



# SEA STATEMENT

## Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan 2023 - 2027

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

January 2023

Prepared under SI 435 of 2004 as amended

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## Acronyms

cSAC	<i>Candidate Special Area of Conservation</i>
DAFM	<i>Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine</i>
DECC	<i>Department of Environment, Climate Change and Communications</i>
DHLGH	<i>Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage</i>
DRCD	<i>Department of Rural and Community Development</i>
DETE	<i>Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment</i>
DT	<i>Department of Transport</i>
EIA	<i>Environmental Impact Assessment</i>
EIP	<i>European Innovation Partnership Scheme</i>
EPA	<i>Environmental Protection Agency</i>
ER	<i>Environmental Report</i>
EU	<i>European Union</i>
FI	<i>Faite Ireland</i>
GIS	<i>Geographical Information Systems</i>
GSI	<i>Geological Survey of Ireland</i>
HDA	<i>Habitats Directive Assessment</i>
LA	<i>Local Authority</i>
NHA	<i>Natural Heritage Area</i>
NIAH	<i>National Inventory of Architectural Heritage</i>
NPWS	<i>National Parks and Wildlife Service</i>
pNHA	<i>Proposed Natural Heritage Area</i>
MCPA	<i>(2-methyl-4-chlorophenoxyacetic acid) -herbicide</i>
RA	<i>Regional Authority</i>
RMP	<i>Record of Monuments and Places</i>
RPS	<i>Record of Protected Structures</i>
S.I. No.	<i>Statutory Instrument Number</i>
SAC	<i>Special Area of Conservation</i>
SEA	<i>Strategic Environmental Assessment</i>
SEO	<i>Strategic Environmental Objective</i>
SFRA	<i>Strategic Flood Risk Assessment</i>
SPA	<i>Special Protection Area</i>
SWOT	<i>Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats</i>
WI	<i>Waterways Ireland</i>
WFD	<i>Water Framework Directive</i>
WSIP	<i>The Water Services Investment Programme</i>

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## Glossary of Terms

<i>Alternatives (Reasonable)</i>	<i>Alternatives should take into account the objectives and geographical scope of the Plan. The alternatives should be realistic, capable of implementation and should fall within the legal and geographical competence of the authority concerned.</i>
<i>Appropriate Assessment</i>	<i>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 (collectively referred to as European sites)</i>
<i>Baseline environment</i>	<i>A description of the present state of the environment of the plan area.</i>
<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Description of the existing environment against which future changes can be measured.</i>
<i>Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna</i>	<i>Biodiversity is the variety of life on Earth, in all its forms and all its interactions. Flora is all of the plants found in a given area. Fauna is all of the animals found in a given area.</i>
<i>Birds Directive</i>	<i>Council Directive of 2nd April 1979 on the conservation of wild birds (79/409/EEC).</i>
<i>Built Environment</i>	<i>Refers to both architectural heritage and archaeological heritage.</i>
<i>Cumulative Effects</i>	<i>Result from a combination of two or more individual effects on a receptor. Such effects can occur as a result of plans, programmes, projects and other actions (this guidance uses the term 'actions' to describe all of these) in the past, present and the reasonably foreseeable future. They can result from impacts that may be individually insignificant, but collectively significant.</i>
<i>Data</i>	<i>Includes environmental data, proxy data, any other relevant statistical data.</i>
<i>Ecology</i>	<i>The study of relationships between living organisms and between organisms and their environment (especially animal and plant communities), their energy flows and their interactions with their surroundings.</i>
<i>Environmental Characteristics</i>	<i>Environmental resources, issues and trends in the area affected by the plan or programme.</i>
<i>Environmental indicator</i>	<i>An environmental indicator is a measure of an environmental variable over time, used to measure achievement of environmental objectives and targets.</i>
<i>Environmental objective</i>	<i>Environmental objectives are broad, overarching principles which should specify a desired direction of environmental change.</i>
<i>Environmental Problems</i>	<i>Annex I of Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament requires that information is provided on 'any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme', thus, helping to ensure that the proposed strategic action does not make existing environmental problems worse. where environmental effects of the plan or programme may be likely.</i>
<i>Environmental Receptors</i>	<i>These are resources that are affected by impacts/effects. They water, air, soil, the climate, ecosystems/biodiversity, landscapes and local communities, cultural heritage, material assets. Other receptors can be added to the assessment and the above list is not exhaustive.</i>
<i>Environmental Report (ER)</i>	<i>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.</i>
<i>Ex-ante evaluation</i>	<i>The purpose of the Ex-Ante Evaluation is to improve the quality of the design of a plan or programme, in this instance the CAP Strategic Plan.</i>
<i>Geographical Information System (GIS)</i>	<i>A computer system that collects, stores, views and analyses geographical (spatial) information and commonly creates maps as an output. It can be used to analysis relationships between different spatial and environmental datasets.</i>
<i>Geology</i>	<i>Science of the earth, including the composition, structure and origin of its rocks</i>

<i>Habitat</i>	<i>Area in which an organism or group of organisms live.</i>
<i>Habitats Directive</i>	<i>Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.</i>
<i>Habitats Directive Assessment</i>	<i>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)</i>
<i>Hierarchy of Plans</i>	<i>Both higher and lower-level plans relevant to the plan being assessed.</i>
<i>Indirect effect</i>	<i>Any aspect of a plan that may have an impact (positive or negative) on the environment, but that is not a direct result of the proposed plan or programme.</i>  <i>May also be referred to as a secondary effect</i>
<i>Interrelationships</i>	<i>Associations or linkages related to environmental impact of the proposed plan or programme usually on environmental receptors.</i>
<i>Key environmental issues</i>	<i>Significant environmental issues, which are of particular relevance and significance within a plan area and/or the zone of influence of that plan. These issues should be identified during SEA Scoping process.</i>
<i>Key environmental receptors</i>	<i>Aspects of the environment likely to be significantly impacted by the proposed plan</i>
<i>Material Assets</i>	<i>Critical infrastructure essential for the functioning of society such as: electricity generation and distribution, water supply, wastewater treatment transportation etc.</i>
<i>Member States</i>	<i>Those countries that belong to the European Union.</i>
<i>Mitigate</i>	<i>To make or become less severe or harsh</i>
<i>Mitigation Measures</i>	<i>Mitigation measures are measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and, as fully as possible, offset any significant adverse impacts on the environment of implementing a human action, be it a plan, programme or project.</i>
<i>Monitoring</i>	<i>A continuing assessment of environmental conditions at, and surrounding, the plan or programme. 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.</i>
<i>Monitoring Programme</i>	<i>A detailed description of the monitoring arrangements to be put in place to carry out the monitoring of the impact of the proposed plan or programme on the environment including frequency of monitoring, who has responsibility for monitoring, and responses if monitoring identifies significant negative impacts.</i>
<i>Natura 2000 Site</i>	<i>Designated European Site. In combination Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas will constitute Natura 2000 network of protected sites for habitats and species across the EU.</i>
<i>Natural Heritage</i>	<i>Refers to habitats and species of flora and fauna.</i>
<i>Non-technical summary</i>	<i>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.</i>
<i>Plan or Programme</i>	<i>Including those co-financed by the European Community, as well as any modifications to them:</i>  <i>- 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</i>  <i>- which are required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions.</i>  <i>In accordance with the SEA Directive, plan or programme that require SEA are those that fulfil the conditions listed in Article 2(a) and Article 3 of the SEA Directive.</i>

<i>Post-mitigation residual impacts</i>	<i>Environmental effects that remain after mitigation measures have been employed.</i>
<i>Public</i>	<i>One or more natural or legal persons and, in accordance with national legislation or practice, their associations, organisations or groups.</i>
<i>Scoping</i>	<i>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.</i>
<i>Screening</i>	<i>The determination of whether implementation of a plan or programme would be likely to have significant environmental effects on the environment. The process of deciding whether a plan or programme requires SEA.</i>
<i>SEA Directive</i>	<i>Directive 2001/42/EC ‘on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment’.</i>
<i>Secondary effect</i>	<i>Effects that are not a direct result of the plan or programme, same as indirect effect.</i>
<i>Sensitivity</i>	<i>Potential for significant change to any element in the environment that is subject to impacts.</i>
<i>Short-term effects</i>	<i>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.</i>
<i>Significant effects</i>	<i>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.</i>
<i>SAC</i>	<i>Special Areas of Conservation selected and designed under the EU Habitats Directive, transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477 of 2011).</i>
<i>SPA</i>	<i>Special Protection Area under Birds Directive (79/409/EEC), designated for bird species listed in Annex I of the Directive, in particular internationally important concentrations of migratory and wetland birds. Designation is focused on habitats of these species.</i>
<i>Statutory Authority</i>	<i>The authority by which or on whose behalf the plan or programme is prepared.</i>
<i>Statutory Instrument</i>	<i>Any order, regulation, rule, scheme or bye-law made in exercise of a power conferred by statute.</i>
<i>Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)</i>	<i>Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt it.</i>
<i>Strategic Environmental Objective (SEO)</i>	<i>Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) are methodological measures which are developed from international, national, and regional policies which generally govern environmental protection objectives and against which the environmental effects of the Plan or programme can be assessed.</i>
<i>Synergistic effect</i>	<i>Effects that, when totalled, result in a greater or lesser effect than the sum of the individual effects.</i>
<i>Threshold</i>	<i>Magnitude of a project, which if exceeded, will trigger the requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment.</i>

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# 1 SEA STATEMENT OF THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA) OF THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY STRATEGIC PLAN (CAP STRATEGIC PLAN) 2023 – 2027

## 1.1 Introduction

The Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine (the Department / DAFM) has prepared the Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan (CAP SP) for Ireland to cover the period from 2023 to 2027. The plan covers the whole of the Republic of Ireland and is national in scale. The plan provides for a range of interventions under Pillar I and Pillar II and includes a range of agricultural and rural development measures. The CAP SP comes into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023.

This SEA Statement has been prepared as part of the SEA process of the CAP SP 2023-2027 and in line with requirements under Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (the SEA Directive) as implemented in Ireland through Statutory Instrument (SI) No.435 of 2004 European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (as amended) and Circular Letter PL 9/2013, Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.

Article 9 of the SEA Directive and Article 16 of S.I. 435 of 2004 requires plan-making authorities, in this case the Department, to report on how the findings of the SEA and the results of the associated consultation have been integrated into the plan/programme.

This requires the preparation of a statement, the SEA Statement, that summarises the following:

- how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme;
- how the environmental report and consultation comments on it have been taken into account;
- the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with (in the SEA Environmental Report (SEA ER) and the associated consultation); and
- the measures decided concerning monitoring.

