public realm projects that are targeting the harbour area and are recommending a 'harbour makeover' that would activate the pier area with improvements to the linkages with the town, the addition of seating, shelters, public toilets and showers, and the development of camping facilities in the adjacent lands. These actions will enhance the appeal of Killala as a new diving base (following the sinking of the Shingle to form an artificial reef), and will support the growth of water-based activities, including the potential for boat tours to Kilcummin, Ballina and Enniscrone.	Plans and projects associated with Killala Pier, (such as development of the pier), as well as potential increased visitor numbers, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes
	KILCUMMIN PIER: Kilcummin is increasingly recognised as a base for surfing, kayaking, swimming, fishing, diving, snorkeling, and has hosted national events in water sports. The pier offers easy access to deep, clear water year-round and does not require boats to facilitate access to these waters (unlike Killala and Ballina). - Address immediate maintenance issues relating to cleaning the steps and the slipway. - Develop a change facility at the pier to meet the growing needs of the outdoor adventure sector, and to strengthen the positioning of North Mayo as an adventure hub.	Plans and projects associated with Kilcummin Pier, (such as development of a change facility at the pier), as well as potential increased visitor numbers, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes

Catalyst Project and Objective	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
	KILLERDUFF, RATHLACKAN, BALLYCASTLE • Address immediate safety and maintenance issues to facilitate the outdoor sector and to service ongoing needs relating to fishing, and search and rescue. • Continue to work with the Céide Coast Community Company to assess the feasibility of developing a tidal pool at Killerduff, and to advance the concept accordingly.	Plans and projects associated with Killerduff, Rathlackan, and Ballycastle, (such as development of a tidal pool), as well as potential increased visitor numbers, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes

Catalyst Project and Objective	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
	In addition to the importance of addressing pier and slipway related issues, there are wider coastal issues that need to be given consideration. ROSS BEACH - Implement the upgrades to toilet facilities with the recently acquired funds to prevent the current problems arising from over-use and limited tank capacity. - Undertake a feasibility study on a proposed coastal walkway or alternative water-based connectivity between Killala and Ross Beach. This will strengthen the appeal of Killala as a coastal base for walking and will reduce vehicular traffic. RINROE BEACH - Undertake an assessment of the environmental impact of wild camping in commonage areas. This is a growing issue since the Covid pandemic. Identify appropriate actions to mitigate impact.	Plans and projects associated with Ross Beach and Rinroe Beach, (such as upgrades to toilet facilities and the development of a costal walkway), as well as potential increased visitor numbers, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes
Initiatives to support angling	- Work with IFI to heighten the tourism industry's awareness of the importance of this sector, and the needs of the visitor who comes to North Mayo for an angling trip, including a good drying room, access to a freezer, flexibility regarding meals, packed lunches, and angling material. Highlight core resources, including the County Mayo Game Angling Guide, and ensure that businesses servicing this sector have a good working knowledge of game angling in North Mayo. - Support angling through developing new imagery of the activity. The anglers fly-fishing in the centre of Ballina is a unique image that highlights the presence of 'our wild adventure' even within an urban context.	The actions associated with heightening the tourism industry's awareness of the importance of this sector, and supporting angling through developing new imagery of the activity, do not involve any physical changes on the ground, and are primarily concerned with promotion. Therefore it can be concluded that it will not lead to an adverse effect on any European site.	No

Catalyst Project and Objective	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
	• Work with IFI develop a strategy that will encourage the return of operators to the charter business. Changes to national policy and insurance requirements have caused this sector to shrink, and sea angling has become under utilised as a base for angling in North Mayo. ○ Continue to highlight the impressive number of species that can be caught at sea.	The actions associated with encouraging the return of operators to the charter business do not involve any physical changes on the ground, and are primarily concerned with promotion. Therefore, it can be concluded that it will not lead to an adverse effect on any European site.	No
	• Continue to improve the angling experience and public awareness of related issues of sustainability: ○ Work with local angling clubs, community groups and the IFI to identify infrastructural improvements that are required to improve access to the experience and the quality of it – such as bush clearance, the erection of stiles and footbridges, and provision for wheelchair access. Clubs, such as the Bangor Erris Angling Club, have been very active in this regard with the recent development of the marina on Carrowmore Lake. ○ Assist the Cill Chomáin community to develop angling platforms at Portacloy and Rinroe. ○ Similarly, work collaboratively to highlight where habitat enhancement projects, such as the need to improve rivers in terms of spawning, and identify steps required to undertake projects. Use such situations to review opportunities for regenerative tourism, where visitors could get actively involved in restoration projects. ○ Work with IFI and tourism operators to assist IFI in developing packages, such as events that focus on attracting women, and continue promoting community events that celebrate the angling sector. • Work with the IFI to further develop the concept of the salmon tours of the weir, and workable solutions for delivering the experience on a regular basis.	Plans and projects associated with improving the angling experience, (such as infrastructural improvements) and the development of Salmon tours, as well as potential increased visitor numbers, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, direct mortality, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes

Catalyst Project and Objective	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
Initiatives to strengthen Lough Conn and Lough Cullen water trail and eco-adventure	- Establish a cross-community stakeholder group, inclusive of NPWS, farming groups, land owners, Fáilte Ireland, and relevant activity operators to engage in preliminary discussions. - Build on the recent Council proposal to develop a LIFE project in Pontoon to explore opportunities for the lakes and Drummin Woods. - Review the 2021 Crossmolina to Foxford 'Blueway' initiative, and determine what prevented this initiative from maintaining a position in the marketplace. - Explore the potential to develop an appropriate water-based experience with associated elements of land-based activities, taking into account the camping facilities at Gortnor Abbey Pier, the potential to develop additional facilities at the pier, and the NPWS proposed concept for a reserve and a rare breeds base at Enniscoe House. - Use the planning process to identify a location for a pontoon that is available for use on Lough Conn. - Assess suitability for new infrastructure that will provide an experience in keeping with the sensitive environment while still allowing for good access to the water.	The actions associated with initiatives to strengthen Lough Conn and Lough Cullen water trail and eco-adventure do not involve any physical changes on the ground, and are primarily concerned with networking, reviewing past project outcomes, and exploring the potential for projects around Lough Conn and Lough Cullen. The outcome of these action are stakeholder groups and reports, rather than infrastructure development. Therefore it can be concluded that it will not lead to an adverse effect on any European site.	No

