




Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)


SEA Process Checklist

Consultation Draft 18th January 2008

**Consultation Period:
18th January to February 29th 2008**

Screening 

Scoping 

Environmental
Assessment 

Information
on Decision



Disclaimer:

It is the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) and SEA Regulations (S.I. 435 & 436 of 2004) that set out the statutory requirements with respect to the environmental assessment of plans and programmes. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to the plan/programme making authority during the SEA process.

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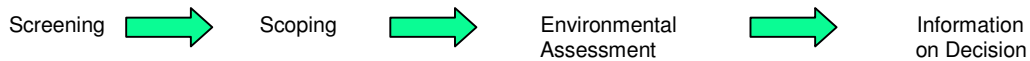




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Screening 

Scoping 

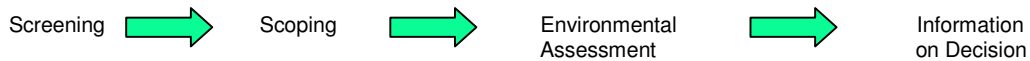
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Abbreviations

DCENR	Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources
DoEHLG	Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ER	Environmental Report
P/P	Plan or Programme
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment

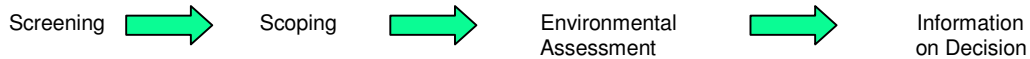


Glossary

Appropriate Assessment	An assessment of the effects of a plan or project on the Natura 2000 network. The Natura 2000 network comprises Special Protection Areas under the Birds Directive, Special Areas of Conservation under the Habitats Directive and Ramsar sites designated under the Ramsar Convention (collectively referred to as European sites).
Baseline environment:	A description of the present state of the environment of the P/P area.
Birds Directive:	Council Directive of 2 nd April 1979 on the conservation of wild birds (79/409/EEC).
Cumulative effects:	Effects on the environment that result from incremental changes caused by the strategic action together with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. These effects can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over time or space.
Data:	Includes environmental data, proxy data, any other relevant statistical data.
Designated authority (Designated environmental authority):	An organisation that must be consulted in accordance with the SEA Regulations. For Ireland these are the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) and the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR).
Environmental Assessment:	The preparation of an environmental report, the carrying out of consultations, the taking into account of the environmental report and the results of the consultations in decision-making and the provision of information on the decision (in accordance with Articles 4 to 9 of the SEA Directive).
Environmental Characteristics:	Environmental resources, issues and trends in the area affected by the P/P.
Environmental indicator:	An environmental indicator is a measure of an environmental variable over time, used to measure achievement of environmental objectives and targets.
Environmental objective:	Environmental objectives are broad, overarching principles which should specify a desired direction of environmental change.
Environmental receptors:	Include biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage (including architectural and archaeological) and landscape as listed in the SEA Directive. This list is not exhaustive, and can include other receptors which may arise for a particular P/P.
Environmental Report (ER):	A document required by the SEA Directive as part of an environmental assessment which identifies, describes and evaluates the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing a plan or programme.



Environmental targets:	A target usually underpins an objective often having a time deadline that should be met and should be accompanied by limits or thresholds.
Evolution of the baseline:	A description of the future state of the baseline in the absence of a plan or programme assuming 'business as usual' or 'do nothing' scenarios, depending on which is more reasonable for the P/P being proposed.
Habitats Directive:	Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.
Hierarchy of Plans:	Both higher and lower level P/P relevant to the P/P being assessed.
Indirect effect:	Any aspect of a P/P that may have an impact (positive or negative) on the environment, but that is not a direct result of the proposed P/P. May also be referred to as a secondary effect
Interrelationships:	Associations or linkages, related to environmental impact of the proposed P/P usually on environmental receptors.
Issues Paper:	Paper produced as part of the consultation process, usually for Land Use Plans, to facilitate consultation with stakeholders on key issues.
Key environmental issues:	Those significant environmental issues, which are of particular relevance and significance within a P/P area and/or the zone of influence of that P/P. These issues should be identified during SEA Scoping process.
Key environmental receptors:	Aspects of the environment likely to be significantly impacted by the proposed P/P.
Material Assets:	Critical infrastructure essential for the functioning of society such as: electricity generation and distribution, water supply, wastewater treatment transportation etc.
Member States:	Those countries that belong to the European Union.
Mitigation measures:	Measures to avoid/prevent, minimise/reduce, or as fully as possible, offset/compensate for any significant adverse effects on the environment, as a result of implementing a P/P.
Monitoring:	A continuing assessment of environmental conditions at, and surrounding, the plan or programme. This determines if effects occur as predicted or if operations remain within acceptable limits, and if mitigation measures are as effective as predicted. The primary purpose of monitoring is to identify significant environmental effects which arise during the implementation stage against those predicted during the plan preparation stage.
Monitoring Programme:	A detailed description of the monitoring arrangements to be put in place to carry out the monitoring of the impact of the proposed P/P on the environment including; frequency of monitoring, who has responsibility for monitoring, and responses if monitoring identifies significant negative impacts.
Non-technical summary:	A summary of the findings of the ER, summarized under the headings listed in Annex 1 of the SEA Directive that can be readily understood by decision-makers and by the general public. It should accurately reflect the findings of the ER.



Plan or Programme:	<p>Including those co-financed by the European Community, as well as any modifications to them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - which are subject to preparation and/or adoption by an authority at national, regional or local level or which are prepared by an authority for adoption, through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government, and - which are required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions. <p>In accordance with the SEA Directive, P/P that require SEA are those that fulfil the conditions listed in Article 2(a) and Article 3 of the SEA Directive.</p>
Post-mitigation residual impacts:	Environmental effects that remain after mitigation measures have been employed.
Proxy data:	Is a measure of activity resulting from a P/P which provides information on environmental impact without the need for a direct measure of an environmental receptor. For example, an increase in the number of vehicles (activity resulting from a P/P) can provide information on the impact on air quality and greenhouse gases without having to measure the concentration of these parameters in the receiving environmental receptor.
Public:	One or more natural or legal persons and, in accordance with national legislation or practice, their associations, organisations or groups.
Reasonable alternatives:	Alternatives should take into account the objectives and geographical scope of the P/P. There can be different ways of fulfilling the P/P objectives, or of dealing with environmental problems. The alternatives should be realistic, capable of implementation and should fall within the legal and geographical competence of the authority concerned.
Scoping:	The process of deciding the content and level of detail of an SEA, including the key environmental issues, likely significant environmental effects and alternatives which need to be considered, the assessment methods to be employed, and the structure and contents of the Environmental Report.
Screening:	The determination of whether implementation of a P/P would be likely to have significant environmental effects on the environment. The process of deciding whether a P/P requires SEA.
SEA Directive:	Directive 2001/42/EC 'on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment'.
SEA Statement:	<p>A statement summarising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - how environmental considerations have been integrated into the P/P - how the ER, the opinions of the public and designated authorities, and the results of transboundary consultations have been taken into account - the reasons for choosing the P/P as adopted in the light of other reasonable alternatives.
Secondary effect:	Effects that are not a direct result of the P/P, same as indirect effect.



