

# SEA STATEMENT

## The Shannon: A Tourism Masterplan (2020-2030)

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### APPENDIX 1 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION





## 1.0 Introduction

This is the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Statement for the Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon (2020-2030) prepared by Waterways Ireland.

The Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon, incorporating the River Shannon and the Shannon Erne Waterway, will be a key step in the evolution of the new Fáilte Ireland strategy for 'Ireland's Hidden Heartlands' which is one of the four key regional tourism experience brands. Ireland's Hidden Heartlands extends to cover the 'heart' of the country, from Leitrim to Limerick City and extending through Longford, West Cavan, Roscommon, East Galway, East Clare, Westmeath, North Tipperary and Offaly.

'Ireland's Hidden Heartlands' promises to bring to life the Midlands' rich natural assets including its many lakes, walkways and blueways, leveraging a growing tourism trend for outdoor activities by encouraging visitors to be 'active in nature'. At present the region has just a 3% share of overnight stays by overseas visitors to Ireland and a 3% share of overnight stays by domestic visitors. Fáilte Ireland's projected growth of future visitor numbers of c. 1.19 million to the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands region by 2030 will result in an additional 304,000 additional visitors to the region. This expected increase gives a good indication of the extent of visitor infrastructure that is likely to be required. A key target will be to 'capture' visitors on the east-west Dublin-West Coast axis by offering 'reasons to stop and stay' and by creating vibrant world class towns, villages, attractions and activities all along the Shannon.

Together with the development of the Beara Breifne Way, Ireland's longest inland way-marked way, which spans part of the Hidden Heartlands, the Shannon has been identified as a transformative signature project of scale which will help to unlock the region's tourism potential. The Tourism Masterplan will identify signature initiatives and projects within the region to support sustainable tourism opportunities both on- and off-water, stimulating enterprises in the towns and villages surrounding it.

### 1.1 SEA Definition

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before the decision is made to adopt the plan or programme. The purpose is to *"provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development"*<sup>1</sup>

### 1.2 Legislative Context

European Parliament Directive 2001/42/EC, and European Council decision 27th June 2001, hereafter known as the SEA Directive was introduced a requirement for SEA to be carried out on all Plans and Programmes across multiple sectors, including tourism. The SEA Directive is to assess the effects of these Plans and Programmes on the environment.

The proposed masterplan has the potential to identify and deliver tourism development proposals in both Ireland and Northern Ireland as the boundary extends over two jurisdictions. The SEA was applied to the full extent of the masterplan area which is outlined in Figure 1.

In Northern Ireland, the European Directive (2001/42/EC) on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment (the SEA Directive) was transposed into national legislation in Northern Ireland by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004 (S.R. 280/2004).

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<sup>1</sup> EU, Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, Article 1

The SEA Directive and the statutory instruments that transpose it into Northern Irish Law require that upon the completion of a Plan, the responsible authority must make a Statement available to both the public and to the Department. This statement is known as the SEA Statement.

In relation to information as to adoption of plan or programme Article 15 states that

15.—(1) As soon as reasonably practicable after the adoption of a plan or programme for which an environmental assessment has been carried out under these Regulations, the responsible authority shall (a) make a copy of the plan or programme and its accompanying environmental report available at its principal office for inspection by the public at all reasonable times and free of charge; and

(b) publish a copy of the plan or programme and of the information referred to in sub-paragraph (c) on the authority's website; and

(c) take such steps as it considers appropriate to bring to the attention of the public –

(i) the title of the plan or programme;

(ii) the date on which it was adopted;

(iii) the address (which may include a website) at which a copy of it and of its accompanying environmental report, and of a statement containing the particulars specified in paragraph (4), may be inspected or from which a copy may be obtained;

(iv) the times at which inspection may be made; and

(v) that inspection may be made free of charge.

(2) As soon as reasonably practicable after the adoption of a plan or programme –

(a) the responsible authority shall inform –

(i) the consultation body;

(ii) where a plan or programme has been notified under regulation 13, the Department concerned.

(b) the Department concerned shall inform the Member State with which consultations in relation to a plan or programme have taken place under regulation 13(4), of the matters referred to in paragraph (3).

(3) The matters are –

(a) that the plan or programme has been adopted;

(b) the date on which it was adopted; and

(c) the address (which may include a website) at which a copy of –

(i) the plan or programme, as adopted,

(ii) its accompanying environmental report, and

(iii) a statement containing the particulars specified in paragraph (4), may be viewed, or from which a copy may be obtained.

(4) The particulars referred to in paragraphs (1)(c)(iii) and (3)(c)(iii), are –

(a) how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme;

(b) how the environmental report has been taken into account;

(c) how the opinions expressed in response to the invitations mentioned in regulation 12 have been taken into account;

(d) how the results of any consultations entered into under regulation 13(4) have been taken into account;

(e) the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and

(f) the measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.

