



DRAFT 10 YEAR LONG-TERM PLAN

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report

Prepared for Waterways Ireland under SI 435 of 2004 as amended
April 2023

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1 INTRODUCTION

The European Union Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EC) requires an environmental assessment be carried out for all plans that are prepared for certain specified sectors, including landuse and water sectors of which the proposed **10 Year Long Term Plan** (the plan) relates. The following Regulations transpose this Directive into Irish law:

- The European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 435 of 2004),
- The Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 436 of 2004) and further amended by
- S.I. No. 200 of 2011 (European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011) and S.I. No. 201 of 2011 (Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011).

The Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations, 2004 (as amended) state that SEA is mandatory for certain plans while screening for SEA is required for other plans that fall below the specified thresholds. The purpose of this screening report is to determine whether the making and implementation of the Plan will or will not, lead to significant environmental effects for the plan area and if it will require a full Strategic Environment Assessment.

In deciding whether a particular plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, regard must be had to the criteria set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive - which is reproduced in the Schedule 2A to the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as inserted by article 12 of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004. The approach to this screening assessment is to assess the plan against the criteria contained in Schedule 2a of the Regulations; this is presented in Section Three of this report and Annex A presents a more detailed commentary of each element. For the purposes of domestic SEA transposing Regulations, Waterways Ireland is a competent authority in the Republic of Ireland and a responsible authority in Northern Ireland.

An assessment under Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive has also been undertaken in conjunction with this SEA Screening report and should be read in tandem with this and the Plan.

1.1 Background and context

Waterways Ireland is one of six North-South Implementation Bodies, established under the British-Irish Agreement Act of 1999. It is the cross-border navigational authority responsible for the management, maintenance, development and restoration of 1,200 km of inland navigable waterways principally for recreational purposes.

Waterways Ireland is the navigation authority responsible for the following navigable inland waterways.

- Lower Bann Navigation
- Erne System
- Shannon-Erne Waterway
- Shannon Navigation
- Royal Canal
- Grand Canal
- Barrow Navigation
- Ulster Canal.

A strategic review was undertaken to inform the plan preparation. The purpose of the long-term Plan is as follows:

"Our Purpose is to be the custodian of the inland navigations and collaborate to reimagine, maintain, develop and promote them to sustain communities, environment and heritage."

The vision articulated in the Plan is as follows:

"Creating inspirational inland navigations and waterways experiences through conservation and sustainable development for the benefit of all."

Six Strategic Priorities are identified in the plan along with key outcomes for each. Figure 1.1 below presents the strategic priorities that provide the framework for the plan, and the accompanying outcomes.

FIGURE 1-1 YEAR PLAN SIX STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



The characteristics of the Plan does not set a framework for projects with a land use effect such as location, nature, size or operating conditions. The plan is non statutory and does not provide consent, establish a framework for granting consent or contribute towards a framework for granting consent.

The Plan will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment, Ecological Impact Assessment and requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent granting.

2 SCHEDULE 2A SCREENING ASSESSMENT

2.1 Introduction

The following section and table below present the SEA Screening assessment of the plan against the criteria provided in Schedule 2a of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2001-2011 which details the criteria for determining whether a plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment. More detailed commentary on the strategic themes and supporting actions are provided in Annex A to this report.

The Screening assessment should be read in conjunction with the **Draft 10 Year Long Term Plan**, and the accompanying Habitats Directive Screening report.

Table 1 SEA Screening

Criteria for determining whether the proposed Waterways Ireland 10 year long term Plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment
<p>1. The characteristics of the Plan having regard, in particular, to:</p>
<p><i>the degree to which the Plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources,</i></p>
<p>The Plan is not statutory and does not set the framework for projects. The Plan will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent granting framework.</p> <p>Strategic Priorities 1 4, and 6 along with accompanying outcomes relate to non landuse activities such as preparation of a long-term funding plan, preparation of a marketing strategy and research and planning capabilities. These do not, in and of themselves give rise to significant environmental effects given their non landuse focus and strategic overview. Strategic Priority 5 identifies outcomes that relate to preparation of strategies and do not provide a framework for future development consent. the ten-year Plan does not identify or define the location, type and nature of strategy and at this stage no likely significant effects are identified.</p> <p>The Waterways Ireland 10 Year long term Plan will provide a strategic overview and direct the manner in which Waterways Ireland achieve their purpose and vision over 10 years, articulated through the 6 Strategic Priorities and outcomes. It does not establish a framework for future development consent of projects and does not direct physical development or criteria upon which development consent would be decided.</p>
<p><i>the degree to which the Plan influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy,</i></p>
<p>The Plan is non statutory and as it states will guide the long term (10 year) strategic direction of Waterways Ireland. It prioritises six key areas with accompanying outcomes. It will influence other plans within the structure of Waterways Ireland and as stated in the plan align with a number of other environmental plans and related plans including National Development Plan 2040, Healthy Ireland Framework 2019 -2025 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.</p>