Networking storytelling and visitor/interpretive centres	• Develop a mapped database of the story elements across the region, identifying where the stories are presented to the visitor. Key themes include: ○ Legends and mythology ○ The Neolithic sites and the wider story of early agriculture ○ Sacred landscapes of early ecclesiastical heritage and Patrician sites, and medieval monastic heritage • Develop new collateral that presents the key themes and stories of North Mayo and where each one can be explored. ○ Highlight the linkages between interpretive / visitor centres and sites on the ground that present more of the same story. ○ Position the interpretive / visitor centres as points on a journey of discovery, rather than standalone attractions. • Work with themes to explore ways of consolidating disparate elements into a stronger and more cohesive offering that will encourage extended lengths of stay. Assess interest for building a network of interpretive centres/themed attractions to work on the wider North Mayo story. The emigration and genealogy theme is an example of one that can be explored from different angles and in different places. Elements include: ○ Solas Visitor Centre ○ North Mayo Heritage Centre ○ Blacksod Memorial Garden – the story of the emigrant ships • With this particular theme, consider establishing a working group of ‘experts’ from across North Mayo to discuss ways of strengthening existing saleable experiences and encouraging further exploration of North Mayo. • Reassess the Humbert theme and its presence on the ground (Kilcummin, Killala, Ballina, Lahardane, into Castlebar). This storyline has had stronger traction in the past, and has seen a level of revival with the 225th anniversary events of the French Landing. Assuming that the theme may find a base in the proposed Killala Tower Hub, explore the potential to strengthen its presence on the ground through new way marking or through the development of an annual hiking event.	The actions associated with networking, storytelling and visitor/interpretive centres do not involve any physical changes on the ground, and are primarily concerned with geo-databases, networking, engagement, and promotion. Therefore it can be concluded that it will not lead to an adverse effect on any European site.	No
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	• Explore further development options for the Táin Bó Flíodhaise Cattle Raid story and develop a preliminary feasibility plan on its potential as an attractor. • Liaise with Irish Lights to explore tourism options for Ballyglass Lighthouse and ways of heightening the story of lighthouses and coastguard stations within Erris. • Continue to support the community in Foxford with strengthening the Admiral Brown story. Focus on developing significant recognition in 2027 – the 250th anniversary of his birth. Work with MCC to identify possible locations for the former museum. INTERPRETIVE / VISITOR CENTRES • Conduct a full inventory of all the interpretive/visitor centres in terms of thematic content, visitor services and facilities, and programming. Use this assessment to highlight gaps, opportunities and new ways of leveraging the centres as a network of experiences. • Consider ticketing options that would encourage visits to multiple centres. Where feasible, use centres as booking locations for extended guided experiences and activities allowing visitors to explore key themes beyond the walls of the centre • SOLAS: this is the tourism hub for the Mullet Peninsula – ensure that it has a strong food offering that is focused on local foods and well networked with local suppliers. ○ Work towards developing an innovative programme of activities and events that will raise the profile of the centre and increase footfall, including a new AV/AR experience. Any programme of events should be integrated into a wider programme of events offered by other centres within the network. • MICHAEL DAVITT MUSEUM: explore options to move forward with the initiatives that the Museum itself is proposing, including the need for a reconfiguration of existing space, a refresh of the exhibits and implementation of the 2024 interpretation plan, and the potential for a new auditorium. • NORTH MAYO HERITAGE CENTRE: explore opportunities to further upgrade the centre and its storytelling role in rural traditions. Continue to expand its profile in geneology.		
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Catalyst Project and Objective	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
	• FOXFORD WOOLLEN MILL: consider the potential for developing new higher-end exclusive experiences that will give a small group a private and immersive experience, in addition to the current tours. • OWENINNY: continue to develop and implement the proposed recreation plan to further diversify the experience and broaden the centre's appeal. • Work with bespoke operators to develop new North Mayo themed tours that take in a number of centres in any given tour.		

Strengthening emerging sectors	THE CREATIVE ARTS SECTOR Tír Sáile represents North Mayo's iconic expression of the artist's interpretation of the landscape and mythology through sculpture. The sculpture trail was established in 1993 and is the largest public arts trail ever undertaken in Ireland. It currently consists of 11 works between Killala and Blacksod. Over time, many of the works have fallen into disrepair and the trail no longer enjoys the same degree of recognition or visibility. There is still a high level of pride and commitment to the trail, and a full review was undertaken in 2024 to assess how it could be elevated again as a key product offering. • Implement the findings of the report – A Review of the Tír Sáile Sculpture Trail. This should include the recommended decommissionings of sites that have been lost to the landscape, the repair actions, and improvements to interpretation and signage. Access and road repair issues need to be addressed, and new marketing collateral should be developed. • Reposition the trail to include the Spirit of Place sculptures, highlighting the evolution of the original trail in the interpretive overview. • The review recommends the addition of audio narratives at the various sites. This should include the option of listening to the narrative in the Irish language for all the installations in the Gaeltacht. • As recommended in the report, consider further enhancing the experience through AR and digital storytelling. • Assess options for improving inclusion and accessibility for all. • Use all arts facilities and visitor centres to promote the Tír Sáile experience. • Work towards identifying strategies that will further strengthen the arts in existing centres and explore the economic return that is generated through the arts. There are already strong linkages with North America (Ballinglen Arts Foundation), Dublin (potentially through the proposition for the new cultural centre to be housed in the barracks building in Ballina), and with the wider regional market (the Ballina Arts Centre), while Áras Inis Gluaire in Belmullet is Ireland's only bilingual arts centre with deep diaspora connections. ○ Establish an arts working group that can identify ways of leveraging the region's artistic strengths to extend the length of stay. The galleries can play	The actions associated with strengthening the creative arts sector are concerned with networking, engagement, promotion, and the addition of signage in the towns within the Plan boundary. Therefore there is no risk of adverse effects', and it can be concluded that it will not lead to an adverse effect on any European site.	No
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	a role similar to the visitor centres in encouraging movement around the region. • While the arts in North Mayo have always drawn their inspiration from the landscape, the synergy between the arts and the environment has intensified and provides a strong basis of differentiation. The emerging artistic voices and forms of dialogue are expressing the bio-cultural identity of North Mayo in exciting new ways, and are playing a stronger role in elevating environmental issues. These trends have the potential to significantly underpin potential work on the proposed UNESCO Biosphere Reserve initiative. ○ Explore the feasibility of presenting Art in the Landscape Festival of Change on an ongoing basis – whether in the original format or an adapted format that can be sustained more readily. The inaugural two-day event was hosted in both Offaly and North Mayo in 2024, offering a diverse range of opportunities for participants to discuss art in the landscape, experience different forms of artistic expression inspired by landscape, and gain insights on place-making through art. ○ Promote the intrinsic value and the activities relating to new forms of environmental dialogue through the arts. These are already happening at community level (e.g. the Creative Ireland BluePrint project that looked at climate change and flooding in Crossmolina together with communities in Northern Ireland), and have the potential to generate new market interest and overnight stays from non-traditional markets. ○ Similarly, promote the work of Wilderland project - a public art and community ecology project in Mayo that is using creative processes and art in the landscape to deepen people's appreciation of their environment, including processes such as rewilding Wild Nephin National Park. Opening these events to the visitor has significant potential to deepen their relationship with both place and community, and will likely generate repeat visitation from the domestic market. It will also highlight North Mayo's core commitment to sustainability. • Work with artisans to identify bespoke opportunities that will profile traditional skills and offer enriched experiences. Examples include the story of wool processing (Carrowteige and Ballycastle), and the potential for a lace-making activity in Belmullet.		
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	AGRITOURISM AND LOCAL FOODS • Address the gaps in this area of experiences through working with emerging entrepreneurs and identifying new potential business operators – with a focus on a cluster-based approach. ○ Build on the work of businesses that are showing a strong commitment to regenerative farming and sustainability practices. Examples include the organic garden at North Mayo Heritage Centre, the Elly Bay Farm, the potential horticultural business at Rossport, and producers such as Black Book Foods. Consider developing new training/learning experiences around these businesses that would add value to their existing activities and could offer the potential for new overnight stays. ○ Develop a training programme that highlights good practice elsewhere. Knocknarea Farm in Strandhill, for example, not only provides an opportunity to buy organic produce direct, but also offers foraging tours and 'pop-up' overnight immersive retreats. Similarly, but on a much larger scale, Glen Keen Farm at Louisburgh provides a multi-faceted agritourism experience that integrates tourism with agriculture and conservation in an innovative and award-winning way. ○ Work with farm businesses to explore appropriate options for developing farm-based accommodation and low-service facilities to expand opportunities for visitors to in rural settings. ○ Develop and pilot a cluster-based mentorship programme. Participants could be selected on the basis of application. The programme should work through developing a market-ready, shelf-stable product to offer local markets and/or an immersive experience on the farm, from initial business concept to piloted market entry. • Work with existing restaurants and local suppliers to strengthen the presence of local foods in restaurant menus. Opportunities to eat local fish are very limited, and discussions are required to explore new ways of addressing this gap. • Work with distilleries to promote related tours, tastings and visitor experiences. • Continue to highlight and build experiences around local products and achievements, such as brown bread (Pulathomas), seaweed soda bread (Belmullet), honey mead (Carrowteige), Erris lamb; and work with distillery and brewery businesses to bring new recognition to the region's spirits and beers.	The actions associated with strengthening the agritourism and local foods sector do not involve any physical changes on the ground, and are concerned with networking, engagement, promotion. Therefore it can be concluded that it will not lead to an adverse effect on any European site.	No
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	ECOTOURISM AND BIODIVERSITY The ecological value of the North Mayo landscapes is well recognised and large tracts are designated areas under EU and national legislation. While developing experiences in these areas has to be handled with a keen awareness for their environmental sensitivity, it also highlights an opportunity for low-impact ecotourism and educational tourism. • Continue to encourage communities, such as Ballycastle, that have developed strong educational markets for field studies to build new academic links and to explore ways of enhancing the destination experience for the incoming 'field-students'. • Work with registered tour guides to identify opportunities for bookable eco-tours. Guided bird watching in particular, offers scope for further growth. Enhancing these eco-tour experiences with opportunities to engage in local community activities will further strengthen the offering for this niche market. • Work with the Clew Bay Tourism Network and related partners to explore the opportunity to advance the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve concept – with the possible intent of extending its boundaries into North Mayo. As has been documented in the Preliminary Scoping/Feasibility Study for the proposed Biosphere Reserve, the concept has significant potential to further shape and underpin tourism offerings that promote the ecological and bio-cultural values of the area. Biosphere Reserves elsewhere, including all that were documented in the case-studies, have used the UNESCO designation to further develop sustainable tourism. ○ The recommendations for the creative arts sector and for agritourism and local foods could all gain uplift from this designation. • Support Mayo NE in their exploratory enquiries to look at developing a centre that focuses on the theme of bog restoration – potentially in Bangor Erris. ○ Work with partners to develop and promote opportunities to engage in regenerative activities, such as eradication of invasive species, and bog restoration. • Dark Skies – work with Ballycastle and Belmullet to position the towns as northern gateways to the Mayo Dark Skies Park. • Work with Mayo Dark Sky Park to coordinate promotion of events.	Actions associated with strengthening the ecotourism and biodiversity sector, (such as the development of eco-tour experiences), as well as potential increased visitor numbers, have the potential to adversely affect European sites through disturbance. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes
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Catalyst Project and Objective	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
Accessibility	Accessibility Transport To North Mayo • Work with Bus Éireann and TII to explore opportunities to strengthen timely bus connections with Ireland West Airport, Knock. In particular, assess and strengthen linkages with flights arriving from the UK. • Encourage dialogue between public transport to streamline time-tabling to facilitate convenient movement from one form of transport to another to complete a journey. • Continue to promote direct rail linkages with Dublin, and the opportunities to travel by train within the county.	The potential increased visitor numbers associated with improved accessibility, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes

Catalyst Project and Objective	Actions	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
	Access Within North Mayo • Work with Bus Éireann and/or Local Link to create new public transport linkages along the north coastal route with a particular emphasis on supporting the Céide Coast Path. Ideally this service should be a flexible pick-up and drop-off service. • Review connectivity in general and work with Bus Éireann and Local Link to address critical gaps and improve local service. • Conduct an assessment of all roads to key attractions and Tír Sáile installations. Prioritise repair issues on roads such as to Doohoma Discovery Point, and the access to Kilcummin loop walk. • Explore opportunities to improve/recreate access to viewsapes for visitors touring North Mayo – for example, the R310 as it runs parallel to Lough Conn. • Explore opportunities to open up and/or improve opportunities to pull off the road to appreciate the panoramic views – for example, along the N59. Where there are existing pull-offs that provide a significant view, assess the potential to improve the experience through interpretation. • Work with relevant agencies such as the Irish Wheelchair Association and the National Disability Authority to conduct appraisals of accessibility at sites and attractions across the region, and address issues where feasible. • Work with businesses to promote digital accessibility and compliance with the EU Accessibility Act.	The potential increased visitor numbers associated with improved access within North Mayo, have the potential to adversely affect European sites. This could be through habitat loss and fragmentation, disturbance, introduction or spread of invasive species or habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction. Therefore, adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded and mitigation is required.	Yes

Table 4-5 Evaluation of Potential Adverse Effects as a result of the Wild Mayo DEDP Target Outcomes.

Target Outcome	Summary	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
Target Outcome 1	Increased levels of domestic and international visitors across the region.	Increased visitor numbers could lead to the loss of habitats, including habitats that are Qualifying Interests of European Sites, and also habitats that are not Qualifying Interests but support Qualifying Interest habitats and species.	Yes
Target Outcome 2	Growth in accommodation offering.	These Target Outcomes are a set of high-level targets, and therefore it can be concluded that they will not lead to an adverse effect on any European site.	No
Target Outcome 3	Investment in visitor attractions and activities growing the appeal of the destination in international and domestic markets.		
Target Outcome 4	Active collaborative tourism networks growing the profile and appeal through cohesive Wild Mayo marketing.		
Target Outcome 5	Growth in the number of food experiences on offer and in the availability of local produce on restaurant menus.		
Target Outcome 6	Improved connectivity for international tourists from Ireland West Airport, Knock and other regional bases.		
Target Outcome 7	Interpretive experiences bring the region's stories to life, fostering emotional connections and cultural appreciation.		
Target Outcome 8	Celebrated and immersive Irish language experiences.		
Target Outcome 9	North Mayo becomes recognised as a spectacular outdoors destination offering immersive wilderness and adventure for all.		

Target Outcome	Summary	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
Target Outcome 10	Agreed approach to sustainable tourism development embraced by our visitors, tourism industry and local community.		

Table 4-6 Evaluation of Potential Adverse Effects as a result of the Wild Mayo DEDP Key Performance Indicators (KPI's).

Key Performance Indicators	Summary	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation required?
KPI 1	Increase tourism revenue by 10% measured through Key Account Management (KAM) data and business surveys.	These Key Performance Indicators relate to business, and visitor experience, and therefore it can be concluded that they will not lead to an adverse effect on any European site.	No
KPI 2	Maintain visitor satisfaction at 91% as measured by the Destination Attitudes Survey (DAS).		
KPI 3	Achieve 10% growth in visitation to attractions and activity providers, measured through KAM data and business surveys.	Increased visitor numbers could lead to the loss of habitats, including habitats that are Qualifying Interests of European Sites, and also habitats that are not Qualifying Interests but support Qualifying Interest habitats and species.	Yes
KPI 4	Contribute to maintaining or increasing Co. Mayo residents' positive perception of tourism delivering benefits for host communities, within the social and environmental capacity of the destination, measured through Tourism Approval Rating (TAR) scores	This Key Performance Indicator relates to public perception, and therefore it can be concluded that they will not lead to an adverse effect on any European site.	No

5.0 MITIGATION

5.1 Principles and Approach

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

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

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

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

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

Table 5-1 Mitigation Measures

Source	Relevant Catalyst Project/ Supporting Initiative / Target Outcome / KPI	Potential Adverse Effect	Mitigation Measure (s) ⁷	Residual Effects
The construction and operation of tourism-related infrastructure and development, as well as increased visitor numbers during operation	<u>Catalyst Projects:</u> 1. The Céide Coastal Path and Downpatrick Head 2. The Western Way and North Mayo Trails Network 3. The Gaeltacht 4. Ballina Town 5. Killala Town 6. Accommodation 7. Capacity Building <u>Supporting Initiatives</u> 1. Infrastructure to support water-based activities 2. Initiatives to support angling 3. Initiatives to strengthen Lough Conn and Lough Cullen water trail and eco-adventure 4. Networking storytelling and visitor / interpretive centres 5. Strengthening emerging sectors - o The creative arts sector - o Agritourism and local foods - o Ecotourism and biodiversity	Habitat loss and fragmentation	The potential for habitat loss and fragmentation will be mitigated through the implementation of the Policy Objectives as laid out in the adopted Mayo County Development Plan 2022 – 2028, including the following: • Strategic County Development Plan Objective SO9 • Biodiversity, Designated and Non-Designated Sites Objectives NEO 6, NEO 14, NEO 18, NEO 35 The 4th National Biodiversity Plan including: • Outcome 3A (Sustainable tourism) • Outcome 3B (Biodiversity and tourism) Visitor Management Guidelines for the Wild Atlantic Way (June 2020) development by Fáilte Ireland contains principles and objectives with consideration for environmental protection, which includes habitats. The assessment of effects of plans and projects stemming from the DEDP will be undertaken by competent experts and in accordance with best practice guidelines, including the guidelines published by the National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS), Chartered Institute of Ecological and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), including any subsequent updates. Ecological surveys and assessment will be carried out in accordance with the following best practice guidance and any subsequent updates: • CIEEM (2024) <i>Guidelines for the Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine</i>. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.	Provided the mitigation measures prescribed in this NIR are implemented, the DEDP, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, will not adversely affect the integrity of the any European site

