

Wild Mayo Destination & Experience Development Plan (DEDP)

Consolidated Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report - Non-Technical Summary

April 2026



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¹ <https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring--assessment/assessment/strategic-environmental-assessment/the-sea-process/>

Glossary

Appropriate Assessment	An assessment of the potential adverse effects of a plan or project (in combination with other plans or projects) on Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA), as designated under EU and national law.
Birds Directive	Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds.
Catchment	A catchment is an area where water is collected by the natural landscape and flows from source through river, lakes and groundwater to the sea.
Development	The carrying out of any works on, in, over or under any land or the making of any material change in the use of any structures or other land in accordance with the Section 3 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended.
Environmental Impact Assessment	The process of carrying out an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) as required by Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU on assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment.
Ecosystem services	The direct and indirect benefits that ecosystems can provide for human health and wellbeing.
Blue and green infrastructure	Strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem service.
Habitats Directive	Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.
Habitats Regulations	The European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011 (S. I. No. 477 of 2011) transpose the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive. The 2011 Regulations were amended by: • S.I. No. 290 of 2013 • S.I. No. 499 of 2013 • S.I. No. 355 of 2015 • Planning, Heritage and Broadcasting (Amendment) Act 2021 (no.11 of 2021), Chapter 4 • S.I. No. 293 of 2021
Natura 2000	A network of core breeding and resting sites for rare and threatened species, and some rare natural habitat types which are protected.
Nature-based Solutions (NbS)	Nature-based solutions are actions to protect, conserve, restore, sustainably use and manage natural or modified terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems which address social, economic and environmental challenges effectively and adaptively, while simultaneously providing human well-being, ecosystem services, resilience and biodiversity benefits.
Nitrates Directive	Council Directive 91/676/EEC concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources.
Plans	A plan is one which sets out how it is proposed to carry out or implement a scheme or a policy. This could include, for example, land use plans setting out how land is to be developed or laying down rules or guidance as to the kind of development which might be appropriate or permissible in particular areas or giving criteria which should be taken into account in designing new development.
Projects	Any development or activity for which development consent may be required. This includes the execution of construction works or of other installations or schemes and interventions in the natural surroundings and landscape including those involving the extraction of mineral resources.
SEA Directive	Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment - requires that an environmental assessment be carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	A process for the formal, systematic evaluation used to identify and assess the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt the plan or programme. It is intended to lead to a high level of protection of the environment and promotion of sustainable development as required by the SEA Directive.
Strategic Environmental Objective (SEO)	Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) are strategic environmental protection objectives which set the desired environmental outcome for the assessment of the Draft WDEDP. These have been formulated with reference to the environmental protection objectives/policies at International, European, and local level.
Water Framework Directive	Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for the Community action in the field of water policy.

1.0 Introduction

This document is the Non-Technical Summary (NTS) of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report (ER) for the Wild Mayo Destination Experience Development Plan (hereafter referred to the 'Plan' or the 'WMDEDP').

This NTS, which should be read in conjunction with the WMDEDP, has been prepared by Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority in accordance with the SEA Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment and the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations S.I. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No.200 of 2011. For more detailed information please refer to the full SEA Environmental Report.

The purpose of the SEA ER is to:

- Inform the development of the Plan.
- Identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment resulting from the implementation of the Draft Plan and reasonable alternatives.
- Provide appropriate mitigation measures to prevent, reduce and offset any significant negative effects on the environment, if any, from implementing the Draft Plan insofar as possible.
- Consult with statutory authorities and the public to provide an opportunity for submissions on the Draft Plan and the SEA process.

2.0 Overview of the Wild Mayo DEDP

A Destination Experience Development Plan (DEDP) is a five-year commercial destination and experience development plan prepared for an area.

The WMDEDP 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.

The Wild Mayo Destination and Experience Development Plan (WMDEDP) is a five-year sustainable tourism development plan for the North Mayo region that stretches from the Mullet Peninsula to Ballina and Foxford as illustrated in Figure 2.1.



Figure 2.1 Geographical Location the WMDEDP

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.

Tourism is a significant component of the county's economy. In 2023 the sector generated €261 million from international and domestic visitors. This DEDP aims to 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.

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.

Figure 2.2 clearly sets out the structure and overall content of the draft WMDEDP. For further details please refer to the Draft WMDEDP itself.

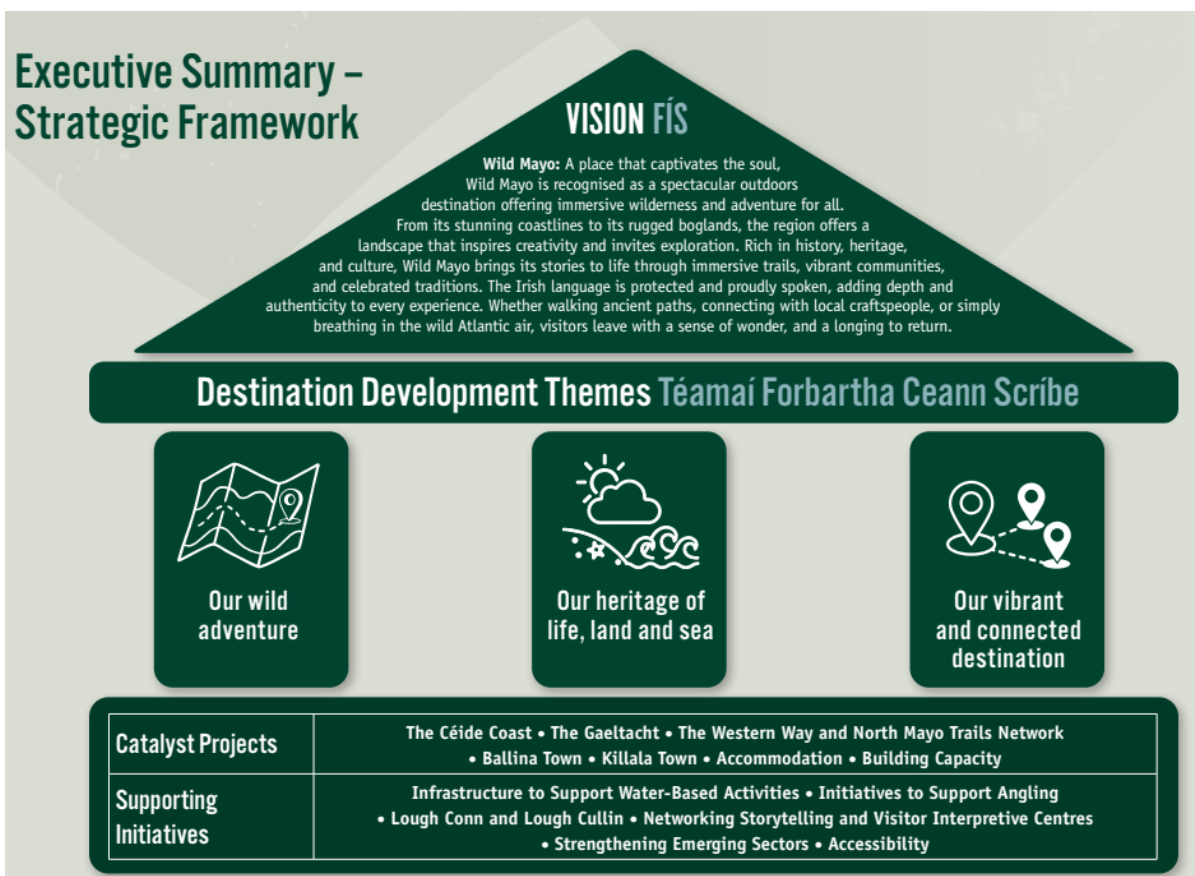


Figure 2.2 Strategic Framework of the WMDEDP (Source: WMDEDP, 2026)

3.0 Strategic Environmental Assessment Process

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the evaluation of the '*likely significant environmental effects*' of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt it. It is required to be undertaken of plans and programmes prepared by authorities at a national, regional or local level.

The European Directive on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment (2001/42/EC), referred to as 'the SEA Directive', requires Member States to assess the '*likely significant environmental effects*' of implementing plans / programmes prior to their adoption.

3.1 SEA Stages & Process

The key focus of SEA is to take environmental issues, and in particular '*likely significant environmental effects*' of a P / P, into consideration during the plan or programme making process. The key stages in the SEA process as they relate to the WMDEDP are outlined in Table 3.1 and Figure 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 Outline of the SEA Process

SEA Stage	Description	Status
Screening	The requirement to undertake a SEA is mandatory for certain Plan / Programme (P / P). Where SEA is not a mandatory requirement, the P / Ps is subject to a 'Screening process', to consider if it is <i>likely to have significant effects</i> on the environment, and therefore, if SEA is required. The preparation of the Draft Plan has been screened for Appropriate Assessment (AA), and it has been concluded that potential for effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded beyond all reasonable scientific doubt and is required to undergo Appropriate Assessment. Therefore, in accordance with <i>Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08</i> the <i>Draft CDEDP</i> is also required to undergo a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with <i>Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment</i> (known as the SEA Directive).	Completed 
Scoping	Preparation of a SEA Scoping Report highlighting that the Environmental Report is required to include: • methods of assessment. • contents and level of detail in the Plan / Programme. • the stage in the Plan or Programme-making process; and • the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in the decision-making process in order to avoid duplication of environmental assessment. Scoping provides for consultation with the Environmental Authorities specified in Article 13 of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011, and the process allows for incorporation of the views of the environmental authorities within the P / P and the SEA Environmental Report.	Completed 
Environmental Report	Preparation of a systemic identification and evaluation of alternatives and assessment of the <i>likely significant environmental effects</i> of implementing the P / P. The findings of the assessment, which is carried out at various stages in the P / P making (e.g. Draft, Amended Draft etc.), are provided in the SEA Environmental Report in accordance with Article 12 (including Schedule 2) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011. The output from this stage is an Environmental Report which accompanies the draft P / P required for public consultation.	Current Stage

SEA Stage	Description	Status
Public Consultation	In accordance with Article 13 (1) of S.I. No 435 OF 2004, as amended, the draft plan under assessment along with relevant environmental assessment documents must be available for review and comment by the relevant environmental authorities and the general public. Sufficient public notice must be given, and a timeline of not less than 4 weeks must be given for the receipt of submissions. Subsequent to this stage and further to review of submissions possible changes might be made to the draft Plan and this needs to be considered in the sea process before finalising.	Next Stage
SEA Statement	Completion / adoption of the Final Plan, taking account of <i>likely significant environmental effects</i>, any submissions or observations received from consultations and integration of mitigation and monitoring measures within the Plan. The Environmental Report is concluded, and an SEA Statement is prepared in accordance with Article 16(2)(b) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011, summarising: • how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan / Programme. • how the environmental report, and any submissions/observations or consultations have been taken into account in the preparation of the Plan / Programme. • the reasons for choosing the Plan / Programme in light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and • the measures decided for monitoring the significant environmental effects of implementation of the Plan / Programme.	Future Stage
Monitoring	There is a requirement to undertake monitoring of the Plan during implementation. This should reflect the monitoring programme set out in the environmental report.	Future Stage

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT Process Overview

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a systematic process for identifying, reporting, proposing mitigation measures and monitoring environmental effects of plans, programmes and strategies. It aims to ensure that environmental issues are taken into account at every stage in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and review of plans, programmes and strategies of a public nature.