### 1.3 Content of the SEA Statement

The SEA Statement must include information on how the environmental report prepared pursuant to article 12, the submissions and observations made to the competent authority in response to a notice under article 13, and any consultations under article 14, have been taken into account during the preparation of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme.

It must also give the reasons for choosing the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with, and the measures decided upon to monitor, in accordance with article 17, the significant environmental effects of implementation of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme.

## 1.4 How environmental considerations have been integrated into the Tourism Masterplan

The SEA process is comprised of the following principle steps:

1. **Stage 1 Screening:** Decision on whether or not an SEA is required;
2. **Stage 2 Scoping** Consultation with the defined statutory bodies on the scope and level of detail to be considered in the assessment;
3. **Stage 3 Environmental Assessment** An assessment of the likely significant impacts on the environment as a result of the Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon Region, leading to the production of an Environmental Report;
4. **Stage 4 Consultation** on the Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon Region and associated Environmental Report;
5. **Stage 5 Evaluation of the submissions and observations** made on the draft Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon Region and Environmental Report prior to finalising the Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon Region;
6. **Stage 6** Issuance of an **SEA Statement** identifying how environmental considerations and consultation have been integrated into the Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon Region.

Environmental Considerations were integrated throughout the Tourism Masterplan at all stages and particularly as a result of

- **Stage 2** Scoping Consultations with environmental authorities under Article 13;
- **Stage 3** Communications of environmental considerations with the Masterplan team and the integration of environmental considerations into the Masterplan.
- **Stage 4** Public consultation under article 14.

## 1.5 Stage 2, Scoping Consultation with Environmental Authorities under Article 13

In line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004 (S.R. 280/2004), the consultation body was given notice on the 11th February 2019 of the of the intention of Waterways Ireland to carry out an environmental assessment. The purpose of the scoping letter was to advise statutory consultees that the Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon was being prepared and that SEA would be carried out. It also invited submissions or observations in relation to the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the environmental report. The purpose of the scoping stage is to ensure the identification of relevant environmental issues, so they could be addressed appropriately in the Environmental Report. The scoping stage also helped to establish the level of detail necessary for the SEA of the Masterplan.

A significant level of consultation was also undertaken with key stakeholders, local authorities, statutory authorities, tourism sector representatives and interested parties was carried out prior to preparing the Draft Masterplan and Environmental Report. This consultation included workshop events in each the three discovery zones. Please see Chapter 8 of Volume 3: Baseline Report for further detail.

### 1.5.1 Statutory Consultees for SEA

The SEA Directive 2001/42/EC was transposed into Northern Irish Law through Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004 (S.R. 280/2004). For the purposes of these Regulations, the Department of the Environment is the consultation body.

**Table 1: Record of Scoping Submissions Received**

Agency	Interest	Concerns
Northern Ireland Environmental Agency	Statutory Environmental Agency	Has provided several N.I. resources and additional information for landscape, environmental impacts, historic environment. Has concern re: Ramsar site Lough Erne SPA and SAC in the Appropriate Assessment and has asked for regard to be given to trans-migratory birds.

## 1.5.2 How Comments were integrated into the Draft Masterplan

	Respondee	Concerns	Detail	Recommendations
1	Northern Ireland Environment Agency	Environmental Report	DAERA Please ensure that a clear statement indicating the opinion and reasons whether the implementation of the plan, in combinations with identified mitigation measures will have a significant effect on N.I	Addressed and included in the environmental report
		Figure 3	Page 6, figure 3 - appears that the boundary of the study area is close to Reily and Gole Woods Nature Reserve. The following information therefore should be included in Table 3: <i>Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland, Regional Development Strategy 2035</i> <i>Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessments;</i> <i>Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011;</i> <i>Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 (as amended);</i> <i>Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 as amended;</i> <i>Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (NI) Order 1985 as amended</i> <i>Wildlife (NI) order 1985</i>	Included in the environmental report
		LCA	There are Landscape Character Assessments available for NI.	Included in the environmental report
		Appropriate Assessment	Comment re Ramsar site Lough Erne SPA and SAC in the Appropriate Assessment and has asked for regard to be given to trans-migratory birds.	For consideration in Appropriate Assessment
		Historic Environment	Historic Environment Decision is disappointed that the historic environment does not appear as a significant consideration in the body of the document.	Additional information included in the Environmental Report.

## 1.6 Stage 4, Consultation on the Draft Masterplan and Environmental Report

An Environmental Report in compliance with the European Union SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) and Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004 (S.R. 280/2004) was prepared and placed on public display with the draft Tourism Masterplan. The purpose of the environmental report was to provide information on any existing environmental problems in the study area, to set out the likely significant effects of the masterplan on the environment and possible mitigation measures with a view to improving the environmental performance of the masterplan.

The findings of the SEA are presented in an Environmental Report which accompanied the Draft Tourism Masterplan.