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

Source	Relevant Catalyst Project/ Supporting Initiative / Target Outcome / KPI	Potential Adverse Effect	Mitigation Measure (s) ⁷	Residual Effects
	6. Accessibility Target Outcome: Increased levels of domestic and international visitors across the region. Key Performance Indicator: Achieve 10% growth in visitation to attractions and activity providers, measured through KAM data and business surveys.		- TII (2009) <i>Ecological Survey Techniques for Protected Flora and Fauna during the Planning of National Road Schemes</i>. Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Dublin. - Smith et al. (2011) <i>Best Practice Guidance for Habitat Survey and Mapping</i>. Heritage Council. Site specific surveys will be undertaken in accordance with these guidelines in order to identify Qualifying Interests, including non-Qualifying Interest species and habitats on which they rely, that may be affected by a plan or project. This will include surveys for mobile species which may be found outside the boundary of a European site.	
		Direct mortality	Pre-construction surveys will be carried out for Qualifying Interests, where required. The life span of ecological surveys and the requirement for pre-construction surveys will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, determined by a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist and informed by <i>Advice Note on the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys</i> (CIEEM, 2019). The following guidance and any subsequent updates will also be adhered to, where appropriate: - TII (2009) <i>Ecological Survey Techniques for Protected Flora and Fauna during the Planning of National Road Schemes</i>. Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Dublin. - Collins (2023) <i>Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines</i> (4th Edition). - Inland Fisheries Ireland (2016) <i>Guidelines on Protection of Fisheries During Construction Works and Adjacent to Waters</i>. - NIEA (2019) <i>Otters and Development</i>. Northern Ireland Environment Agency Where works are to be carried out in sensitive areas, a suitably qualified Ecological Clerk of Works will be employed to supervise the works. In-stream works will only take place between the 1st July and 30th September, unless otherwise agreed with Inland Fisheries Ireland. Site specific mitigation measures will be incorporated into any future	

Source	Relevant Catalyst Project/ Supporting Initiative / Target Outcome / KPI	Potential Adverse Effect	Mitigation Measure (s) ⁷	Residual Effects
			project(s) to reduce the risk to QI species and habitats, such as fencing, green bridges and hop-over planting.	
		Disturbance	The potential for disturbance to species will be mitigated through the implementation of the Policy Objectives as laid out in the adopted Mayo County Development Plan 2022 – 2028, including the following: • Strategic County Development Plan Objective SO9 • Rural Economy Policy EDO 54 • Biodiversity, Designated and Non-Designated Sites Objectives NEO 6, NEO 44, NEO 45, NEO 46 • Newport Settlement Plan Policy NTP 5 • Rural Settlement and Village Settlement Plan Policy RSVP 6 Visitor Management Guidelines for the Wild Atlantic Way (June 2020) development by Fáilte Ireland contains principles and objectives with consideration for environmental protection. Relevant legislation and guidance relating to noise, vibration, lighting and disturbance will be adhered to during the planning of projects, including, but not limited to: • CIEEM (2024) <i>Guidelines for the Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine</i>. version 1.2. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester. • Institution of Lighting Professionals (2020) <i>Guidance notes for the reduction of obtrusive light</i>. Guidance Note 01/20. Institution of lighting professionals, Regent House, Regent Place, Rugby, Warwickshire, UK. • Cutts, N, Hemingway K and Spencer J (2013) <i>The Waterbird Disturbance Mitigation Toolkit Informing Estuarine Planning and Construction Projects. Produced by the Institute of Estuarine and Coastal Studies</i>. Version 3.2.	

Source	Relevant Catalyst Project/ Supporting Initiative / Target Outcome / KPI	Potential Adverse Effect	Mitigation Measure (s) ⁷	Residual Effects
			• Collins (2023) <i>Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines</i> (4th Edition). • Inland Fisheries Ireland (2016) <i>Guidelines on Protection of Fisheries During Construction Works and Adjacent to Waters</i>. • NIEA (2019) <i>Otters and Development</i>. Northern Ireland Environment Agency.	
		Habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction	The potential for habitat degradation as a result of water quality reduction will be mitigated through the implementation of the Policy Objectives as laid out in the adopted Mayo County Development Plan 2022 – 2028, including the following: • Biodiversity, Designated and Non-Designated Sites Objectives NEO 6, NEO 42 • Biodiversity, Designated and Non-Designated Sites Policy CAP 9 • Renewable Energy Policy REP 1 Plans and projects will be designed, constructed and operated in accordance with relevant legislation and where applicable, with the following guidelines and any subsequent updates: • (TII, 2008) <i>Guidelines for the crossing of Watercourses During Construction of National Road Schemes</i> • (IFI, 2016) <i>Guidelines on Protection of Fisheries during Construction Works in and adjacent to Waters</i>. • CIRIA C753 The SUDS Manual • TII (2015) Road Drainage and the Water Environment. • CIRIA C753 The SUDS Manual • CIRIA C532: Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites, Guidance for Consultants and Contractors • CIRIA C692: Environmental Good Practice on Site • CIRIA C648: Control of Water Pollution from Linear Construction Projects: Technical Guidance • CIRIA C648: Control of water pollution from linear construction projects: Site guide.	

Source	Relevant Catalyst Project/ Supporting Initiative / Target Outcome / KPI	Potential Adverse Effect	Mitigation Measure (s) ⁷	Residual Effects
		Spread of invasive species	The potential for the spread invasive species will be mitigated through the implementation of the Policy Objectives as laid out in the adopted Mayo County Development Plan 2022 – 2028, including the following: - Biodiversity, Designated and Non-Designated Sites Policy NEP 8 and Objectives NEO 6, NEO 16 Plans and projects will be designed, constructed and operated in accordance with relevant legislation and where applicable, with the following guidelines: - TII (2020a) <i>The Management of Invasive Alien Plant Species on National Roads – Standard</i>. - TII (2020b) <i>The Management of Invasive Alien Plant Species on National Roads – Technical Guidance</i>	

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

Table 5.2 Relevant objectives and policies from the Mayo County Development Plan

SO 4	To transition to a low carbon and climate resilient county, by promoting sustainable settlement patterns, the integration of land-use and sustainable modes of transport, encourage walking, cycling and public transport, increasing reliance on green energy sources, encouraging urban and rural communities to facilitate effective change and by building climate change resilience and climate action into all services and functions of Mayo County Council.
SO 9	To ensure the assessment of all planning applications in the Plan area have regard to the information, data and requirements of the Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Report, SEA Environmental Report and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Report contained in Volume 5 of the Mayo CDP 2022-2028. To require project planning to be fully informed by ecological and environmental constraints at the earliest stage of project development and any necessary assessment to be undertaken, including Ecological Impact Assessments (EclA) and assessments of disturbance to species protected under the Wildlife Act and/or the Flora Protection Act and of Habitat IV species protected under the Habitats Directive. Ensure that proposals for developments located within identified or potential flood risk areas, or which may exacerbate the risk of flooding elsewhere, are assessed in accordance with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines (DoEHLG/OPW 2009) and Circular PL2/2014 (or any updated/superseding document), the relevant policies, objectives and guidelines within this plan and shall also take account of the National CFRAM Programme Flood Hazard Mapping and Flood Risk Management Plans when they become available.
EDP 29	To support the sustainable growth and development of the maritime economy, particularly in remote rural coastal communities and islands.
EDP 30	To support the sustainable development of the marine sector, having regard to Harvesting Our Ocean Wealth An Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland July 2012 and the publication of the National Marine Planning Framework and subsequent marine spatial plans.
EDP 31	To support the sustainable development of marine aquaculture and fishing industries having regard to best environmental practices, so as to maximise their contribution to jobs and growth in coastal communities where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment, including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network, residential amenity or visual amenity.
EDP 32	To protect the county's valuable inland fishery resource and support its sustainable development through the protection of water and habitat quality and facilitation of ancillary infrastructure at appropriate locations
EDO 54	To facilitate rural enterprises, and resource development (such as agriculture, agri-food sector, agri-tourism, commercial fishing, aquaculture, rural tourism, forestry, bio- energy, the extractive industry, recreation, cultural heritage, marine enterprise sector, research and analysis) and renewable energy resources (such as wind/ solar/ocean energy) that are dependent on their locality in rural locations, where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment, including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network, residential amenity or visual amenity. Where proposals demonstrate measures to promote environmental enhancement through improved ecological connectivity, such as measures in the Pollinator Plan, additional native species planting or blue and green infrastructure measures, these will be favourably considered
EDO 64	To review and where necessary vary the County Development Plan upon adoption of the Marine Spatial Plan (MSP) to ensure alignment, and consistency between land-use and ocean-based planning and to ensure coordination supporting the protection of the marine environment and growth of our marine economy.