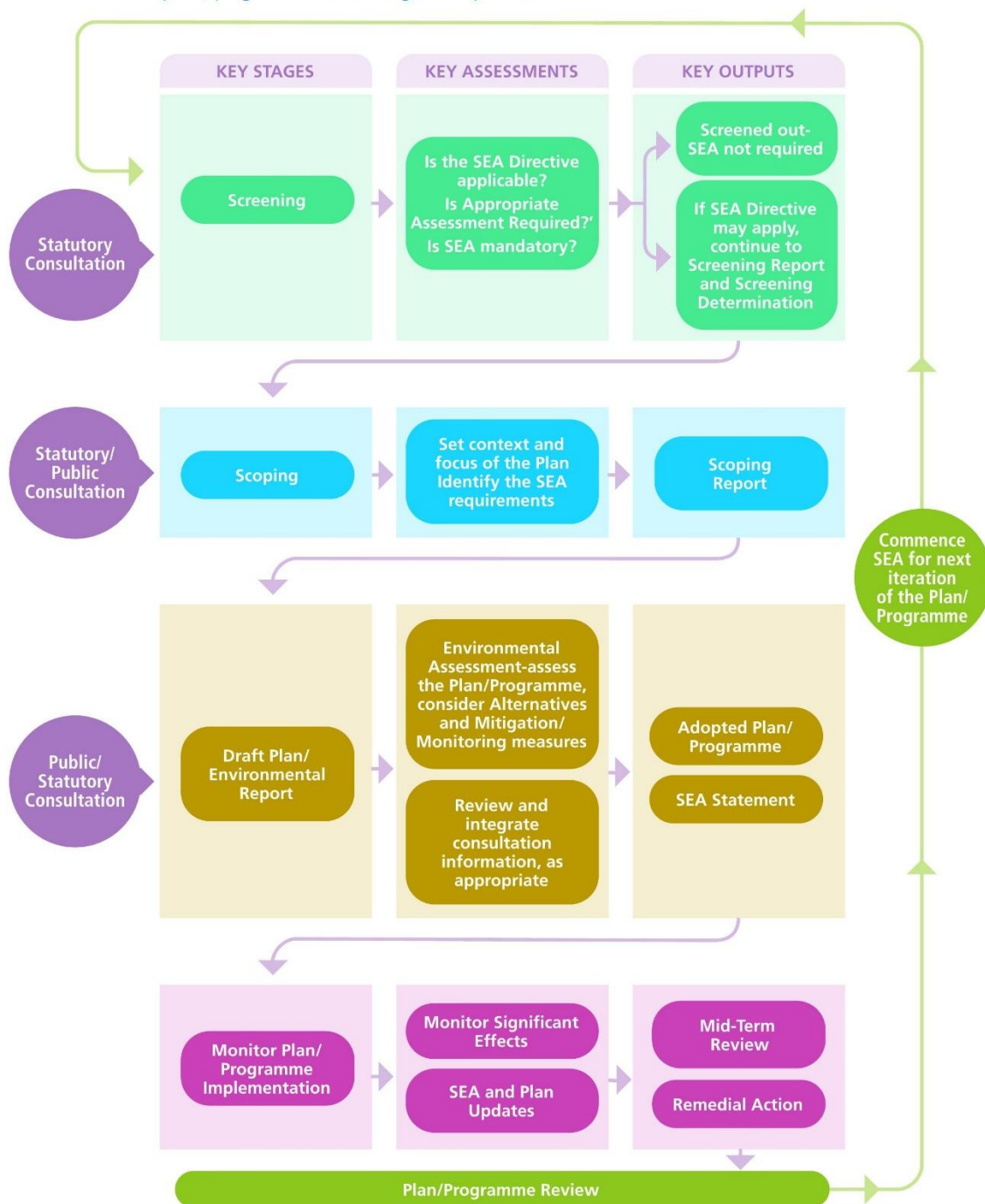


Figure 3.1 Overview of SEA Process (EPA SEA Process Flow, 2021²)

² <https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring--assessment/assessment/strategic-environmental-assessment/the-sea-process/>

4.0 Relationship with other Plans & Programmes

The development of the Draft Plan and this SEA is informed and carried out in the context of a hierarchy of legislation, plans and programmes. The Draft Plan is a non-statutory plan and does not form a framework for development consent.

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

Such Plans and Programmes include national, regional, county and local plans as follows:

- National Planning Framework
- A National Tourism Policy Statement – A New Era for Irish Tourism
- Northern and Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy
- Wild Atlantic Way Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027
- Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028, and Local Plans 7 Programmes

5.0 Current State of the Receiving Environment

5.1 Introduction

The SEA Directive requires that the information on the baseline environment is focused upon the relevant aspects of the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected and the likely evolution of the current environment in the absence of the WMDEDP. Being consistent with the strategic provisions of the WMDEDP, this section provides a strategic description of aspects of environmental components which have the greatest potential to be affected by implementation of the WMDEDP, if unmitigated. The WMDEDP is focused on the geographical area as illustrated in Figure 2.1.

Much of the baseline has been compiled with reference to the latest iteration of the EPA *'Ireland's State of the Environment Report 2024'*, as well as other up-to-date resources and datasets reference throughout.

5.2 Evolution of the Environment in the Absence of the Plan

It is a requirement of the SEA Directive to consider – 'the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme.' In the absence of the WMDEDP it is envisaged that the baseline environment would primarily evolve in line with the policies and objectives of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 and associated documents. The County Development Plans detail policies and objectives specific to tourism, however, the standalone WMDEDP provides significant opportunities for specific set of tourism related mitigation measures and the associated likely positive environmental effects.

Therefore, while higher level environmental protection objectives – such as those of County Development Plans and various EU Directives and transposing Irish Regulations – would still apply, the absence of the WMDEDP would mean that new development would be less coordinated and controlled. Less coordinated and controlled development would be less certain to result in the positive effects provided for by the WMDEDP.

The following Environmental Aspects were considered:

- Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna.
- Population and Human Health.
- Land, Soils and Geology.
- Air Quality, Noise and Climate.

- Material Assets.
- Architectural, Archaeological & Cultural Heritage
- Water Quality.
- Landscape & Visual.

5.3 Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna

Biodiversity plays a significant role in the provision of clean air, water, healthy soils and food as well as visually contributing to a plan area with its natural beauty and heritage.

The biodiversity within the study area underpins important economic sectors such as agriculture, tourism and recreation and is a core component of the green infrastructure. A number of areas in study area have been identified as being of exceptional importance for biodiversity at a national and/or international level and are protected through national and European legislation.

Key ecological sensitivities across the area to which the Plan relates include rare species and habitats, aquatic and riverine ecology, peatlands, coastal areas and marine waters and locally important habitats (e.g. woodlands, parklands, degrows stone walls etc.)

The Plan area contain the following protected sites as set out in Table 5.1

Table 5.1 Key Protected Sites in the Plan Area

Protected Site	Number in Plan Area
Designated European Sites	44
Nationally Designated Sites	52
Salmonid Waters	3
Shellfish Waters	4
Margaritifera Sensitive Areas (Pearl Mussel)	4
Other e.g. Ramsar Sites	7

Potential Threats & Pressures

The key pressures resulting from tourism and recreation in relation to biodiversity include:

- Direct habitat loss within European Sites e.g. developments occurring on undeveloped sites, recreational activity works.
- Indirect effects on the ecological networks supporting European Sites e.g. linear developments forming barriers to movements of mobile species or loss of sites that support an overall population of species.
- Construction and use of commercial and recreational infrastructure and areas. For example, development within watercourses.
- Indirect threat to water quality including changes to surface and groundwater quality and volumes.
- Direct / indirect disturbance of sensitive habitats / species e.g. recreation at harbour or coastal sites, riverside walkways, pressure from increased visitor numbers etc.
- Direct / indirect threats to European Sites by invasive species.
- Direct / indirect threats to native flora and fauna from pathogens / diseases.
- Invasive Species and problematic species - continued control and management of invasive species. For example, the loss of biodiversity as native species are shaded out, but also diseases and pathogens.

5.4 Population & Human Health

Specific to the north of the county and the draft Plan area the population of the local electoral divisions of Ballina and Belmullet collectively had a population of 38,54.

The 2022 Census set out that for the entire county with a population of 111,600 that 58,300 people were in the work force, an increase of over 13% on those reported working in the 2016 census. The manufacturing sector accounted for the biggest sector of employment followed by wholesale and retail.

There are no specific figures released by the 2022 census relating specifically to numbers directly employed in the tourism sector for the draft plan area.

The number of homes within the area to which the Plan relates with radon levels above the reference level is within the normal range experienced in other locations across the country.

The 2022 Census indicates the majority of self-reported health in County Mayo that self-reported as having very good health was 51.4% which is down on a figure of 56% from the response received in 2016.

Potential Threats & Pressures

The following are the main broad existing pressures that exists for human population and health:

- Effects to residential and visitor accommodation (availability and affordability),
- Effects to populations in high radon areas,
- Effects due to flood events and landslide events,
- Pressure on critical infrastructure if not planned and managed appropriately,
- Exacerbating effects of climate change, and
- Effects on all other environmental factors depending on the nature of tourism activity e.g. water environment, air quality, land use change, etc.

The tourism industry offers potential positive opportunities for social and economic benefits, including supporting and diversifying the rural economy, communities and ecosystem services.

5.5 Lands, Soils & Geology

Consideration of land and soil management is essential to sustainable development as these resources support the built environment, food production processes, water, resources for development and other ecosystem services.

Land use describes the use land has been put to from a human perspective. The county's land cover is predominately composed of Peat lands. Other common land cover type in the county includes agricultural, conifer plantation, forest and semi natural areas, moors and heathlands, intertidal flats, waterbodies and very small areas of industrial and urban cover.

The most dominant soils in the draft Plan area are peat. In the eastern part of the draft Plan area there are brown earths and well drained mineral soils and river alluvium. To the far west of the draft plan area there is substantial amounts of dunes or blown sand and dotted throughout the area in pockets are well drained acid mineral soils.

The *Geological Survey of Ireland* (GSI) provides information available on geology. GSI has assessed the geological heritage of the study area and identified sites of importance. The bedrock foundation, with hundreds of millions of years in the formation and shaping, and the more recent history of processes involving river channels and glaciers which are the features that have created the underlying geology. The study area has a range of such natural and man-made sites.

There are 20 identified Irish Geological Heritage (IGH) sites in the draft Plan area. These sites do not receive statutory protection but receive an effective protection from their inclusion in the planning system. Landslides & Coastal Erosion

The term "landslide" describes a wide variety of processes that result in the downward and outward movement of materials such as rock, debris, earth, mud and peat under the force of gravity. Issues such as existing ground conditions, slope stability and storage of excavated material have the potential to

influence susceptibility to landslides/bog bursts. The potential impacts of landslides include loss of human life/injury, flooding, pollution of watercourses and impacts upon aquatic biodiversity.