## 1.7 Submissions and Observations on the Draft Masterplan and Environmental Report

The *Draft Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon 2020-2030* and associated an Environmental Report and an Appropriate Assessment pursuant to Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC went on public display from Wednesday 4th March 2020 to 4pm on Wednesday 22nd April 2020, inclusive.

The public notice stated that:

Pursuant to the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004 (S.R. 280/2004) notice is hereby given by Waterways Ireland, that the Draft Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon 2020-2030 and associated Environmental Report and Appropriate Assessment pursuant to Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC will be on public display from Wednesday 4th March 2020 to 4 pm on Wednesday 22nd April 2020, inclusive. These documents are available for inspection at the following location and stated times:

Waterways Ireland, Sligo Rd, Enniskillen Mon-Fri 9.30am-5pm

The Draft Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon 2020-2030, associated Environmental Report and is also available on the Waterways Ireland online consultation portal at <https://www.waterwaysireland.org/about-us/public-consultations>

Under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004 (S.R. 280/2004) written submissions or observations are invited from the consultation body, members of the public and other interested parties with respect to the Draft Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon 2020-2030 and associated environmental report. Observations or submissions may be made to Waterways Ireland from the period beginning the 4th March 2020 and ending 4pm 22nd April 2020.

You can make a submission by completion of the following online survey. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/R77GXYK>

Written submissions will be taken into consideration before the finalisation of the Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon 2020-2030. Submissions must include the full name and address of the person(s) making the submission and where relevant, the body or organisation represented. Written submissions will only be accepted on the survey form, to be returned to the following address, marked:

Public Consultation – SEA Shannon Tourism Masterplan  
Waterways Ireland - Western Regional Office  
Scariff, Co. Clare

Please note that although contents of submissions may be made public, the personal information (data) collected during the consultation process is collected for the purpose of receiving and dealing with

submissions and any data collected is subject to the Waterways Ireland Data Protection Policy which can be found at <https://www.waterwaysireland.org/data-protection>.

**Table 2 Summary of Submissions at the Draft Stage of the Tourism Masterplan**

NO	RESPONDENT	Submission Summary:	Consideration
1 NI	NIEA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. DAERA Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Team welcome the opportunity to comment on the Draft Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon 2020- 2030 and associated Environmental Report DAERA has considered the documents and our opinion is set out below. Environmental Report</li> <li>2. We have considered the SEA Environmental Report and find it to be a clear and comprehensive assessment.</li> <li>3. The Environmental Report refers to the NI Climate Change Adaptation Programme (DoE, 2014) in a number of places. Northern Ireland’s second Climate Change Adaptation Programme was published in September 2019 and covers the period 2019/2024. The Environment Report may wish to take this into account.</li> <li>4. Section 5.8 on page 90 refers to The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2007), in its 4th assessment report (AR4). There has been a more recent report in 2018 which predicts much greater impacts of Climate Change. The Environment Report may wish to take this into account.</li> <li>5. DAERA acknowledges the strategic nature of the plan and would generally agree with the assessment of potential impacts on the natural environment, we would suggest that the mitigation measures as outlined in the Strategic Environmental Assessment Report should be incorporated into the plan.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Noted</li> <li>2. Noted and welcomed</li> <li>3. Noted and environmental report amended</li> <li>4. Noted and environmental report amended</li> <li>5. Noted and completed</li> </ol>

## 2.0 How environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan

### 2.1 Alternatives and the Plan

One of the critical roles of the SEA is to facilitate an evaluation of the likely environmental consequences of a range of alternative scenarios for the future development of the plan area. In preparing this tourism masterplan, the following three alternatives were considered, each focusing on a different spatial approach to the development of visitor experiences and associated tourism services and infrastructure:

- Alternative 1: Consolidation and Improvement to existing Tourism Infrastructure and Visitor Experiences;
- Alternative 2: Develop major new visitor attractions on or alongside the water/river; or
- Alternative 3: Do nothing.

### 2.2 Evaluation of Alternative Scenarios

This section summarises the evaluation of the Alternative Scenarios.

#### 2.2.1 Alternative 1: Consolidation and Improvement to existing Tourism Infrastructure, Visitor Attractions and Experiences

Traditionally the River Shannon been a popular destination for both overseas and domestic visitors. The height of its popularity coincided with the emergence of the all island boat hire industry which acted as the cornerstone of both the Shannon and Erne's tourism product from the 1990s. The area and the popularity of this product in particular has since declined in popularity, leaving behind a variety of underused hotels, jetties, harbours and boats. A key issue of the masterplan is the need to address the fall off in visitor numbers and to revitalise the visitor infrastructure, services and towns that depend on the tourism industry as a basis for their economy.