- Short-term effects:** These are typical of those effects that may occur during construction stage of a development, for example, the increased traffic going to and from a site during construction, or, the noise associated with construction activities.
- Significant effects:** Effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors.
- Statutory authority:** The authority by which or on whose behalf the plan or programme is prepared.
- Statutory Instrument:** Any order, regulation, rule, scheme or bye-law made in exercise of a power conferred by statute.
- Synergistic effect:** Effects that, when totalled, result in a greater or lesser effect than the sum of the individual effects.
- Transboundary Consultation:** If a plan or programme is being prepared that is likely to have significant effects on the environment in another Member State, or where a Member State likely to be significantly affected so requests, the Member State in whose territory the plan or programme is being prepared shall, before the plan or programmes adoption or submission to the legislative procedure, forward a copy of the draft plan or programme and the relevant environmental report to the other Member State.
- Zone of Influence:** The area over which a plan can impact on the environment.



Introduction and Methodology

This Checklist has been prepared with the purpose of ensuring compliance with Directive 2001/42/EC “on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment” (the SEA Directive).

The Checklist is designed to ensure compliance with the broad objective of the Directive set out in Article 1 by promoting full integration of SEA in the Plan / Programme (P/P) making process, and to promote best practice in the application of SEA across the various sectors covered by the scope of the Directive.

Article 1 –Objectives:

“The objective of this Directive 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, by ensuring that, in accordance with this Directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.”

In addition, it is intended that the Checklist will also facilitate compliance with obligations placed on Member States by Article 12 (2) of the SEA Directive:

Article 12 Information, reporting and review

Article 12(2)

“Member States shall ensure that environmental reports are of sufficient quality to meet the requirements of this Directive and shall communicate to the Commission any measures they take concerning the quality of these reports”.

The Checklist is not a mandatory checklist. The intention is that the Checklist will be used as a companion to the Guidance produced by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG)- (*Implementation of SEA Directive 2001/42/EC: Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment – Guidelines for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities*, November 2004) and the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) - SEA Methodology (*ERTDI Report Series No. 18 –Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland Synthesis Report, 2003*).

The Checklist is not intended to be used as an end of line evaluation of the SEA process and associated Environmental Report. It is the intention that the Checklist will be used more as a quality assurance/control tool, which will guide SEA Practitioners and P/P makers during the SEA process, in the preparation of the Environmental Report and in integration of the findings of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in the P/P.

Methodology

The SEA Process Checklist devised poses a set of questions, which form a checklist for SEA practitioners and P/P makers. The aims of the checklist are to help SEA practitioners and P/P makers to:

- (a) quickly identify if they have met with statutory obligations in undertaking an SEA and in the preparation of an Environmental Report, in accordance with the terms of the SEA Directive and Irish national legislation. This is addressed by a set of questions under the heading Minimum Requirements
- (b) provide clear guidance as to how the SEA process and the ER preparation processes can reflect best practice



- (c) test by means of a set of additional discretionary tasks which recognise that good SEA practice needs to do far more than meet with minimum statutory requirements. The discretionary tasks are referred to as Additional Recommended Tasks in the checklist.

The minimum requirements in the SEA Process Checklist have been derived directly from the SEA Directive and the relevant national legislation i.e. the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004, S.I. No. 435 of 2004 and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004, S.I. NO 436 of 2004. In almost all cases, the exact wording of the directive/national legislation has been used in the checklist in order not to attempt to 'second guess' either. However, in the case of a very small number of the questions posed, the precise wording has not been used but had been subject of minor re-wording. This has been done only when considered necessary for the purpose of clarity. The checklist also refers the user to the relevant corresponding part the SEA Directive. In the case of the requirement for "Appropriate Assessment" the relevant Article of the Habitats Directive is referred to.

In the case of the discretionary tasks, those tasks recommended in guidance on SEA prepared by the Irish Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (2003) and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2004) were included in the checklist. These were supplemented by additional tasks derived from leading SEA research publications, from best practice currently being developed in the field of SEA, and from the Work Group's expertise. The team included a range of expertise in the areas of SEA practice, research and implementation.

For both mandatory and discretionary tasks a negative response to any of the questions posed should provide a prompt to the SEA Practitioner and P/P maker to address the particular task in question. Where appropriate, any actions undertaken to resolve non-compliance should be recorded in comments.

The Checklist was developed and refined in a series of meetings of the multi-disciplinary Work Group during 2007 and 2008. The various Draft versions of the Checklist were subsequently tested on a number of existing Environmental Reports and further refined where appropriate.



Consultation Draft January 2008

This Consultation Draft of the SEA Process Checklist was issued on Friday 18th January 2008 for a six week consultation period ending on 29th February 2008. The EPA and the SEA Process Work Group welcome any comments, observations and/or suggestions on this Consultation Draft of the Checklist.

Please forward any feedback you may have on the Draft Checklist by Friday February 29th to **Tadhg O'Mahony, SEA Section, Office of Environmental Assessment, Environmental Protection Agency, Regional Inspectorate, Inniscarra, and County Cork**. Comments can also be forwarded electronically to t.omahony@epa.ie quoting "**SEA Process Checklist**" in the Subject line.

It should be noted that the Checklist is a Process Checklist and the intention is that the Checklist is applied during the SEA Process. This should prompt any activities, required to be undertaken or information, required to be included, respectively, in the SEA Process and associated outputs. The "Checklist" should not be used solely as an end of process Checklist, though it can also serve this purpose.