The area to which the Plan relates has numerous locations with a history of landslide events and many of these events are associated with the peatland and upland areas. The GSI have identified much of the north coastal and middle inland part of the draft Plan area as having moderate to high susceptibility to landslides.

Potential Threats & Pressures

The dominant pressures on land and soils include soil sealing, erosion, organic matter decline, compaction, salination and landslides. Tourism can create pressure on land and soils due to direct land use change, creating soil sealing and/or impacting geological heritage sites.

5.6 Air Quality, Noise & Climate

Air Quality Maps for Ireland show whether air quality is ‘good’, ‘fair’, ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ in each region. The current air quality across the study area is ‘good’. Monitoring is done using continuous monitors for relevant air pollutants in various locations around Ireland. The pollutants of most concern are those from traffic. There is need to protect and improve (as appropriate), air quality in the study area, particularly in areas zoned for increased urban and transport related development.

The *Mayo County Council Noise Action Plan 2024-2028* (Mayo County Council, 2024) identifies major roads in the county as noise sources, including the N5 from Westport to east of Swinford and the N17 from Claremorris south to the Galway County boundary. These roads are major national and regional roads that connect major urban centres within Mayo and to neighbouring counties. These road stretches do not fall within the draft Plan area. Under this plan there are currently no “*Quiet Areas*”³ identified in County Mayo.

While many greenhouse gases (GHG) occur naturally, human activities including transport, agriculture and land use change are increasing concentrations of some GHG creating the greenhouse effect resulting in changes to the climate. EU Member States have collectively agreed to aim to keep global warming to below a 2°C increase from pre-industrial levels, under the Paris Agreement. These changes are directly and indirectly impacting Ireland’s climate evidenced by changes in rainfall events, an increased frequency of storm events, sea level rise affecting coastal areas, as well as changes to air and soil temperature.

Future changes in climate and associated impacts on sea level, rainfall patterns/intensity and river flow will influence flooding frequency and extent in the future. Local Authorities in compliance with the *Regional Planning Guidelines* are attempting to adopt sustainable flood risk strategies in areas likely to be at risk of flooding in the future in the context of climate change and changing weather patterns. Changes to climate could lead to an increase in flooding events in Ireland.

Mayo County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 (MCCCAP) – This Plan sets out the need for a climate action plan in the context of adaption, mitigation and risk assessment for the county. A number of strategic goals and associated actions are found in the plan with a number associated with the tourism sector.

Potential Threats & Pressures

Concern has clearly shifted to a range of pollutants associated with road traffic. Therefore, it is important that a good quality road infrastructure is provided and alternatives to the private car are encouraged as much as possible.

³ <https://www.mayo.ie/environment/pollution-control/noise> - . A quiet area in open country is defined as an area delimited by the Action Planning Authority following consultation with the agency and approval by the Minister, that is undisturbed by noise from traffic, industry, or recreational activities

In terms of climate tourists contribute to greenhouse gas emissions across the same sources/sectors as local and national populations, e.g. transport, heating and electricity, agriculture/food production and waste generation.

The potential effects of climate change resulting in an increase in the frequency and severity of weather events, including flooding, storms, heavy snowfall, and variation in temperature. Severe rainfall events, or very cold events with or without snowfall could adversely impact upon towns and people in the draft Plan area leading to water shortages, residential flooding and disruption to infrastructure and to movement. Therefore, it will be important to improve resilience of existing and planned critical infrastructure, systems and procedures to the effects and variability of climate change.

5.7 Material Assets

Material assets are resources that are valued and intrinsic to a development and the surrounding area. Material assets may be of either natural or human origin and the value may arise for economic or cultural reasons. Material assets include water supply, wastewater treatment infrastructure, waste disposal, transport infrastructure, energy, telecommunications and utilities infrastructure. The sustainable growth of the draft Plan area is dependent on the provision of services and infrastructure.

Natural Assets: Open areas, parks, greenways, blueways, peatlands, afforestation and the coastline are all important natural assets in the draft Plan area. They provide recreational facilities, resilience to climate change and its effects, potential for employment, renewable energy, fishing etc.

Manmade Assets: These include water and wastewater, waste management, transport, telecommunications and energy & utilities. In the study area there were no water supplies that required remedial action, and all eight wastewater treatment plants have capacity. In the plan area there are three active waste licence holders- one for quarry activities, one for peat deposition and a landfill licence. Road travel is the main form of transport in the draft plan area with two national and three regional roads forming the main road arteries servicing the area. Work continues in County Mayo to roll out the National Broad Band Plan to the entire county. Areas around Ballina have already benefited from upgrades. While the county and draft Plan area have high potential for consideration of renewable energy forms an important aim will be to ensure a balance between facilitating the development of the county whilst protecting the environment for future generations. Gas and electricity are the energy utilities which have traditionally supported homes and businesses across the Country.

Existing Threats & Pressures

An increase in tourism could result in increasing demand for water, wastewater treatment, waste management, transport infrastructure / links and energy and telecommunications services.

Existing material assets issues / pressures within the study area, include:

- Water Supply and Wastewater Services - increased tourist numbers will generate pressure on existing water and wastewater sources to meet demands. Inadequate infrastructure, including inadequate capacity, contribute to the contamination of receiving surface water and groundwater waterbodies.
- Transport - the movement of people is key to the success of new development and areas, where adequate transport infrastructure (i.e. road, rail, cycle and pedestrian routes) to these developments and accessibility throughout the development / area (safe footpath and cycle paths) is fundamental to the development of tourism in the study area. Sustainable development of blueways and greenways is essential to promote recreation and tourism.
- Waste - increased tourist numbers will pose challenge in providing sustainable recycling infrastructure and will put pressure on the local authorities to provide better waste management and access to waste services.

5.8 Architectural, Archaeological & Cultural Heritage

Ireland is rich in architectural, archaeological, and cultural heritage with an abundance of heritage sites located throughout the country. Heritage sites by nature are usually invaluable and irreplaceable. These assets are under pressure from competing land uses across all sectors.

North County Mayo contains the renowned Ceide Fields Archaeological Site of prehistoric field systems, as well as the Belderg field systems and megalithic tombs. The coastal areas (including the islands of Inishglora and the Inishkeas) are abundant in archaeological sites and monuments, while the upland areas and bogland are also archaeologically significant.

There are 12 known wrecks located around the coast and in rivers in the draft Plan area as recorded by the National monument wreck vier –

Existing Issues & Pressures

Development is the greatest threat to archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage. Sites and features of historical and cultural significance can be lost through development on, or adjacent to, sites or their setting impacted.

Climate change also poses a direct and indirect threat to these historic sites. The increased frequency and severity of flooding and rising sea levels have the potential to damage or destroy sites, particularly in coastal areas or along watercourses. Increased levels of tourists can also lead to damage to sensitive structures or sites.

5.9 Water

Water is fundamental to all life, for humans, plants and animals alike. It is also critical in economic terms in generating and sustaining wealth in a number of key areas such as agriculture, fishing, aquaculture, power generation, industry, transport and tourism. However, it is also a fragile resource requiring continued protection. In general terms Ireland's waters are of good quality, however, preserving the high standard of water is essential for human health and the natural environment.

For the purposes of this section, the water environment is taken to include natural features such as lakes, rivers, streams and groundwater waterbodies. In addition, specifically designated waters and flooding are also dealt with in this section.

Two elements of the water environment are discussed here: surface water and ground water.

Surface Water Features & Quality

Surface waterbodies, as defined by the EPA, include rivers, lakes, transitional and coastal waters. These waterbodies are used for a variety of services such as drinking water abstraction, fishing, aquaculture, bathing, wastewater treatment, agricultural uses, and recreational or amenity uses. The draft Plan area includes for two WFD catchments and 19 associated sub catchments.

The majority of the river catchments monitored were of high and good status with fewer being moderate and four sub catchments were rated as poor. In terms of lake status there were a mix of high and good with one lake Cross being rated as moderate. Coastal waters were for the most part high with Killala Bay and Broadaven bay being rated as good and of the three transitional water bodies identified in the draft Plan area two were of good status and one was moderate.

The draft Plan area has four designated bathing water area all classified by the EPA in 2024 as excellent.

Further to this the WFD has rated water bodies in the draft Plan area at being at risk – these are illustrated in Figure 5.14.

Ground Water

Groundwater, also known as aquifers, is water stored in the void spaces in underground layers of rock. These aquifers are permeable, allowing both the infiltration of water from the soils above them and the yielding of water to surface and coastal waters.

In the draft Plan area, the majority of underlying aquifer is classified as poor which means it is generally unproductive. The ground water quality for the draft Plan area has been classified as good.

Aquifer Vulnerability is a term used to represent the natural ground characteristics that determine the ease with which groundwater may be contaminated by human activities. The draft Plan area has some high vulnerability particularly along the coastline – this would correlate with thin soils or rock exposure.

Flooding

The underlying causes of flooding, heavy rain and high sea levels are, essentially uncontrollable. Floods are usually caused by a combination of events including overflowing riverbanks, heavy rains, coastal storms or blocked or overloaded drainage systems and an increase in development and impermeable surfacing.

Both the River Deel at Crossmolina and the Moy at Ballina had had flood relief schemes completed. From records it shows that there have been 1-15 flood events in the draft Plan area- these events vary in severity and cause.

Existing Threats & Pressures

The principal threat to water is pollution which can adversely impact on all parts of the water cycle from groundwater to rivers, lakes, estuaries and coastal waters. The Plan must comply with the requirements of the WFD and the Groundwater Directive and aim to drive improvement to water quality in both the short and long-term. Existing water quality issues / pressures with environmental considerations include:

- Water – some of the surface waterbodies in North County Mayo need to be improved from moderate to achieve good or high by 2027
- Water - pressure on water sources include excessive nutrient enrichment which leads to eutrophication.
- Water - pressure on water sources also comes from land-use changes, water-based recreational sports, erosion, industry and urbanisation.
- Sustainable management of waterways and water-based recreation activities to ensure a balance between tourism development and conservation of natural resources and heritage areas.
- Water - water contamination arising through poor working practices, leakages or accidental spillage of materials if efficient pollution control measures are not fully implemented and maintained.
- Surface, ground & transitional waters - are at risk of pollution from septic tanks and wastewater treatment systems in the vicinity of waterbodies, potential pressures and impacts on water body status, water usage and flood risk from the construction projects i.e. increased sedimentation, groundwater recharge and accidental spillages.
- There is growing pressures from increasing population and increasing and sometimes conflicting social, economic and recreational uses.
- Flooding - flood risk to be considered as a key environmental criterion.

5.10 Landscape & Visual

The landscape Appraisal for County Mayo is divided into six policy area which relate to the protection and capacity to absorb development.

The draft Plan area is located over five of these areas as follows:

- Area B- Northwest Coastal Moorland
- Area C – Northwest Coastal Bog

- Area D – North Coastal Plateaux
- Area E- North Mayo Mountain Moorland
- Area G: North Mayo Drumlins

The draft Plan area also has a number of vulnerable features as identified under this appraisal. This relates to visually vulnerable features including skylines and vulnerable areas including coastlines, riverbanks and lakeshores.