The relevance of the Plan in the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,

This Plan is non statutory and environmental protection measures and policies including lower tier assessments would apply should landuse projects arise will apply.
Strategic Priority 6 in particular identifies outcomes that aim to address environmental issues including An Environmental Management System, A sustainable Water Management Strategy, Embed the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Implement the Climate Action Plan (for Waterways Ireland) and prepare a new Heritage Plan 2030.

Environmental problems relevant to the plan

As reflected in the above outcomes relating to Strategic Priority 6, key challenges relevant to the plan include biodiversity loss, water management, climate actions and heritage encompassing natural and cultural heritage issues and considerations.

the relevance of the plan in the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g., plans linked to waste-management or water protection).

The Plan is non statutory and does not provide a framework for development consent, however as illustrated in Strategic Priority 6 a number of actions support environmental policy such as action on climate change, water management and biodiversity loss.
The nature, type and scale of proposals are not identified in this 10-year Plan and projects are not identified that would require development consent.
Should development arise from the strategies proposed as part of the 10-year Plan at a future date, the application of appropriate legislation such as the Water Framework Directive, the Habitats Directive, the SEA directive and the EIA Directive, will apply as appropriate.

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:

the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,

At this strategic level, no landuse effects are identified. Should specific projects arise they will be subject to full compliance with the planning and consenting process by the relevant local authority and Waterways Ireland.

the cumulative nature of the effects,

No such cumulative effects are identified for the Plan given its non-statutory basis and its approach to supporting the implementation of the remit of Waterways Ireland. It is noted that many of the strategic priorities do not relate to landuse activities. For other outcomes as identified under Strategic Priority 5, these relate to research and feasibility and the nature, scale, type and location is not known at the early stage of the plan.

the trans boundary nature of the effects

No transboundary effects are identified as no landuse effects are identified given the Plan is non statutory and does not in and of itself give rise to landuse effects.

the risks to human health or the environment (e.g., due to accidents),

No such risks are identified as arising from the Plan.

the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).

At this scale, no such effects are identified.

the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:

(a) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage

A screening statement in support of Appropriate Assessment has also been prepared for this plan in line with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). A finding no likely significant effects has been determined to inform Waterways Ireland, the competent authority in their decision making.

(b) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,

As no landuse effects are identified at this juncture, and given the scale, nature and type of elements in the Plan, no exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values are pertinent to the Plan.

Nonetheless, certain outcomes of the Plan namely the biodiversity strategy, new heritage plan and climate action plan will support environmental improvements and addressing environmental issues of relevance.

In order to be realised, potential projects or proposals arising from the plan by Waterways Ireland at a future date, will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent granting framework.

Such legislation, policies, plans and programmes include lower tier environmental assessment including Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment. Should projects arise from the Plan, the statutory consent process as outlined above will apply.

(c) intensive land-use,

No specific areas are identified for landuse effects or development activities in the plan and at this juncture no such effects are identified.

(a) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status.

A Screening report for Appropriate Assessment has been undertaken and accompanies this strategy and SEA Screening report. The AA screening report has concluded that the plan will not result in land use activities that have the potential to result in negative impacts to the qualifying features of interest of European Sites and will not have the potential to compromise the achievement of the conservation objective of European Sites. It can be concluded by Waterways Ireland, is not likely, alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, to have a significant effect on any European Sites in view of their Conservation Objectives and on the basis of best scientific evidence and there is no reasonable scientific doubt as to that conclusion.