## 1.2 Structure of this SEA Statement

This SEA Statement is structured under the following headings:

Section 1: Introduction

Section 2: Summary of how environmental considerations were integrated into the CAP SP 2023 - 2027

Section 3: Summary of how the environmental report and consultation submissions on it were taken into account in the CAP Strategic Plan 2023 - 2027

Section 4: Consideration of alternatives

Section 5: Monitoring

## 2 SUMMARY OF HOW ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS WERE INTEGRATED INTO THE CAP SP 2023 – 2027

### 2.1 Stages in the SEA Process

The steps involved in a SEA are summarised below in relation to the SEA of the CAP SP 2023-2027, and include how environmental considerations, submissions from the consultation process, and feedback received throughout the SEA process were integrated into the CAP SP.

Stage	Description
Screening (determining whether or not SEA is required).	A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) pre-screening check was carried out by the Department. In accordance with 9(1)(a) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended, (European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004), the Department determined that a SEA was to be carried on the CAP SP 2023-2027.
Scoping (determining the range of environmental issues to be covered by the SEA).	<p>The purpose of the SEA Scoping report was to identify the scope of the SEA and ensure that relevant data and environmental topics are included in the SEA Environmental Report. The draft Scoping Report was issued for Statutory and Public consultation from 15th February 2021 until 13th April 2021. Submissions could be made via email/online survey or post. In addition to the statutory consultation, the project team held a Scoping Workshop with the SEA and AA Steering Group as well as a Scoping Workshop with the CAP Stakeholder Consultative Committee.</p> <p>Feedback and submissions on the scope of the SEA were varied, however, a number of consistent themes were identified. These are listed below:</p> <p>Impact of agricultural activity on a number of environmental resources, in particular</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water quality and adverse trends at national level</li> <li>• Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna – loss of habitats, loss of ecological connectivity, impacts of declining water quality (surface, ground, estuarine) on supporting habitats and species, effects of air quality and climate change on biodiversity, flora and fauna. Need for robust approach to the Appropriate Assessment process.</li> <li>• Population and Human health – generational renewal, farm viability, rural development, air quality, climate change, water quality, material assets.</li> <li>• Climate change – addressing greenhouse gas emissions from the agriculture sector, air quality impacts from agricultural activities and impacts of ammonia emissions</li> <li>• Soil and geology – carbon in soils and soil quality</li> <li>• Material assets – farm waste, transport and energy considerations</li> <li>• Landscape, cultural heritage- the heritage and influence of agricultural practices historically and in contemporary terms</li> <li>• Inter-relationship – between the above in particular water and biodiversity, human health and climate change.</li> </ul> <p>Significant environmental issues and recommendations have all been responded to and were considered through the preparation of the CAP SP and in the SEA process as appropriate. The full table of submissions considered, and responses issued are provided in the annexes to the Final SEA ER.</p> <p>Additional information, suggested changes to a number of Strategic Environmental Objectives, and identification of additional environmental issues were provided as a</p>



	<p>result of the above SEA Scoping and these were included, as appropriate and relevant to the SEA ER and the CAP SP.</p> <p>All environmental topics listed in the SEA Directive were scoped in for the purposes of the assessment.</p>
The preparation of an Environmental Report	<p>The Environmental Report was undertaken and included the following headings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Overview of the CAP SP</li> <li>• Methodology including Habitats Directive Assessment</li> <li>• Relationship to other plans, and programmes</li> <li>• Baseline Environment</li> <li>• Strategic Environmental Objectives</li> <li>• Alternatives considered</li> <li>• Assessment of the preferred</li> <li>• Significant effects on the environment</li> <li>• Mitigation Measures</li> <li>• Monitoring</li> </ul> <p>Section 3 of this SEA Statement provides further information, in line with Article 9 of the SEA Directive, on how the Environmental Report and consultation submissions on it were taken into account.</p>
The carrying out of consultations	<p>The draft CAP Strategic Plan, SEA ER and Natura Impact Statement were put on public display and issued to statutory consultees from 8th November to 8th December 2021. Submissions were received from a range of stakeholders including statutory consultees, as well as non-governmental organisations, farming representatives and individual members of the public. Amongst all of the submissions submitted during this process there were fourteen submissions related to the environmental assessment of CAP SP. Annex B of the SEA ER provides the table of submissions and the responses made to same.</p>
The integration of environmental considerations into the Plan or Programme	<p>The identification of additional baseline information, additional environmental issues to consider, feedback and amendment of the SEOs, and mitigations measures all provided for integration of environmental considerations into the CAP SP 2023-2027. Changes proposed to the CAP SP through statutory consultation (late 2021) and through observations from the European Commission were incorporated where and as appropriate. The SEA and AA process undertook screening of these changes to assess if likely significant environmental effects were identified. This allowed for a procedure to evaluate from an environmental perspective the implications and potential environmental effects of changes to the CAP SP. Findings of no significant environmental effects were identified through the SEA and AA processes during these screening stages. The screening reports are found in the annexes to the final SEA ER and Natura Impact Statement (NIS).</p>
The publication of information on the decision (SEA Statement)	<p>Article 9 of the SEA Directive and Article 16 of S.I. 435 of 2004 requires plan-making authorities, in this case the Department, to report on how the findings of the SEA and the results of the associated consultation have been integrated into the plan/programme. This is the final output of the SEA process and provides information on how environmental considerations, the views of statutory consultees, and other submissions received during the consultation stages have been taken into account in the CAP SP 2023 - 2027.</p>

## 2.2 Appropriate Assessment

The Natura Impact Statement (NIS) of the Appropriate Assessment has evaluated the impacts arising from the CAP SP and ultimately found that the Department has incorporated the finalised mitigation measures and recommendations into the proposed scheme design and implementation of the CAP SP schemes where appropriate and relevant. In light of

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this revised design of the schemes, and the NIS and SEA of the CAP SP, it can be concluded that, for the purposes of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, the implementation of the CAP SP, along or in-combination with other plans or programmes, will not have adverse effects on the integrity of any European Sites.

The potential impacts that could negatively affect European Sites and their features of interest have been summarised in Section 5 of the NIS, while Appendix A of the NIS provides a focused examination of the potential impacts derived from land use interventions arising from the CAP Strategic Plan to Natura 2000 sites/European Site.

Section 6 of the NIS outlines the mitigation measures and recommendations identified as part of the SEA and AA processes, which aim to provide further reassurance that no adverse impacts will arise. These mitigation measures and recommendations have been informed by a review of public consultation submissions and European Commission observations. The Department has incorporated the mitigation measures and recommendations into the proposed scheme design and implementation where appropriate into the CAP SP.

### **2.3 Adoption of CAP Strategic Plan 2023 – 2027**

The European Commission approved the CAP SP 2023 -2027 for Ireland on 31st August 2022. The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue TD, signed the AA Determination Statement on 3rd October 2022 in light of the reasoning and conclusions set out in the Appropriate Assessment Conclusion Statement. This paved the way for the CAP SP to be subsequently approved by the Irish Government on 4th October 2022.

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## 3 SUMMARY OF HOW THE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT AND CONSULTATION SUBMISSIONS WERE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN THE CAP STRATEGIC PLAN 2023 -2027

### 3.1 Introduction

The SEA and the AA processes were undertaken in parallel to the preparation of the CAP SP 2023-2027, as a key part of the process. The SEA legislation and guidelines highlight the importance of the integration between the preparation of the Plan and the SEA, AA processes. The iterative nature of the SEA process is such that the Plan is informed by environmental considerations throughout its preparation. This included a comprehensive series of meetings throughout the process including detailed presentations from the Department staff on initial and emerging interventions through the CAP SP preparation process.

In addition, the SEA and AA team undertook the following to inform the SEA Environmental report and the plan formulation process:

- the project team held a Scoping Workshop with the SEA and AA Steering Group as well as a Scoping Workshop with the CAP Consultative Committee. Feedback and submissions on the scope of the SEA were varied, however, a number of consistent themes were identified. Significant environmental issues and recommendations have all been responded to and were considered through the preparation of the CAP SP and the SEA process as appropriate.
- The SEA team prepared an extensive baseline of the SEA topics presented in relation to agriculture landuse and rural development. This included literatures reviews, a wide range of data sources, as well as information and research provided during the consultation phases of the assessment process.
- In addition, the SWOT analysis prepared by the Department informed the design of the CAP SP and was referenced where appropriate to identify significant environmental issues.
- This process was used to refine the SEOs, assist in consideration of alternatives, undertake the assessment and prioritise significant environmental issues.
- Iterative discussion and development of the alternatives.
- Initial commentary and feedback including queries relating to emerging interventions from the draft CAP SP 2023-2027.
- Recommendation of mitigation measures from the SEA process and issues arising in relation to European Sites and the AA process.
- Discussions in relation to submissions received through consultation at Scoping and after the publication of the draft SEA ER and draft NIS.
- Integration of stakeholder observations and issues identified through the statutory public consultation on the CAP SP 2023-2027.

All of the above informed the final draft CAP SP– including the interventions (schemes) – that was ultimately submitted to the European Commission, and which received approval on 31st August; and was subsequently considered and approved by the Irish Government on 4th October.

### 3.2 SEA Environmental Report

Table 3.1 below presents the structure of the SEA Environmental Report and its compliance with the requirements under SI 435 of 2004 as amended.

**Table 3-1 Structure of the SEA Environmental Report**

<b>Schedule 2B of Statutory Instrument 435 of 2004</b>	<b>Addressed in the SEA ER</b>
a) An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans	Chapter One Introduction and Chapter Three: Methodology outlines contents and main objectives Chapter Four details the relationship with other relevant plans
b) The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan	Chapter Five Baseline Environment provides this information
c) The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected	Chapter Five Baseline Environment provides this information
d) Any Issues and Threats problems which are relevant to the plan, including, in particular, those relating to any areas of particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to the Birds Directive or habitats Directive	Chapter Five Baseline Environment provides this information
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 to be taken into account during its preparation	Chapter Six SEA Objectives provides this information
f) The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage (including architectural and archaeological heritage), landscape and the inter-relationship between the above factors	Chapter Eight Significant Effects on the Environment provides this information
g) The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce, and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan	Chapter Nine Mitigation Measures provides this information
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	Chapter Seven Alternatives Considered provides this information and difficulties encountered are listed at the end of Chapter Five, Baseline Environment
i) A description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring of the significant environmental effects of implementation of the plan	Chapter Ten Monitoring provides this information
j) A non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings	This is provided as a separate document to the Environmental Report and is also available as part of Public Consultation

Table 3-2 below outlines the Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) that were developed to test and assess the potential environmental effects of the CAP SP. This is the finalised list that was used, after they had been revised following submissions by consultees. Footnotes indicate where additional questions were added by consultees. Footnotes indicate where there was an amendment to the SEO following public consultation.