The draft Plan area has a number of vulnerable features, scenic routes, protected views and slopes and ridges. It is also designed for the most part under sensitive landscape types including peat bogs, moors and heathlands, beaches, dunes, sands and natural grasslands.

Existing Pressures & Threats

Development, including tourism development, has the potential to change the landscape character of a draft Plan areas distinct landscapes. Developments, in a manner which is inconsistent with the landscape character or type, can impact the sensitivity of these landscapes and in turn, can impact tourism. Impacts to landscapes can come in many forms such as housing development, industry such as quarrying, wind farms (onshore and offshore), or any land use changes.

Areas of high landscape sensitivity, including scenic views, are particularly vulnerable to landscape changes and are likely to be the most attractive locations for development pressure. Balancing the pressure for development in unique landscapes, including in areas containing features of note (such as heritage sites), will remain a challenge.

6.0 Strategic Environmental Objectives

The SEA Directive requires that ‘the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.’

A series of Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) have been prepared in line with current guidance (refer to Table 6.1). The SEOs provide a basis for the assessment of the environmental effects of the WMDEDP and are framed in such a manner as to enable the WMDEDP to be fully assessed in environmental terms.

SEOs are distinct from the strategic objectives within the WMDEDP, although they often overlap and are developed from international, national and regional policies which generally govern environmental protection objectives. These high-level SEOs are paired with specific targets which can be monitored using indicators (see Section 10 of this Report).

Table 6.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEO's) for the WMDEDP

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna (B)	B1	Ensure compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to the protection of Natura 2000 Sites and Annex habitats and species ⁴ and no adverse effects on the integrity of any European site, with regard to its qualifying interests, associated conservation status, structure and function.
	B2	Preserve, protect, maintain and where appropriate enhance the terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, including internationally, EU and nationally designated sites, habitats and protected species
	B3	Ensure WMDEDP does not contradict biodiversity protection, restoration and rehabilitation objectives in the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028.

⁴ ‘Annexed habitats and species’ refer to those listed under Annex I, II & IV of the EU Habitats Directive and Annex I of the EU Birds Directive.

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
Population & Human Health (PHH)	PHH1	Promote sustainable high-quality tourism within the plan area that supports economic development and maximises potential for employment and investment.
	PHH2	Improve health and wellbeing by provision of recreational and tourism related activities.
Lands, Soils & Geology (LSG)	LSG1	Minimise green field development and protect land and soil resources from pollution and degradation.
Air Quality, Noise & Climate) ANC)	ANC1	Maintain and promote continuing improvement in air quality and noise emissions through the reduction of emissions.
	ANC2	Contribute towards climate adaptation and mitigation and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with National targets, including Ireland's commitment to realising a climate neutral economy by 2050.
Material Assets (MA)	MA1	To contribute towards the protection of public assets and infrastructure, ensure new developments are served with adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity (drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) that does not present a danger to human health.
	MA2	Promote sustainable waste management, minimisation and recovery.
	MA3	Promote sustainable transportation including increased use of public transport and active travel measures.
Architectural, Archaeological & Cultural Heritage (AACH)	AACH1	Protect and avoid impact on places, features and landscapes of cultural and archaeological importance, including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP).
	AACH2	Protect and avoid impact on places, features, buildings and landscapes of architectural heritage, (including entries to the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAHs)).
Water (W)	W1	Protect, maintain and where necessary improve water quality and the management of watercourses, groundwater and the marine environment, in compliance with the requirements of the WFD objectives and measures.
	W2	Implement and comply with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management and Sustainable Drainage Systems Guidelines to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding.
Landscape & Visuals (LV)	LV1	To protect landscape character, minimise the loss of historic landscape features such as mature trees and hedgerows and scenic views.
	LV2	Avoid impacts on the statutory landscape & visual designations as identified in the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028.

7.0 Assessment of Alternatives

In accordance with *Schedule 2 of S.I.435 of 2004 (as amended)*, the ER is required to provide: “an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information.”.

Alternatives are required to be reasonable, realistic and capable of implementation. They are required to be set at the appropriate level at which the Draft Plan will be implemented, operating within the planning hierarchy i.e., the higher the level, the more strategic the options are likely to be. Reasonable

alternatives were considered by Fáilte Ireland, taking into account the objectives and geographic scope of the Draft WMDEDP.

The alternatives considered by Fáilte Ireland are:

1. Alternative 1 – Do Nothing: Continue without the development of a plan.
2. Alternative 2A - Do-Something: Prepare a plan without environmental consideration.
3. Alternative 2B - Do-Something: Prepare a plan with environmental consideration.

All Three options were assessed against the SEOs set out in the previous section and the preferred alternative was chosen based on the following:

- It is likely that Alternative 1 will have more negative environmental effects than positive and so, Alternative 1 does not deliver positive benefits for tourism in the Plan area.
- Alternative 2A will deliver effective benefit and response for tourism in the Plan area, but without ensuring environmental protection.
- Alternative 2B will deliver effective benefit and response for tourism in the Plan area, whilst at the same providing for sustainable development and environmental protection.

Given the tourism and environmental benefits, Alternative 2B is selected as the preferred approach.

8.0 Assessment of the Draft Wild Mayo DEDP

8.1 Assessment

The WMDEDP has been subject to an assessment for potential effects arising from the implementation of the Plan on the baseline environment as characterised and described in Section 5 of this Report. The assessment is carried out having regard to the Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) established for the aspects of the baseline environment which have potential to be impacted by the WMDEDP. These Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) are detailed in Section 6 of this Report.

Assessment questions for each environmental element are set out in Table 8.1 and a summary of the assessment itself is provided in Table 8.2. Where likely significant effects remain, Section 9 includes the proposed mitigation. Section 10 identifies the proposed environmental monitoring measures.

Table 8.1 Assessment Questions

SEOs	Assessment Criteria/Questions
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	Is there potential to result in significant or adverse effects (direct or indirect) on: • European; (Natura 2000) or species protected in Annex II and IV of Habitats Directive and Annex I of Birds Directive? • Nationally designated sites NHA's and pNHAs? • Local, county or national biodiversity including Biodiversity Action Plan objectives? • Is there potential to improve /increase biodiversity protection? • Is there potential for construction works that may impact biodiversity?
Population and Human Health	Is there potential to: • Affect public health and quality of life in terms of improved access to tourism, recreational, amenity facilities/resources (shops, retail etc) and other community facilities? • Reduce journey time to above facilities? • Improve access to tourists to rural locations / populations? • Improve quality of travel and access to information for visitors? • Raise public awareness of opportunities for more sustainable transport or more active travel to tourist destinations? • Increase impacts on local populations including public health and wellbeing from increased tourist related effects i.e. pressure on the availability of permanent accommodation for locals/workforce, traffic congestion levels, noise and air quality emissions? • Support local economic development for employment and community facilities? • Support and enhance access and development of tourism and recreation (including water-based recreation)? • Improve the tourism offering and disperse the benefits of tourism to new areas?
Land, Soils & Geology	Is there potential for: • Impacts on designated geological heritage sites/features? • Impact on valuable greenfield sites/ valuable soils or geological resources? • Remediation of contaminated land or reuse of brownfield sites? • Impacts on land use zoning?
Air Quality, Noise & Climate	Is there potential to: • Contribute to improvements to air quality or to increase air pollution? • Breach air quality standards? • Significantly increase the level of construction and/or operational carbon emissions? • Contribute to reducing emissions and meeting future emission reduction targets?

SEOs	Assessment Criteria/Questions
	• Increase vulnerability to climate change of the environment to climate change? • Increase resilience and adaptation of the environment to climate change?
Architectural, Archaeological and Cultural Heritage	Is there potential to: • Cause direct damage to, or detract from the setting of, designated cultural heritage assets, or does this contribute to protecting them (including marine based archaeology, protected bridges and railway corridors and/ or undiscovered archaeology)? Increase connectivity and appreciation of cultural heritage assets?
Material Assets	Is there potential for: • Pressure on critical infrastructure (water, wastewater, transportation networks/services, energy, internet capacity)? • Impacts on existing tourism assets, businesses or agricultural land? • The increase and/or avoidance/minimisation of resource consumption (i.e. does it support the circular economy)?
Water	Is there potential for: • Deterioration of waterbody status or conflict with or contribute to potential to achieve WFD objectives for achieving “Good” status (groundwater and surface water and transitional water bodies)? • Increased flood risk or result in loss of flood plain? • Improvements of blue infrastructure and nature-based solutions Improvement in water quality in areas impacted by tourism activities (e.g. beaches, coastal areas, river-based activities)
Landscape	Is there potential to: • Affect sensitive landscapes such as seascapes, townscapes and river views or visual amenity, for example are there impacts to landscape protection zones or scenic views or routes? • Cause any significant landscape changes or new viewpoints made available?

Table 8.2 summarizes the likely significant effects of the draft Plan.

Table 8.2 Overall Findings – Environmental Effects arising from draft Plan Provisions

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the existing statutory planning/decision-making and consent-granting framework ⁵			SEO Codes
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potential Significant Adverse Effect, if unmitigated	Residual Adverse Non -Significant Effect	
Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	- Contribution towards the protection and management of biodiversity and flora and fauna (in designated sites, including European Sites and Wildlife Sites, and Annexed habitats and species, listed species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats) including through: - Visitor management strategies; and - DEDP requirements for environmental protection and management. - Contributes towards the maintenance of existing green infrastructure and its ecosystem services. - Contribution towards protection of biodiversity and flora and fauna as a result of contributing towards the protection of environmental vectors, air, water and soil	Arising from both construction and operation of tourism related development/activities: - Loss of/damage to biodiversity in designated sites (including European Sites and Wildlife Sites) and Annexed habitats and species, listed species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats, and disturbance to biodiversity and flora and fauna. - Habitat loss, fragmentation and deterioration, including patch size and edge effects; and - Disturbance (e.g. due to noise and lighting along transport corridors) and displacement of protected species such as birds and bats	- Loss of an extent of non-protected habitats and species arising from the replacement of seminatural land covers with artificial surfaces arising from projects consented through the statutory planning/consent-granting framework. - Losses or damage to ecology (these would be in compliance with relevant legislation; and mitigated as projects would demonstrate compliance with various environmental protection and management measures)	B1, B2, B3
Population & Human Health	- Contribution towards the protection of human health including through DEDP requirements for environmental protection and management. - Contribution towards the protection of human health as a result of not directing additional tourists towards specific locations in instances where significant problems with critical	- Potential interactions if effects upon environmental vectors such as water are not mitigated. - Potential interactions if additional tourists are directed towards specific locations in instances where significant problems with critical infrastructure (drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) have been identified	Potential interactions with residual effects on environmental vectors. This has been mitigated by provisions that have been integrated into the Plan, including those relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management.	PHH1 PHH2

⁵ Effects include in-combination effects – those arising from services, infrastructure and other development (to service development, including tourism) that are planned for and consented through the statutory framework including the NPF, RSES and lower-tier land use plans. Examples may include developments/operation of developments relating to water services, transport, access or accommodation. Mitigation includes that which has been integrated into the Plan – please refer to Section 9 of this report.