##### Environmental Impacts

The central environmental benefit of this alternative is associated with its focus on the re use and regeneration of existing tourism facilities and infrastructure. Whilst in some cases increased visitor numbers will mean that upgrades to existing infrastructure may be required, it is generally considered that the environmental impacts on air and water will be addressed using specific infrastructural upgrades and therefore minimised in this scenario. Indeed, the socio-economic benefits are likely to be greatest under Alternative 1 as the benefits will accrue in areas where the existing population is highest.

#### 2.2.2 Alternative 2: Develop major new Visitor Attractions on or alongside the Water/River

The River Shannon and Shannon Erne Waterway extend over a vast geographical and predominantly rural area encompassing a variety of undeveloped nature areas including several sites of biodiversity importance. It is interspersed with a number of settlements, which with the exception of Limerick and Athlone, are predominantly small to medium sized in nature.

This low level of urbanisation means that corresponding visitor infrastructure in terms of attractions, accommodation and associated activity is also low. Generally speaking, the study area lacks attractions of scale, where the most popular visitor attractions of Clonmacnoise and Lough Key Forest Park enjoy visitors in the region of 170,000 - 200,000 per annum. The development of new attractions of scale will be required to invigorate the visitor offer and experience, and to encourage visitors to dwell longer. Several locations for new attractions were identified and considered during the preparation of the Masterplan; however, these would require the development of green field sites.

## Environmental Impacts

The environmental impacts associated with developing wholly new visitor attractions within the Masterplan area are dependent on the nature, scale and location of the development and are potentially wide ranging.

### 2.2.3 Alternative 3: Do Nothing

The 'do nothing' scenario was considered prior to the commissioning of the Masterplan. With the emergence of *Ireland's Hidden Heartlands* as a national tourist brand, a requirement for a planned and coordinated approach was established. Without a Masterplan in place, a number of potential disbenefits and environmental impacts would accrue.

#### Environmental impacts

The 'do nothing' and business-as-usual approach was not considered appropriate on the basis that it would result in poor value for money in terms of any future investment, as well as a potentially greater scale of environmental impacts associated with unplanned and uncoordinated development of a potentially significant scale.

Without a masterplanning / plan led approach, the opportunity to test and consult on the strategy in accordance with the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive would also be missed.

## 2.3 Selection of Preferred Alternative

The preferred alternative which emerged from the evaluation process was Alternative 1, which is the consolidation of and improvement to existing tourism infrastructure, visitor attractions and experiences within the Masterplan area, as this has the fewest potentially negative impacts on the SEA objectives.

This scenario contributes towards the protection of the environment and conforms to high level planning objectives around the prioritisation of development around existing infrastructure.

By applying appropriate mitigation measures - including those which have been integrated into the Plan - potential adverse environmental effects which could arise as a result of implementing this scenario are likely to be avoided, reduced or offset.

Section 8 of the Environmental Report evaluates the individual strategic aims and objectives which have been prepared to realise the selected scenario.

## 2.4 Communication of Environmental Considerations and Integration into the Plan

Mitigation measures have been recommended where potential negative impacts from development in the Shannon Masterplan area on environmental topic areas have been identified. These mitigation measures have been proposed with the aim of preventing, reducing and offsetting any significant adverse effects on the environment as a result of the implementation of the Shannon Tourism Masterplan.

In developing the mitigation measures set out below, it is acknowledged that the implementation of the Shannon Masterplan shall be consistent with the policies and objectives set out within the statutory planning framework provided by the National Planning Framework, Regional Economic and Spatial Strategies and County Development Plans. This statutory planning context provides the framework under which any new proposals associated with the masterplan will be assessed. Implementation will also have to comply with the all relevant legislation, policies, plans and programmes, particularly with respect to the provisions of the EIA and Habitats Directive.

## 2.5 Mitigation Measures incorporated into the Draft Masterplan

Mitigation involves avoiding and /or reducing significant negative effects of the Masterplan. Where an environmental assessment identifies significant adverse effects, consideration is given in the first instance to preventing such impacts i.e. avoidance. Where this is not possible, reducing the magnitude or extent, probability and/or severity of effects is proposed.

Strategic Environmental Assessment is an iterative process and should be fully integrated into each stage of masterplan preparation. This section outlines the general mitigation measures currently integrated into the Draft Masterplan that will prevent, reduce, and offset as much as possible any significant adverse effects on the environment resulting from the implementation of the masterplan.

In addition to avoiding certain approaches such as dispersal of tourism development in greenfield locations, the following mitigation measures are currently incorporated into the draft tourism masterplan:

- Develop and identify ecotourism standards across the study area that support the implementation of mitigation measures proposed in this environmental report
- Objective SI1.6 that highlights the requirement for an Environmental Code of Conduct.
- The inclusion of Strategic Initiative 5: Protecting & Enhancing the Shannon Environment which includes SI5.1 Adopting an Ecotourism Approach and SI5.4 Biosecurity Measures in particular
- SI3.4 Reimagining Historic Buildings & Canal Structures, which aims to preserve and enhance existing cultural heritage and embodied energy within older buildings.
- Strategic Initiative 4: Shannon Towns and Villages which supports consolidation of development in existing settlements where the required water and wastewater infrastructure is already in place.