2.2 Draft SEA Screening Determination

The plan is a non-statutory land use plan and is being screened for the requirement for SEA in accordance with the requirements of:

- Directive 2001/42/EC (SEA Directive) and particularly Articles 3(3), 3(4) & 3(5) relate to 'Screening' for the requirement for SEA.
- S.I. No. 435 of 2004 European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011 - European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011.
- Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, which sets out the "Criteria for determining whether a plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment".

Section 9 (1) of the (2004) Regulations (S.I. No. 435) (as amended) states "*subject to sub-article (2), an environmental assessment shall be carried out for all plans and programmes.*

*(a) which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, **water management**, telecommunications, **tourism** and town and country planning or **land use**, and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, or"*

(b) which are not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site but, either individually or in combination with other plans, are likely to have a significant effect on any such site."

The Waterways Ireland 10 Year Long term Plan does not provide consent, establish a framework for granting consent or contribute towards a framework for granting consent. In order to be realised, potential projects or proposals arising from the plan will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent granting framework.

The AA Screening of the plan as set out in the accompanying Screening Statement in support of Appropriate Assessment shows that the plan will not result in land use activities that have the potential to result in negative impacts to the qualifying features of interest of European Sites and will not have the potential to compromise the achievement of the conservation objective of European Sites. In light of the above findings, it is determined that the Waterways Ireland 10 year long term plan does not require full SEA.

This is the preliminary SEA Screening Determination and will be finalised following consultation with the statutory environmental authorities.

In accordance with Article 9(5) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, Waterways Ireland will provide notice to the specified environmental authorities that implementation of the 10 year long term plan would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment and will seek submissions or observations prior to finalising the Screening for the requirement for SEA.

Upon receipt of submissions/observations, the SEA Screening Determination will be finalised.

ANNEX A SEA COMMENTARY ON 10-YEAR LONG TERM PLAN

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1 - ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE		
Background	Success Statement	Key Outputs
<p>The Body has endured many years of under-resourcing with consequent gaps in capacity and capabilities as the external environment has changed immeasurably.</p> <p>The Environment in which the Body now operates has changed dramatically over the last 20 plus years. Customer expectations, Health & Safety and Environmental legislation as well as technological advances necessitate a different structure and new approach to resource allocation. The Organisation Structure agreed for the Body in 2000 is no longer fit for purpose.</p> <p>There is no history of a people strategy incorporating developmental or succession planning. Technology systems are legacy-based with a financial management package approaching end of life. Key people and organisational principles are prescribed from formation in 2000 resulting in inflexibility, limiting organisational and people development opportunities.</p> <p>Waterways Ireland works within robust governance structures and legislative frameworks. One example of this is the enforcement of the Canal Bye Laws and Shannon Navigation Bye Laws. The changing use of the waterways alongside amendments to the primary legislation has resulted in outdated Bye Laws. It is our intention to proceed with a planned revision of the current Bye Laws.</p>	<p>Waterways Ireland is a fit for purpose organisation with appropriate governance systems, digitally enabled with capabilities and capacity, aligned to the ambition and challenges of the strategy. Measured on a balanced scorecard with a People First focus and evidenced through Well Being and 'Great Places to Work' initiatives.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A fit for purpose organisation structure with clarity on the functions and responsibilities of the leadership and wider management teams to deliver on our Purpose and Vision. 2. A learning and development strategy. 3. A target operating model. 4. Project management capabilities within Asset Management & CEO Office. 5. Research and planning capabilities. 6. Digital transformation strategy in two Phases. 7. Robust governance structures and legislative framework. 8. Fit for purpose Health & Safety Management Systems.
<p>SEA Commentary</p> <p>No land use effects, or likely significant effects are identified for Strategic Priority 1 as the activities relate to Organisation Development and Governance. The implementation of Strategic Priority 1 does not have any foreseeable adverse impacts on SEA parameters given the nature, scale and type of outcomes identified for this Strategic Priority which relates to organisational development and governance.</p>		

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2 - SUSTAINABLE FUNDING MODEL