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the existing statutory planning/decision-making and consent-granting framework ⁵			SEO Codes
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potential Significant Adverse Effect, if unmitigated	Residual Adverse Non -Significant Effect	
	infrastructure (drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) have been identified. • Contribution towards the protection amenity usage and access. • Contribution towards the sustainable growth of tourism and associated sustenance and growth of communities within the draft Plan area			
Land, Soils & Geology	• Various provisions (e.g. relating to maintaining the wildness of areas that have not yet been developed) help to minimise land-take and loss of extent of soil resource. • Contribution towards the protection of the environment from contamination.	• Adverse impacts upon the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource. • Potential for increase in coastal /riverbank erosion.	• Loss of an extent of soil function arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces and from sea level rise/coastal erosion	LSG1
Air Quality, Noise & Climate	• Contribution towards climate adaptation and mitigation through measures relating to: • Walking and cycling; and • Contribution towards European and national objectives for climate adaptation and mitigation, taking into account a wide range of detailed measures including those relating to resilience.	• Potential conflict, in combination with plans and programmes from all sectors including transport and land use planning, between increases in visitors (which is likely to result in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions and other emissions to air, including from aviation, with associated interactions with climatic factors) and local, national and European objectives to reduce carbon emissions. • Potential conflicts between transport movements, including car movements, and air quality	• An increase in travel related greenhouse gas and other emissions to air, including from aviation. This has been mitigated by provisions that have been integrated into the Plan, including those relating to sustainable mobility and compliance with the Climate Action Plan and the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (2018 and any subsequent versions). • Risks remain due to uncertainty with regard to climate and interactions with issues including flooding and material assets.	ANC1 ANC2
Material Assets	• Contributes towards protection and allows for continued use of public assets and infrastructure. • Contains clear objectives around seasonality and regionality which look not only to spread the benefits of tourism but also the potential impacts/ load associated with tourism.	• Increased number of visitors have the potential to increase traffic levels. • The need to provide adequate and appropriate water services (it is the function of Uisce Eireann to provide for such needs). • Increases in waste levels and residual wastes from visitors and construction of developments.	• Residual wastes to be disposed of in line with higher level waste management policies. • Increased loading on critical infrastructure (drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) where no significant problems have been identified with this infrastructure.	MA1 MA2 MA3

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the existing statutory planning/decision-making and consent-granting framework ⁵			SEO Codes
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potential Significant Adverse Effect, if unmitigated	Residual Adverse Non -Significant Effect	
	- Helps to minimise likelihood of exceeding capacity immaterial assets as a result of not directing additional tourists towards specific locations in instances where significant problems with critical infrastructure (drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) have been identified - Contribution towards compliance with national and regional water services and waste management policies	Potential impacts upon public assets and infrastructure.	- Exceedance of capacity in critical infrastructure risks remain due to uncertainty with regard to climate – however such risks will be mitigated by measures that have been integrated into the Plan; and the statutory planning/consent-granting framework. - Any impacts upon public assets and infrastructure to comply with statutory planning/consent granting framework.	
Architectural, Archaeological, & Cultural Heritage	- Contribution towards the long-term protection of archaeological and architectural heritage by encouraging greater levels of awareness and appreciation through, use, interpretation and access, in line with the requirements relating to the protection of cultural heritage including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places and/or their context; and entries to the Records of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context - Contributes towards protection of designated sites of geological heritage	- Potential effects on designated and unknown archaeological heritage. - Potential effects on architectural heritage - Adverse effects on designated geological heritage sites.	- Potential alteration to the context and setting of architectural heritage however, these will occur in compliance with legislation. - Potential alteration to the context and setting of archaeological heritage however, this will occur in compliance with legislation. - Potential loss of unknown archaeology however, this loss will be mitigated by measures integrated into the Plan	AACH1 AACH2
Water	- Contribution towards the protection of water resources (including the status of surface and groundwaters), bathing water quality and water-based designations including through integrating requirements for environmental protection and management into the Plan. - Contribution towards flood risk management and appropriate drainage	- Adverse impacts upon the status of water bodies and entries to the WFD Register of Protected Areas (ecological and human value), arising from changes in quality, flow and/morphology. - Increase in flood risk	- Increased loadings as a result of development to comply with River Basin Management Plan. - Flood related risks remain due to uncertainty with regard to extreme weather events – however such risks will be mitigated by measures that have been integrated into the Plan; and the statutory planning/consent-granting framework	W1 W2

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the existing statutory planning/decision-making and consent-granting framework ⁵			SEO Codes
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potential Significant Adverse Effect, if unmitigated	Residual Adverse Non -Significant Effect	
Landscape & Visuals	Contribution towards the protection of landscape designations as a result of facilitating compliance with relevant plans; and maintaining the wildness of areas that have not yet been developed.	- Occurrence of adverse visual impacts, especially in marine, estuary, island and ridge areas where, and conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape. - Changes in the appearance of the landscape	Residual visual effects (these would comply with landscape designation provisions)	LV1 LV2

8.2 Overall Findings

Table 8.13 summarizes the main findings of the environmental effects that might arise from the draft Plan provisions.

The overall conclusions for this section are as follows:

- The Plan contributes towards Compliance with Environmental Legislation and Guidelines
- The Plan provides for Environmental Protection and Management
- The Plan is likely to contribute towards, in combination with other governmental policies, plans etc., an increase in greenhouse gas emissions – although such increases will be mitigated
- The Plan is Consistent with the existing Statutory Decision-Making and Consent Granting Framework
- Potentially Significant Adverse Effects will be mitigated

8.3 Interrelationship Between Environmental Factors

The interactions between the environmental factors are an important consideration for the environmental assessment. Due to the variety of activities associated with tourism, there is potential for all environmental factors to interact with each other to some degree, either positively or negatively. Main interactions are likely to be between tourism/visitors interacting with local populations and human health, biodiversity, climate, architectural, archaeological and cultural heritage, landscape and material assets.

The likely interactions between environmental factors, given the implementation of the Draft Plan, are set out in Table 8.3. The table below indicates with a tick (✓), the interactions across the environmental factors.

Table 8.3 Interactions between Environmental Factors

✓= Key Interactions

x- Minor/No interactions

Environmental Factor	Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	Population & Human Health	Land, Soil & Geology	Air Quality, Noise & Climate	Material Assets	Architectural, Archaeological, and Cultural Heritage	Water	Landscape & Visuals
Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna		✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
Population & Human Health	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Land, Soil & Geology	✓	✓		X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Air Quality, Noise & Climate	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	x
Material Assets	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Architectural, Archaeological, & Cultural Heritage	x	✓	✓	✓	✓		x	✓
Water	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X		✓
Landscape & Visuals	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	

8.4 Potential Cumulative Effects

Cumulative effects can be described as the addition of many small impacts to create one larger, more significant, impact.

There are 2 types of potential cumulative effects that have been considered, namely:

- Potential intra-Plan cumulative effects - these arise from the interactions between different types of potential environmental effects resulting from a plan, programme, etc. The interrelationships between environmental factors that help determine these potential effects are identified on Table 8.3.
- Potential inter-Plan cumulative effects - these arise when the effects of the implementation of one plan occur in combination with those of other plans, programmes, projects, etc.

The WMDEDP could have a relationship with other plans and programmes. However, these plans and programmes have also been subject to environmental assessment, including SEA and AA, for the purpose of preventing and mitigating potential negative environmental effects. Table 8.4 lists the relevant plans and programmes that have potential for cumulative effects with the WMDEDP.

The assessment of cumulative effects above focused on national, regional and local plans, programmes, strategy and policy documents that have the potential to affect the same receiving environment that could be affected by the WMDEDP.

The assessment of cumulative effects concludes that the implementation of the WMDEDP will not result in direct, indirect or cumulative impacts which would have the potential to adversely affect the environment. Indeed, the implementation of the WMDEDP has the potential for positive cumulative interactions in delivering on policies and objectives of higher-level plans in relation to increased economic activity and employment and greater appreciation and understanding of natural heritage, cultural heritage and landscape.

Table 8.4 Potential Cumulative Effects with other Plans and Programmes

Plans & Programs	Potential Cumulative Effect	Likely Cumulative Effect
National Planning Framework (NPF) Project 2040 (First Revision April 2025)	The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the National Planning Framework have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the plan have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration	No
Northern and Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy	The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the RSES have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the RSES have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No
National CFRAMS Programme Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Study	Catchment-based Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Studies and their product – Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) – are at the core of national policy for flood risk management and the strategy for its implementation. These studies are required by The Floods Directive [2007/60/EC], which is being implemented in Ireland through the European Communities (Assessment and Management of Flood Risks) Regulations 2010 [S.I.122/2010]. Each FRMP is accompanied by an	No

Plans & Programs	Potential Cumulative Effect	Likely Cumulative Effect
	associated SEA Environmental Report and Natura Impact Statement. The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the FRMP have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the FRMP have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	
National 4th Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030	The Biodiversity Action notes the requirements and purposes of AA and SEA and the vision of the plan to conserve and restored for the benefit of all sectors of society.	No
National Sustainable Mobility Policy (2022)	The policy sets a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel and public transport to support Ireland's overall requirement to achieve a 51% reduction in carbon emissions by the end of this decade. The projects which will be implemented as a result of this national policy will be subject to their individual environmental impact assessment and appropriate assessment processes (as appropriate) and hence there would be no potential adverse effects on the overall receiving environment	No
County Development Plans (Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028, 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. Each of the CDP within the Zone of Influence of the study area has been subject to SEA and AA processes to ensure that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Plan have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration	No
Regional Tourism Development Strategies 2023-2027 – Wild Atlantic Way Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027	The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the Strategy have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Strategy have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No

8.5 Summary

The environmental assessment of the provisions of the WMDEDP identifies potential uncertain effects on the environment as set out above. Much of this relates to uncertainty in the likely outcome of objectives and the potential nature and scope of any development, which may or may not, derive from the implementation of catalyst projects, enabling projects, destination projects and the Plan. Therefore, measures are detailed in Section 9 which will set the context for the avoidance and / or reduction of any such potential environmental effects.

In working with the SEA process, the Plan acknowledges the requirement for any development to adhere to best practice in terms of environmental governance. Indeed, protection and enhancement of the environment is a critical pillar underpinning the core objectives and success of the WMDEDP.

In this context any proposals for development arising from the WMDEDP must meet the proper planning and sustainable development policies, objectives and development management provisions of the statutory Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028.

9.0 Mitigation

The finding of the environmental assessment in Section 8 of this Environmental Report is that, if unmitigated, a number of the actions of WMDEDP have potential for uncertain or negative effects on various aspects of the environment. This section sets out the types of mitigation measures that are appropriate at this strategic level to ensure such negative or uncertain effects are mitigated for adequately.

9.1 Level of Mitigation

This Plan has been informed by and is situated alongside a hierarchy of statutory documents setting out public policy for land use development, tourism, infrastructure, sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management. These include (but is not limited to) the National Planning Framework (NPF), Climate Action Plan (CAP), the National and County Biodiversity Action Plans, the Northern & Western Region Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032 (SRRSEs), and the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 and local area plans located with the plan area.