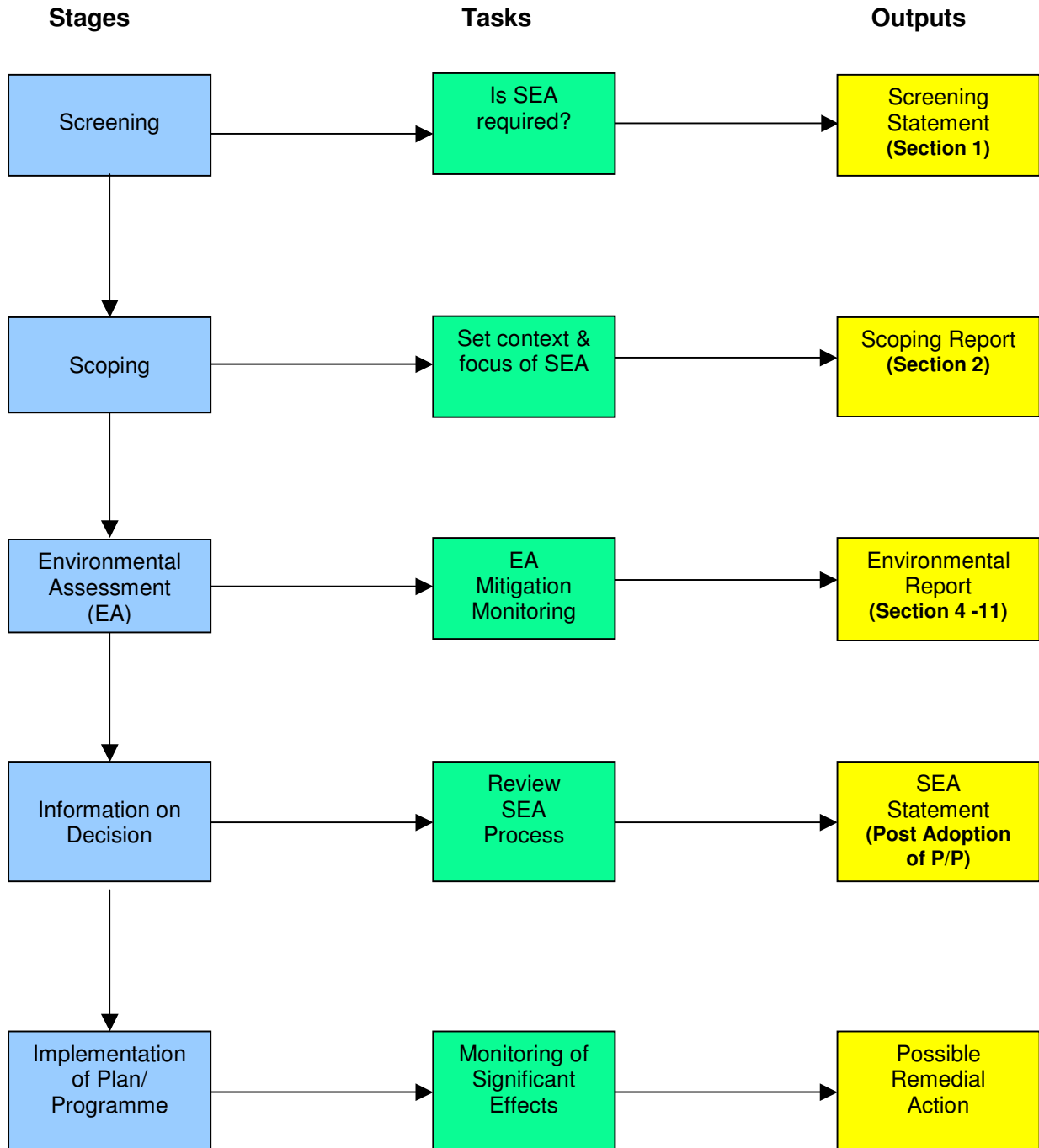
Next Stages


On receipt of feedback, the various comments will be collated and circulated within the SEA Work Group for consideration. The "Checklist" will then be updated and placed on the EPA 's Website as a Working Document. It is intended that the Checklist will be piloted formally on a number of key SEA 's being undertaken during 2008. Following review of the application of the Checklist" by Plan /Programme makers, SEA Practitioners, statutory and non statutory bodies and other interested parties the Checklist will be updated to reflect any feedback received.

Once finalised, the Checklist will be published on the EPA 's website and is also likely to be made available as a paper copy. It should be noted that the Checklist will be an active document and will be updated on a regular basis.


The SEA Process: key Stages, Tasks and Outputs

The key Stages, Tasks and Outputs, which form the basis of the SEA Process and on which this SEA Process Checklist is based, are set out below.



Screening 

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SECTION 1 - SCREENING

Minimum Requirements

	Question	Yes, No, Comment	Statutory Basis
1.1	In reaching a determination of the requirement for SEA, have the criteria set out in Annex 1 of the SEA Directive and Schedule 2A of S.I. 436 or Schedule 1 of S.I. 435 been taken into account?		SEA Directive Article 3(6)/6(3) S.I. Nos 435 & 436 of 2004
1.2	Has a determination been made, in consultation with the DoEHLG, regarding the requirement for an appropriate assessment in accordance with the Habitats Directive?		Habitats Directive Article 6(3)
1.3	Has the relevant competent authority consulted the prescribed environmental authorities as required and notified them of its determination?		SEA Directive Article 3(6)/6(3) S.I. Nos 435 & 436 of 2004
1.4	Has the relevant statutory authority made available for public inspection a copy of its determination on the requirement for SEA?		S.I. Nos 435 & 436 of 2004

Additional Recommended Task

	Question	Yes, No, Comment	
1.5	Does the screening determination clearly state whether SEA is required or not, who has made the decision and when?		
1.6	If the P/P has been screened out of SEA, does it clearly demonstrate that it does not meet all/most of the criteria of Annex 1 and Schedule 2A of S.I. 436 and Schedule 1 of S.I. 435?		
1.7	Has a description been provided in the ER of the screening process and subsequent determination?		