**Table 3-2 Strategic Environmental Objectives**

SEA Topic	Objective	Sub-Questions – Will the CAP SP:
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna (BFF)	Contribute to and maximise the protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the wider countryside <sup>1</sup> . Contribute to the protection and restoration of European Sites and nationally designated sites (e.g., NHAs/pNHAs)	Maintain and enhance internationally and nationally designated sites, specifically SPAs, SACs, Ramsar sites and Natural Heritage Areas? Maintain and restore habitats, species, and sites? Encourage uptake of biodiversity measures Prevent, minimise, or control the spread of invasive species? Maintain and improve ecosystem services and ecological networks in the wider countryside? Reverse the decline of pollinators? Reduce and achieve ammonia emissions in line with National Emission Ceiling Directive (NECD) thresholds? Will the draft Cap Strategic Plan 2023-2027 reverse the decline of farmland and upland birds? <sup>2</sup>
Population And Human Health (PHH)	Maximise, support, and promote sustainable agricultural land use and support long term viability of farms 2, Contribute to improving health and quality of life for farming communities and wider rural communities	Support and enhance sustainable agricultural practices in appropriate locations? Result in nature rich green spaces – linked to improved health and wellbeing Support sustainable farm incomes? Encourage younger farmers participation? Reduce health risks associated with farm activities? Reduce local adverse impacts from agricultural activities on rural community including towns and villages <sup>3</sup>
Soil and Geology (SG)	Maximise, protect, and enhance soil quality whilst recognising the soil carbon function soils under agricultural land use Contribute to the protection, conservation and integrity of designated habitats, geological features, species, or their sustaining resources in designated ecological sites	Safeguard and improve the highest quality soil and agricultural land? Reduce soil pollution, degradation, and erosion? Increased uptake of sustainable management of soil resources and fertility? Increase agricultural practices that increase carbon capture in soils? Reduce the use of inorganic nitrogen fertiliser?
Water Resources (W)	Maximise the protection and enhancement of the status of aquatic ecosystems and, with regard to their water needs, terrestrial ecosystems and wetlands directly depending on the aquatic ecosystem (quality, level, flow).	Maximise the protection and enhancement of the status of aquatic ecosystems and, with regard to their water needs, terrestrial ecosystems and wetlands directly depending on the aquatic ecosystem (quality, level, flow). Protect and improve drinking water sources as required under the water framework directive and recast drinking water directive <sup>4</sup>
Climate Change (CC)	Reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions from the agricultural sector in line with national commitments	Support the agricultural sector in reducing its absolute GHG emissions? Will the draft cap strategic plan 2023-2027' cut greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture to meet the Paris agreement? Improve the climate change resilience and adaption capacity of the sector? Support land management practices that protect and capture carbon, particularly from peatlands and grasslands? Support policies that maintain/increase the area of tillage land in line with Ag Climatise objectives? Invest in research to provide new mitigation measures for Irish food systems? Reduce the use of chemical nitrogen use in Irish Agriculture to reduce Green House Gas Emissions? Reduce ammonia emissions from the agricultural sector in line with the Ag Climatise roadmap to meet the ceilings set down in EU legislation?

<sup>1</sup> Source Biodiversity Action Plan for Ireland 2017-2023

<sup>2</sup> SEA Scoping submission Birdwatch Ireland.

<sup>3</sup> SEA Scoping submission EPA

<sup>4</sup> SEA Scoping submission Irish Water

Air Quality (AQ)	To avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environmental resulting from emissions to air.	Reduce ammonia (NH <sub>3</sub> ) emissions from agriculture to meet achieve EU Thresholds? Support Ireland in its requirement to achieve the National Emissions Ceiling Directive Thresholds for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO <sub>x</sub> ), Sulphur Dioxide (SO <sub>2</sub> ), Non-Methane Volatile Organic Compounds (NMVOC) NO <sub>x</sub> and PM levels under ambient air quality legislation.
Landscape (L)	Contribute to the conservation, protection, enhancement and manage the character and quality of Ireland's distinctive landscape and seascape	Enhance and maintain key agricultural features of the landscape? Recognise the local and regional diversity of landscape character and support retention of same? Support and promote the integration of new farm buildings sensitive to into local landscapes character through appropriate design, siting and screening <sup>5</sup> .
Cultural Heritage (CH)	Contribute to the protection, enhancement, and management of Ireland's rich archaeological and cultural heritage as well as vernacular and traditional farm buildings and features	Safeguard and support the protection of archaeological sites, field monuments and cultural heritage? Support and maintain vernacular farm buildings? Support the reuse for sustainability and adaption of farm buildings? Support the upskilling or retraining in traditional farm practices and traditional building skills <sup>6,7</sup>
Material Assets (MA)	Conserve natural resources, reduce waste production through the circular economy and promote efficient use of transport, grid and energy network as applied to agriculture and the CAP Strategic Plan	Safeguard natural resources and minimise unsustainable use? Reduce hazardous waste, increase recycling rates and re-use of materials through circular economy measures? Promote and support on farm sustainability through energy efficient methods (smart farming)? <sup>7</sup>
Natural capital And Ecosystem Services Inter-Relationships (IR)	Recognise and maintain the ecosystems functions of habitats in and around the plan area and promote nature-based solutions to climate change mitigation and adaptation through CAP measures.	Plan for and support landscape scale responses to climate change adaptation? Maintain and enhance ecosystem services? <sup>8</sup>

### 3.2.1 Summary of Assessment

The following tables provide a summary of the SEA evaluation of the GAECs and interventions provided under Pillar I and Pillar II of the CAP SP 2023 - 2027. Please note where additional measures are included, these arose from changes to the draft CAP SP made in response to the statutory public consultation (**green font**) or in response to European Commission observations on the draft CAP SP (**blue font**). All such changes were subject to SEA and AA Screening and the full reports can be found in the accompanying final SEA ER and Natura Impact Statement (NIS).

<b>+</b>	Indicates a potential positive environmental impact
<b>-</b>	Indicates a potential negative environmental impact
<b>+/-</b>	Indicates that both positive and negative environmental impacts are likely or that in the absence of further detail the impact is unclear
<b>Zero 0</b>	Indicates neutral or no significant impact

<sup>5</sup> SEA Scoping submission DAERA

<sup>6</sup> SEA Scoping Submission DAERA

<sup>7</sup> SEA Scoping Submission EPA

<sup>8</sup> SEA Scoping submission recommendation An Claiomh Glas

### 3.2.2 Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAECs)

Table 3.3 below summarises the evaluation of the final GAECs included in the CAP SP 2023 - 2027. Where amendments to the GAEC were made these are shown in **blue font** and were subject to SEA and AA Screening, the Screening Reports can be found as annexes to the final SEA Environmental Report and the final Natura Impact Statement.

In addition, the final CAP SP 2023 - 2027 was updated to reflect changes arising from the Nitrates Action Plan 2022-2025 including GAECs. Additional text was also included in the final CAP SP 2023-2027 as follows:

*The entire territory of Ireland has been designated a nitrates vulnerable zone (NVZ). Consequently, those areas which are subject to buffer requirements, as defined under current the Good Agricultural Practice (GAP for Protection of Waters Regulations, include the following watercourses:*

*(a) any (or any part of any) river, stream, lake, canal, reservoir, aquifer, pond, watercourse, or other inland waters, whether natural or artificial,*

*(b) any tidal waters,*

*(c) where the context permits, any beach, riverbank and salt marsh or other area which is contiguous to anything mentioned in paragraph (a) or (b), and the channel or bed of anything mentioned in paragraph (a) which is for the time being dry, but does not include a sewer.*

*Similarly, under conditionality, Ireland extends the SMR 1 and SMR 2 buffer areas, based on the above GAP definition of water courses, to GAEC 4.*



**Table 3-3 Summary of Assessment Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC)**

Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC)		Biodiversity Flora & Fauna	Population and Human Health	Soil & Geology	Water Resources	Climatic Factors & Air Quality	Landscape	Cultural Heritage	Material Assets	Inter-Relationships
1	Maintenance of permanent grassland based on a ratio of permanent grassland in relation to agricultural area	+/-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+/-
2	Protection of wetland and peatland	++	++	++	++	+/-	++	++	++	++
3	Ban on burning arable stubble, except for plant health reasons	+	+	+	+	+	+/-	0	0	+
4	Establishment of buffer strips along water courses	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
5	Tillage management, reducing the risk of soil degradation and erosion, including consideration of the slope gradient <sup>9</sup> .	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
6	Minimum soil cover to avoid bare soil in periods that are most sensitive	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
7	Crop rotation in arable land, except for crops growing under water <sup>10</sup>	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	+
8	Minimum share of agricultural area devoted to non-productive areas or features <sup>11</sup>	+	+-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
9	Ban on converting or ploughing permanent grassland designated as environmentally-sensitive permanent grasslands in Natura 2000 sites <sup>12</sup>	+/-	+	+/-	+	+/-	+/-	+	+	+/-

**SEA comment on all GAECs:** The GAECs are designed to be complementary to existing national measures (and SMRs) and contribute to the farming landscape in a positive manner, raising the profile and ambition for better environmental practices across all farms, for example, by placing a value on environmental features on a farm through GAEC 8. As such this represents an enhanced baseline to build upon with more target measures under eco-schemes and other agri-environmental interventions. In tandem and in combination the above GAECs should result in positive environmental effects subject also to the recommended SEA and AA mitigation measures identified above that can be delivered through interventions also such as Eco-scheme, AECM and AKIS training. Key to the success of the GAECs from an environmental perspective and in particular to address critical, significant environmental problems relating to biodiversity, water and climate is the need to ensure full and comprehensive monitoring, delivery and implementation on the ground at farm level as is required under the EU legislative framework for the CAP Strategic Plan. In addition to address and respond to trends relating to environmental issues, the monitoring regime should be targeted in a practical manner as outlined in the CAP SP and Financing Regulations to allow for results that enhance the positive measures in the plan, and respond accordingly where adverse effects are identified early in the plan stage. The monitoring commitments are subject to annual review and remedial actions/revisions if adverse effects are identified through this monitoring in accordance with the EU framework. This should provide the improvement of environmental conditions on farms and in turn broader reversal of adverse trends.

<sup>9</sup> Amendments to this GAEC were made following observations from European Commission, please see Section 3.5 of this SEA Statement.

<sup>10</sup> Amendments to this GAEC were made following observations from European Commission, please see Section 3.5 of this SEA Statement.

<sup>11</sup> Amendments to this GAEC were made following observations from European Commission, please see Section 3.5 of this SEA Statement.

<sup>12</sup> Amendments to this GAEC were made following observations from European Commission, please see Section 3.5 of this SEA Statement.