Implementing the DEDP will involve Fáilte Ireland working collaboratively to facilitate, promote, support and coordinate stakeholders (including local authorities, other government agencies, tourism operators, communities and visitors) in their activities in a way that is consistent with existing and emerging plans.

In order to be realised, projects included in this Plan will have to comply, as relevant, with the various provisions of legislation, policies, plans and programmes. (including requirements for project level Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form part of the statutory decision-making and consent granting framework, of which this Plan is not part and does not contribute towards.

Such legislation, policies, plans and programmes include:

- Compliance with statutory higher-level plans and policies including the NPF, RSES, Climate Action Plan, etc.
- Compliance with statutory land use plans that form part of the statutory decision making and consent granting framework (e.g. Development Plans, such as the Mayo County Development Plan 2022- 2028 and Local Area Plans) as appropriate,
- Requirements for project level environmental assessment, including EIA, AA & SSFRA, as required.

9.2 Draft Plan Mitigation

Plan mitigation is mitigation that is incorporated into the text of the Draft Plan to prevent, reduce, offset and monitor any likely significant environmental effects. The Draft Plan has benefitted from iterative feedback with stakeholders and the SEA team to inform the Draft Plan as presented for public consultation. **Appendix B** of the Draft Plan details some of these measures to include:

9.2.1 Infrastructure Capacity

With respect to infrastructural capacity (including drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) the potential environmental impacts associated with increase visitor numbers and increase pressure on capacities of existing infrastructure (including accommodation) will require careful planning and assessment. The potential environmental effects of the likely increase in tourism volumes resulting from the relevant projects in this plan will need to be considered at project level and mitigated as appropriate. This aspect should be linked to the development of visitor management plans as appropriate.

The promotion of developing visitor friendly supporting infrastructure where it is required will also be encouraged.

9.2.2 Visitor Management

Those receiving funding shall seek to sustainably manage existing and any increase in visitor numbers and/or any change in visitor behaviour to avoid significant effects on the environment including loss of habitat and/or disturbance to sensitive species (including human beings and biodiversity). This shall include for example, ensuring that new projects are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities. Visitor management plans will be required for proposed plans, programmes and projects that are to receive funding as relevant and appropriate.

9.2.3 Control and Management of Invasive Species

Proposals and the development of Visitor Management plans shall consider the control and management of invasive species having regard to existing objectives contained with the County Development Plan.

Developers and managers of existing tourism or recreational sites and/ or future development should adhere to best practice and facilitate the development of appropriate facilities to minimise the spread of invasive species including along blueways and greenways. Further information and resources on “Check, Clean, Dry, Disinfect” should be sought on invasives.ie

Fáilte Ireland shall work with partners to encourage greater awareness of potential threats caused by invasive species and how they can spread.

9.2.4 Green Infrastructure and Ecosystem Services

Those receiving funding shall contribute towards the maintenance of existing green infrastructure and its ecosystem services, taking into account the output of the Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystem Services project being undertaken by the NPWS ([NPWS - Ecosystems Services Mapping & Assessment](#)). Proposals for the development of any green infrastructure should demonstrate the synergies that can be achieved with regard to the: provision of open space amenities; sustainable management of water; protection and management of biodiversity; protection of cultural heritage; and protection of protected landscape sensitivities

9.3 Requirements for Environmental Protection & Management

The key environmental protection measures included in the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 provide for appropriate and detailed mitigation of potential uncertain environmental effects of the WMDEDP over and above those already embedded into the plan as discussed above. These measures include policies and objectives for the natural environment, climate action & renewable energy, sustainable communities, infrastructure, movement and transport, economic development, tourism & recreation, housing, built environment and settlements. These can be further reviewed in the Plan itself:

Further to the above Table 9.1 contains various provisions with which all and any partners as named out in the WMDEDP against various action (e.g. local authorities) will demonstrate compliance at lower levels of decision making in order to progress projects and receive as appropriate relevant funding and support. These decision-making processes will include project level assessments for consent.

Table 9.1 Environmental Protection & Management Compliance Requirements

Environmental Topic	Requirement for Environmental Protection & Management
All	Regulatory framework for environmental protection and management Responsible partners shall cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the of the regulatory framework for environmental protection objectives and management. Local authorities and others will demonstrate, as

Environmental Topic	Requirement for Environmental Protection & Management
	appropriate, that plans, programmes and projects comply with EU Directives – including the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC, as amended), the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (85/337/EEC, as amended) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC) – and relevant transposing Regulations.
All	Information to be considered by local authorities and others at lower levels of decision making and environmental assessment Lower levels of decision making and environmental assessment by local authorities and others, as relevant, should consider the sensitivities identified in Section 4 of the SEA Environmental Report, including the following: • Candidate Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas. • Features of the landscape that provide linkages/connectivity to designated sites (e.g. watercourses, areas of semi-natural habitat such as linear woodlands etc) • Salmonid Waters. • Shellfish Waters. • Freshwater Pearl Mussel catchments. • Nature Reserves. • Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas. • Areas likely to contain a habitat listed in annex 1 of the Habitats Directive. • Entries to the Record of Monuments and Places and Zones of Archaeological Potential. • Entries to the Record of Protected Structures. • Un-designated sites of importance to wintering or breeding bird species of conservation concern • Architectural Conservation Areas; and • Relevant landscape designations
All	Construction and Environmental Management Plan Construction Environment Management Plans (CEMPs) shall be prepared in advance of the construction of larger projects and implemented throughout. Such plans shall incorporate relevant mitigation measures indicated in any lower tier Environmental Impact Statement or Appropriate Assessment. CEMPs typically provide details of intended construction practice for the proposed development, including: a. location of the sites and materials including area(s) identified for the storage of compound(s) - construction refuse, b. location of areas for construction site offices and staff facilities, c. details of site security fencing and hoardings, d. details of on-site car parking facilities for site workers during the course of construction, e. details of the timing and routing of traffic to and from the construction site and construction associated directional signage, f. measures to obviate queuing of construction traffic on measures to obviate queuing of construction traffic on the adjoining road network, g. measures to prevent the spillage or deposit of clay, rubble or other debris, h. alternative arrangements to be put in place for pedestrians and vehicles in the case of the closure of any public right of way during the course of site development works, i. details of appropriate mitigation measures for noise, dust and vibration, and monitoring of such levels, j. containment of all construction-related fuel and oil within specially constructed bunds to ensure that fuel spillages are fully contained; such bunds shall be roofed to exclude rainwater, k. disposal of construction/demolition waste and details of how it is proposed to manage excavated soil, l. a water and sediment management plan, providing for means to ensure that surface water runoff is controlled such that no silt or other pollutants enter local water courses or drains, m. details of a water quality monitoring and sampling plan. n. if peat is encountered - a peat storage, handling and reinstatement management plan. o. measures adopted during construction to prevent the spread of invasive species (such as Japanese Knotweed). p. appointment of an ecological clerk of works at site investigation, preparation and construction phases

Environmental Topic	Requirement for Environmental Protection & Management
All	Maintenance Plan Lower tier assessments should examine the need for Maintenance Plans informed by environmental considerations to be prepared and implemented.
Biodiversity and flora and fauna	Protection of Biodiversity including Natura 2000 Network Responsible partners shall contribute, as appropriate, towards the protection of designated ecological sites including candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs); UNESCO World Heritage and UNESCO Biosphere sites; Ramsar Sites; Salmonid Waters; Shellfish Waters; Freshwater Pearl Mussel Flora Protection Order sites; Wildlife Sites (including catchments; Nature Reserves); Certain entries to the Water Framework Directive Register of Protected Areas; Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs); Wildfowl Sanctuaries (see S.I. 192 of 1979) ; and Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). Responsible partners shall demonstrate compliance with relevant EU Environmental Directives and applicable National Legislation, Policies, Plans and Guidelines, including the following and any updated/superseding documents): • EU Directives, including the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC, as amended)⁴, the Birds Directive(2009/147/EC)⁵, the Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC)⁶, the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (85/337/EEC, as amended), the Water Framework Directive(2000/60/EC) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC) • National legislation, including the Wildlife Act 1976⁷, the European Communities(Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1989 (SI No. 349 of 1989) (as amended), the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000, the European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (amended), the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the European Communities(Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011), the European Communities (Environmental Liability) Regulations 2008⁸ and the Flora Protection Order 1999 • National policy guidelines (including any clarifying Circulars or superseding versions of same), including the Landscape and Landscape Assessment Draft Guidelines 2000, the Environmental Impact Assessment Sub-Threshold Development Guidelines 2003, Strategic Environmental Assessment Guidelines 2004 and the Appropriate Assessment Guidance 2010 • Catchment and water resource management Plans, including River Basin District Management Plan 2009-2015 (including any superseding versions of same). • Biodiversity Plans and guidelines, including Actions for Biodiversity 2011-2016: Ireland's 2ndNational Biodiversity Plan (including any superseding version of same). • Ireland's Environment 2014 (EPA, 2014, including any superseding versions of same), and to make provision where appropriate to address the report's goals and challenges. Appropriate Assessment All projects and plans arising from this programme will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. A plan or project will only be authorised after the competent authority has ascertained, based on scientific evidence, Screening for Appropriate Assessment, and a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment where necessary, that: 1. The Plan or project will not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary effects on the integrity of any European site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects); or 2. The Plan or project will have significant adverse effects on the integrity of any European site(that does not host a priority natural habitat type/and or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000; or 3. The Plan or project will have a significant adverse effect on the integrity of any European site(that hosts a natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no

Environmental Topic	Requirement for Environmental Protection & Management
	alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons for overriding public interest, restricted to reasons of human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura2000.
	Protection of Natura 2000 Sites No projects giving rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on Natura 2000 sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall be permitted on the basis of this programme (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects9)
	NPWS & Integrated Management Plans Regarding, integrated management plans, Article 6(1) of the Habitats Directive requires that Member States establish the necessary conservation measures for Special Area of Conservation involving, if need be, appropriate management plans specifically designed for the sites or integrated into other development plans. The NPWS's current priority is to identify site specific conservation objectives; management plans may be considered after this is done. Where Integrated Management Plans are being prepared for all Natura sites (or parts thereof), responsible partners shall engage with the National Parks and Wildlife Service in order to ensure that plans are fully integrated with other plans and programmes, with the intention that such plans are practical, achievable and sustainable and have regard to all relevant ecological, cultural, social and economic considerations and with special regard to local communities.
	Coastal Zone Management Responsible partners shall demonstrate that works will be undertaken in accordance with best practice and local authorities and others shall, as appropriate: support measures to protect the coast, the coastal edge and coastal habitats; and facilitate an Integrated Coastal Zone Management approach to ensure the conservation, management and projection of man-made and natural resources of the coastal zone.
	Biodiversity and Ecological Networks Responsible partners shall demonstrate, as appropriate, protection and enhancement of biodiversity and ecological connectivity, including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, semi-natural grasslands, rivers, streams, natural springs, wetlands, geological and geo-morphological systems, other landscape features and associated wildlife where these form part of the ecological network and/or may be considered as ecological corridors or stepping stones in the context of Article 10 of the Habitats Directive
	Protection of Riparian Zone and Waterbodies and Watercourses Responsible partners shall demonstrate that waterbodies and watercourses are protected from inappropriate development, including rivers, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains. This will include protection buffers in riverine, wetland and coastal areas, as appropriate
	Non-Designated Sites Responsible partners shall demonstrate the appropriate protection of non-designated habitats and landscapes and to conserve the biological diversity
	Non-native invasive species Responsible partners shall support, as appropriate, the National Parks and Wildlife Service's efforts to seek to control the spread of non-native invasive species on land and water
Population & Human Health	Human Health Responsible partners shall assess proposals for development in terms of, inter alia, potential impact on existing adjacent developments, existing land uses and/or the surrounding landscape. Where proposed developments would be likely to have a significant adverse effect on the amenities of the area through pollution by noise, fumes, odours, dust, grit or vibration, or cause pollution of air, water and/or soil, local authorities and others shall ensure the introduction of mitigation measures in order to eliminate adverse environmental impacts or reduce them to an acceptable operating level