SECTION 2- SCOPING

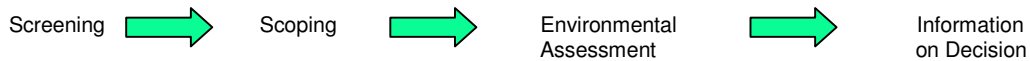
Minimum Requirements

	Question	Yes, No, Comment	Statutory basis
2.1	Were the designated environmental authorities consulted when deciding on the scope of the information to be included in the Environmental Report?		SEA Directive Article 5 (4) S.I. Nos 435 & 436 of 2004

Additional Recommended Tasks

	Question	Yes, No, Comment	
2.2	Does the proposed scope of the report cover all the relevant information in accordance with Annex 1 of the SEA Directive and all of the points in Schedule 2 and Schedule 2B of S.I. 435 and S.I. 436? If not, have reasons for eliminating issues from further consideration been documented?		
2.3	Has informal preliminary scoping taken place with the designated authorities prior to the commencement of the P/P making process?		DoEHLG Guidelines S.3.14
2.4	Have scoping meetings/workshops been held with (a) any of the designated environmental authorities, (b) relevant internal departments within the organisation and (c) other relevant statutory and non-statutory organisations?		
2.5	Where appropriate, if the zone of influence extends beyond the plan boundary, has transboundary notification and consultation been undertaken with other Member States & adjoining authorities on the scope of the SEA?		
2.6	As part of the scoping exercise, have the designated authorities been given an outline of: a) the geographical area involved (including a referenced and scaled map of the area) b) the nature of the plan and its intended lifespan c) the likely scale, nature and location of development within the area during the life of the plan (in broad terms) d) the predicted significant effects of this development		DoEHLG Guidelines S.3.17
2.7	Has a Scoping Report been prepared which clearly highlights key environmental resources, zone of influence of the P/P, alternatives, key existing environmental issues/problems and likely significant environmental effects of the P/P?		DoEHLG Guidelines S.3.16

2.8	Does the scoping report reflect the size/level of detail in the P/P?		
2.9	Does the scoping report provide the designated authorities with sufficient information to form a view on the likely significant effects of implementation of the P/P?		
2.10	Has a Scoping Issues Paper (for land use plans) been prepared to facilitate consultation? Have the environmental issues raised in the Issues paper been appropriately addressed in the scoping report?		DoEHLG Guidelines S.3.14
2.11	Have the public and other interested bodies been identified and consulted at the scoping stage?		
2.12	Have the teams responsible for the preparation of the P/P and the ER been involved in the scoping exercise?		EPA Guidelines- Stage 2
2.13	Have the responses to the scoping exercises been included in the Scoping Report?		
2.14	Has the Scoping Report been made public?		
2.15	Where an appropriate assessment is required and will be undertaken in conjunction with the SEA, have any environmental problems, indicators or other issues relevant to the assessment been identified, that need to be considered during the SEA process?		Habitats Directive Article 6



SECTION 3 – CONSULTATION


Consultation with Designated Authorities, Public, and, where applicable, International and National Transboundary Consultations

Minimum Requirements


	Question	Yes, No, Comment	Statutory Basis
3.1	Have the Draft P/P and accompanying ER been made available to the designated authorities and the public?		SEA Directive Article 6(1)/6(3) S.I. Nos 435 & 436 of 2004
3.2	Have the designated environmental authorities and the public been given an early and effective opportunity to express their opinion on the draft P/P and the accompanying ER?		SEA Directive Article 6(2)/6(4) S.I. Nos 435 & 436 of 2004
3.3	Have the ER and the opinions expressed by the designated authorities and the public during consultation been taken into account during the preparation of the P/P?		SEA Directive Article 8 S.I. Nos 435 & 436 of 2004
3.4	Where relevant, has a copy of the Draft P/P and the ER been forwarded to other Member States before its adoption?		SEA Directive Article 7 S.I. Nos 435 & 436 of 2004
3.5	Where relevant, have the Member States been given a reasonable time frame to respond to the draft P/P and ER?		
3.6	Have the opinions expressed by other Member States during transboundary consultation been taken into account?		SEA Directive Article 7 S.I. Nos 435 & 436 of 2004

Additional Recommended Tasks

	Question	Yes, No, Comment	
3.8	Has a description of the outcome of all consultations (including transboundary) been documented in the ER?		
3.9	Where a consultation recommendation has not been taken on board, has an explanation been provided of why?		
3.10	Have P/Ps and ERs for counties contiguous to the border with Northern Ireland been subject to transboundary consultation with the relevant Northern Ireland Environmental Authorities?		DoEHLG Guidelines S. 5.9
3.11	If the zone of influence of the P/P extends beyond the P/P boundary, have relevant statutory Bodies/Authorities and adjoining Local Authorities been informed and consulted?		DoEHLG Guidelines S. 5.9

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SECTION 4 – PLAN DESCRIPTION

Minimum Requirements


	Question	Yes, No, Comment	Statutory Basis
4.1	Has an outline of the contents and the main objectives of the P/P been provided in the ER?		SEA Directive Article 5 Annex I (a)
4.2	Has information been provided on the relationship of the P/P with other relevant P/Ps?		SEA Directive Article 5 Annex I (a)

Additional Recommended Tasks

	Question	Yes, No, Comment	
4.3	Has a referenced and scaled map illustrating the geographical extend of the P/P area been included in the ER?		
4.4	Have any relevant conflicts and/or synergies between the P/P objectives and the objectives of other P/Ps in the hierarchy (including transboundary) been identified and described?		
4.5	Has the zone of influence of the P/P been described appropriately?		
4.6	Has the potential for transboundary effects of the plan been identified?		

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SECTION 5 – EXISTING ENVIRONMENT


Minimum Requirements

	Question						Statutory Basis
5.1	(a) Are the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment described? (b) Are any existing environmental problems described (in particular those relating to areas designated pursuant to the Birds and Habitats Directives)? (c) Are the environmental characteristics of areas that are likely to be significantly affected by the P/P identified? (d) Is the likely evolution of the existing environment without the implementation of the P/P described? (e) Have any significant gaps in the baseline data been identified? (f) Have alternative/proxy data sources been identified where existing baseline data is unavailable?						SEA Directive Article 5 Annex I (b), (c), (d)
Environmental Receptor	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	Comment
Biodiversity, flora and fauna							
Water (surface, ground, estuarine and coastal)							
Soil							
Landscape							
Cultural Heritage (architectural and archaeological heritage)							
Population							
Human Health							
Air							
Climatic Factors							
Material Assets							
Interrelationships							
Other							

Yes: Y
No: N

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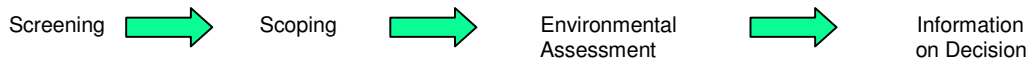
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	Question	Yes, No, Comment	Statutory Basis
5.2	Has a description been included of any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know how) encountered in compiling the required information?		SEA Directive Article 5 Annex 1 (h) S.I. Nos 435 & 436 of 2004

Additional Recommended Tasks

	Question	Yes, No, Comment	
5.3	Does the relevant current state of the environment (baseline), as described, reflect: a) the availability of data? b) The size and level of detail of the P/P?		
5.4	Have trends for key environmental receptors been presented and described using appropriate environmental data?		
5.5	What sources of environmental data and/or environmental information systems (e.g. GIS) have been used?		
5.6	Have existing environmental problems relevant to the P/P been identified and put into the context of relevant environmental objectives, standards, thresholds etc.?		