RO 2	To enable, facilitate and encourage the growth and sustainability of the tourism sector, through supporting the provision of tourism enterprise developments in rural areas including open farms, subject to the provision of adequate infrastructure and compliance with normal planning considerations.
TRO 8	To investigate the further potential of the Wild Nephin Ballycroy National Park and Dark Sky initiative in a sustainable manner. This approach should demonstrate good practice in terms of eco-tourism and wilderness and seek to gain recognised accreditation on same.
TRO 9	To explore the development of community walks, off road trails/rural trail developments, parks, other outdoor amenities and recreational infrastructure, and work with relevant landholders and recreational/tourism agencies to increase access to the countryside and our coastal areas, subject to proper planning and sustainable development principles.
TRO 10	Encourage sensitively designed and located development which provides for the appreciation, interpretation, upgrade and provision of access to natural habitats, scenic vistas and heritage and geoheritage features for the benefit of rural tourism, subject to normal planning and nature conservation consideration.
TRO 29	The Council, within the lifetime of this plan, aims to: - Identify, preserve and enhance existing accesses and public rights of way to recreational areas including the coast, upland areas, lakeshores, river-bank areas and heritage sites. - Where necessary, establish new accesses and public rights of way to recreational areas including the coast, upland areas, lakeshores, river-bank areas, and heritage sites in co-operation with landowners and the local community. When public rights of way are identified, the owners of the public rights of way shall be notified in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). - Map public rights of way in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). (a) and (b) shall be carried out in accordance with best sustainable management practices, any guidance from the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.
MTO 12	To continue the development of a network of Greenways in the county in accordance with best practice and where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network
MTO 13	To investigate the potential of providing looped Greenways / Walkways for the Tier I, II and III Settlements of the county, where it can be demonstrated that such schemes will not have a significant adverse effect on the environment including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.
MTP 31	To support the development and improvements of ports, harbours, piers, slipways, associated shore facilities and access, where appropriate, where it can be demonstrated that the development aligns with the marine spatial plan and will not have significant adverse effects on the environment, including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network
INP 7	To support the Implementation of the Connacht Ulster Regional Waste Management Plan 2015-2021(as amended) or replacement plan with particular emphasis on reuse, recycling and disposal of residual waste in the most appropriate manner where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment, the integrity of the Natura 2000 network, traffic safety, residential or visual amenity.
INP 8	To promote the sustainable management of waste generation and investment in different types of waste treatment and support a healthy environment, economy and society.
INO 10	Promote prioritising prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery, and to sustainably manage residual waste. New developments shall take account of the provisions of the Connacht Ulster Regional Waste Management Plan 2015-2021(as amended) and observe those elements of it that relate to waste prevention and minimisation, waste recycling facilities and the capacity for source segregation.

INO 17	To require the use of SuDS to minimise and limit the extent of hard surfacing and paving and require the use of sustainable drainage techniques where appropriate for new development or for extensions to existing developments, in order to reduce the potential impact of existing and predicted flooding risks.
INO 23	To ensure that where flood risk management works take place that natural heritage, cultural heritage, rivers, streams and watercourses are appropriately protected.
SCO 8	To support, promote and facilitate the development of an inter-county coastal path linking Mayo, Galway and Sligo, subject to no significant adverse impacts on the environment including the integrity of any Natura 2000 site.
BEP 24	To apply the following key attributes when considering public realm and public space enhancements: Accessible - connected and linked permeable spaces to ensure ease of movement. Functional - safe, adaptable and social environments to attract and foster activity. Attractive - visually pleasing spaces with high quality design, materials and installations (lighting, furniture and signage) based on a singular common design theme. Distinctive - reference to local context and building on the character and identity of place. Where appropriate, recreational considerations and access to blue and greens space should be underpinned by the Green Space Principles including: • Enhance urban greening through planting strategies that mitigate noise and air pollution and maximise local biodiversity gain and facilitate sustainable drainage (e.g. deciduous wooded and wildflower meadow areas). • A networked approach: emphasising green infrastructure networks (rather than isolated parks) can provide new opportunities for connecting existing and new green spaces and creating linkages between urban and rural areas. Examples include greenways and linear parks, local greenways or cycleways that link to regional and national greenways and de-culverting watercourses to provide new blue corridors. • Well managed and maintained, creating a high-quality environment: poorly managed spaces or vandalism lead to negative perceptions among potential users. • Multifunctional uses: examples include spaces that encourage active mobility, physical activity and sports, relaxation and tranquillity, and opportunities for social exchange (e.g. that incorporate community gardens or encourage park runs). • Create multisensory restorative environments that help mitigate the psychological stresses of modern living through the provision of "restive places for rejuvenation".
NEP 1	To support the protection, conservation and enhancement of the natural heritage and biodiversity of County Mayo, including the protection of the integrity of European sites, that form part of the Natura 2000 network, the protection of Natural Heritage Areas, proposed Natural Heritage Areas, Ramsar Sites, Nature Reserves and Wild Fowl Sanctuaries (and other designated sites including any future designations).
NEP 2	To protect and enhance the county's natural heritage and biodiversity by supporting the implementation of the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021, the National Pollination Plan 2015-2020 and County Mayo Biodiversity Plan 2015- 2020 and any future editions, in partnership with relevant stakeholders, subject to available resources.
NEP 3	To protect and enhance the county's natural heritage and biodiversity through supporting the implementation, in partnership with the County Mayo Heritage Forum, relevant stakeholders and the community, of the objectives and associated actions in the County Mayo Heritage Plan and future editions thereof, which relate to the remit and functions of Mayo County Council.
NEP 4	To conserve and enhance the county's biodiversity and ecological connectivity, identified areas of local biodiversity importance (Local Biodiversity Areas) in the towns and villages in Mayo.
NEP 7	To encourage the effective management of native and semi-natural woodlands, groups of trees and individual trees in the discharge of development management functions.
NEO 3	To ensure the unique ecological, scenic, recreational and environmental character of the Wild Nephin Ballycroy National Park is protected and enhanced and developed appropriately.