### 3.2.3 Summary of Assessment of Pillar I Interventions

Similarly, Table 3.4 below summarises the evaluation of the Pillar I Interventions included in the CAP SP 2023 - 2027. This presents final Pillar I interventions in the approved plan. Where amendments to the Pillar I interventions were made following statutory consultation on the draft CAP SP in late 2021, these are shown in **green font** and were subject to SEA and AA Screening. As with the GAECS in Section 3.2.2, where changes were made to Pillar I Interventions following European Commission observations on the CAP SP 2023-2027, these are shown in **blue font** and were subject to SEA and AA Screening. The relevant SEA and AA Screening Reports from the changes made to the CAP SP 2023 - 2027 are included as annexes to the final SEA Environmental Report and the final Natura Impact Statement of the Appropriate Assessment.

**Table 3-4 Summary of Assessment of Pillar I Interventions**

Section of CAP SP	Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna		Population & Human Health		Soil & Geology	Water Resources		Climatic Factors & Air Quality		Landscape	Cultural Heritage	Material Assets	Inter-relationships	
BASIC INCOME SUPPORT FOR SUSTAINABILITY (BISS)	+/-	+	+	+/-	+	+/-	+	+/-	+	+	+	+	+/-	+
Complementary income support for young farmers (CIS-YF)	+/-	+	+	+/-	+	+/-	+	+/-	+	+	+	+	+/-	+
ECO-SCHEME	+/-	+	+	+/-	+	+/-	+	+/-	+	+	+	+	+/-	+
Agricultural Practice 1: Space for Nature <sup>13</sup>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Agricultural Practice 2 Extensive Livestock Production	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Agricultural Practice 3 Limiting Chemical Nitrogen Usage	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Agricultural Practice 4 Planting of Native Trees.	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Agricultural Practice 5 Use of GPS technology, controlled sprayers <sup>14</sup>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Ag Practice 6. Soil Sampling and	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

<sup>13</sup> Agricultural Practice amended following European Commission Observations. Please see Section 5 of this SEA Statement

<sup>14</sup> Agricultural Practice amended following European Commission Observations. Please see Section 3.5 of this SEA Statement

Appropriate Liming on all eligible hectares <sup>15</sup> .									
Ag Practice 7: Planting of a break crop(s) <sup>16</sup>									
Ag Practice 8 (Multi-species sward) <sup>17</sup>									
Complementary redistributive income support for sustainability (CRISS)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Protein Aid	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Sectoral Intervention for the Apiculture sector	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sectoral Intervention in the Fruit and Vegetable Sector	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

### 3.2.4 Pillar II Interventions

Similarly, Table 2.5 below summarises the evaluation of the Pillar I Interventions included in the CAP SP 2023-2027. This presents final Pillar II interventions in the approved plan. Where amendments to the Pillar II interventions were made following statutory consultation on the draft CAP SP in late 2021, these are shown in **green font** and were subject to SEA and AA Screening. As with the GAECs in Section 3.2.2, where changes were made to Pillar II Interventions following European Commission observations on the CAP SP 2023-2027, these are shown in **blue font** and were subject to SEA and AA Screening. The relevant SEA and AA Screening Reports for changes made to the CAP SP 2023-2027 are included as annexes to the final SEA Environmental Report and the final Natura Impact Statement.

<sup>15</sup> Agricultural Practice amended following statutory public consultation 8<sup>th</sup> November to 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021. Please see Section 3.5 of this SEA Statement

<sup>16</sup> Agricultural Practice amended following statutory public consultation 8<sup>th</sup> November to 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021. Please see Section 3.5 of this SEA Statement

<sup>17</sup> Agricultural Practice amended following European Commission Observations. Please see Section 3.5 of this SEA Statement.

**Table 3-5 Summary of Assessment of Pillar II Interventions**

Section of CAP SP	Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	Population & Human health	Soil & Geology	Water Resources	Climatic Factors & Air Quality	Landscape	Cultural Heritage	Material Assets	Inter-relationships
ACRES General Scheme <sup>18</sup>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Non-productive investments associated with agri-environment climate measure	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
ACRES Training Scheme	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
On-Farm Capital Investment Scheme (CIS)	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-
Collaborative Farming Grant	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Continued Professional Development for Advisors	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Dairy Beef Welfare Scheme	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-
European Innovation Partnerships - AGRII <sup>19</sup>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Areas of Natural Constraints	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Early-stage support for Producer Organisations in the beef, sheep, cereals, potato and amenity sectors	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Knowledge Transfer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Article 71 – Co-operation (1)(b) prepare and implement LEADER, referred to as community-led-local	+/-	+	+/-	+/-	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-

<sup>18</sup> Amendments were made to the ACRES (Ireland's AECM scheme) Tiers 1,2 and 3 following statutory public consultation and European Commission observations. Please see Section 3.5 of this SEA Statement. This SEA Statement uses the ACRES as this was the name used in the final CAP SP 2023 -2027.

<sup>19</sup> Amendments were made to the EIP following statutory public consultation, please see Section 3.5 of this SEA Statement.

development in Article 25 of Regulation (EU)[CPR]									
Organic Farming Scheme	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Sheep Improvement Scheme <sup>20</sup>	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Straw Incorporation Measure	0	0	+	0	+	0	0	+	0
Suckler Carbon Efficiency Programme <sup>21</sup>	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-
Training to implement Suckler Carbon Efficiency Programme	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

<sup>20</sup> Amendments were made to the Sheep Improvement Scheme following statutory public consultation, please see Section 3.5 of this SEA Statement.

<sup>21</sup> Amendments were made to the Suckler Carbon Efficiency Programme following statutory public consultation, please see Section 3.5 of this SEA Statement.

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### **3.3 The SEA Environmental Report, Natura Impact Statement and Mitigation Measures and Recommendations**

The measures presented in Section 3.6 below were a result of the environmental assessment processes and the Department modified the CAP SP accordingly as part of the iterative process. For further details, please see the CAP SP 2023 - 2027 Annex 1 Ex-ante evaluation and Strategic Environmental Assessment which outlines how the mitigation measures have been integrated into the CAP SP.

Thereafter relevant actions/measures or recommendations from other relevant national plans are presented at Section 4.4. Please see the final SEA ER Section 9 Mitigation Measures for a full list.

Key principles in the approach to mitigation measures has been to support 'the right measure in the right place' and to capture and monitor data though the plan lifetime to assess if stated objectives are being achieved.

**Table 3-6 Mitigation Measures and Environmental Topic**

Table 3-6 below outlines the SEA topic, the significant effects identified under that SEA topic, and the Mitigation Measure was identified as part of the SEA process. Please see Annex 1 of the CAP SP for more detail on how they have been addressed and fully incorporated into the CAP SP.

SEA topic	Significant effects	Mitigation Measure <i>Please see Final CAP SP 2023-2027 Annex 1: Recommendations of the ex-ante evaluation and SEA and how they have been addressed</i>
<b>Biodiversity, flora and fauna (BFF)</b>	BFF: impacts on habitats and species, loss of connectivity and functionality, loss of habitat for species including farm birds and waders.	<b>Mitigation Measure 1: Aim for all farms to support right measure, right place over plan lifetime</b> <i>Lessons learnt from operational agri-environmental schemes, EIPs, LIFE projects, the Pilot Farm Environmental Survey (FES) and Pilot Soil Sampling Programme (SSP) should be expanded where appropriate over the CAP Strategic Plan period. The current pilot stage of the FES will focus on the development of methodology and the up-skilling of farmers and advisors in the roll-out of farm level habitat surveys on approximately 8,000 farms. The pilot FES programme will provide the farmer with an inventory of habitats, biodiversity and environmental information about his/her own farm. This should inform future knowledge transfer, awareness raising, communication and further mapping at farm level.</i>
<b>Water(W)</b>	W: impacts on water quality (surface, ground and estuarine) arising from point and diffuse sources, agricultural practices that results in excessive nitrates and soil run off, buffers and sufficient size of same.	
<b>Soil &amp;Geology (SG)</b>	SG: carbon in soil and application of fertiliser, slurry and practices that increase soil run off.	
<b>Landscape (L)</b>	L: connectivity of landscape features, loss of landscape features.	
<b>Climatic Factors and Air Quality (CCAQ)</b>	CCAQ: reversing trend of ammonia emissions, GHG emissions associated with agricultural production.	
<b>All environmental topics.</b>	<p>Critical to the understanding the effects, positive and negative, associated with a number of interventions in the CAP SP is the need to ensure sufficient oversight and monitoring of effects.</p> <p>Annual review and provision for remedial actions promotes an adaptive response and ability to intervene should adverse effects arise from interventions.</p>	<b>Mitigation Measure 2: Oversight and monitoring: Monitoring Committee</b> <i>Oversight and monitoring of the CAP Strategic Plan through the Monitoring Committee and existing controls and checks protocols. In addition, to address and respond to trends relating to environmental issues, the monitoring regime needs to be enforced, targeted in a practical manner to allow for results that enhance the positive measures in the plan, and respond accordingly where adverse effects are identified early in the plan stage. This would also support where positive effects are occurring and learn from these actions. This will facilitate achievement of targets set out in the CAP Strategic Plan 2023-2027 including those relevant to other national and EU legislations such as WFD, Habitats Directive, Birds Directive, and the National Emissions Ceiling Directive.</i> <p><i>Allow for annual review and remedial actions/revisions if adverse effects are identified through this monitoring. This would seek to monitor effects (positive and negative) across key environmental receptors identified through the SEA and AA process namely Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna, European Sites, water resources and GHG emissions. Enhanced cross reporting between local authorities, EPA, DAFM, DHHLG, DACE and Irish Water as appropriate.</i></p>