SECTION 6 – OBJECTIVES, TARGETS AND INDICATORS


Note: See Appendix IV – Objectives, Targets and Indicators explanation

Minimum Requirements


	Question	Yes, No, Comment	Statutory Basis
6.1	Have any environmental protection objectives, established at International, European Community or Member State level which are relevant to the P/P been identified?		SEA Directive Article 5 Annex 1(e)
6.2	Have these objectives and any environmental considerations been taken into account (placed in context/linked into the P/P) during the preparation of the P/P?		SEA Directive Article 5 Annex 1(e)

Additional Recommended Tasks

	Question	Yes, No, Comment	
6.4	Are the proposed environmental objectives linked to appropriate targets and indicators?		
6.5	In relation to environmental targets; (a) have limits or thresholds been established where appropriate? (b) have timescales been set where appropriate?		
6.6	Are the environmental indicators capable of the following; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> describing trends in the baseline environment? demonstrating the likely significant environmental impact(s) of the implementation of the P/P? being used in a monitoring programme? providing an early warning of significant unforeseen adverse effects? prioritising key environmental impact(s)? is the number of environmental indicators manageable, in terms of time and resources? 		DoEHLG Guidelines S.4.13 S. 7.11 S.7.12

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6.7	Have the environmental objectives been linked to targets and indicators for those environmental receptors identified as being significantly affected?			
Environmental Receptor	O	T	I	Comment*
Biodiversity, flora and fauna				
Water (surface, ground, estuarine and coastal)				
Soil				
Landscape				
Cultural Heritage (architectural and archaeological heritage)				
Population				
Human health				
Air				
Climatic factors				
Material assets				
Other				

Yes: Y
No: N

Environmental objective (O): In SEA, objectives are broad, overarching principles which should specify a desired direction of change, for example, 'reduce air pollution' or 'improve human health'.

Environmental target (T): A target usually underpins an objective often having a time deadline that should be met and should be accompanied by limits or thresholds

Environmental indicator (I): Indicators are used to track the achievements of objectives and targets, describe the baseline situation, monitor the impact of the proposed plan or programme on the environment and monitor impacts

Proxy indicators: A measure of activity resulting from a P/P which provides information on environmental impact without the need for a direct measure of an environmental receptor



SECTION 7 – CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES

Minimum Requirements

	Question	Yes, No, Comment	Statutory Basis
7.1	Have 'reasonable alternatives' been identified and described?		SEA Directive Article 5 Annex 1 (h) S.I. Nos 435 & 436 of 2004
7.2	Have the reasons for selecting (a) the alternatives and (b) the preferred alternative been provided?		SEA Directive Article 5/ Article 9(1)b Annex 1 (h) S.I. Nos 435 & 436 of 2004
7.3	Has a description of how the assessment of alternatives was undertaken been provided?		SEA Directive Article 5 Annex 1 (h) S.I. Nos 435 & 436 of 2004

Additional Recommended Tasks

	Question	Yes, No, Comment	
7.4	Are the potential alternatives proposed assessed against the relevant environmental objectives and against each other?		(Modified IEMA)
7.5	Has a clear explanation been given of the likely significant environmental effects of each alternative?		
7.6	Has clear written justification been given for the choice of the preferred alternative?		
7.7	Do the alternatives considered reflect the objectives and hierarchy of the P/P?		

Screening →

Scoping →

Environmental Assessment →

Information on Decision


SECTION 8 – LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS OF THE PLAN OR PROGRAMME

Minimum Requirements


Question		Statutory Basis									
8.1	Are the likely significant effects on the environment described?	SEA Directive Article 5 Annex I (f) S.I. Nos 435 & 436 of 2004									
Environmental Receptor	S	M	L	P	T	Sec	Cm	Sy	+	-	Comment
Biodiversity, flora and fauna											
Water (surface, ground, estuarine and coastal)											
Soil											
Landscape											
Cultural Heritage (architectural and archaeological heritage)											
Population											
Human Health											
Air											
Climatic factors											
Material Assets											
Interrelationships											
Other											

Note:

S	Short -term effects
M	Medium-term effects
L	Long-term effects
P	Permanent effects
T	Temporary effects
Sec	Secondary effects
Cm	Cumulative effects
Sy	Synergistic effects
+:	Positive effects
-:	Negative effects

Screening 

Scoping 

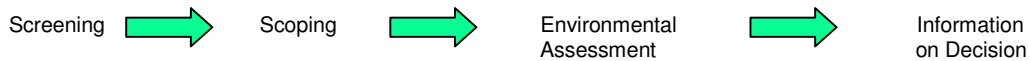
Environmental Assessment 

Information on Decision



Additional Recommended Tasks

	Question	Yes, No, Comment	
8.2	Are significant effects described in relation to: - current environmental conditions - relevant environmental standards and thresholds		
8.3	Are appropriate impact prediction methods used, and, are impacts quantified where relevant?		
8.4	Have the methods used for impact prediction been described?		



SECTION 9 – MITIGATION MEASURES

Minimum Requirements

	Question	Yes, No, Comment	Statutory Basis
9.1	Have mitigation measures been proposed for all significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the P/P?		SEA Directive Article 5 Annex I (g)

Additional Recommended Tasks

	Question	Yes, No, Comment	
9.2	Have the proposed mitigation measures been incorporated into the P/P?		
9.3	Have the proposed mitigation measures been linked, where appropriate, to specific relevant significant environmental effects?		
9.4	Has an explanation been provided where mitigation of significant adverse effects is not proposed?		
9.5	Are the mitigation measures proposed within the remit of the statutory authority? If not, is there reasonable certainty that they will be implemented?		
9.6	Do the proposed mitigation measures have potential to fully avoid or mitigate the relevant impact(s)? If not, have additional measures been considered?		
9.7	Is a description provided of any likely post-mitigation residual impacts included?		
9.8	If the appropriate assessment shows that the P/P would have a significant impact on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site, has the statutory authority considered further alternatives to try to avoid these impacts?		