NEO 4	To protect and enhance biodiversity and ecological connectivity in County Mayo, including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, semi-natural grasslands, rivers, streams, natural springs, wetlands, stone walls, geological and geo-morphological systems, other landscape features and associated wildlife, where these form part of the ecological network.
NEO 6	To protect surface waters, aquatic and wetland habitats and freshwater and water-dependent species through the implementation of all appropriate and relevant Directives and transposed legislation and seek to protect and conserve the quality, character and features of inland waterways by controlling developments close to navigable and non-navigable waterways.
NEO 7	To seek the protection of the riparian zones of watercourses throughout the county, recognising the benefits they provide in relation to flood risk management, their protection of the ecological integrity of watercourse systems and the role they play in the enhancement of the county's natural heritage and biodiversity
NEO 8	To maintain, protect and where possible enhance the natural heritage and biodiversity of bogs, fens and turloughs, where appropriate, in County Mayo.
NEO 9	Recognise the importance, in terms of their natural heritage and biodiversity, of woodlands, tree lines, hedgerows, stone walls, watercourses and associated riparian vegetation and the role they play in supporting bat populations and where possible developments will be encouraged to retain such features
NEO 10	To install nest boxes in all new and existing Municipal buildings, as appropriate, and in consultation with Birdwatch Ireland, Swift Conservation Ireland.
NEO 11	To ensure that the impact of development within or adjacent to national designated sites, Natural Heritage Areas, Ramsar Sites and Nature Reserves likely to result in significant adverse effects on the designated site is assessed by requiring the submission of an Ecological Impact Assessment report (EIA), Environmental Report (ER), an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), if deemed necessary, and/ or a Natura Impact Assessment (NIA), if deemed necessary, prepared by a suitably qualified professional, which should accompany planning applications.
NEO 14	To protect and enhance the ecological network throughout the county to improve the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network in accordance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.
NEP 8	To support measures for the prevention and/or eradication of invasive species as appropriate within the county.
NEO 16	To ensure that where the presence of invasive species is identified at the site of any proposed development or where the proposed activity has an elevated risk of resulting in the presence of these species, details of how these species will be appropriately managed and controlled will be required.
NEP 9	To enhance the county's natural heritage and biodiversity through supporting the protection and restoration of peatlands in County Mayo, where appropriate, in order to transition towards a low-carbon and circular economy.
NEP 10	To recognise the role of peatlands as carbon sinks to combat climate change and ensure that peatland areas, including those designated or proposed for designation (pNHA, NHA or SAC), are conserved for their ecological, climate regulation, archaeological, cultural and educational significance.
NEO 18	As part of the implementation of Climate Ready Mayo, Climate Adaption Strategy, to develop and implement a Peatland Management Strategy for County Mayo that will: a. To identify damaged Peatlands in the county and those at risk from climate change and becoming carbon emitters. b. To initiate conservation and management of Mayo's peatlands, particularly those sites nominated for designation as Special Areas of Conservation and Natural Heritage Areas, to preserve the habitat and their unique ecosystems, managing flood risk and other environmental benefits.
NEP 12	To seek to protect and expand the green infrastructure network within the county, where possible, and to encourage green infrastructure to be spatially connected to facilitate the extension or establishment of ecological corridors.

NEP 13	To promote and enhance green and blue infrastructure and seek to integrate the provision of green infrastructure with infrastructure provision and replacement, including walking and cycling routes, as appropriate, while protecting and enhancing natural heritage and improving ecological corridors.
NEO 21	To identify green and blue infrastructure and sustainable design that supports biodiversity and natural systems to adapt to climate change, contribute to climate adaptation in the built and natural environment and provide co benefits.
NEO 24	To protect and enhance the county's floodplains and wetlands as 'green infrastructure' which provides space for storage and conveyance of floodwater, enabling flood risk to be more effectively managed and reducing the need to provide flood defences in the future, subject to normal planning and environmental criteria.
NEP 15	To protect the character, visual, recreational, ecological and amenity value of the coast and provisions for public access, while recognising the needs of coastal communities to live, work and interact with the coast.
NEP 16	To maintain and enhance our natural coastal defences to increase resilience to climate change.
NEP 25	To promote the implementation of the Noise Directive 2002/49/EC and associated Environmental Noise Regulations 2006, as amended.
NEO 30	To ensure that the county's natural coastal defences, such as beaches, sand dunes, coastal wetlands and estuaries are not compromised by inappropriate works or development.
NEO 31	To ensure that any conservation works on coastal dune systems shall be carried out in accordance with best practice, subject to ecological impact assessment and Appropriate Assessment, as appropriate
NEO 35	As part of the implementation of Climate Ready Mayo, Climate Adaption Strategy, develop in consultation with key stakeholders, an Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan for County Mayo to preserve, enhance and develop protected habitats of coastal ecosystems, dunes and wetlands, as well as protect critical infrastructure and assets from damaging storm surges.
NEO 42	To comply with the Blue Dot Catchments Programme and protect and restore high status water bodies in County Mayo and ensure all proposed development which may have an impact on a high-status water quality site will require site specific assessment to determine localised pressures and demonstrate suitable mitigation measures, in order to protect these sites.
NEO 43	To protect through its regulatory controls and in conjunction with the Local Authority Waters Programme, water bodies with 'high ecological status', to restore water bodies that have fallen below 'high ecological status', to maintain water bodies at 'Good Status' and to mitigate threats to water bodies identified as 'At Risk' i.e. 'Moderate and Poor Status'.
NEO 44	Promote the achievement of best ambient air quality, compatible with sustainable development, in accordance with the EU Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFE) Directive (2008/50/EC) and by ensuring that all air emissions associated with new developments are within Environmental Quality Standards as set out in the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (SI No. 180 of 2011) (or any updated/ superseding documents).
NEO 45	To raise awareness of artificial light pollution and identify where lighting improvements or adjustments can be made to reduce its impact, where appropriate.
NEO 46	To protect the Mayo Dark Sky Park at Wild Nephin Ballycroy National Park and any adjoining sites that form part of the designated network, from adverse levels of artificial light pollution and encourage the use of Dark Sky Friendly lighting for all new lighting and lighting upgrades.

CAP 1	To support and enable the implementation and achievement of European and national objectives for climate adaptation and mitigation as detailed in the following documents, taking into account other provisions of the Plan (including those relating to land use planning, energy, sustainable mobility, flood risk management and drainage); Climate Action Plan (2025 and any subsequent versions); • National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (2018 and any subsequent versions). • Relevant provisions of any Sectoral Adaptation Plans prepared to comply with the requirements of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, including those seeking to contribute towards the National Transition Objective, to pursue, and achieve, the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by the end of the year 2050; and Mayo Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (2019-2024 and any subsequent versions).
CAP 2	To support the National Climate Change Strategy and methods of reducing anthropogenic greenhouse gases on an ongoing basis through implementation of supporting objectives in this Plan, particularly those supporting use of alternative and renewable energy sources, sustainable transport, air quality, coastal zone management, flooding and soil erosion and promotion of the retention of, and planting of trees, hedgerows and afforestation, subject to no significant adverse effects on the environment including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.
CAP 3	To support, promote and facilitate the advancement of climate action at the local and community level in County Mayo and to raise general awareness of issues associated with climate action and climate change mitigation and adaptation.
CAP 4	To support local, regional, national and international initiatives for climate adaptation and mitigation and to limit emissions of greenhouse gases through energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy sources, which make use of all natural resources, including publicly owned lands, in an environmentally acceptable manner.
CAP 6	To support the transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050, by way of reducing greenhouse gases, increasing renewable energy, and improving energy efficiency and supporting nature- based solutions to climate adaptation and mitigation that provides co benefits.
CAP 7	To support and promote the enhancement of carbon sinks such as peatlands, appropriate afforestation and permanent grasslands, with consideration of afforestation or rewetting on cut away peatlands.
CAP 9	To support Ireland's renewable energy commitments outlined in national policy by facilitating the development and exploitation of all appropriate renewable energy sources at suitable locations within the county, where such development does not have a negative impact on the surrounding environment (including water quality), landscape, biodiversity or local amenities, so as to provide for further residential and enterprise development within the county
CAO 4	To develop and implement a climate change screening checklist and guidance document over the lifetime of the plan, to ensure new development takes account of climate change over the lifetime of a development, in particular with regard to its location, site layout, building, ventilation and cooling, drainage, water, outdoor spaces and connectivity.
CAO 6	To increase the resilience of Natural and Cultural Capital, as per Goal 3 of Climate Ready Mayo, by: a. Building awareness of Nature Based Adaptation Solutions and Green Infrastructure. b. Support biodiversity for its intrinsic value within the natural environment and its importance in climate change adaptation. c. Develop a database of impacts of climate change on Mayo's Natural Environment. d. Identify Cultural and Heritage Sites vulnerable to climate change and develop adaptation and management policies. e. Encourage adaptation in Agriculture and Local Food Supply.
REP 1	To support Ireland's renewable energy commitments outlined in national policy by facilitating the development and exploitation of a range of renewable energy sources at suitable locations within the county, where such development does not have a negative impact on the surrounding environment (including water quality), landscape, biodiversity or local amenities to ensure the long-term sustainable growth of the county.