Background	Success Statement	Key Outputs
<p>The funding model is based on an annual disbursement of grants for use for current (resource) and capital purposes. The grant of current funding from Ireland follows publication of the annual Budget and is then matched by the NI Executive in 85:15 apportionment. Capital funding is allocated based on project works within each jurisdiction. There is no multi-year budgetary planning. An Estimates process occurs in Ireland in early summer and the Body seeks 'to do better' in a future funding year.</p> <p>In Ireland pension costs are included in the allocation of current (resource) funding in any given year. As pension costs continue to rise on foot of an ageing workforce (average age 52) the current (resource) funding will decline in relative terms. This is not an issue in NI as pension costs are granted separately from the current (resource) allocation.</p> <p>Similarly, provision for liability claims is included in current (resource) funding but if high value claims cannot be covered a funding request from our Sponsor Departments is sought.</p> <p>Our analysis indicates we need to address four specific challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Rising pension costs and the impact on current (resource) funding. (ii) Proportionality of current and capital funding – adequate capital funding drives more projects and more activities which leads to scaling-up or capacity issues if current (resource) funding is inadequate. (iii) From an international perspective we lag significantly behind other navigation authorities in terms of total expenditure and number of employees per kilometre. We need to position our 	<p>Waterways Ireland is appropriately funded with both the investment and working capital required to effectively execute the strategy.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Long term funding plan with clarity on capital expenditure and working capital needs. 2. Additional sustainable income streams developed through active management of our existing asset portfolio and identification and/or creation of new opportunities to grow income for further investment. 3. Explore opportunities to align our funding with international comparators to support the achievement of the objectives set out in our asset management strategy, and deliver social, economic, and environmental benefit. 4. A robust framework to measure the social, economic, and environmental capital delivered by the organisation.

<p>longer-term funding requirements closer to international comparators rather than rely on a 'do better' future year.</p> <p>(iv) Internationally, we also lag other navigation authorities in generating income to support our expenditure profile and needs. We need to develop alternative and new sources of income to improve the financial sustainability of the Body.</p>		
<p>SEA commentary No land use effects, or likely significant effects are identified for Strategic Priority 2 as the activities relate to funding and a sustainable funding model. These outcomes in and of themselves do not give rise to significant environmental effects at any scale.</p>		
<p>STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3 - ASSET PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT</p>		
<p>Background</p>	<p>Success Statement</p>	<p>Key Outputs</p>
<p>Waterways Ireland initiated an Asset Management Strategy review in late 2019 to address gaps in our long-term planning and deployment. A strategy was defined in 2020 and an Asset Management Improvement Plan (AMIP) was launched. There has been good progress and the AMIP is on target to provide insights and inform ongoing, and future, investment decisions across our 18 principal asset categories.</p>	<p>Waterways Ireland has a portfolio of valued assets in both Jurisdictions that are sustainably maintained, developed, restored, and managed to maximise the navigability, accessibility, and value of the network for users, local communities, and visitors.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementation of Asset Management framework. 2. Long term capital and maintenance planning and deployment. 3. Realising value from our assets. 4. Integration of natural capital accounting
<p>SEA Commentary: No land use effects, or likely significant effects are identified for Strategic Priority 3 as the activities relate asset management and planning for same. No land use effects, or likely significant effects are identified for Strategic Priority 3. These outcomes in and of themselves do not give rise to significant environmental effects at any scale.</p>		

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4 - CORPORATE REPUTATION & BRAND EQUITY

Background	Success Statement	Key Outputs
<p>In 2020 Waterways Ireland conducted a major research project across both Jurisdictions. One of the goals of the research project was to determine awareness from the representative sample of 1,300 respondents of who we are and what we do. In addition to this quantitative survey, we also conducted qualitative research with a stakeholder audience active in complementary activities. Spontaneous and prompted brand awareness from Waterways Ireland was low. Prompted brand awareness was 38%.</p> <p>48% of adults across the island of Ireland are interested in finding out more about Waterways Ireland, and 50% are interested in visiting and exploring Waterways. There is an immediate opportunity to develop the Waterways Ireland brand among circa 2.6 million adults.</p> <p>Following the research findings Waterways Ireland committee to developing a brand strategy as part of a broader marketing strategy for the Body.</p> <p>Separately, there has been an absence, historically, of good reputation management. Lack of planning and consideration of the importance of a good reputation has led, on occasions, to reactivity and increased reputational risk. We have, over time, acquired through experience the understanding that a good reputation is easily lost and hard to restore.</p>	<p>Waterways Ireland has strengthened its corporate reputation and stakeholder relationships, and enhanced brand awareness and esteem amongst citizens of Ireland and Northern Ireland.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Marketing Strategy incorporating brand and identity, customer, and commercial strategies. 2. A Corporate Affairs function to deliver the Body's reputation and stakeholder management objectives to its target segments. 3. In our foundation years programmes to match to our competencies and capabilities as we build expertise and insights.

