



OPW

Oifig na
nOibreacha Poiblí
Office of Public Works

REVIEW OF THE FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT PLANS, 2021

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT

**Environment Section
Engineering Services
Office of Public Works**

REVISION	B
DATE	22/12/2021

DOCUMENT REVISION	REVISION DATE	ALTERATIONS
B	22/12/2021	N/A
A	24/08/021	

CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	4
2.	Background to the Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs)	4
3.	Review of the FRMPs – 2nd Cycle	6
4.	SEA Screening process	7
a.	Screening Check, Stage One	8
5.	Conclusions	8
6.	References	9
7.	Appendix A Decision Trees	10

1. Introduction

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a process required under the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plan and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 435 of 2004) (hereafter referred to as ‘the SEA Regulations’), as amended by the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations, 2011 (S.I 200 of 2011). SEA Screening of individual plans or programmes is required to determine whether or not significant effects on the environment would be likely to arise from a plan or programme, based on the criteria in Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations.

This Report provides a Screening Review of the Review of the Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs). The FRMPs were first published in May 2018 under the requirements of the 2007 EU Flood Directive (2007/60/EC) and Statutory Instrument Nos. 122 of 2010 and 495 of 2015. The FRMPs are the third key step of the Directive that followed the completion of the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) and the preparation of the flood maps. The Directive requires a review and update as necessary of the FRMPs by 22 December 2021 and every six years thereafter.

2. Background to the Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs)

The aim of the EU ‘Floods’ Directive (2007), is to reduce the adverse consequences of flooding on human health, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity. The Directive requires Member States to undertake three key steps of analysis and planning:

- The PFRA (Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment): A screening of flood risk to identify Areas of Potentially Significant Flood Risk (APSFRs), which were referred to as Areas for Further Assessment (AFAs) for purposes of the National CFRAM Programme. The PFRA is a preliminary assessment, based on available or readily-derivable information.
- The Flood Maps: The preparation of flood hazard and risk maps for the APSFRs identified through the PFRA.
- The Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs): The preparation of plans setting out objectives and a set of measures aimed at the management and reduction of flood risk within the APSFRs (Areas of Potential Significant Flood Risk).

The initial PFRA, completed in 2012, identified 300 communities at potentially significant flood risk (the APSFRs). These communities, that are home to over three million people (approximately two-thirds of the national population), include the cities and large towns, but also many small rural villages. The review of the PFRA by the OPW, that was completed and reported to the EU Commission in 2019, took account of floods that had occurred since the initial PFRA and of the findings of the National Catchment-based Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Programme. The review concluded that the initial PFRA had been inclusive and comprehensive, and that 101 of the 300 communities originally designated were in fact at low risk and that no additional communities required designation.

Detailed flood maps were prepared and published in 2016 for the 300 communities at potentially significant flood risk, and for the river reaches between these communities and down to the open sea. The review of the flood maps in Ireland is an ongoing process aimed at ensuring that the maps that are publicly available (www.floodinfo.ie) provide up-to-date information. The review of the flood maps was reported to EU Commission in 2020.

The FRMPs were developed through the National CFRAM Programme. They set out the flood relief schemes that have already been constructed and those that are currently underway, and provide the outline of 118¹ proposed schemes and the evidence to prioritise their delivery to where the benefit is greatest. The FRMPs also set out a range of measures that can benefit all at risk properties, including those communities that were not assessed in the CFRAM Programme, including measures addressing the prevention of flood risk and preparedness and resilience to flood events.

The FRMPs, and the measures set out therein, were due for implementation during this review period (2018-2021) and also during the subsequent cycle of the Directive (2022-27) up to the next review of the FRMPs that is due to be completed in 2027.

¹ The FRMPs as published proposed 118 flood relief schemes. One further scheme has since been commenced for the community of Burnfoot following completion of a Scheme Viability Review.

3. Review of the FRMPs – 2nd Cycle

The FRMPs were published in 2018 and set out a programme of work up to 2027. As such, it is not necessary at this time, and for the purposes of this review, to undertake a full re-examination of the measures required for all communities at potentially significant flood risk, or of the range of measures that can benefit all at risk properties.

The review assesses the progress made in the implementation of the measures set out within the FRMPs, and examines whether any changes or updates to the measures have taken place and whether any new measures are required.

The review of the PFRA did not identify any additional areas of potentially significant flood risk, and so the review focuses on the management of flood risk in the 119 designated communities, and on measures that can provide benefits in all areas. Similarly, the review focuses only on those sources of flooding that have been determined as being the source of significant flood risk in one or more areas of potentially significant flood risk, as determined through the review of the PFRA and the first cycle analysis.