SECTION 10 – MONITORING PROGRAMME

Minimum Requirements

	Question	Yes, No, Comment	Statutory Basis
10.1	Has a monitoring programme of significant environmental effects of implementing the P/P been described?		SEA Directive Article 10 Annex 1 (i) S.I. Nos 435 & 436 of 2004
10.2	Does the monitoring programme allow unforeseen adverse effects to be identified, for instance, where assumptions underpinning the ER's impact predictions may not come true in practice?		SEA Directive Article 10(1) Annex 1 (i) S.I. Nos 435 & 436 of 2004
10.3	Have thresholds / trigger levels been assigned which will determine the need for appropriate remedial action?		SEA Directive Article 10(1) Annex 1 (i) S.I. Nos 435 & 436 of 2004

Additional Recommended Tasks

	Question	Yes, No, Comment	
10.4	Are responsibilities for carrying out the monitoring programme clearly defined?		DoEHLG Guidelines S. 7.7
10.5	Are responsibilities for responding to any significant negative environmental effects of implementation of the P/P clearly defined?		
10.6	Are responsibilities for identifying and responding to unforeseen adverse effects of implementation of the P/P clearly defined?		
10.7	Has the frequency of monitoring been specified in the monitoring programme?		
10.8	Has the frequency of reporting on the results of the monitoring programme been specified?		
10.9	Does the monitoring programme address significant gaps identified in the baseline data?		DoEHLG Guidelines S. 7.4
10.10	Does the monitoring programme utilise existing monitoring arrangements where appropriate?		

Screening →

Scoping →

Environmental Assessment →

Information on Decision



10.11	Does the monitoring programme include provision for the ongoing review of environmental targets and indicators?		
10.12	Has provision been made to produce regular monitoring reports during the time period of the P/P?		
10.13	Does the monitoring programme address transboundary effects, if any?		
10.14	What provisions are there to make the results and interpretation of the monitoring programme available to the designated environmental authorities and the public?		




SECTION 11 – ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT AND NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY


Note: This section provides an overview of the compliance of the ER with the requirements of the SEA Directive and the SEA Regulations. Where non-compliance has been highlighted in previous sections of the SEA Process Checklist, actions taken to resolve non-compliance should be highlighted in the 'Comment' section.

Minimum Requirements

	Question	Yes, No, Comment	Statutory Basis
11.1	Does the ER contain all of the aspects listed in Annex 1 of the SEA Directive and Schedule 2 and 2B of S.I. 435 and 436 of 2004?		SEA Directive Article 5 Annex 1 S.I. Nos 435 & 436 of 2004
11.2	Does the ER include a non-technical summary?		SEA Directive Article 5 Annex I (j) S.I. Nos 435 & 436 of 2004
11.3	Does the non-technical summary clearly summarise the following:		SEA Directive Article 5 Annex I (j) S.I. Nos 435 & 436 of 2004
		Y/N	Comment
	a) Contents and main objectives of the draft P/P		
	b) Current state of the environment and evolution		
	c) Environmental characteristics of area significantly affected		
	d) Existing environmental problems		
	e) Environmental protection objectives		
	f) Significant effects on the environment		
	g) Mitigation measures		
	h) Alternatives		
	i) Monitoring		

Screening 

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Additional Recommended Tasks

	Question	Yes, No, Comment	
11.4	Has a description been provided in the ER of the screening process and subsequent determination?		
11.5	Have the responses to the scoping exercises been included in the ER? Has an explanation been given as to how these responses were considered?		
11.6	Is the non-technical summary concise and easy to understand?		DoEHLG Guidelines S. 4.41
11.7	Has a description of the outcome of all consultations (including transboundary) been documented in the ER?		
11.8	Have relevant references, glossary of terms and scaled maps (with source identified) been included?		

Screening 

Scoping 

Environmental Assessment 

Information on Decision

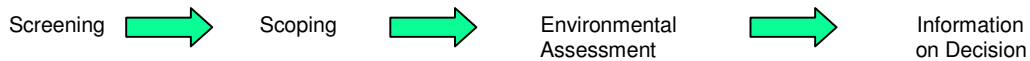


POST P/P ADOPTION

INFORMATION ON THE DECISION (SEA STATEMENT)

Minimum Requirements

	Question	Yes, No, Comment	Statutory basis
12.1	Has an SEA Statement, providing information on the decision, been made available, alongside the adopted P/P, to the designated authorities and the public?		SEA Directive Article 9 (1)
12.2	Where transboundary consultations took place, has the SEA statement been sent to the relevant statutory environmental authorities and the relevant Member States?		SEA Directive Article 9 (1)
12.3	Does the SEA Statement summarise: (a) how environmental considerations (including environmental objectives) have been integrated into the P/P?		SEA Directive Article 9 (1)(b) DoEHLG Guidelines S. 6.5
	(b) how the ER & outcome of consultations have been taken into account in the P/P?		
	(c) the reason for choosing the P/P as adopted in the light of other reasonable alternatives considered?		
	(d) the measures put in place to monitor (and mitigate) the significant environmental impacts of implementing the P/P?		



**POST P/P ADOPTION
QUALITY AND INTEGRATION WITH THE P/P**

Minimum Requirements

	Question	Yes, No, Comment	Statutory basis
13.1	Have environmental considerations been integrated in the P/P preparation and adoption?		SEA Directive Article 1
13.2	Is the Environmental Report of sufficient quality to meet the requirements of the SEA Directive?		SEA Directive Article 12 (2)

Additional Recommended Task

	Question	Yes, No, Comment	Statutory Basis
13.3	Is the ER well presented and laid out in a logical sequence?		
13.4	Does the ER make effective use of maps, tables, figures, etc.		
13.5	Has the integration of the P/P making process and the SEA process been documented, including key stages and decisions?		
13.6	Has a description been provided in the ER of the screening process and subsequent determination?		
13.7	Have the key decision-makers been informed of: (a) the requirement for and purpose of environmental assessment? (b) the responsibilities of the plan making authority in the context of SEA? (c) the intended outputs of the SEA process?		
13.8	Has a summary of the key outcomes of the environmental assessment been provided?		
13.9	Does the non-technical summary summarise the main findings of the environmental assessment and how they influence the plan?		DoEHLG Guidelines S. 4.41

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Statutory Instrument, NO 436 of 2004. *Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations*. Stationery Office: Dublin.