## 2.6 Further Mitigation Measures included in Adopted Masterplan

The following additional mitigation measures are recommended:

- All projects should consider the need for project level environmental assessment. This will have implications for Part 8 arrangements and the consent process for 'small scale' development.
- All smaller scale plans such as Visitor Experience Development Plans should consider the need for plan level environmental assessment.
- Addressing climate change will be a considerable challenge for all sectors in the coming decade. As a result, it is suggested that all new major tourism development incorporates a net zero-carbon approach.
- In areas of potential flood risk, a flood risk assessment will be necessary. Vulnerable uses will not be appropriate in areas of high risk.
- Site specific flood risk assessments will identify the constraints for consideration at the detailed design stage. Further consideration of the potential impact of climate change on all potential sources of flooding will also be provided.

As per the recommended mitigation measures identified in the Environmental Report, the following amendments were incorporated into the adopted Tourism Masterplan.

- All future Destination & Visitor Management Plans should be supported by appropriate ecological surveys and environmental assessment.
- Route selection with respect to greenways, blueways and trails will consider environmental as well as technical and financial feasibility. Proposals will be the subject to the relevant environmental assessments at the planning consent stage. Text is included on page 138 of the masterplan.
- Add the following wording to DZ1.4: 'Subject to environmental assessment at the relevant consent stage', support emerging spiritual Pilgrim Way along the Shannon-Shannon Erne Waterway, with onwards links to Lough Erne.

- In relation to DZ2.1, the Development of a Visitor Management Plan for Clonmacnoise should carry out plan level environmental assessment and implement the principles of sustainable access and design.
- In relation to DZ2.2, the objective should be amended to include the requirement for the preparation of a Visitor Experience Development and Management Plan supported by the relevant environmental assessment.
- In relation to DZ2.3 Wet'n'Wild Peatlands of Mid Shannon, this objective should be amended to require 'a detailed sustainable visitor management plan and community consultation prior to the implementation of this objective and the reuse of existing infrastructure and services which should be prioritised.'
- Regarding DZ2.4 Expanding the Lough Ree Experience, text should be amended to include the recommendation for a feasibility study to investigate a more sustainable approach to transport within the Lough Ree area.
- In relation to DZ2.5 Improvement of the Visitor Centre at the Corlea Iron Age Trackway, text should be included to state that as part of the proposed 'improvement plan' further consideration should be given to the constraints in relation to existing infrastructure. The Plan should implement the principles of sustainable access and design.
- In relation to DZ2.6 Surf in the Turf – Surf Wave Centre: 'As party of the feasibility study, a number of potential site options should be evaluated on planning and environmental grounds. Key issues for consideration include
  - Sustainable transport and access
  - Impact on water supply
  - Landscape and visual impact
  - Wastewater treatment infrastructure
  - Potential impact on internationally designated sites.
- In relation to DZ3.1 Ardnacrusha, text should be amended to state that 'As part of the Feasibility Study further consideration should be given to potential impact on heritage assets, sustainable transport and access, water quality and designated sites. Proposals should also implement the principles of sustainable access and design.'
- In relation to DZ3.2 Develop enhanced Castlough & Portroe Lookout, the text should be amended to ensure that 'as part of the approach consideration should be given to potential impacts on heritage assets, landscape and visual amenity, sustainable transport and access, water quality and designated sites.'
- In relation to DZ3.3 Feasibility Study for Development of 'Shannon Greenway' priority should be given to the re use and enhancement of existing trails. Environmental effects including visual impact could be reduced further by minimising the development of additional infrastructure and ensuring trail surfacing is permeable and does not impact on designated sites.
- Proposals relating to Enhancing the cruise hire fleet should ensure that the upgrade is carried out to high environmental standards and that a re-use or waste reduction strategy with regard to end of life cruisers is adopted.
- Under SI2.2, it is recommended that the Development of additional Cruise Hire Hubs should be supported by an environmental feasibility study
- Under SI2.3 Marina Development the technical assessment must be supported by an environmental feasibility study.
- Under SI2.5 Angling, hubs should be identified in tandem with appropriately environmental management standards.
- Under SI2.7 Tranquillity Zones, the designation of tranquillity zones will have regard to ecological sensitivities.
- For SI2.8 Small Scale Accommodation Options, appropriate locations should be defined within the county development plans.