SEA topic	Significant effects	Mitigation Measure <i>Please see Final CAP SP 2023-2027 Annex 1: Recommendations of the ex-ante evaluation and SEA and how they have been addressed</i>
<b>Biodiversity, flora and fauna</b>  <b>Soil, Geology Landscape</b>	<p>BFF: in particular environmentally sensitive permanent grassland in European Sites and potential adverse effects on these habitats arising from CAP interventions.</p> <p>Indirectly impacts on soil quality, and landscape.</p>	<p><b>Mitigation measure 3: Collaborate and engage with NPWS to address monitoring on permanent grassland<sup>22</sup></b></p> <p><i>The Department is currently reviewing the designated Environmentally Sensitive Permanent Grassland (ESPG) sites in collaboration with the National Parks and Wildlife Service Division of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Cross-reporting and cooperation between statutory authorities (DAFM, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (National Parks and Wildlife Service) and Local Authorities will be enhanced to facilitate effective controls and follow up actions, as appropriate. This will include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• Greater emphasis on targeting controls to ensure effectiveness. This will be achieved by consideration of new information relevant to the SMRs and GAECs, evaluation of outcome of past controls and an effective risk analysis procedure in the selection process.</i></li> <li><i>• Where feasible, checks by monitoring will be introduced to enhance the number of farmers subject to controls.</i></li> <li><i>• Remedial actions will form part of the control process.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Biodiversity Flora and Fauna</b>  <b>Climate Change</b>  <b>Landscape</b>  <b>Cultural heritage</b>  <b>Human Health</b>	<p>Potential risk of adverse environmental effects from the implementation of certain Pillar 1 interventions, namely BISS and Eco-scheme measures; although positive environmental effects can also be derived from these schemes through ensuring adherence to scheme requirements and the widespread potential take-up of Eco-schemes.</p> <p>To ensure appropriate interventions and advice are provided to farmers, targeted and robust training is required.</p> <p>In relation to European Sites, the NIS has identified knowledge requirements as they relate to specific Annex 1 habitats, Annex II species and SPA bird populations.</p>	<p><b>Mitigation Measure 4: Capacity Building and Training</b></p> <p><i>Critical to the environmental issues is the need for capacity building and training for farmers and their advisors, and as such the following mitigation measure is recommended Education and training are targeted at all farmers and advisors and that a core component should be delivered on understanding and addressing key environmental challenges facing agriculture in particular water, climate change and biodiversity and human health, landscape and cultural heritage. This would help deliver a more robust and comprehensive understanding of these issues and generate potential solutions and ownership from farmers themselves. Key themes to consider over the capacity building interventions are as follows:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• As part of the delivery of education and training farmers should be made aware of and be required to be aware of Annex I habitat, Annex II species and SPA bird population sensitivities in the zone of influence of the farm.</i></li> <li><i>• The provision of farm advisor training with respect to PIP maps and their interpretation specifically focusing training on Nitrate &amp; Phosphorous pollution impact potential</i></li> <li><i>• Such education and training and farm awareness will provide consistency with the controls outlined for SMR 3 and SMR 4</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Further details on the knowledge requirements required for specific Annex I habitats, Annex II species and SPA bird populations are outlined in appendices to the Natura Impact Statement.</i></p>

<sup>22</sup> This text was submitted by the Department to the European Commission following their observations on the CAP SP

SEA topic	Significant effects	Mitigation Measure <i>Please see Final CAP SP 2023-2027 Annex 1: Recommendations of the ex-ante evaluation and SEA and how they have been addressed</i>
<b>Water Soil &amp; Geology Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna Climatic Factors &amp; Air Quality</b>	The SEA identified potential adverse effects associated with application of Eco-schemes and the need to provide for monitoring and co-ordination.	<b>Mitigation Measure 5: Eco Scheme Agricultural practice 3: Limiting chemical nitrogen usage</b> <i>In order to ascertain and confirm positive trends from this practice, ongoing coordination with other departments and agencies including Environmental Protection Agency, Inland Fisheries Ireland, as well as farm advisors as the key interface between the Department and farmers on the ground.</i>
<b>Biodiversity Flora and Fauna Water Climate Change Landscape Cultural heritage Human Health Material Assets</b>	The SEA identified a number of effects associated with the measures within On-Farm Capital Investment Scheme (CIS). The potential for adverse effects stems from a concern as to the capacity of local authorities to undertake screenings for planning and consent under the EIA Regulations as relevant.	<b>Mitigation Measure 6 from Food Vision 2030 Capital Investment Scheme</b> <i>The strengthening of the implementation of the EIA (Agriculture) Regulations is important in providing protection for habitats under pressure from agriculture. Any risk/s to any Natura 2000 sites as a result of new agricultural activities or enterprise should be subject to suitable environmental assessment requirements under AA and EIA (Agriculture) criteria. Best practice in this respect could be further extended to include assessment of all agricultural activities. Therefore, all new agricultural activities, changes in agricultural activities or management practice, should be cognisant and compliant with all relevant environmental legislation. Environmental legislation would include, but not be limited to, AA and EIA Agriculture Regulations.</i>  <i>Currently under TAMSII and proposed under the new Capital Investment scheme, planning permission or a letter of exemption is required for all proposed buildings or fixed structures at time of application. Current planning practices require the competent planning authority to consider likely significant effects to the environment and European Sites as part of the planning process. Screening for Appropriate Assessment and EIA is part of the planning process. It is recommended that the competent planning authorities screening determinations be provided as a required document as part of the CSP Capital Investment Scheme application process.</i>
<b>Biodiversity Flora and Fauna Water Climatic Factors and Air Quality Soil &amp; Geology Landscape Cultural heritage Human Health Material Assets</b>	The SEA and AA identified potential effects in the absence of ecological training and expertise in the design and delivery of ACRES. This aligned with the focus on right measure, right place.  To ensure appropriate interventions under ACRES are provided to farmers, ecological advice and training is required.  In relation to European Sites, the NIS has identified knowledge requirements as they relate to specific Annex 1 habitats, Annex II species and SPA bird populations.	<b>Mitigation Measure 7: ACRES</b> <i>The proposed actions for ACRES general will be designed with ecological assessment advice and expertise. Mandatory advisor training including the latest ecological advice and available resources. The use of the Departments IT system will be provided to registered farm planners to ensure that any proposed actions with potential to have an impact on a European Site will be suitably screened for that potential risk. The Departments IT systems will also flag any proposed actions that may have a potential impact on a European Site and these proposed actions will be flagged for further consideration.</i>
<b>Biodiversity Flora and Fauna Water Climatic Factors and Air Quality</b>	The SEA and AA processes highlighted the need to strengthen the monitoring and cross compliance (cross compliance is known as conditionality in CSP) activities associated with the CAP SP. As the adherence and compliance with the GAECs and	<b>Updates regarding Mitigation Measures 2, 3, and 5</b> <i>Oversight and monitoring of the environmental impacts of the CAP Strategic Plan will be carried out by the Interdepartmental / Agency Environmental Monitoring Committee (IDAEM), which will report to the Department's Monitoring and Evaluation Steering Group. In addition, to address and respond to trends relating to environmental issues, the monitoring</i>



SEA topic	Significant effects	Mitigation Measure <i>Please see Final CAP SP 2023-2027 Annex 1: Recommendations of the ex-ante evaluation and SEA and how they have been addressed</i>
<b>Soil &amp; Geology</b> <b>Landscape</b> <b>Cultural heritage</b> <b>Human Health</b> <b>Material Assets</b>	<p>SMRs are the fundamental requirements for support under the CAP SP, the need to provide for robust monitoring of cross compliance for these measures was stressed through the environmental assessment processes.</p> <p>Cross compliance and monitoring across statutory authorities in relation to a range of environmental provisions including Water Framework Directive, Habitats Directive and EIA Directive obligations is essential to monitor environmental effects of the CAP SP.</p>	<p><i>regime will be strengthened, through enhanced cooperation, including data sharing agreements, across Government Departments and State Agencies, including, but not limited to, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (incl National Parks and Wildlife Service), the Environmental Protection Agency, representatives from the Local Authorities and Teagasc.</i></p> <p><i>In addition to this, cross-reporting and cooperation between statutory authorities (DAFM, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (National Parks and Wildlife Service) and Local Authorities) will be enhanced to facilitate effective controls and follow up actions, as appropriate. This will include;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• Greater emphasis on targeting controls to ensure effectiveness. This will be achieved by consideration of new information relevant to the SMRs and GAECs, evaluation of outcome of past controls and an effective risk analysis procedure in the selection process.</i></li> <li><i>• Where feasible, checks by monitoring will be introduced to enhance the number of farmers subject to controls.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Remedial actions will form part of the control process. The Department will make provision in On The Spot Checks (OTSC) control procedures to check planning permission for new works.</i></p>

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### **3.5 Summary of how the environmental report and consultation submissions on it were taken into account in the CAP Strategic Plan 2023 -2027**

The Strategic Environmental Assessment Report, draft CAP SP, as well as the Appropriate Assessment (AA) Natura Impact Statement (NIS), were presented for public and statutory consultation over the period from 8<sup>th</sup> November – 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021. The purpose of this was to give the public and the statutory bodies an opportunity to express their opinions on the findings of the Environmental Report, the Natura Impact Statement, and to use it as a reference point in commenting on the draft CAP SP 2023 -2027, further to previous more general consultation periods earlier in the process of developing the CAP SP. Please see Annex B of the SEA ER for a response table to the list of consultees who made submissions that were addressed during the SEA and AA processes.

### **3.6 Summary of key issues raised and response to same**

The following section provides an overview of the key issues raised by consultees in relation to the SEA ER, NIS and draft CAP SP. Please see the final SEA ER which provides full report on the submissions and response to same.

#### **3.6.1 Recommendations relating to updates to plans/programme, datasets and transboundary considerations.**

Submissions provided information in relation to recently released and available policy and plans that were considered relevant to the SEA ER. Minor amendments/clarifications to maps and data in the SEA ER were also identified. The need to consider transboundary consultation with Northern Ireland statutory bodies was highlighted.

In response the final SEA ER has been updated in terms of additional data/clarification etc. The Department has provided the following response in relation to transboundary consultation:

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine consulted with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs of Northern Ireland (NIEA) during the scoping and consultation phase of the environmental assessment of the draft CAP Strategic Plan. The Department will continue to engage as normal with its counterparts in Northern Ireland including on issues of regulation within its remit. At project level, this can be addressed through the planning consent process.

#### **3.6.2 Consideration of alternatives**

A small number of submissions queried the alternatives considered in the SEA ER and the assessment of same.

In response the SEA consideration of alternatives process was underpinned by workshops on same, a review of potential scenarios and refinement over the plan period guided by the understanding of the environmental baseline, identification of significant issues through consultation, literature review and expert judgement.

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### **3.6.3 Identification of significant environmental effects and mitigation measures**

A number of submissions raised concerns in relation to the identification of significant environmental effects in both the SEA ER and the NIS and the relationship to mitigation measures to address same. The integration of the mitigation measures in the CAP SP was raised as a further concern.

In response to these issues raised, a number of changes were made to the CAP SP 2023-2027 in terms the interventions for example additional measures were added to Agricultural Practices in the Eco-scheme, there were also changes to AECM General Scheme and EIPs.

Additional mitigation measures were developed and accepted by the Department following the consultation process. Further measures were provided by the Department in response to European Commission observations.

Annex 1 of the final CAP Strategic Plan provides detail on the SEA and references how its mitigation measures were integrated into the final CAP SP 2023-2027.

### **3.6.4 Monitoring**

A number of comments related to the provision for monitoring, particularly in relation to water quality and effects on biodiversity. More broadly submissions highlighted the need for monitoring to be robust. The need for full and comprehensive monitoring, delivery and implementation of GAECs on the ground at farm level was highlighted.