The purpose of the FRMPs was to set out the strategy, including a set of proposed measures, for the cost-effective and sustainable, long-term management of flood risk in the relevant river basin, including the areas where the flood risk has been determined as being potentially significant.

Twenty-nine FRMPs were published in May 2018; each setting out the feasible range of flood risk management measures proposed for their respective river basins.

The FRMPs include feasible measures developed through a range of programmes and policy initiatives including:

- Non-structural flood risk prevention and preparedness measures that are applicable nationally, aimed at reducing the impacts of flooding, that have been and are being developed to implement Government policy on flood risk management (OPW, 2004).
- Structural flood protection measures proposed for communities at significant flood risk, aimed at reducing the likelihood and/or degree of flooding, identified through the National CFRAM Programme.

The FRMPs built on and supplemented the national programme of flood protection works that had previously been completed or that were under design or construction at the time or that

were set out through other projects or plans, and the ongoing maintenance of existing drainage and flood relief schemes.

The 29 FRMPs were subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), and, where necessary, Plan-level Appropriate Assessment (AA) under the Habitats Directive, to determine the potential benefits and impacts of the FRMPs on the environment, and to identify mitigation and monitoring measures necessary to avoid or minimise such impacts.

It should be noted that approval and publication of the FRMPs did not confer consent to the construction of any physical works. Environmental Impact Assessment and Project-level Appropriate Assessment must be undertaken as part of a statutory planning process in accordance with the relevant legislation as appropriate as part of the progression of proposed measures that involve physical works.

Based on the conclusion of the FRMPs assessment and the status of the actions from the CCSAP relative to the measures set out in the FRMPs, the review has determined that it is not necessary at this time to identify any additional measures, and as such it has not been necessary to prepare new FRMPs or to update the existing FRMPs.

4. SEA Screening process

The European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plan and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 435 of 2004) (hereafter referred to as ‘the SEA Regulations’), as amended by the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations, 2011 (S.I 200 of 2011), require the screening of individual plans or programmes, based on the criteria in Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations. These criteria must be taken into account in determining whether or not significant effects on the environment would be likely to arise.

The SEA screening process undertaken by the OPW is consistent with the process as recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) publication entitled *Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland – Synthesis Report*, specifically Stage 1 (Screening of Plans and Programmes).

a. Screening Check, Stage One (Pre-screening)

The first step of the validation process was to undertake a pre-screening check using the decision tree presented in Appendix A, EPA publication “*Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland*”.

The decision tree is based on a series of administrative questions that allows rapid screening-out of plans and programmes that are clearly not going to have an environmental impact, and screening-in of those that definitely do require an SEA. The decision tree and responses to the administrative questions as they apply to the Plan are presented in Appendix A.

The outcome of the pre-screening stage is that the FRMP Review does not require a SEA because it does not provide a framework for development consent for projects. The FRMP Review does not introduce any additional areas of potentially significant flood risk or any additional measures to manage flood risk. There are no new projects introduced by the FRMP Review including no new projects listed in the EIA Directive. Strategic environmental assessment has been conducted for measures as set out in the 2018 FRMPs and these remain fit for purpose.

A further screening criteria is if the plan will significantly affect a Natura 2000 site and, therefore, require an assessment under the Habitats Directive. An appropriate assessment screening has been conducted in parallel to this SEA screening and has determined that the FRMP Review is not likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site. An assessment under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive is not required and accordingly, a SEA is not required.

5. Conclusions

Following the SEA screening process, it has been determined that a full Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required for the FRMP Review. The Stage One i.e. pre screening decision is as presented in Appendix A Decision Tree, that details the decision making process that confirms that the FRMP Review does not provide a framework for development consent for projects listed in the EIA Directive or require a Stage II AA under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

6. References

- DCCAE, 2018. *Sectoral Planning Guidelines for Climate Change Adaptation*. Dept. Communications, Climate Action and Environment.
- EPA, 2021. *Good Practice Guidance on SEA Screening*. Environmental Protection Agency.
- EPA, 2017. *SEA Process Checklist*. Environmental Protection Agency.
- EPA, 2015. *Integrating Climate Change into Strategic Environmental Assessment in Ireland - A Guidance Note*. Environmental Protection Agency
- EPA, 2003. *Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland - Synthesis Report*. Environmental Protection Agency.
- EPA, 2018. *SEA Effectiveness Review in Ireland - Action Plan 2018-2020*. Environmental Protection Agency.
- Government of Ireland. *S.I. No. 435/2004 - European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004*. Dublin Stationary Office.
- Government of Ireland. *S.I. No. 200/2011 - European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011*. Dublin Stationary Office.

7. Appendix A Decision Tree