- To protect water quality, it is important to ensure that adequate infrastructure is in place prior to major new development in towns and village,
- Under SI3.4 Shannon Festivals and Events, the approach may benefit from an environmental management plan to manage activities, resource use and waste for events with less than 5,000 people.
- As part of SI5.2 Destination Development and Rewilding Plan and SI5.3 UNESCO Biosphere for Lough Ree & Environs it will be important to ensure that potential conflicts around access and ecologically sensitive sites are resolved.
- Under 7.1 guiding principles, text should be amended to state that all future projects should be required to demonstrate consideration of the potential need for project level environmental assessment as well as adequate infrastructure being in place prior to providing support to major new development.
- Consideration should be given to incorporating an environmental management section of the masterplan.

The following overarching text was also included in Chapter 1 of the Masterplan. This states that:

‘Measures to improve the environmental performance of the masterplan have been integrated throughout the document but are also outlined in the environmental management Section (7.1).

This masterplan also emphasises that subsequent tourism proposals must be consistent with the environmental commitments contained in the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies as well as the County Development Plans and Local Area Plans of the relevant local authority.

Project proposals and other proposed plans, referred to in this masterplan will also need to take into account the requirements of the relevant environmental legislation and associated EU Directives such as SEA, EIA, Birds, Habitats, Floods and Water Framework directives, as appropriate. Further information on environmental sensitivities in the plan area which will help inform the need for these assessments is available from the EPA’s Environmental Sensitivity Mapping Webtool ([www.enviromap.ie](http://www.enviromap.ie)).’

## 3.0 Monitoring Measures

The SEA Directive requires that the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes are monitored. Article 17 of SI No. 435/2004 - European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004, states that

*‘the competent authority shall monitor the significant environmental effects of implementation of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme in order, inter alia, to identify at an early stage unforeseen adverse effects and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action and, for this purpose, existing monitoring arrangements may be used, if appropriate, with a view to avoiding duplication of monitoring.’*

This section outlines the measures for monitoring the likely significant effects of implementing the Plan. Table 5 overleaf shows the indicators which have been selected for monitoring the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan, if unmitigated. Monitoring of individual indicators will be controlled by the frequency of reporting from other sources. The Monitoring Programme may also be updated to deal with specific environmental issues - including unforeseen effects - as they arise. Such issues may be identified by the Competent Authority or identified to the Competent Authority by other agencies over the course of the masterplan implementation period

**Table 3 Proposed Monitoring Framework: Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon**

Ref	Environmental Objective	Indicator	Topic	International, National policy documents / strategies / guidelines	European, Source of Information
1 BIO	Conserve and enhance habitats and species, with priority protection afforded to sites and species designated under the Habitats Directive	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of habitats and species</li> <li>Quality and range of statutorily protected areas along the Shannon</li> </ol>	Biodiversity	<p>EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)</p> <p>EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC)</p> <p>UN Convention on Biological Diversity Actions for Biodiversity 2011- 2016, Ireland’s National Biodiversity Plan (2011)</p> <p>National Wildlife Act 1976-2000</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht report of the implementation of the measures contained in the Habitats Directive - as required by Article 17 of the Directive (every 6 years)</li> <li>Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht’s National Monitoring Report for the Birds Directive under Article 12 (every 3 years) / Consultations with the NPWS / CORINE mapping resurvey (every c. 5 years)</li> </ol>
2 BIO	Prevent the spread of invasive species	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Occurrence of invasive species</li> </ol>	Biodiversity	<p>EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)</p> <p>EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC)</p> <p>UN Convention on Biological Diversity Actions for Biodiversity 2011- 2016, Ireland’s National Biodiversity Plan (2011)</p> <p>National Wildlife Act 1976-2000</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Biodiversity Data Centre Examine records of <a href="http://invasives.biodiversityireland.ie">http://invasives.biodiversityireland.ie</a> / Heritage/biodiversity officers of local authorities</li> </ol>
3 HEA	Improve health and wellbeing by	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Numbers participating in walking and cycling</li> </ol>		Ireland 2040 – The National Planning Framework (2018)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Waterways Ireland</li> <li>Area Engineers at Local authorities</li> </ol>

	<b>improving opportunities safe and sustainable transport</b>	<p>activities – based on data from existing Waterways Ireland Counters</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Issues with traffic flows/congestion during peak visitor periods</li> <li>3. Air Quality</li> </ol>	Population and Human Health	<p>People, Place and Policy Growing Tourism to 2025 Directive 2002/49/EC of 25 June 2002 relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise Directive 96/62/EC – Air Quality Framework Directive Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFE) Directive (2008/50/EC)</p>	3. EPA, air quality monitoring stations
<b>4 WAT</b>	<b>Protect and improve the quality of surface and ground water bodies</b>	WFD water status of surface and groundwaters	Water	<p>European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997 (S.I. No. 94 of 1997 as amended by S.I. No. 233 of 1998 and S.I. 378 of 2005); European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Water) Regulations, 2009 (S.I. No. 272 of 2009); European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations, 2010 (S.I. No. 9 of 2010), and; European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations, 2010 (S.I. No. 610 of 2010). EU Water Framework Directive (2000/0/EC)</p>	Environmental Protection Agency