In the final CAP SP and SEA ER and NIS the following mitigation measure is provided to strengthen monitoring and oversight:

Oversight and monitoring of the environmental impacts of the CAP Strategic Plan will be carried out by the Interdepartmental/Agency Environment Monitoring Committee, which will report to the Department's Monitoring and Evaluation Steering Group. In addition, to address and respond to trends relating to environmental issues, the monitoring regime will need to be strengthened. This will require enhanced cooperation, including data sharing agreements, across Government Departments and State Agencies, including the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (including National Parks and Wildlife Service), Department of Environment and Climate Change, the Environmental Protection Agency, representatives from the Local Authorities and Teagasc.

### **3.6.5 Natura Impact Statement**

A number of submissions raised concerns in relation to the approach and assessment in the Natura Impact Statement noting the requirement for mitigation measures as well as the need to assess actual Natura 2000 sites and to pass the test in terms of 'complete, precise and definitive findings, beyond reasonable scientific doubt'.

The final NIS provides a complete examination of all elements of the CAP SP. A definitive conclusion has been made across the entire AA process, as set out in the AA conclusion statement that the CAP SP will not, alone or in combination with other plans or programmes, have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European Site. The findings of the Appropriate Assessment represent the findings of an Appropriate Assessment of a strategic plan with a scope that is national in scale. For assessments

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of such plans EC guidelines state that it may only be possible to identify potential effects of certain actions or components of the plan at a general level, without specifying them at the European Site level. The EC guidelines go on to state that a Natura Impact Statement and Appropriate Assessment should be proportionate to the geographical scope, to the plan's level of detail and to the nature and extent of likely effects'.

With regard to the implementation of mitigation measures it is noted that oversight of plan implementation and monitoring of the environmental impacts will be carried out by the Inter-Departmental / Agency Environment Monitoring Committee, which will report to the Department's Monitoring and Evaluation Steering Group.

### **3.7 SEA and AA assessment of changes made to the final CAP SP 2023 -2027.**

The SEA and AA processes undertook two screenings of changes to the CAP SP 2023-2027, as follows:

Changes made to the CAP SP 2023 -2027 on foot of the statutory public consultation from 8<sup>th</sup> November to 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021, and

Changes made to the CAP SP 2023-2027 on foot of observations on the draft CAP SP by the European Commission.

The SEA and AA Screenings of these changes can be found in the supporting annexes to the SEA ER, and the NIS respectively.

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## 4 ALTERNATIVES

### 4.1 Approach to alternatives

The approach to the consideration of alternatives in the SEA has followed the *Developing and Assessing Alternatives in Strategic Environmental Assessment* (EPA,2015). In addition, through the Scoping stage, both in Scoping workshops and formal consultation on the Draft Scoping Report (15th February 2021 to 13th April 2021) consultees were asked to comment on the proposed approach to the Alternatives and the suggested use of the CAP General and Specific Objectives as a means to develop reasonable alternatives. In addition to the European Commission recommendations to Ireland on its CAP SP as well as the SWOT analysis (April 2021) high level alternatives were proposed.

The SEA team also took the strategic approach to Alternative's development – i.e., high level options that achieve a given objective. Such strategic types are commonly realistic at policy level. Combined with this strategic approach, the team identified key environmental issues relating to CAP Strategic Plan identified through Scoping consultation (effects orientated) and this further assisted the development of Alternatives.

The Commission provided each EU country with tailor-made recommendations, accompanied by a communication. They aim to assist in the drafting of the national CAP Strategic Plans by identifying the key areas on which each EU country should focus.<sup>23</sup> The following table presents the initial alternatives brought forward for assessment.

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<sup>23</sup> Commission recommendations for Ireland's CAP strategic plan Accompanying the document COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS Recommendations to the Member States as regards their strategic plan for the Common Agricultural Policy  
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020SC0377&from=EN>

**Table - 1 European Commission Recommendations to Ireland in CAP Strategic Plan Preparation**

General Objective	Recommendation	Strategic Alternatives
<b>General Objective 1: Foster a smart, resilient and diversified agricultural sector ensuring food security</b>	<p>1.a. Support farmers in capturing higher share in the value chain by assisting innovation and diversification of products and markets (ranging from exports to local and agro-tourism), investments in quality aspects (including environmental labelling, EU and other quality schemes, organic farming) and by encouraging the recognition of Producer Organisations as well as the formation of new ones where relevant.</p>	<p><b>Alternative 1A. Generational Renewal, support for young and women farmers and producer organisations</b></p>
	<p>1.b Support the ability of Irish farmers to invest in sustainable practices, by improving access to finance, including through supporting new or improved financial instruments</p> <p>1.c Improve the viability of farms, especially medium-sized farms and farms in areas facing natural constraints by increasing the fairness and the efficiency of income support, in particular via internal convergence and by applying, for example, the complementary redistributive income support for sustainability and the reduction of payments</p> <p>2.g Improve the resilience of the farming sector to climate risks such as water stress on grassland and fodder crops - for example, by supporting partnerships between livestock and arable farms and the creation of fodder reserves</p>	<p><b>Alternative 1B Generational renewal , support for young and women farmers with focus on training, capacity and smart farming</b></p>
<b>General Objective 2: Bolster environmental care and climate action and to contribute to the environmental and climate-related objectives of the Union</b>	<p>2.a. Encourage a general move towards more sustainable farming practices by improving the environmental and climate-related performance of income support – through appropriate requirements and schemes, including support for carbon farming.</p> <p>2.b Ensure a widespread improvement in nutrient management, thereby helping to achieve the Green Deal target on reducing nutrient losses (as well as other targets and objectives, as indicated in section 1.2 above) – through optimised fertilisation (and potentially limited fertilisation in some cases), improved manure management and a wider transition to precision farming. Appropriate design of elements of conditionality will be essential in achieving these shifts (especially to ensure action in hotspots), and funded support schemes may also be needed. Encourage improvements to the efficiency of enteric fermentation in farmed livestock in line with the Methane Strategy, including through support for advice, innovation and management practices, as appropriate.</p> <p>2.d Step up efforts to encourage tree-planting in various configurations – including agro-forestry systems – and with species mixes which are appropriate in terms of biodiversity, adaptation to climate change, carbon sink capacity and resistance to pests and diseases. Support may be necessary not only for afforestation but also for advice on species selection and on effectively integrating woodland into farm management.</p> <p>2.e Make significant efforts to increase the area farmed organically - thereby helping to achieve the Green Deal target on organic farming (as well as other targets and objectives). Support for conversion to and maintenance of organic farming may be appropriate, but steps to develop the market (whether supported through the CAP or not) may also be needed.</p> <p>2.g Improve the resilience of the farming sector to climate risks such as water stress on grassland and fodder crops - for example, by supporting partnerships between livestock and arable farms and the creation of fodder reserves</p>	<p><b>Alternative 2A: Organic farming from the current rate of under 2% to the government commitment of 7.5 %.</b></p> <p><b>Alternative 2B: Organic farming, agro forestry and support for extensive farming</b></p>

General Objective	Recommendation	Strategic Alternatives
<b>General Objective: 3</b> <b>Strengthen the socio-economic fabric of rural areas and address societal demands</b>	<p>3.a Improve animal health and welfare in line with consumer expectations, by putting in place more ambitious measures to support farmers to improve livestock management practices, especially for pigs and male dairy calves.</p> <p>3.b Contribute to the Green Deal target on reducing the use and risk of pesticides via schemes fostering a switch to sustainable farming practices (including integrated pest management).</p> <p>3.c Continue improving access to land and finance for young farmers and new entrants, including by targeting inheritance constraints and supporting cooperation between farmer generations.</p> <p>3.d Increase social inclusion in rural communities by supporting improvements in basic services and their accessibility. In doing so it will be important to ensure synergies with other EU and national funds.</p> <p>3.e Develop the bioeconomy by supporting renewable energy production from agriculture and forestry as well as supporting diversification into other non-food areas.</p>	<p><b>Alternative 3A: Support for diversification of rural economy by supporting higher value local food production, promotion of local landscape related products, agro tourism, bio economy</b></p> <p><b>Alternative 3B: Support for essential services in rural towns and villages to act as service centres to rural areas, bioeconomy measures and support through renewable energy production (farm solar, wind energy, forestry/timber products)</b></p>
<b>Cross cutting Objective:</b>	<p>Fostering and sharing of knowledge, innovation and digitalisation in agriculture and rural areas, and encouraging their uptake. Support further integration of the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System, strengthening links between research, advisors, education, the farming community and interactive innovation projects, in particular organise innovation support services, support peer-to-peer learning and dissemination to all Irish advisors.</p> <p>This would apply to all alternatives to a greater /lesser extent.</p>	<p><b>Alternative 4A: Continuation of measures</b></p> <p><b>Alternative 4B: Continuation of measures under the current CAP Strategic Plan and Rural Development Programme with revisions/updates to reflect national policy and legislative changes.</b></p>
<b>This applies to all alternatives other than Alternative 4. As can be seen above, the highest number of recommendations relating to <i>Objective 2: Bolster environmental care and climate action and to contribute to the environmental and climate-related objectives of the Union</i></b>		

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## 4.2 Refinement of alternatives

Following the preliminary consideration of strategic alternatives, a number of alternatives were developed and refined further. The SEA assessed alternatives that combined the preferred strategic alternative(above) in combination with the European Commission's recommendations to Ireland in terms of priorities for the CAP SP. Please see Chapter 7 of the final SEA ER for the detailed assessment of alternatives.

In order to positively respond to all EU Recommendations and tailor them to the Irish context some key measures were required including to:

- Improved Conditionality – eligible land, nutrient management, extensive farming
- Farm viability and income support redistribution.
- Tailored, targeted responses for habitats such as peats and grasslands
- Wider and cross-cutting improvement in overall nutrient management
- GHG emissions and in enteric methane reductions
- Knowledge sharing, capacity building and technical skills

Thus, the preferred alternative that encompasses all of the EU recommendations is preferred from the SEA perspective as it provides the greatest and widest environmental effects; improves farm viability and improves technical understanding and knowledge sharing. As reflected in the River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027 (Draft) the need to underpin the preferred alternative by providing the right measure in the right place supporting by extensive informed advice and capacity building is essential to improving overall environmental performance of the preferred alternative



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## 5 MONITORING

### 5.1 Introduction

One of the most significant developments in the 2023-2027 CAP SP programming period is the New Delivery Model (NDM), a new governance structure that will shift a compliance-based approach to a performance-based approach. The CAP SP programming period (2023-2027) will be monitored and evaluated using the new Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (PMEF). The NDM will demand a robust governance system as is currently the case; but in addition, will require a reconciliation of expenditure incurred with impacts achieved, through a transparent performance reporting framework based on the reporting of outputs and results with milestones and programme targets.