SEA Commentary:

land use effects, or likely significant effects are identified for Strategic Priority 4 as the activities relate to Corporate Reputation & Brand Equity. No land use effects, or likely significant effects are identified for Strategic Priority 4. These outcomes in and of themselves do not give rise to significant environmental effects at any scale.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5 - DEVELOPMENT

Background	Success Statement	Key Outputs
<p>Development has been a much-debated word within Waterways Ireland over many years. It is understandable that is the case. In its infancy stage the Body was engineering-led with a focus on navigations and critical infrastructure. It was a start-up entity amalgamating staff from several designated bodies to a portfolio of assets historically lacking in investment. Proposals to invest in ancillary infrastructure or activities were generally perceived as diverting funding away from the core needs. There was little understanding of the concept of attracting different types of users to the on-water and off-water navigational portfolio.</p> <p>Post-economic crisis the Body was also severely underfunded with both current (resource) and capital funding declining to 40-50 percentiles versus year 2010. To survive, the organisation cut costs and availed of funding available from new government schemes. Funding was unavailable for the operational-necessity critical infrastructure on our navigations, but funding became available for trails, greenways, and blueways. So began the internal debate 'are we a waterway or a walkway'. It is not a binary debate. They can be mutually inclusive.</p> <p>What is Development?</p> <p>In its simplest infrastructural interpretation, it is anything outside of our 18 principal asset categories referenced. It includes the restoration of the Ulster Canal; regeneration of Tullamore Harbour with our council stakeholder; and a transformation of our Dublin canal and docklands assets. Importantly, development is also 'soft' projects such as product development, place naming, interpretation, VEDPs (visitor experience development plans), feasibility studies, and much more.</p>	<p>Waterways Ireland has collaborated with all our stakeholders on the development and delivery of existing and future waterway development projects that meet the emerging needs and expectations of local communities and users throughout the navigational network.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development Strategies for all our Navigations to build a pipeline of future projects. 2. Identify iconic / transformative development projects which 'make a difference' at scale nationally and internationally. 3. Implementation of good practice development principles 4. Explore the feasibility of extending the scope of our navigational network.

<p>Development includes a shift in mindset to realise we also have a unique, intangible asset – our core inherent competency working in and along our waterways. This competency will enable us, over time, explore the feasibility of extending the scope of our navigational network and to acquire new navigations across both Jurisdictions. We refer to this as New Markets.</p> <p>A key output from this strategic priority is the creation of development plans for all our navigations. Each navigation has its uniqueness, and it should be central to the developmental planning for the future. Finally there is a need to understand, and manage, the impact of development on our climate action, environment, and heritage objectives. Achieving our objectives in harmony, rather than conflict, is our goal.</p>		
<p>SEA Commentary:</p> <p>Output 1: Relates to development of a strategy that in and of itself will not result in significant effects as the location, type and nature of strategy is not defined and at this stage no significant environmental effects are identified. Should projects arise from this at a future date, these would be subject to planning and consenting process.</p> <p>Output 2: Relates to identification of potential projects at national/regional scale. This relates to identification only and not development at this juncture. In and of itself this action does not give rise to significant effects as the location, type and nature of potential projects is not identified. Any projects or actions that result from this output will be subject to statutory consenting and licensing processes including EIA, and AA as appropriate.</p> <p>Output 3: This output relates to the implementation of good practice principles and integration of international and national policy including environmental, climate change policy to drive good practice principles. In and of itself this action does not give rise to LSE as the location, type and nature of potential projects is not identified. Any projects or actions that result from this output will be subject to statutory consenting and licensing processes including EIA and AA as appropriate.</p> <p>Output 4: This output relates to exploration and feasibility in relation to extending scope of navigational network. However, it is noted that individual projects that will arise on foot of this action will be subject to screening for EIA, and AA, and where necessary will be subject to full EIAR and Appropriate Assessment at the project level. This will ensure that localised short-term impacts associated with the implementation of projects supported by this action will not undermine the environmental resources such as water quality, built heritage etc and/ or conservation status of qualifying features of interest/special conservation interests and that the overall positive implications of this action to contribute to the overall favourable conservation condition of qualifying features of interest is achieved.</p>		