Environmental Topic	Requirement for Environmental Protection & Management
Land, Soil & Geology	Soil Protection and Contamination Responsible partners shall ensure that adequate soil protection measures are undertaken where appropriate. Adequate and appropriate investigations shall be carried out into the nature and extent of any soil and groundwater contamination and the risks associated with site development work, where brownfield development is proposed.
	Areas of geological interest Responsible partners shall demonstrate protection and maintenance of the character, integrity and conservation value of features or areas of geological interest
Water	Water Framework Directive and associated legislation Responsible partners shall contribute towards, as appropriate, the protection of existing and potential water resources, and their use by humans and wildlife, including rivers, streams, wetlands, groundwater, coastal waters and associated habitats and species in accordance with the requirements and guidance in the EU Water Framework Directive 2000 (2000/60/EC), the European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (as amended), the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (SI No. 272 of 2009), the Groundwater Directive 2006/118/EC and the European Communities Environmental Objectives (groundwater) Regulations, 2010 (S.I. No. 9 of 2010) and other relevant EU Directives, including associated national legislation and policy guidance (including any superseding versions of same). Local authorities and others shall support the application and implementation of a catchment planning and management approach to development and conservation, including the implementation of Sustainable Drainage System techniques for new development.
	River Basin Management Plan Responsible partners shall support the implementation of the relevant recommendations and measures as outlined in the various River Basin Management Plans 2009 – 2015, and associated Programmes of Measures, or any such plans that may supersede same during the lifetime of this plan as well as relevant recommendations contained in the Water Quality in Ireland 2007 – 2009 (EPA, 2011, and any updated/superseding document). Local authorities and others shall demonstrate that proposals for development would not have an unacceptable impact on the water environment, including surface waters, groundwater quality and quantity, river corridors and associated woodlands and coastal waters. Also, local authorities and others shall have cognisance of, where relevant, the EU's Common Implementation Strategy Guidance Document No. 20 which provides guidance on exemptions to the environmental objectives of the Water Framework Directive
	Bathing Water Responsible partners shall contribute towards the achievement of the requirements of the EU Bathing Water Directive and transposing Bathing Water Quality Regulations (SI No. 79 of 2008) and EU Mandatory Values, as a minimum, and EU Guide Values, where possible.
	Flood Risk Management Guidelines Responsible partners shall support, as appropriate, in co-operation with the OPW, the implementation of the EU Flood Risk Directive (2007/60/EC), the Flood Risk Regulations (SI No. 122 of 2010), the DEHLG/OPW publication The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines (2009) (including any clarifying Circulars or superseding versions of same) and relevant outputs of the Catchment and Flood Risk Assessment and Management Studies (CFRAMS).
	Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) Responsible partners shall ensure that new development is adequately serviced with surface water drainage infrastructure and promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems as appropriate.
Air, Noise & Climate Add here	Infrastructure for Walking, Cycling and Water-based activities Responsible partners shall work with Fáilte Ireland, the National Trails Office, Coillte, the Department of the Housing, Local Government & Heritage Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Department of Enterprise, Tourism & Employment and other relevant stakeholders, to improve on the existing level of infrastructure and facilities for walking, cycling and water-based activities along the Wild Atlantic Way.
	Climate Action

Environmental Topic	Requirement for Environmental Protection & Management
	Responsible partners shall work with Fáilte Ireland to • Implement the actions in the Climate Action Plan 2025 and the Local Authority CAP and subsequent updates. • Work with partners to improve access and availability of sustainable • Work with partners to implement the relevant actions in the National Adaptation Framework. • Implement the relevant actions in the Sectoral Adaptation Plan for the Tourism Sector • Work with partners to implement relevant targets contained in the Tourism Policy Framework
Material Assets	Construction Waste Responsible partners shall demonstrate that all waste arising during construction phase will be managed and disposed of in a way that ensures the provisions of the Waste Management Acts and regulations and National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy 2024-2030. Construction Waste Management Plans will be implemented by local authorities and others to minimise waste and ensure correct handling and disposal of construction waste streams in accordance with the Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects, Department of the Environment, July 2006
	Waste Disposal Responsible partners shall safeguard the environment by seeking to ensure that residual waste is disposed of appropriately.
	Uisce Eireann Responsible partners shall co-operate with and support, as relevant and appropriate, Uisce Eireann in its new role as the lead authority for water services.
Architectural, Archaeological & Cultural Heritage	Archaeological Heritage Responsible partners shall contribute, as appropriate, towards the protection and sympathetic enhancement of archaeological heritage, in particular by implementing the relevant provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the National Monuments Act, 1930 (as amended).
	Protection of Archaeological Sites Responsible partners shall contribute, as appropriate, towards the protection of archaeological sites and monuments and their settings, archaeological objects and underwater archaeological sites that are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places, in the ownership/guardianship of the State, or that are subject of Preservation Orders or have been registered in the Register of Historic Monuments. Contribute, as appropriate, towards the protection and preservation of archaeological sites, which have been identified subsequent to the publication of the Record of Monuments and Places.
	Consultation Responsible partners shall consult with the National Monuments Service of the Department of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht in relation to proposed developments adjoining archaeological sites.
	Underwater Archaeological Sites Responsible partners shall contribute, as appropriate, towards the protection and preservation of underwater archaeological sites in riverine, intertidal and sub-tidal locations.
	Architectural Heritage Responsible partners shall help to ensure the appropriate protection of architectural heritage by complying, as appropriate, with the legislative provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) in relation to architectural heritage and the policy guidance contained in the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines 2011 (and any updated/superseding document)
Landscape & Visuals	Landscape Designations Responsible partners shall contribute, as appropriate, towards the protection of county and local level landscape designations from incompatible developments. Proposals for development that have the potential to significantly adversely impact upon these designations shall be accompanied by an assessment of the potential landscape character and visual impacts of the proposed development - demonstrating that landscape impacts have been anticipated and avoided to a level consistent with the

Environmental Topic	Requirement for Environmental Protection & Management
	sensitivity of the landscape and the nature of the designation. Such assessments should be prepared having regard to the relevant aspects of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (2013 Landscape Institute).
	Coastal Areas and Seascapes Responsible partners shall protect the character and visual potential of the coast and conserve the character and quality of seascapes.

10.0 Monitoring

Article 10 of the SEA Directive requires monitoring to be carried out for significant effects directly related to the implementation of the Draft Plan “*in order to, inter alia, identify at an early-stage unforeseen adverse effects and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action.*” It is a key part to ensuring the Draft Plan does not negatively impact the receiving environment, and to assess whether current mitigation measures are appropriately compensating any anticipated environmental impacts.

Monitoring of the Draft Plan is focused on monitoring the identified potential significant negative and positive effects only on the environment as a result of implementing the Draft Plan.

10.1 Indicators & Targets

Monitoring is based around indicators that allow quantitative measures of trends and progress over time relating to the Strategic Environmental Objectives identified in Section 5 and used in the evaluation. Each indicator to be monitored is accompanied by the target(s) that were identified with regard to the relevant strategic actions refer to Table 10.1.

Table 10.2 overleaf shows the current indicators and targets that have been selected for monitoring the likely significant environmental effects of implementing relevant Fáilte Ireland Plans, Programmes, etc. These monitoring measures are updated on an ongoing basis as new data comes to light.

Monitoring is an ongoing process, and the programme allows for flexibility and further refinement of indicators and targets.

10.2 Reporting & Responsibility

The monitoring process will be undertaken by Fáilte Ireland, including preparation of evaluation reports and corrective actions, if required. The steering group that will be formed to implement the Draft Plan (that includes key stakeholders responsible for project ownership and/or partnering in the delivery of the plan) will be a key source of monitoring data and any remedial measures, as appropriate.

The findings of monitoring will be reported on periodically with frequencies to be determined during the implementation stage. It is recommended that the proposed environmental monitoring programme is agreed in advance of finalisation with all partners and stakeholders involved in the monitoring. After consultation is undertaken on the Draft Plan, the environmental monitoring programme can be amended and will be finalised and published in the SEA Statement.

Table 10.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna (B)	B1	Ensure compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to the protection of Natura 2000 Sites and Annex habitats and species ⁶ and no adverse effects on the integrity of any European site, with regard to its qualifying interests, associated conservation status, structure and function.
	B2	Preserve, protect, maintain and where appropriate enhance the terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, including internationally, EU and nationally designated sites, habitats and protected species
	B3	Ensure WMDEDP does not contradict biodiversity protection, restoration and rehabilitation objectives in the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028.
Population & Human Health (PHH)	PHH1	Promote sustainable high-quality tourism within the plan area that supports economic development and maximises potential for employment and investment.
	PHH2	Improve health and wellbeing by provision of recreational and tourism related activities.
Lands, Soils & Geology (LSG)	LSG1	Minimise green field development and protect land and soil resources from pollution and degradation.
Air Quality, Noise & Climate (ANC)	ANC1	Maintain and promote continuing improvement in air quality and noise emissions through the reduction of emissions.
	ANC2	Contribute towards climate adaptation and mitigation and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with National targets, including Ireland's commitment to realising a climate neutral economy by 2050.
Material Assets (MA)	MA1	To contribute towards the protection of public assets and infrastructure, ensure new developments are served with adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity (drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) that does not present a danger to human health.
	MA2	Promote sustainable waste management, minimisation and recovery.
	MA3	Promote sustainable transportation including increased use of public transport and active travel measures.
Architectural, Archaeological & Cultural Heritage (AACH)	AACH1	Protect and avoid impact on places, features and landscapes of cultural and archaeological importance, including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP).
	AACH2	Protect and avoid impact on places, features, buildings and landscapes of architectural heritage, (including entries to the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAHs)).
Water (W)	W1	Protect, maintain and where necessary improve water quality and the management of watercourses, groundwater and the marine environment, in compliance with the requirements of the WFD objectives and measures.
	W2	Implement and comply with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management and Sustainable Drainage Systems Guidelines to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding.
Landscape & Visuals (LV)	LV1	To protect landscape character, minimise the loss of historic landscape features such as mature trees and hedgerows and scenic views.
	LV2	Avoid impacts on the statutory landscape & visual designations as identified in the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028.