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine will establish a performance framework for Ireland's 2023-2027 CAP Strategic Plan which will include the following:

- a) a set of common context, output, result and impact indicators which will be used as the basis for monitoring, evaluation and the annual performance reporting
- b) targets and annual milestones established in relation to the relevant specific objective using the relevant result indicators
- c) data collection, storage and transmission
- d) regular reporting on performance, monitoring and evaluation activities
- e) the ex-ante, interim, and ex post evaluations and all other evaluation activities linked to the CAP Strategic Plan.

This will be achieved by capturing and processing

- indicator data (in respect of output indicators, and result indicators, as required in particular for the completion of Annual Performance Reports) through existing and new internal IT systems and data sources.
- monitoring and evaluation data from external sources.
- other, more qualitative monitoring data, through alternative means or from other external sources, such as may be provided via the use of external expertise, projects, and evaluations.

It is intended that external evaluators be involved in the early phases of establishing the performance framework. This will ensure that the specific objectives of the CAP SP are linked to relevant indicators which can be used to monitor and evaluate performance of the CAP.

Article 10 of the European SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) states that the significant environmental effects of implementing a plan/programme shall be monitored in order, *inter alia*, to identify at an early-stage unforeseen adverse effects and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action. There is a legislative requirement to include in the Environmental Report a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring [Annex I(i)].

The issue of data collection at farm level to improve monitoring<sup>24</sup> and the need to improve cross Government Department policy coherence and implementation<sup>25</sup> were also identified during the SWOT analysis used to inform the CAP Strategic Plan 2023-2027 preparation. Finally, a number of SEA Scoping submissions made reference to monitoring<sup>26</sup>. The opportunity for Government Departments and agencies to collaborate exists and should be supported through this Monitoring approach.

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<sup>24</sup> Gen.N1: Improve the collection of data at farm level in order to improve the monitoring of indicators, demonstrate impact and inform policy

<sup>25</sup> Gen.N2: Improve cross Government Department policy coherence and implementation

<sup>26</sup> See for example, EPA, Inland Fisheries, An Taisce, An Chaomh Glas and individual via Survey Monkey submissions

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## 5.2 Establishment of an evaluation/monitoring team

In order to effectively monitor and evaluate the CAP Strategic Plan, an evaluation team will be established in 2022 to evaluate the impact of CAP SP beneficiaries on the three environmental, biodiversity and climate-related objectives of the CAP SP. The evaluation team will consult the Interdepartmental/Agency Environmental Monitoring Committee (IDAEM). Its role will be to:

- Liaise with the relevant Department line divisions and IT (Data Analytics) division.
- Liaise with other Government Departments and agencies in order fully to utilise data and projects that are already available thereby improving cross Government Department policy coherence and implementation when collating data.
- Carry out an assessment of the indicators collected for annual performance reporting purposes and from external sources/projects and identify the additional feasible data requirements needed at farm level to evaluate the impact of the CAP SP on the three environmental, biodiversity and climate-related objectives of the CAP SP.
- Establish a representative sample of CAP SP beneficiaries in order to collect this additional baseline data at farm level.
- Establish a framework/methodology to:
  - collect the additional data for evaluation purposes (including baseline)
  - collect additional data collected by other departments and
  - merge these with the CAP SP indicators collected for annual performance reporting purposes.
- Data collection on the sample beneficiaries will start in 2023 and will be monitored and reported on by the evaluation team throughout the lifetime of the CAP SP. This includes a baseline evaluation by April 2024, a mid-term evaluation by April 2026 and a final evaluation by April 2028. This same cohort/sample can be used to assess the impact of the CAP SP across all objectives or focus on a specific theme.
- Form an evaluation plan to assess the impact and contributions of these sample beneficiaries to the CAP SP objectives over the 2023-2027 period.
- Ensure evaluation reports on the impacts of the CAP SP are submitted to the Interdepartmental / Agency Environmental Monitoring Committee (IDAEM) and will feed into the requirements for a mid-term and ex post evaluations.
- The work of the evaluation team will consult with the Interdepartmental / Agency Environmental Monitoring Committee (IDAEM).
- Reports will be considered annually by the CAP SP Monitoring Committee in line with EU legislative requirements

## 5.3 Remedial Action

Given the challenges identified and the need to provide evidence base for interventions the thresholds/triggers for remedial action are set out in the performance framework for the CAP SP. These are derived from national plans and legal commitments.

The setting of targets will be established based on the proposed interventions as outlined in the CSP and confirmed by the ex-ante evaluation process before the CSP was approved by the Commission. The monitoring and review of targets and milestones are set out in the CAP SP and will be monitored and reported on annually. These are also then subject to a mid-term and ex-poste evaluation process. The Food Vision, Climate Action Plan, River Basin

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Management Plan and National Emissions Directive targets will be delivered by a variety of interventions inside and outside of the CAP SP with a role for regulation, industry and new technologies.

Transboundary consultation and sharing of monitoring data is recommended for effects relating to Air Quality, Water Landscape **and biodiversity**.<sup>27</sup>

#### 5.4 SEA and AA Recommendation relating to Data Gathering

The SEA and AA recommends a number of options to be explored over the CAP SP lifetime. It is acknowledged that currently this data may not be easily or simply captured, particularly relating to dispersed farm holdings but recommendations made in the SEA ER should be considered over the plan lifetime as technology, data capture and GIS improves.

#### 5.5 Datasets

The EPA's State of the Environment reports and datasets (including related air and water quality indicators, etc.) – these provide a significant and reliable source of environmental (spatial) data on the state of the environment and changes and trends that are central for populating relevant indicators, particularly at the national and regional level. The plan should build on the lessons learned and experience gained from the EIPs and pilot projects on results-based actions. These should be disseminated to farmers and advisors and the AKIS will have a central role in this including the National CAP Network. Ideally the latest research would be put into best practice, e.g. soil and nutrient capture in riparian zones.

There is an ever-growing body of research funded through the Department and other Government Department and different State Agencies in particular around certain SEA parameters such as biodiversity, flora and fauna, soil and water. Incorporating this data and recommendations should be a key approach in the SEA monitoring programme, not just in terms of datasets but also in identifying and mainstreaming best and good practice approaches.

**Table 5.1** overleaf presents the SEA Monitoring Table. Where relevant complementary CAP results indicators are listed underneath the SEA topic.

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<sup>27</sup> This addition was provided on foot of NI DAERA submission at consultation stage of the draft plan and SEA ER.

Table 5-1 SEA Monitoring Table

SEA Significant Issue	Monitoring indicators/monitoring requirements	Suggested Data sources/indicators	Responsibility
<b>Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna</b>			
<b>Addressing habitat fragmentation, decline and loss of connectivity</b>	<p>R.31 Preserving habitats and species: Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) under supported commitments supporting biodiversity conservation or restoration including high-nature-value farming practices</p> <p>R.32 Investments related to biodiversity: Share of farms benefitting from CAP investment support contributing to biodiversity</p> <p>% of sites in favourable or improving condition.</p> <p>% of species in favourable conservation status over plan duration</p> <p>R.33 Improving Natura 2000 management: Share of total Natura 2000 area under supported commitments</p> <p>R.34 Preserving landscape features: Share of Utilised Agriculture Area (UAA) under supported commitments for managing landscape features, including hedgerows and trees</p>	<p>EPA ESM and datasets</p> <p>DAFM</p> <p>Ammonia; MARSH Mapping Ammonia Risk on Sensitive Habitats (MARSH) published in the Science of the Total Environment</p> <p>WFD indicators monitored under the WFD monitoring programme for 2022-2027 period.</p> <p>WFD data – and reporting on Areas for Action</p> <p>High status water bodies – reporting</p> <p>Riparian buffers min 3m and measuring these through LPIS and on ground and EIPs and AECMS</p> <p><b>Article 12 reporting and Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland assessments<sup>28</sup></b></p>	DAFM
<b>Impact on water dependant / hydrologically connected European sites from CAP Pillar 1 and II interventions</b>	<p>R.21 Protecting water quality: Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) under supported commitments for the quality of water bodies</p> <p>O.1: Number of European Innovation Partnership (EIP) operational group projects (EIP Stream B)</p>		DAFM
<b>Effects of ammonia on habitats and water</b>	<p>Average site ammonia deposition rates in comparison with critical level</p> <p>I.14 and C.47 Ammonia emissions from agriculture</p>		DAFM
<b>Farmland and Upland Birds and Waders</b>	<p>I.19 / C:36 Farmland Bird Index (<b>for farmland birds, not suitable dataset for upland birds and waders<sup>29</sup></b>)</p> <p>O.1: Number of European Innovation Partnership (EIP) operational group projects (EIP Stream B)</p> <p>R.31 Preserving habitats and species: Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) under supported commitments for supporting biodiversity conservation or restoration including high-nature-value farming practices</p>		

<sup>28</sup> Inserted following submission by Birdwatch Ireland during consultation of draft plan and SEA ER.

<sup>29</sup> Farmland bird index not suitable dataset to monitor Upland Birds and Waders, per Birdwatch Ireland Submission during consultation on draft plan and SEA ER.