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SEA CONSULTATION BODIES / ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORITIES

Ireland

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – Ireland

<http://www.epa.ie/TechnicalGuidanceandAdvice/StrategicEnvironmentalAssessment/>

Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government

<http://www.environ.ie/en/DevelopmentandHousing/PlanningDevelopment/EnvironmentalAssessment/>

Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources

<http://www.dcmnr.gov.ie/Marine/Environmental+Assessment/Environmental+Assessment.htm>

England

Environment Agency

<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/aboutus/512398/1504325/835367/?version=1&lang=e&lang=e>

Natural England

<http://www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/Landscape/PP/planning/SEA.asp>

English Heritage

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.1477>

Standards of Service in SEA for the Above

http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/commdata/acrobat/sea_sos_eng_1705376.pdf?lang=e

Scotland

Scottish Environmental protection Agency (SEPA)

<http://www.sepa.org.uk/index.html>

Historic Scotland

<http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/policyandguidance/sea.htm>

Scottish Natural Heritage

<http://www.snh.org.uk/>

Wales

Environment Agency (Wales)

<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/aboutus/512398/1504325/835367/?version=1&lang=e&lang=e>

Countryside Council for Wales

<http://www.ccw.gov.uk/>

CADW

<http://www.cadw.wales.gov.uk/default.asp>

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Europe

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Protocol on SEA (Kiev, 2003). *Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context*

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<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2004/en/si/0435.html>

Statutory Instrument, No 436 of 2004. *Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations*. Stationery office: Dublin

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2004/en/si/0436.html>

Northern Ireland

Statutory Rule, No 280 of 2004. *The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations*. Stationery office

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/Sr/sr2004/20040280.htm>

England

Statutory Instrument, No 1633 of 2004. *The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations*. Stationery office

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2004/20041633.htm>

Scotland

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<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/ssi2004/20040258.htm>

Wales

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<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1976/en/act/pub/0039/index.html>

Wildlife (Amendment) Act, No 38 of 2000.

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2000/en/act/pub/0038/index.html>

Northern Ireland

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England, Scotland, Wales

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SEA Generic Guidance

Ireland

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http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/commondata/acrobat/dos_and_donts_r_1085127.pdf?lang=e

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2005. *Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents - Guidance for Regional Planning Bodies and Local Planning Authorities*
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<http://www.transport-sea.net/docs/SEA%20Manual%20-%2021-10-05c.pdf>

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<http://www.ukbap.org.uk/library/brig/BRIGGuidanceWebpdf.pdf>

PENDING GUIDANCE

SEA and Health – due for publication from the Department for Health

CCW is producing numerous guidance documents for environmental issues in Wales

RSPB is producing a SEA case studies document

USEFUL WEB-SITES

SEA

Europe

European Community home page for environmental assessment: includes legal context for both EIA and SEA

www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/eia/home.htm

Ireland

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) - Ireland

<http://www.epa.ie/TechnicalGuidanceandAdvice/StrategicEnvironmentalAssessment/>

Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government

<http://www.environ.ie/en/DevelopmentandHousing/PlanningDevelopment/EnvironmentalAssessment/>

Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources

<http://www.dcmnr.gov.ie/Marine/Environmental+Assessment/Environmental+Assessment.htm>

UK

Communities and Local Government: Information about Communities and Local Government's ministerial team, the Board and our agencies and non-departmental public bodies

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/sustainabilityenvironmental/strategicenvironmentalassessment/>

Environment Agency (England and Wales) – SEA - The website:

<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/aboutus/512398/1504325/>

Strategic Environmental Assessment Information Service

<http://www.sea-info.net/>

Levett and Therivel Website

<http://www.levett-therivel.fsworld.co.uk/>

Scottish Executive SEA Page

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/14587>

Biodiversity

European Agencies

European Commission

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/index_en.htm

<http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/s15006.htm>

European Environment Agency

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/biodiversity>

Irish Agencies

Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government - The National Parks & Wildlife Service

<http://www.environ.ie/en/Heritage/NationalParksandWildlife/>

UK Government Departments and Agencies

Environment and Heritage Service (NI): statutory body advising on biodiversity (etc) in Northern Ireland

<http://www.ehsni.gov.uk/biodiversity.htm>

Natural England works for people, places and nature to conserve and enhance biodiversity, landscapes and wildlife in rural, urban, coastal and marine areas.

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/conservation/default.htm#>

Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

www.defra.gov.uk

Joint Nature Conservancy Committee. Advisory committee to the Government on nature conservation

www.jncc.org.uk

Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA).

www.sepa.org.uk

Scottish Natural Heritage: statutory body advising on biodiversity (etc) in Scotland

www.snh.org.uk

Environment Agency, responsible for water, fisheries and waste regulation in England and Wales

www.environment-agency.gov.uk/youreenv

Environment Agency (Wales)

<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/regions/wales/>

Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) – statutory body advising on biodiversity (etc) in Wales

<http://www.ccw.gov.uk/>

CASE STUDY EXAMPLES TO FOLLOW

Appendix I – Annex I of the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC)

ANNEX I

Information referred to in Article 5(1)

The information to be provided under Article 5(1), subject to Article 5(2) and (3), is the following:

- (a) an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;
- (b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;
- (c) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;
- (d) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC;
- (e) 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;
- (f) the likely significant effects ⁽¹⁾ on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors;
- (g) the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;
- (h) 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;
- (i) a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Article 10;
- (j) a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.

Appendix II – Schedules 1 and 2 of S.I. No. 435 of 2004

SCHEDULE 1

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING WHETHER A PLAN OR PROGRAMME (OR MODIFICATION THERETO) IS LIKELY TO HAVE SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

1. The characteristics of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, having regard, in particular, to
 - the degree to which the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources,
 - the degree to which the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, influences other plans including those in a hierarchy,
 - the relevance of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,
 - environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme,
 - the relevance of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection).
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,
 - the cumulative nature of the effects,
 - the transboundary nature of the effects,
 - the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),
 - the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),
 - the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:
 - a) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,

- b) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,
 - c) intensive land-use,
- the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status.

SCHEDULE 2

INFORMATION TO BE CONTAINED IN AN ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

The following information shall be contained in an environmental report -

- (a) An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans or programmes;
- (b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme,
- (c) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;
- (d) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to the Birds Directive or the Habitats Directive;
- (e) the environmental protection objectives, established at international, European Union or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;
- (f) the likely significant effects¹ on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors;
- (g) the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme;
- (h) an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties

¹ These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects.

(such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;

- (i) a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring of the significant environmental effects of implementation of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme;
- (j) a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.