REP 2	To support, within the context of the Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (OREDPA) and its successors, the progressive development of Ireland's offshore renewable energy potential, including domestic and international grid connectivity enhancements
REP 3	To actively encourage and support the sustainable development, renewal and maintenance of energy generation infrastructure in order to maintain a secure energy supply, while protecting the landscape, archaeological and built heritage and having regard to the provisions of the Habitats Directive.
BRP 5	To promote and support the enhancement and extension of The Bowers Walk River walkway and safeguard the value of the river as an ecological "green corridor". Riverside walkway provisions should be incorporated, where appropriate, into development proposals bounding the river.
BSP 4	To promote and support the enhancement and extension of the Dalgan River walkway and to safeguard the value of the river as an ecological "green corridor". Riverside walkway provisions should be incorporated, where appropriate, into development proposals bounding the river
BSO 7	To protect the water quality and riparian zone of the Dalgan River and to encourage appropriate developments that enhance its landscape setting and public benefit.
CMO 7	To protect, maintain and enhance, in conjunction with the relevant agencies, the conservation value of Mayfield and Clare Loughs, their associated wetland habitats and rich diversity of plant and animal species and the extent, quality and connectivity of associated surface waters and wetlands as well as to promote the educational role of the lakes
CMO 8	To protect and enhance the conservation value of the disused railway lines in [Claremorris] and their setting / margins as wildlife habitats and corridors notwithstanding that such disused railway lines may be developed at some future date as part of the County's infrastructure / greenway network, in a manner that has regard to their inherent conservation value.
CNO 6	To protect the Mullaghanoe River as a salmonid status water course, and all water courses and surface waters within the area, their water quality, ecology and function as ecological corridors and as potential influences on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites within an appropriate radial buffer zone
FDO 2	To support the local community in exploring the creation of a river walk in [Foxford], as resources permit and in a manner that will not adversely affect the integrity of the River Moy candidate Special Area of Conservation.
KAO 7	To protect Killala Bay/Moy Estuary Special Area of Conservation (Site Code 000458) and Special Protection Area (Site Code 004036). Development proposals will be required to demonstrate that the development will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the sites.
LHO 5	To protect the water quality and riparian zone of the Bunowen River. Any proposed developments adjacent to or close to watercourses shall be carefully assessed to ensure that there is no adverse impact to the water course, its riparian zone or to any waterbody into which it flows.
NTP 5	To support the implementation of flagship lighting designs for St Patrick's Church and the viaduct bridge, to support Newport's Lighting Masterplan and to support the safeguarding the accreditation of nearby Mayo Dark Sky Park.
RSVP 6	To support public realm enhancements in rural settlements and villages, including signage, public lighting (Dark Sky Friendly), public seating, hard and soft landscaping and improvements to the road and footpath network, where appropriate

6.0 IN-COMBINATION EFFECTS

6.1 Introduction

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

6.2 Methodology

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

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

Table 6-1 In-combination effects assessment

Plans, Policies, and Programmes	Summary	Potential for In-combination Effects
Wild Mayo Destination and Development Plan	The description of the DEDP is provided in Section 2 of this NIR.	The projects and actions within the DEDP have the potential to give rise to in-combination effects with one another. However, each component of the plan is subject to mitigation measures, which will avoid adverse effects on European sites. Therefore, while interactions between the components are possible, the mitigation strategies will prevent any in-combination effects.
Clew Bay Destination & Visitor Experience Development Plan (2021)	This Clew Bay Destination & Visitor Experience Development Plan is designed to insight into Clew Bay as a destination on the Wild Atlantic Way. The Plan highlights the personality of the area through a creative framework that helps to accentuate the strengths of the region and can be used to animate the destination in a cohesive and structured way. This plan was subject to AA and SEA processes.	This is a strategic level plans, and no project specific details are available. Therefore, there is no potential for in-combination effects.
Project Ireland 2040: - Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework (NPF) 1st Revision - National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030	The NPF is a high-level framework that sets plans for investing in social, economic and cultural infrastructure to achieve overarching strategic objectives of wellbeing, equality and opportunity. The NDP a high-level budgetary plan that identifies strategic need and priorities for governmental capital investment for the period 2021 - 2030.	These are strategic level plans, and no project specific details are available. Therefore, there is no potential for in-combination effects.
Wild Atlantic Way Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027	The Wild Atlantic Way Tourism Development Strategy 2023 – 2027 is high-level strategy for the tourism industry and relevant stakeholders to increase awareness and consumer appeal of the region. This plan was subject to AA and SEA processes.	These are strategic level plans, and no project specific details are available. Therefore, there is no potential for in-combination effects.

Plans, Policies, and Programmes	Summary	Potential for In-combination Effects
River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for Ireland 2022-2027	The River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for Ireland 2022-2027 sets out the measures that are necessary to protect and restore water quality in Ireland. The overall aim of the plan is to protect and sustainably manage Ireland's freshwater and marine waters to improve Ireland's water-based environments. This plan was subject to AA and SEA processes.	No risk of likely significant in-combination effects will result as the primary purpose of the Directive is to improve ecological status.
4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030	The purpose of the 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030 is to set out a high-level strategy for halting the decline of Ireland's biodiversity and restore and maintain ecosystems and ecosystem services from 2023 – 2030.	As the BAP is aimed at environmental protection, there are no in-combination effects.
County Mayo Heritage and Biodiversity Strategy 2024-2030	The County Mayo Heritage and Biodiversity Strategy (2024-2030) was developed with the aim to identify, raise awareness and promote the conservation of the built, natural and cultural heritage of County Mayo. It is a high-level strategy with a range of themes, including biodiversity, historic and archaeological heritage, and intangible cultural heritage. This plan was not subject to SEA or AA processes.	No risk of likely significant in-combination effects will result as the one of the aims of the strategy is to conserve of the natural heritage of County Mayo.
County Mayo Biodiversity Plan 2010-2015	The County Biodiversity Action Plan provides a framework for the conservation of biodiversity and natural heritage at a local level. It contains information about features and areas of ecological importance in Mayo, and provides biodiversity-specific actions for the county. The plan is designed to ensure that national and international targets for the conservation of biodiversity can be achieved while at the same time addressing local priorities. The production of biodiversity plans by local authorities is an action in the first National Biodiversity Plan published in 2002, which recognised the key role of local authorities in protecting our natural heritage. This plan sets out objectives for local awareness and engagement, and does not include actions or objectives relating to developments other than those already detailed in the National Biodiversity Action Plan. This plan was not subject to SEA or AA processes.	No risk of likely significant in-combination effects will result as the one of the aims of the plan is the conservation of biodiversity and natural heritage in County Mayo.