Population and Human health			
<b>Generational Renewal</b>	R.36 Generational renewal: Number of young farmers benefitting from setting up with support from the CAP, including a gender breakdown O.30 Number of supported operations or units for generational renewal (excluding setting-up support)	Institute of Public Health HSE Health and Safety Authority CSO Teagasc National Farm Survey EPA ESM and datasets DAFM	DAFM
<b>Farm Income</b>	I.26: Distribution of CAP support I.3 / C.25 Agricultural factor income C.27: Farm income R.4 Linking income support to standards and good practices: Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) covered by income support and subject to conditionality R.6. Redistribution to smaller farms: Percentage of additional direct payments per hectare for eligible farms below average farm size (compared to average) R.7: Enhancing support for farms in areas with specific needs: Percentage additional support per hectare in areas with higher needs (compared to average) R.8 Targeting farms in specific sectors: Share of farms benefitting from coupled income support for improving competitiveness, sustainability or quality O.4: Number of hectares benefitting from basic income support O.5: Number of beneficiaries or hectares benefitting from payments for small farmers O.6: Number of hectares benefitting from complementary income support for young farmers O.7: Number of hectares benefitting from complementary redistributive income support		DAFM
<b>Rural enterprise and diversification</b>  <b>Access to quality food/ welfare/ organics</b>	R.1 Enhancing performance through knowledge and innovation: Number of persons benefitting from advice, training, knowledge exchange, or participating in European Innovation Partnership (EIP) operational groups supported by the CAP in order to enhance sustainable economic, social, environmental, climate and resource efficiency performance Number of rural enterprises supported via LEADER R.10 Better supply chain organisation: Share of farms participating in producer groups, producer organisations, local markets, short supply chain circuits and quality schemes supported by the CAP R.38 LEADER coverage: Share of rural population covered by local development strategies R.37: Growth and jobs in rural areas. New jobs supported in CAP projects Number of training courses relating to environment including climate change supported by CAP and LEADER O.17 Number of hectares and number of other units benefitting from support for organic farming O.18 Number of livestock units (LU) benefitting from support for animal welfare, health or increased biosecurity measures R.29: Development of organic agriculture. Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) supported by the CAP for organic farming, with a split between maintenance and conversion I.28 / C.48 Antimicrobials Sales/use of antimicrobials in food producing animals I.18 /C.49 Risk, use and impacts of pesticides Traditional skills courses supported by LEADER	Institute of Public Health HSE Health and Safety Authority CSO Teagasc Family Farm Survey EPA ESM and datasets DAFM	DAFM

<b>Water body and water quality statistic relating to blue flat status, WFD data, shellfish areas, etc including boil notice</b>	<p>R.21 Protecting water quality: Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) under supported commitments for the quality of water bodies</p> <p>R.22 Sustainable nutrient management: Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) under supported commitments related to improved nutrient management</p> <p>I.15 / C.39 Water quality (including, 1. Gross nutrient balance – nitrogen, 2. Gross nutrient balance – phosphorus and 3. Nitrates in groundwater)</p> <p>Water Framework Directive Data on surface, ground, transitional waters.</p> <p>Number of private wells with e coli/ pesticide traces (not annual)</p>	<p>EPA ESM and datasets</p> <p>DAFM</p> <p>Ammonia; MARSH Mapping Ammonia Risk on Sensitive Habitats (MARSH) published in the Science of the Total Environment</p> <p>WFD indicators monitored under the WFD monitoring programme for 2022-2027 period.</p> <p>WFD data – and reporting on Areas for Action</p> <p>High status water bodies – reporting</p> <p>Riparian buffers min 3m and measuring these through LPIS and on ground and EIPs and AECMS</p> <p><b>Article 12 reporting and Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland assessments<sup>30</sup></b></p>	DAFM
<b>Soil and Geology</b>			
<b>Change in wetland and agricultural cover</b>	<p>C.05 Land cover</p> <p>R.12 Adaptation to climate change: Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) under supported commitments to improve climate adaptation</p>		DAFM
<b>Peatland soils status</b>	<p>R.14 Carbon storage in soils and biomass: Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) under supported commitments to reduce emissions or to maintain or enhance carbon storage (including permanent grassland, permanent crops with permanent green cover, agricultural land in wetland and peatland)</p> <p>R.12 Adaptation to climate change: Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) under supported commitments to improve climate adaptation</p> <p>R.33 Improving Natura 2000 management: Share of total Natura 2000 area under supported commitments</p>	<p>CORINE</p> <p>Soil Observatory data (es 2020)</p> <p>Teagasc</p> <p>Tellus GSI</p> <p>DAFM</p> <p>EPA research projects</p> <p>Ecosystem services mapping</p> <p>EPA ESM and datasets</p>	DAFM
<b>Fertiliser use kg/hectare and recycling of nitrogen</b>	<p>Reductions in organic and inorganic fertiliser applications particularly in intensive farms (livestock and arable)</p> <p>R.22 Sustainable nutrient management: Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) under supported commitments related to improved nutrient management</p>		DAFM
<b>Soil quality</b>	<p>R.22 Sustainable nutrient management: Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) under supported commitments related to improved nutrient management</p> <p>R.24 Sustainable and reduced use of pesticides; Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) under supported specific commitments which lead to a sustainable use of pesticides in order to reduce risks and impacts of pesticides such as pesticides leakage</p> <p>R.19; Improving and protecting soils: Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) under supported commitments beneficial for soil management to improve soil quality and biota</p>		DAFM

<sup>30</sup> Inserted following submission by Birdwatch Ireland during consultation of draft plan and SEA ER.

<b>Soil organic matter</b>	(such as reducing tillage, soil cover with crops, crop rotation included with leguminous crops)  R.14 Carbon storage in soils and biomass R.22 Sustainable nutrient management: Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) under supported commitments related to improved nutrient management		
<b>Water resources</b>			
<b>Surface water body ecological status</b>	% in good or high status R.21 Protecting water quality: Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) under supported commitments for the quality of water bodies R.22 Sustainable nutrient management: Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) under supported commitments related to improved nutrient management % of waterbodies failing WFD targets. Levels of anthropogenic N in estuaries.	DAFM 5 <sup>th</sup> NAP PIP data at catchment level on P and N EIP, Cooperation Where water bodies are failing to meet at least good status or are showing deterioration of status this will be investigated with reference to ongoing programme of measures under RBMP rollout. Data source: EPA and Marine Institute	DAFM
<b>Agricultural pollution levels in rivers</b>	I.13/C.41: Soil erosion by water: Percentage of agricultural land in moderate and severe soil erosion % reduction in nitrogen losses to waters from agriculture. R.22 Sustainable nutrient management: Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) under supported commitments related to improved nutrient management		DAFM
<b>Impacts on water quality as a result of sectoral activities</b>  <b>Achieving Good ecological status by 2027 in line with WFD</b>	I.15 / C.39 Water quality (including, 1. Gross nutrient balance – nitrogen, 2. Gross nutrient balance – phosphorus and 3. Nitrates in groundwater. R.21 Protecting water quality: Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) under supported commitments for the quality of water bodies  R.21 Protecting water quality: Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) under supported commitments for the quality of water bodies R.33 Improving Natura 2000 management: Share of total Natura 2000 area under supported commitments Status of water bodies – compliance with the environmental objective under WFD and MSFD as appropriate		
<b>Climatic Factors and Air Quality</b>			
<b>Reduce GHG emissions</b>	R.14 Carbon storage in soils and biomass: Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) under supported commitments to reduce emissions or to maintain or enhance carbon storage (including permanent grassland, permanent crops with permanent green cover, agricultural land in wetland and peatland) GHG Annual recorded sectoral emission statistics I	GHG reporting (EPA) Fertiliser Register DAFM	DAFM



<b>Reduce ammonia emissions year on year under National Emissions Ceiling Directive, Ireland has an ammonia target of 107,500 tonnes in 2030.</b>	R.20 Improving air quality: Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) under supported commitments to reduce ammonia emission Total fertiliser use/application Chemical nitrogen use: This must be reduced to a target level of 350,000 tonnes by 2025 Cumulative increase in of organic soil rewetting per year [data source: DHLGH]. I.11 / C.40: Soil organic carbon in agricultural land		DAFM DHLGH
<b>Atmospheric concentrations of key agricultural pollutants</b>	GHG Annual recorded sectoral emission statistics I.10/ C.44 Greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture C.23: Livestock units C.24: Livestock density Biogenic methane reduction of a minimum of 10% by 2030; Reduction of ammonia emissions to below 107,500t by 2030; O.14: Number of hectares (excluding forestry) or number of other units covered by environmental or climate-related commitments going beyond mandatory requirements Annual average background concentrations of NOx, NMVOC, particulates and ammonia at locations recording these parameters. R.14 Carbon storage in soils and biomass: Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) under supported commitments to reduce emissions or to maintain or enhance carbon storage (including permanent grassland, permanent crops with permanent green cover, agricultural land in wetland and peatland) R.20 Improving air quality: Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) under supported commitments to reduce ammonia emission I.14/ C.47: Ammonia emissions from agriculture		EPA DAFM
<b>Landscape</b>			
<b>Loss of agricultural landscape character</b>	R.34: Preserving landscape features: Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) under supported commitments for managing landscape features, including hedgerows and trees		DAFM
<b>Loss of agricultural landscape connectivity</b>	O.31: Number of supported local development strategies (LEADER) or preparatory actions	DAFM 2021 Landscape Classification Typology GIS A landscape classification map of Ireland and its potential use in national land use monitoring - ScienceDirect	DAFM
<b>Loss of traditional /vernacular agricultural features</b>	Sustainable Farm plans-landscape measures R.34: Preserving landscape features: Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) under supported commitments for managing landscape features, including hedgerows and trees; Number of Catchment/landscape Cooperation Projects R.28: Environmental or climate-related performance through knowledge and innovation: Number of persons benefitting from advice, training, knowledge exchange, or participating in European Innovation Partnership (EIP) operational groups supported by the CAP related to environmental or climate-related performance O.1 Number of European Innovation Partnership (EIP) operational group projects		DAFM



<b>Cultural Heritage</b> <b>Loss of vernacular features</b> <b>Impact on setting of archaeological and built heritage features</b>	Eco scheme tree planting measures O.8: Number of hectares or livestock units benefitting from eco-schemes Uptake of Eco-scheme Space for Nature agricultural practice O.12: Number of hectares benefitting from support for areas facing natural or other specific constraints, including a breakdown per type of areas I.21/C.21: Agricultural land covered with landscape features Recognition of local landscape in marketing of foods/food production		
	Number of AECM farmers/EIP/Cooperation with archaeological measures and support by archaeologist	DAFM/DRCD Historic Environment datasets can be referred which can provide an important evidence base to assist in the assessment of transboundary cultural heritage effects and include recorded designated and non-designated heritage assets and are available at: <a href="https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/historic-environment-digitaldatasets">https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/historic-environment-digitaldatasets</a> or can be accessed via <a href="https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/services/historic-environment-map-viewer">https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/services/historic-environment-map-viewer</a> .	DAFM DRCD
<b>Adaptive reuse of farm and rural buildings</b>	R.38 LEADER coverage: Share of rural population covered by local development strategies O.31: Number of supported local development strategies (LEADER) or preparatory actions O.1 Number of European Innovation Partnership (EIP) operational group projects		DAFM
<b>Material Assets</b>			
<b>Improving energy efficiency at farm level (energy, fertiliser, water)</b>	EPA Smart Farming scheme numbers of updates. R.15 Renewable energy from agriculture, forestry and from other renewable sources: Supported investments in renewable energy production capacity, including bio-based (in MW) O.20: Number of supported on-farm productive investment operations or units R.16 Investments related to climate: Share of farms benefitting from CAP investment support contributing to climate change, mitigation, and adaptation, and to the production of renewable energy or biomaterials I.12/C.42: Sustainable production of renewable energy from agriculture and forestry C43: Energy use in agriculture, forestry, and food industry	SEIA data DAFM LULUCF reporting	DAFM
<b>Reducing waste (including hazardous)</b>	Availability of recycling schemes available to farmers and waste streams from farm activities.	SEIA data DAFM LULUCF reporting	DAFM