Appendix III – Schedule 2B of S.I. No. 436 of 2004

SCHEDULE 2B

INFORMATION TO BE CONTAINED IN AN ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

Articles 13E, 13N, 14D, 15D and 179C

The following information shall be included in an environmental report –

- an outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans;
 - the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan;
 - the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;
 - any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to the Birds Directive or Habitats Directive;
- (e) the environmental protection objectives, established at international, European Union or national level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;
- (f) the likely significant effects¹ on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors;
- (g) the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan;
- (h) 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;

¹ These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects.

- (i) a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring of the significant environmental effects of implementation of the plan;
- (j) a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.”

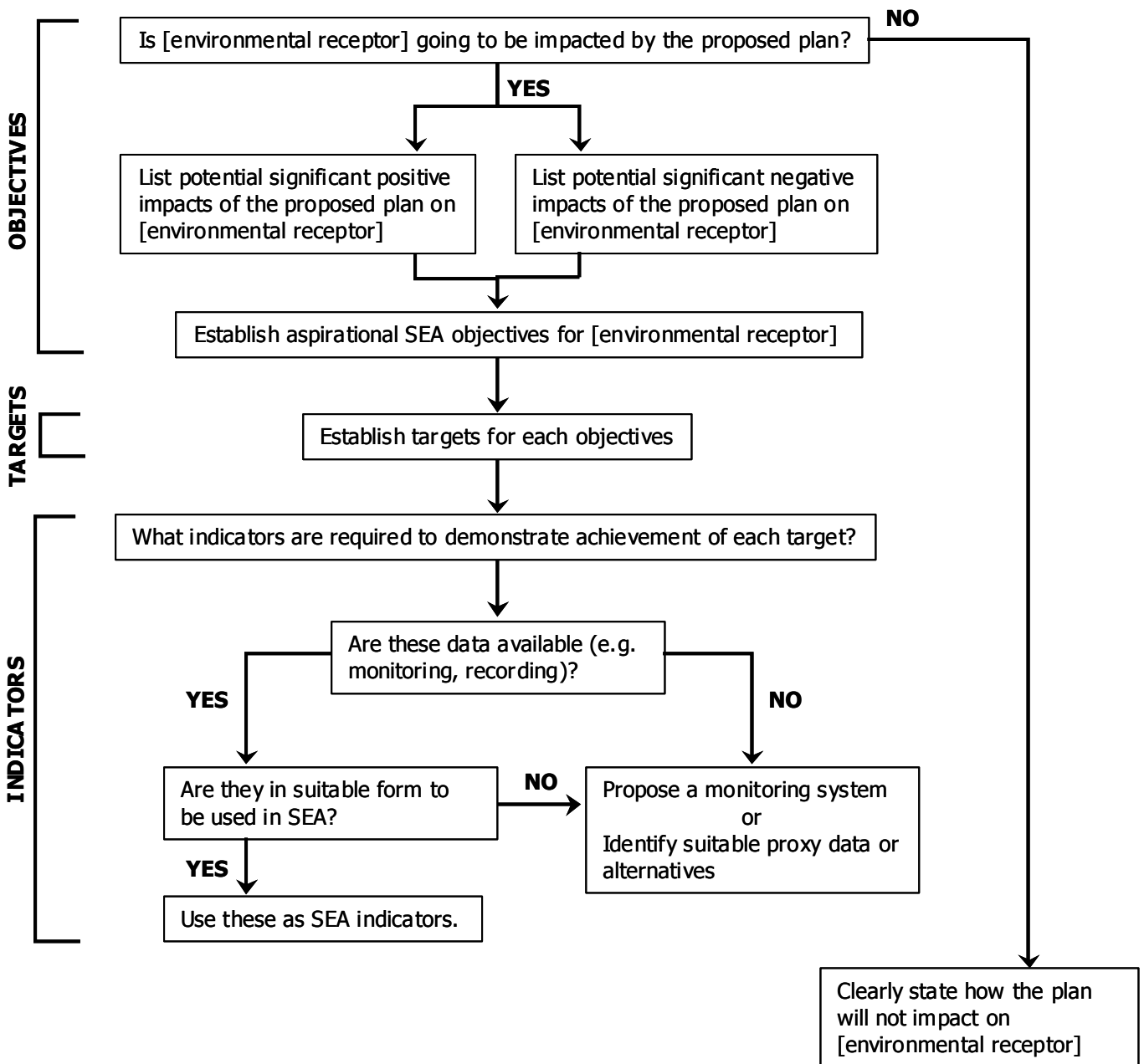
Appendix IV – Objectives, Targets and Indicators Explanation

In order to clearly determine the environmental impact (positive or negative) of a proposed plan or programme environmental objectives, targets and indicators need to be established. Table 1 gives examples of typical environmental objectives, targets and indicators for use in SEA. Objectives and targets set aims and thresholds which should be taken into consideration to effectively assess the impact of proposed plans on the environment. Indicators are used to illustrate and communicate this environmental impact in a simple and effective manner. A detailed explanation of the use of objectives, targets and indicators in the SEA process is available in Thérivel (2004) and Donnelly et al., (2006a&b). In brief, objectives are established for each environmental receptor listed in the SEA Directive which express the desired direction of change (Table 1). These objectives have associated targets which set stringent thresholds and limits, which once breached, would trigger remedial action. Finally, indicators are used to track the achievements of objectives and targets, describe the baseline situation, monitor the impact of the proposed plan or programme on the environment and predict impacts (Thérivel, 2004).

Table 1 Examples of environmental objectives, targets and indicators in SEA.

Objectives - specify the desired direction of change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve biodiversity Improve air quality Improve surface water quality Reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions
Targets - are more focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the area designated for conservation by X% by 2020 10% of commuters to move from road to rail transport by 2020 All waste water to receive tertiary treatment by 2020 15% of dwellings to use a renewable energy source by 2020
Indicators - measure progress towards targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % land area designated for conservation % of commuters using train/car % of waste water receiving tertiary treatment % of dwellings using different energy supplies
Proxy Indicators	<p>A of activity resulting from a P/P which provides information on environmental impact without the need for a direct measure of an environmental receptor. For example, an increase in the number of vehicles (activity resulting from a P/P) can provide information on the impact on air quality and greenhouse gases without having to measure the concentration of these parameters in the receiving environmental receptor</p>

**Appendix V – Methodology for establishing environmental objectives, targets
and indicators**



Decision support framework for establishing, objectives, targets and indicators for use in SEA. **Donnelly, A.**, Jones, M.B., O'Mahony, T. and Byrne, G. (2006) Decision support framework for establishing objectives, targets and indicators for use in SEA. *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal* **24**: 151-157.