⁶ 'Annexed habitats and species' refer to those listed under Annex I, II & IV of the EU Habitats Directive and Annex I of the EU Birds Directive.

Table 10.2 Proposed SEA Monitoring Programme

Note: The monitoring programme has taken into full consideration assessment and monitoring completed on other tourism related plans including the Wild Atlantic Way operational Plan and resulting Environmental Monitoring Programme.

Environmental Factor	SEO	Indicator	Target	Source and Frequency
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna (B)	B1 -Ensure compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to the protection of Natura 2000 Sites and Annex habitats and species ⁷ and no adverse effects on the integrity of any European site, with regard to its qualifying interests, associated conservation status, structure and function	Conservation status of habitats and species protected under European and International legislation	Maintenance of favourable conservation status for all habitats and species protected under National and International legislation to be unaffected by implementation of the Plan.	• Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage report of the implementation of the measures contained in the Habitats Directive - as required by Article 17 of the Directive (every six years) • DHLGH National Monitoring Report for the Birds Directive under Article 12 (every three years). • Local authority/ An Coimisiún Pleanála planning application project decisions relating to projects under the plan. • EPA State of the Environment reporting. • Data from any relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programme relevant to the project/area.
	B2 - Preserve, protect, maintain and where appropriate enhance the terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, including internationally, EU and nationally designated sites, habitats and protected species	Conservation status of habitats and species protected under International and National legislation	No habitats or ecological networks, or parts thereof to be impacted/ lost without remediation resulting from projects arising from the Plan.	• Data from beneficiaries provided in funding applications as required under Mitigation Section 9 of the SEA ER. (Frequency: ongoing - project specific). • CORINE mapping resurvey (every five years). • Local authority (LA) or An Coimisiún Pleanála planning application project environmental assessments & decisions.

⁷ 'Annexed habitats and species' refer to those listed under Annex I, II & IV of the EU Habitats Directive and Annex I of the EU Birds Directive.

Environmental Factor	SEO	Indicator	Target	Source and Frequency
				- EPA State of the Environment reporting. - Data from any relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programme relevant to the project/area. - Visitor management plan relating to project(s). - National Biodiversity Data Centre, The Irish Wetland Bird Survey (I-WeBS).
	B3- Ensure WMDEDP does not contradict biodiversity protection, restoration and rehabilitation objectives in the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028.	To comply with the biodiversity policies and objectives of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028	No contravention of the biodiversity policies and objectives of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028	Mayo County Council monitoring for likely significant environmental effects of the developments and compliance with policies and objectives of the CDP
Population and Human Health (PHH)	PHH1- Promote sustainable high-quality tourism within the plan area that supports economic development and maximises potential for employment and investment.	To comply with the tourism and economic development policies and objectives of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028	To sustainably manage visitors to the area and to comply with the tourism and economic development policies and objectives of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028	- Data from beneficiaries provided in funding applications as required under Section 9 of the SEA ER. (Frequency: ongoing). - Visitor management plan relating to projects. - Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities. - Fáilte Ireland (annual review): Tourism performance reports, visitor surveys, monitoring programmes, tourism research & reports. - Central Statistics Office.
	PHH2: Improve health and wellbeing by provision of recreational and tourism related activities.	Occurrence of a spatially concentrated deterioration in human health arising from environmental factors resulting from the WMDEDP, as identified by the Health Service	Ensure that visitors have appropriate access to recreational areas and public health amenities.	Data from beneficiaries provided in funding applications as required under Section 9 of the SEA ER. (Frequency: ongoing).

Environmental Factor	SEO	Indicator	Target	Source and Frequency
		Executive (HSE) and / or Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).		• Visitor management plan relating to project(s) • Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities. • Publicly available data from HSE and EPA to be reviewed. • EPA State of the Environment reporting. • Local Authority reports (annual review).
Lands, Soils & Geology (LSG)	LSG1 -Minimise green field development and protect land and soil resources from pollution and degradation.	Extent of conversion of land cover / green field to developed / artificial surfaces.	Contribute to NPF target to limit the rate of increase of land that is sealed or artificialised and promote the reversal of this in suitable areas e.g., flood zones, high density areas.	• CORINE land cover mapping (CORINE every 6 years (due 2024)). • Land use national land cover map (Fáilte Éireann - every five years). • EPA State of the Environment reporting.
Air Quality, Noise & Climate) (ANC)	ANC1 - Maintain and promote continuing improvement in air quality and noise emissions through the reduction of emissions.	Demonstration of compliance with air quality and noise provisions Number of exceedances of ambient air quality standards in the County, as monitored under the EPA's National Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Network	To maximise the number of measures relating to air quality and noise minimisation being implemented	• To maximise the number of measures relating to air quality and noise minimisation being implemented.
	ANC2 - Contribute towards climate adaptation and mitigation and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with National targets, including Ireland's commitment to realising a climate neutral economy by 2050.	Demonstration of compliance with provisions relating to climate adaptation and mitigation	To maximise the number of measures relating to climate adaptation and mitigation being implemented	• Data from beneficiaries provided in funding applications as required under Section 9 of the SEA ER. (Frequency: ongoing - project specific). • EPA - GHG emissions data and projections. • Government Climate Action Plan (annual review). • Met Eireann (annual statistics).

Environmental Factor	SEO	Indicator	Target	Source and Frequency
				- Transport for Ireland - Local Link network statistics. - Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities. - FI CAP accreditation (annual review). - Mayo County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029.
Material Assets (MA)	MA1- To contribute towards the protection of public assets and infrastructure, ensure new developments are served with adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity (drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) that does not present a danger to human health.	Number of incompatible developments (supported by the plan) adversely affecting existing or planned infrastructure, including water supply, wastewater management, energy and transport infrastructure	No incompatible development (supported by the plan) adversely affecting existing or planned material assets infrastructure.	- Review of Annual Environmental Reports prepared by Uisce Éireann. - Review of publicly available data from EPA monitoring. - EPA State of the Environment reporting. - Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes. - Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities.
	MA2- Promote sustainable waste management, minimisation and recovery.	Tonnes of different types of waste received at Council and private Waste Management Facilities annually	Increase waste recycling and recovery in the County. Reduce waste generation in the County.	- EPA State of the Environment reporting. - Waste licence & permit returns - Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
	MA3- Promote sustainable transportation including increased use of public transport and active travel measures.	% change in modal split. Kilometres of permanent segregated cycling network. Kilometres of permanent integrated cycling network. Number of Electric Vehicle charging points in the city & county Total Area of road reallocated for sustainable alternatives.	Percentage increase in the number of public transport users in the City & County. Increase kilometres of permanent segregated cycling network . Increase kilometres of permanent segregated cycling network.	- Review delivery of sustainable transport projects via Mayo County Council / NTA/TII - Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities. - Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.

Environmental Factor	SEO	Indicator	Target	Source and Frequency
			Increase number of Electric Vehicle charging points in the county. Increase Total Area of road reallocated for sustainable alternatives	
Architectural, Archaeological & Cultural Heritage (AACH)	AACH1- Protect and avoid impact on places, features and landscapes of cultural and archaeological importance, including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP).	Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan.	No adverse effects on archaeological or cultural heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan	- Review of data available from National Monuments Section of Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. - Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes. - Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities
	AACH2- Protect and avoid impact on places, features, buildings and landscapes of architectural heritage, (including entries to the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAHs)).	Percentage of entries to the Records of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan.	No adverse effects on architectural heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan	
Water (W)	W1- Protect, maintain and where necessary improve water quality and the management of watercourses, groundwater and the marine environment, in compliance with the requirements of the WFD objectives and measures.	Classification of Overall Status (comprised of ecological and chemical status) under the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (S.I. No. 272 of 2009). Groundwater compliance with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC, subject to exemptions provided for by Article 4 of the WFD.	No deterioration in the status of any groundwater or surface water, or adverse effect upon the ability of any groundwater or surface water to achieve 'good status' as a result of the WMDEDP	- Information issued under the Water Framework Directive Monitoring Programme for Ireland (multi-annual). - Review of WFD status of Bathing Waters, green flag / blue flag for beaches. - EPA State of the Environment reporting. - Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.

Environmental Factor	SEO	Indicator	Target	Source and Frequency
		Reference to EPA WFD Monitoring programme and status of surface waterbodies, groundwater bodies reported		
	W2- Implement and comply with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management and Sustainable Drainage Systems Guidelines to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding.	Flood-related incidences related to the WMDEDP	Compliance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines and to ensure that any new developments granted planning permissions are on appropriately zoned lands	• Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities. • Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes. • Review of planning applications for any new infrastructure to be accompanied by standalone flood risk assessment report in sensitive areas
Landscape & Visuals (LV)	LV1 - To protect landscape character, minimise the loss of historic landscape features such as mature trees and hedgerows and scenic views	Number of unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in Development Plans and other statutory land-use plans.	No unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in Development Plans and other statutory land-use plans.	• Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes
	LV2 - Avoid impacts on the statutory landscape & visual designations as identified in the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028.	Status of High Amenity Zones and Views and Prospects. Number of developments permitted that result in avoidable adverse impacts on High Amenity Zones and Views and Prospects.	All action and development proposals supported by the plan must comply with policy objectives relating to the protection of High Amenity Zone and Views and Prospects defined in the Development Plans. No development supported by the plan should have an adverse impact on High Amenity Zones and Views and Prospects.	• Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes. • Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities

Appendix 1 – SEA Screening Determination

Screening Determination for Strategic Environmental Assessment under SEA Directive 2001/42/EC as transposed into Irish law under S.I. 435/2004, as amended

Concerning the proposed Wild Mayo Destination and Experience Development Plan

Fáilte Ireland as the Competent Authority for the proposed Wexford Destination and Experience Development Plan has undertaken screening for SEA under Directive 2001/42/EC as transposed into Irish law under S.I. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. 200 of 2011.

The screening assessment was carried out using the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects as set out in Schedule 1 of S.I. 435/2004, as amended and having regard to Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08¹, which directs that:

"In any case where, following screening, it is found that the draft plan or amendment may have an impact on the conservation objectives of a Natura 2000 site or that such an impact cannot be ruled out, adopting a precautionary approach

- *an appropriate assessment of the plan must be carried out and;*
- *in any case where a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) would not otherwise be required, it must also be carried out."*

Following assessment of the criteria and having regard to the nature of the Plan and the potential for likely significant environmental effects from implementation of the Plan, including on the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites, Fáilte Ireland has determined that the Plan will require SEA.

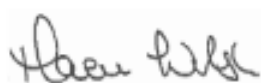
This determination has been made following consideration the criteria set out in Schedule 1 to S.I. 435/2004, as amended, and following consultation with the Statutory Environmental Authorities for SEA.

The principal reason the Plan requires SEA is as follows:

- As directed under Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08: because the potential for likely significant environmental effects on European sites could not be ruled at Appropriate Assessment screening stage.

Signed on behalf of Fáilte Ireland:

Dated: September 2025



¹ <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/circular-sea-01-08.pdf>