

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT

SEA SCREENING REPORT FOR THE FIRST AMENDMENT TO IRELAND'S COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2027

Prepared for:

Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine



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Abstract: Fehily Timoney and Company is pleased to submit this SEA Screening Report to Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine for the first amendment to Ireland's Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan 2023-2027.

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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Background

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (the Department) has prepared the Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan 2023-2027 (herein referred to as the 'CSP' or the 'plan'). The plan came into effect on January 1st, 2023. The plan covers the whole of the Republic of Ireland and is national in scale.

The broad purpose of the plan is to support the development of the agriculture sector and rural communities in Ireland in line with the underpinning principles and aims of the EU Common Agricultural Policy.

The plan was subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process in accordance with the requirements of 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. An SEA Statement for the plan was prepared as part of the SEA process.

The Department now proposes making a first amendment to the plan. SEA Screening is required to determine whether a full SEA is required for the first amendment to the plan. This report documents the SEA Screening undertaken to identify the need for full SEA in this case.

1.2 Overview of the SEA Process

The SEA Directive – Directive 2001/42/EC on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment, requires that an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

The overarching objective of the SEA Directive is *'to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans....with a view to promoting sustainable development'*¹

SEA is a process for evaluating, at the earliest appropriate stage, the environmental consequences of implementing Plan or Programme (P/P) initiatives prepared by authorities at a national, regional or local level or which have been prepared for adoption through legislative means.

SEA is described within the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government's (2004) Guidelines for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities on the Implementation of SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) as the *'formal systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt the plan or programme'*.

¹ Implementation of SEA Directive (2001/42/EC): Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment – Guidelines for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2004)



The SEA process comprises the following steps:

- Screening – the process whereby a decision is made on whether a particular P/P, other than those for which SEA is mandatory, would be likely to have significant environmental effects, and would require SEA. This is the current stage of the SEA process to which this report relates.

If SEA is required following the Screening Determination, the following steps are necessary:

- Scoping – Scope and level of detail in the environmental assessment is decided upon, in consultation with the identified statutory bodies;
- Environmental Assessment - An assessment of the likely significant impacts on the environment as a result of the relevant P/P;
- Preparation of an Environmental Report;
- Consultation of the P/P and associated Environmental Report;
- Evaluation of the submission and observations made on the P/P and environmental report; and
- Provision of an SEA Statement, identifying how environmental considerations and consultation have been integrated into the Final P/P.

SEA is intended to provide the framework for influencing decision-making at an earlier stage when P/Ps – which give rise to individual projects – are being developed. It is noted that SEA should result in more sustainable development through the systematic appraisal of policy options.

1.3 Overview of the SEA Screening Process

The first step of the SEA process is to carry out SEA Screening to determine the requirement for SEA of a P/P.

The first stage in determining whether a P/P requires SEA is the carrying out of a 'Pre-screening Check' (also known as a 'Stage 1 Applicability'). This allows rapid screening-out of P/P that are clearly not going to have any environmental impact and screening-in of those that do require SEA. The second stage in determining whether a P/P requires SEA is known as 'Stage 2 Screening.' The purpose of this stage is to determine whether a P/P is likely to have significant effects on the environment and whether SEA must be carried out in conjunction with a P/P. The application of environmental significance criteria is important in determining whether an SEA is required. Annex II of Directive 2001/42/EC sets out the 'statutory' criteria that should be addressed when undertaking this stage. This process is typically undertaken following an 8-step approach Figure 1-1.

The first environmental significance criterion relates to the characteristics of the P/P, having regard to: the degree to which the P/P sets out a framework for other projects and activities; the influence of the P/P on other projects, plans or activities; the role of the plan for integrating environmental considerations to promote sustainable development; environmental issues of relevance to the P/P and the relevance of the P/P for the implementation of EU legislation on the environment.

The second environmental significance criterion refers to the characteristics of the effects and area likely to be affected, having regard to; the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects; the cumulative nature of the effects; the transboundary nature of the effects; the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to special natural characteristics or cultural heritage, exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values or intensive use; the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European or international protection status.



Figure 1-1 SEA Screening steps as per the EPA's Good Practice Guidance on SEA Screening

1.4 Legislative Context

The screening stage of SEA is primarily addressed through Article 2 and Article 3 of the SEA Directive and Annex II which sets out the considerations in relation to determining significant environmental effects.

Article 2(a) of the SEA Directive establishes two cumulative conditions which P/P must satisfy in order for the further elements of the SEA Directive to be applicable to them:

- They must have been prepared and/or adopted by an authority at national, regional or local level or prepared by an authority for adoption, through a legislative procedure, by a parliament or government; and
- They must be required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions.

If these conditions are not satisfied, the measure is not regarded as a P/P which comes within the scope of the SEA Directive.

Once a P/P has been determined to be within the scope of the SEA Directive, Article 3 sets out the criteria for determining which P/P require environmental assessment. Again, several conditions must be met. A P/P must (a) belong to the list of sectors and (b) set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive, or (c) require an Appropriate Assessment under the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).