				<p>Bathing Water Quality Regulations (SI No. 79 of 2008)</p> <p>European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (SI No. 272 of 2009)</p>	
<p><b>5</b> <b>WAT</b></p>	<p><b>Protect water levels</b></p>	<p>WFD water status of surface and groundwaters</p>	<p>Water</p>	<p>European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997 (S.I. No. 94 of 1997 as amended by S.I. No. 233 of 1998 and S.I. 378 of 2005);</p> <p>European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Water) Regulations, 2009 (S.I. No. 272 of 2009);</p> <p>European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations, 2010 (S.I. No. 9 of 2010), and;</p> <p>European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations, 2010 (S.I. No. 610 of 2010).</p> <p>EU Water Framework Directive (2000/0/EC)</p> <p>Bathing Water Quality Regulations (SI No. 79 of 2008)</p> <p>European Communities Environmental Objectives</p>	<p>Environmental Protection Agency</p>

				(Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (SI No. 272 of 2009)	
6 WAT	<b>Minimise development in areas of flood risk, where flood risk compatible development is proposed ensure that flood risk does not increase elsewhere.</b>	Interaction with flood extents / significant planning application within areas of flood risk	Water, material assets	<p>European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997 (S.I. No. 94 of 1997 as amended by S.I. No. 233 of 1998 and S.I. 378 of 2005);</p> <p>European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Water) Regulations, 2009 (S.I. No. 272 of 2009);</p> <p>European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations, 2010 (S.I. No. 9 of 2010), and;</p> <p>European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations, 2010 (S.I. No. 610 of 2010).</p> <p>EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)</p> <p>Bathing Water Quality Regulations (SI No. 79 of 2008)</p> <p>European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (SI No. 272 of 2009)</p> <p>EU Directive on the assessment and management of flood risks [2007/60/EC],</p>	Area engineers within local authorities / Assessments carried out at project level CFRAMS / floodmaps.ie

				The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009) National Adaptation Framework, Planning for a Climate Resilient Ireland, 2018	
7 CLI	<b>To adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No of new major zero carbon tourism developments in the masterplan area</li> <li>2. Electrification of boats and supporting infrastructure / Number of electric vehicles introduced and level of investment in supporting infrastructure (indicator to be confirmed)</li> </ol>	Climate	<p>EU Directive on the assessment and management of flood risks [2007/60/EC], The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009) National Adaptation Framework, Planning for a Climate Resilient Ireland, 2018 A 2030 Framework for Climate and Energy Policies [COM (2013) 169] EU 2020 Climate and Energy Package 2013-2020 National Planning Framework 2040 National Mitigation Plan 2017 Climate Act 2015</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Local authority development management teams</li> <li>2. Waterways Ireland</li> </ol>
8 HER	<b>To protect the integrity and authenticity of cultural heritage</b>	Number of unused historic properties redeveloped or brought back into use	Cultural heritage	<p>National Monuments Act, 2004 Planning and Development Act, 2000 S.I. 229/2005 - National Monuments Act 1930</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information on funding under the Structures at Risk Scheme is available from the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht / Local authority development management</li> </ol>

				(Section 14B) Regulations 2005 Government Policy on Architecture 2009 – 2015	teams / information from local authorities on number of planning applications referred to the DAHG  2. Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities
9 LAN	<b>To protect landscape character, minimise the loss of historic landscape features such as mature trees and hedgerows and scenic views</b>	Number of developments subject to Landscape and Visual impact assessment	Landscape	The European Convention on Landscape, 2000 A National Landscape Strategy for Ireland Strategy Issues paper for consultation (2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information from planning departments of local authorities</li> <li>• Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities</li> </ul>
10 SOIL	<b>To protect soil resources and minimise the loss of the high quality agricultural land</b>	Area of cut away bog remediated	Soil, Geology	A Resource Opportunity, Waste Management Policy in Ireland. Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government July 2012	- Bord na Mona / Corine land cover data



## **APPENDIX 1:**

### Summary of Consultation

## **Working/ Steering Group**

Formal meetings were held throughout the development of the Shannon Masterplan with the project Working Group, comprising representatives of Waterways Ireland and Fáilte Ireland. Additional consultations and feedback were held with the Steering Group, comprising representatives of the Working Group and representatives of the ten Local Authorities that are adjacent to the Shannon and Shannon and Shannon Erne Waterway.

## **Consultations**

A range of key consultations were held with the executive teams (CEO, Directors of Services) of each of the ten counties adjacent to the Shannon in late 2018. Additionally, consultations were held with the various statutory bodies, responsible for aspects of the management of the Shannon and Shannon Erne Waterway, including: Waterways Ireland, Fáilte Ireland, NPWS, EPA, OPW, National Monuments Service and ESB. Electronic communications were held with the Inland Fisheries Ireland, Coillte and Bord na Mona. Additional consultations were held with Irish Boat Rental Association (IBRA), Inland Waterways Association of Ireland and a number of other NGOs.