Plans, Policies, and Programmes	Summary	Potential for In-combination Effects
Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028	The Mayo County Development Plan (CDP) sets out the policy objectives and the overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the county over the plan period. The plan provides for, and manages, the physical, economic, and social development of the county, in the interests of the overall common good, and in compliance with environmental legislation. The CDP has been subject to SEA and AA processes to ensure that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with its implementation have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	This plan was subject to AA. No significant in-combination impacts are envisaged at plan level. Projects arising from the plan will be required to undergo AA Screening which will ensure no in-combination effects
Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028	The County Development Plan (CDP) provides the principal planning strategy document for the development of a local authority area over the statutory time period of the plan. The CDP has been subject to SEA and AA processes to ensure that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with its implementation have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	
Sligo County Development Plan 2024-2030	The County Development Plan (CDP) provides the principal planning strategy document for the development of a local authority area over the statutory time period of the plan. The CDP has been subject to SEA and AA processes to ensure that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with its implementation have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	
Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028	The County Development Plan (CDP) provides the principal planning strategy document for the development of a local authority area over the statutory time period of the plan. The CDP has been subject to SEA and AA processes to ensure that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with its implementation have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	

Plans, Policies, and Programmes	Summary	Potential for In-combination Effects
All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025	The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (AIPP) 2021-2025 is a five-year road map developed to build on the successful delivery of the 81 actions in the first Plan prepared for the 2015 to 2020 period. It aims to take steps to restore pollinator populations to health levels in Ireland. It creates a framework to bring together pollinator initiatives across Ireland, so that through coordination and cooperation to overarching goal can be achieved. The AIPP 2021-2025 has 186 actions spread across the following six objectives: • Objective 1: Making farmland pollinator friendly. • Objective 2: Making public land pollinator friendly. • Objective 3: Making private land pollinator friendly. • Objective 4: All-Ireland Honeybee Strategy. • Objective 5: Conserving rare pollinators. • Objective 6: Strategic coordination of the Plan.	As the plan is aimed at environmental protection, there are no in-combination effects.
Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (1979)	The Bern Convention aims to ensure conservation of wild flora and fauna species and their habitats. Special attention is given to endangered and vulnerable species, including endangered and vulnerable migratory species specified in appendices to the Convention. The Parties commit to take all appropriate measures to ensure the conservation of the habitats of the wild flora and fauna species. Such measures should be included in the parties' planning and development policies and pollution control, with particular attention to the conservation of wild flora and fauna. The Parties undertake to promote education and disseminate general information concerning the need to conserve species of wild flora and fauna and their habitats. The Convention establishes a Standing Committee on which the parties are represented by their delegates. The Committee's principal task is to monitor the provisions of this Convention in the light of development of the wild flora and the assessment of its needs. For this purpose, the Standing Committee is especially competent to make recommendations to the Parties and amendments to the appendices where these protected species are specified.	As the plan is aimed at environmental protection, there are no in-combination effects.

Plans, Policies, and Programmes	Summary	Potential for In-combination Effects
Biodiversity Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan (2019)	The Biodiversity Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan considers terrestrial, freshwater, and marine biodiversity and ecosystem services. The goal is to protect biodiversity from the effects of climate change and to conserve and manage ecosystems so that they deliver services that increase the adaptive capacity of people and biodiversity. This is achieved by identifying adaptation options that will help to protect biodiversity and ecosystem services from the effects of changing climate.	The measures and research as a result of the plan will place a responsibility on all stakeholders to adapt to the impacts of predicted climate change. This framework prioritises reducing knowledge gaps through an evidence base and to develop tools to support the adaptation decision-making process. The framework and the DEDP will be complimentary and as such no significant in-combination effects are envisaged.
Bonn Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (1983)	The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (also known as CMS or the Bonn Convention) aims to conserve terrestrial, marine and avian migratory species throughout their range. It is one of a small number of intergovernmental treaties concerned with the conservation of wildlife and wildlife habitats on a global scale. Since the Convention entered into force on 1 November 1983, its membership has grown steadily to include 80 (as of 1 September 2002) Parties from Africa, Central and South America, Asia, Europe, and Oceania.	As the plan is aimed at environmental protection, there are no in-combination effects.
Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Implementation Plan for the period 2019 – 2024	The North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO) was established by the Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean in 1984. NASCO's objective is to conserve, restore, enhance and rationally manage Atlantic salmon through cooperation of six Governments and the European Union. Implementation plans are prepared by each jurisdiction to demonstrate what actions are being taken by the parties to implement NASCO's resolutions, agreements and guidelines. NASCO. The U.K and the European Union are members of the North-East Atlantic Commission under this organisation. The functions of this Commission are brought into effect through implementation plans and include the following: • Providing a forum for consultation and co-operation on the conservation, restoration, enhancement and rational management of salmon stocks;	As the plan is aimed at environmental protection, there are no in-combination effects.

Plans, Policies, and Programmes	Summary	Potential for In-combination Effects
	- Proposing regulatory measures; and - Making recommendations on scientific research. Each jurisdiction develops Implementation Plans detailing measures to be taken over five-year periods in relation to three areas of concern: - Management of salmon fisheries; - Protection and restoration of Atlantic salmon habitat; and - Management of aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics. Atlantic Salmon is protected under Annex II and V of the Habitats Directive. A total of 26 SACs in Ireland have been designated for the protection Atlantic Salmon. As discussed above, the European Communities Regulation on Quality of Salmonid Waters (S.I. No. 293/1988) intends on maintaining or restoring water quality and unimpeded migratory corridors within salmonid waters.	
Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)	The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) stems from the growing recognition that biological diversity is an asset of tremendous value to present and future generations across the world. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) tasked experts to prepare an international legal instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. They were to consider "the need to share costs and benefits between developed and developing countries" as well as "ways and means to support innovation by local people". The text of the Convention was adopted on 22 May 1992 in Nairobi and was opened to signature on 5 June 1992, during the Rio "Earth Summit". Within a year, it had received 168 signatures. It entered into force on 29 December 1993. The CBD meets every two years. Its website offers more information about the CBD and how it works, as well as all the available documents, for every meeting since the first Conference of the Parties. In accordance with Article 6 of the Convention, parties have to develop national biodiversity strategies or action plans (NBSAPs).	As the plan is aimed at environmental protection, there are no in-combination effects.
Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention) 1971	The Convention on Wetlands, signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, is an intergovernmental treaty, which provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and appropriate use of wetlands and their resources.	As the plan is aimed at environmental protection, there are no in-combination effects.

Plans, Policies, and Programmes	Summary	Potential for In-combination Effects
European Communities (Quality of Salmonid Waters) Regulations, 1988. (S.I. No. 293/1988)	The European Communities (Quality of Salmonid Waters) regulations, S.I. No 84 of 1988 defines freshwaters as being waters capable of supporting Salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>), Trout (<i>Salmo trutta</i>), Char (<i>Salvelinus sp</i>) and whitefish (<i>Coregonus sp</i>) and are hereby designated as Salmonid waters. A local authority shall carry out or cause to be carried out, sampling of Salmonid waters in its functional area in respect of the parameters specified in the second schedule of the 1988 regulation. The European commission oversees Member State's policies in this area. In Ireland the Department of the Environment and local Government is responsible for making designations which the local authorities implement.	As the plan is aimed at environmental protection, there are no in-combination effects.
European Union Biodiversity Strategy for 2030	The EU's Biodiversity Strategy 2030 is a comprehensive, ambitious, and long-term plan to protect nature and reverse the degradation of ecosystems. The Strategy aims to put Europe's biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030 and contains specific actions and commitments. The Biodiversity Strategy is designed to halt biodiversity loss in Europe by committing to land and sea protection and restoring ecosystems by 2030. The biodiversity strategy aims to put Europe's biodiversity on the path to recovery by 2030 for the benefit of people, climate and the planet. In the post-COVID-19 context, the strategy aims to build our societies' resilience to future threats such as: • the impacts of climate change; • forest fires; • food insecurity; and • disease outbreaks - including by protecting wildlife and fighting illegal wildlife trade.	As the plan is aimed at environmental protection, there are no in-combination effects.

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

7.0 CONCLUSION

This NIR has been prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Habitats Directive, the Habitats Regulations and the Planning and Development Act 2024, as well as the relevant case law and current best practice guidance. It has demonstrated that, in the absence of appropriate mitigation, the Wild Mayo DEDP could adversely affect the integrity of European sites, in view of their Conservation Objectives. In light of this finding, this NIR has prescribed appropriate mitigation to eliminate or minimise such effects. This assessment has been undertaken on the basis of the best scientific knowledge in the field and the Precautionary Principle. No reasonable scientific doubt remains as to the absence of such effects.

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

8.0 REFERENCES

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