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 6 - CLIMATE ACTION, ENVIRONMENT & HERITAGE

Background	Success Statement	Key Outputs
<p>Throughout this and our other planning documents, there are a multitude of references to the importance of our role of 'custodianship', within our purpose 'to sustain communities, environment, and heritage', and within our vision 'through conservation and sustainable development'. Our governments have pledged to 'match our collective ambition for nature, climate and people with the scale of the crisis at hand'. Covid-19 has made many people re-evaluate their relationship with the natural world.</p> <p>Consequently, we will reflect a shift in emphasis in our financial and human resource allocation on policies supporting sustainability, climate action, biodiversity, and heritage over the duration of Corporate Plan 2023-2025. Importantly, we are in 2023 starting with a fully formed, post public consultation Climate Action Plan.</p> <p>We have also revisited first principles and considered how we should manage the most precious resource in our portfolio – water. Our revisited water management strategy will be revisited in 2023 and as with our climate action plans will move to implementation phases with supporting funding.</p> <p>We strongly believe, despite our relatively small size, we can become exemplars within the public sector and build further on our accomplishments of recent years</p>	<p>Waterways Ireland has fulfilled its duty to be custodians of our inland waterways for future generations by ensuring our activities protect and conserve the natural, built, and cultural heritage of the waterways.</p> <p>We strive to be an exemplar among public bodies in meeting, and where possible exceeding, targets relating to the environment, sustainability, climate action and biodiversity.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An Environmental Management System. 2. A sustainable Water Management Strategy. 3. Embed the UN Sustainable Development Goals. 4. Implement the Climate Action Plan. 5. A new Heritage Plan 2030.
<p>SEA Commentary: Strategic Priority 6 relates to Climate Action, Environment & Heritage and proposes the creation of a sustainable Water Management Strategy, an Environmental Management System, a new Heritage Plan 2030, and the implementation of the Climate Action Plan. The latter plan was prepared in 2022 and subject to screening for SEA and AA, both screenings identified no significant or likely significant effects and no requirement for SEA or AA was determined.</p>		

ANNEX B: PRE-SCREENING CHECKLIST

<p>Qs 1: Is the plan subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional, or local authority or prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government?</p>	<p>Yes. This plan is being prepared by Waterways Ireland who are a cross-border body and not an authority. However, for the purposes of domestic SEA transposing regulations, Waterways Ireland is a competent authority in the Republic of Ireland and a responsible authority in Northern Ireland. Therefore, Waterways Ireland are considered a national authority in the context of this question.</p>
<p>Qs 2: Is the plan required by legislative, regulatory, or administrative provisions?</p>	<p>No, the Waterways Ireland 10 Year long term Plan is a non-statutory plan and is not required by legislative, regulatory, or administrative provision.</p>
<p>Qs 3: Is the sole purpose of the plan to serve national defence or civil emergency or is it a financial/budget plan or is it co-financed by the current SF/RDF (Structural Funds and Regional Development Funds) programme?</p>	<p>No, this is a non-statutory plan. Applying the decision tree process, at this juncture the plan is screened out for SEA. However, applying the precautionary principle and given the aims of Waterways Ireland and navigation on water bodies, proceeding to question 3 is considered appropriate.</p>
<p>Qs 4: Is the plan prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecoms, tourism, town and country planning or land use?</p>	<p>The plan does not directly relate to water, land use or tourism. However, given the remit of Waterways Ireland and its aspects of management of navigable waterways, the plan can be considered as indirectly related to water, and potential tourism and land use.</p>
<p>Qs 5: Is the plan likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site which leads to a requirement for Article 6 or Habitats Directive Assessments?</p>	<p>No, a screening statement in support of appropriate assessment has been undertaken and a finding of no likely significant effects.</p>
<p>Qs 6: Does the plan provide a framework for development consent for projects listed in the EIA Directive?</p>	<p>No, the 10-year plan does not provide or set a framework for development consent for projects listed in the EIA directive.</p>