Consultations were held with tourism and heritage officers in each local authority through workshops. Workshops commenced in November 2018 and continued with tourism trade and SMEs in a series of sub-regional workshops in late January 2019. Community representatives, tourism activity and service providers were consulted through the thematic framework workshops, with follow-on consultations with individuals and groups.

## **Summary of consultations**

All consultations were noted in the course of the Study. These responses were analysed in further detail to provide inputs to the development of the strategic initiatives in the Masterplan (Volume 2).

## **Thematic Workshop**

The Thematic Workshop on the 29th November 2018 attracted 29 people. They represented all parts of the Shannon and a wide range of interests, with tourism, archaeology, wildlife, folklore, history and river-based recreation being particularly well-represented (see Participant Interests document).

During the workshop the participants discussed the special and distinctive qualities of the Shannon in depth. These deliberations focused on six provisional thematic areas that had been derived from discussions with the consultant team and the client Working Group. The goal of the workshop was to test and refine these six themes and, if possible, reduce the number.

The provisional themes were:

- The Living Shannon
- Shannon routes, crossings and meetings
- The Timeless Shannon
- Wellspring of Early Christianity
- People of the River Shannon
- The Shannon, mighty river of Ireland

### *Review of themes: Stage 1*

The workshop tested how far the provisional themes aligned with participants' sense of what was special and distinctive about the Shannon.

This raw data showed:

- an extremely good match – of 200 responses all but three fitted this provisional thematic framework
- all the provisional themes had traction – i.e. they all attracted good numbers of responses

These results were reported to the Project Steering Group on November 30 who responded warmly to the six provisional themes. They said these expressed the Shannon accurately.

## Outcome

The conclusion from this stage is that the provisional themes are essentially correct and there is nothing missing. This indicates that they could be refined and streamlined but should not be profoundly altered.

### *Review of themes: Stage 2*

The workshop outputs were scrutinised for overlap and duplication between the themes and the comparative strength of responses. Responses that suggest strong themes are specific to the Shannon, diverse, place-based and/or detailed. Responses that indicate weaker themes are fewer and more generic (e.g. 'culture', 'history', 'nature').

In a group exercise of this type the difference between strong and weak responses can indicate the topics that people are most motivated by i.e. the ones that they are most interested to talk about. This suggests a stronger basis for developing tourism products.

Our analysis of participants' interests suggested that the weaker responses in the workshop were not usually due to under-representation of knowledge areas.

This exercise showed:

Responses for The Timeless Shannon, Shannon routes, crossings and meetings, and the landscape and activity elements of The Living Shannon were particularly strong and substantial.

This suggests these are the strongest themes.

- The Wellspring of Early Christianity is strong, but more limited in scope. Many of the responses here were duplicates from elsewhere. This suggests this is a sub-theme, probably of Shannon routes, crossings and meeting).
- The responses on the nature and biodiversity aspects of The Living Shannon were non-specific. There was wildlife expertise in the room so this suggests that this may not be a strong theme. It would be helpful to talk to a specialist to explore this further.
- Similarly, the responses on People of the Shannon were few and generic e.g. 'craft', 'heritage', 'traditional culture and beliefs'. In this case it could be that people in the room did not know enough about the topic. Alternatively, it may be that this area is not particularly locally distinctive, or that local people do not recognise it or that they do not want to talk about it. A theme that relates directly to contemporary life on the Shannon is vital for the Tourism Masterplan so it will be important to explore this further at the local workshops.
- The importance of the islands and the stories came out strongly and was mentioned in several of themes. This suggests this is an under-told story that participants would like to see highlighted more. We need more information on these stories.
- The scale of the river and its status as the longest in the British Isles was emphasised in several of the themes. This has also been highlighted in many of our conversations. It seems resonant; this scale seems symbolic as well as geographic. This is a core idea around which people unite.

These considerations fed into the re-drafting of the themes.

### *Parting shots*

The workshop concluded with a parting shots exercise. This allows the participants who have spent the previous few hours in tightly structured group conversations to make an individual comment about any aspect of the Tourism Masterplanning. It is an important technique for ascertaining concerns that people may not wish to express in the group. The results are in the Parting Shots Responses document.

The striking thing about the results of this exercise from this group, when compared with many other workshop groups in a wide range of situations, is the consistency of the responses. Over 40% (12 out of 29) of respondents choose to emphasise the importance of sustainable development and the importance of conserving the natural environment of the Shannon. This will inform many aspects of the Masterplan and suggests theming around the value of the natural environment is important.

The other responses from this exercise focused on improved access and infrastructure (8 out of 29 responses) and the need for local people to be involved in the development of tourism and to benefit from it (6 out of 29 responses).

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