Annex II of the SEA Directive presents the criteria for determining the likely significant effects referred to in Article 3(5) of the Directive. The significance of effects is determined with reference to the type and nature of the P/P, its position in the planning hierarchy and its influence on other P/P. It also has regard to the nature of the effects and the sensitivity of the receiving environment as well as the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects. Cumulative and transboundary issues must also be considered.

The SEA Directive is transposed into Irish legislation by the following:

- European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations (S.I. 435/2004)
- Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations (S.I. 436/2004). Both pieces of legislation were amended in 2011 through the following amendment regulations:
- European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Amendment Regulations (S.I. 200/2011)
- Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Amendment Regulations (S.I. 01/2011).

The criteria defined in Annex II of the SEA Directive has been transposed into national legislation via Schedule 1 of S.I. 435/2004.

This SEA Screening has been carried out in accordance with above legislation.

1.5 Relevant SEA Guidance

This SEA Screening has been carried out in accordance with and having appropriate regard to the following guidance documents:

- Good Practice Guidance on SEA Screening (EPA, 2021).
- Synthesis Report on Developing A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies For Plans And Programmes In Ireland (EPA, 2013).
- Synthesis Report on Developing A Strategic Environmental Assessment (Sea) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland (EPA, 2003).
- Implementation of SEA Directive (2001/42/EC): Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment – Guidelines for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities
- Implementation of Directive 2001/43 on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment (European Commission, ND).

1.6 Appropriate Assessment and relationship to SEA Screening

The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) requires an 'Appropriate Assessment' (AA) to be carried out where a plan or project is likely to have a significant impact on a European site. European sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

The first step in the process is to establish whether AA is required for the particular plan or project. This first step is referred to as 'AA Screening' and the purpose is to determine, on the basis of a preliminary assessment and objective criteria, whether a plan or project, alone and in combination with other plans or projects, could have significant effects on a European site in view of the site's conservation objectives.



Article 3(c) of the SEA Directive requires that an SEA is carried out on a P/P wherever such a P/P requires an AA under the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).

An AA Screening Report has also been prepared for proposed Amendment No. 1 to the CSP in accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). The Report concludes the following:

It is concluded that the proposed amendment No. 1 will not give rise to any adverse effects on designated European sites², alone or in combination with other plans or projects. Consequently, a Stage 2 AA is not required for the amendment.

This AA Screening Report will also accompany the amended CSP.

² Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be:

- a) no alternative solution available,
- b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the plan/programme/strategy/project etc. to proceed; and
- c) Adequate compensatory measures in place.



2. DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE CSP

2.1 Overview of the Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan 2023-2027

These amendments relate to Ireland's Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan 2023-2027 (CSP). The core legislative proposals were published by the EU Commission in June 2018, of which draft Regulation (COM 2018) 3921 sets out the principal proposals for mainstream CAP financial support of agriculture, farming and rural development. After extensive negotiations, the European Parliament, the Council of the EU, and the European Commission reached a political agreement in June 2021 and the Regulations were adopted and published.

Specifically, the rules on the CAP Strategic plan are set out in Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 establishing rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the common agricultural policy (CAP Strategic Plans) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1305/2013 and (EU) No 1307/2013 and other related legislation.

The strategic statement for the CAP Strategic Plan sets out the main expected achievements and interventions of the plan. The strategic aim of the plan is for it to underpin the sustainable development of Ireland's farming and food sector by supporting viable farm incomes and enhancing competitiveness, by strengthening the socio-economic fabric of rural areas, and by contributing to the achievement of environmental and climate objectives at national and EU levels.

A total budget of €9.8 billion will be provided for under CAP, with supports provided for: via the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) for Pillar I measures; via the European Union via the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and by the national Exchequer for Pillar II measures.

Supports will be provided for a wide range of measures to address the economic, environmental and social sustainability of the sector. The main supports include direct payments and sectoral interventions through Pillar 1 and rural development measures under Pillar 2 underpinned by the CAP Strategic Plan's green architecture. The mechanism for the delivery of direct payments will be the Basic Income Support for Sustainability (BISS) under Pillar I. This payment is designed to provide a direct income support to Irish farmers to underpin their continued sustainability and viability and to support farmers in their continued delivery of a secure food supply.

The green architecture of the CAP Strategic Plan establishes the mechanisms for the delivery of support that aims to align the continued delivery of a secure food supply with the environmental and climate action ambitions. The green architecture will operate across both pillars of CAP funding and will be implemented by three core elements, namely Conditionality; Pillar I Eco-schemes; and Pillar II climate/environment and animal welfare related interventions. Conditionality sets the base line requirements for farmers in receipt of CAP Payments. Consisting of Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs) and standards for the maintenance of land in Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAECs), Ireland proposes to implement a system of enhanced conditionality through the CSP.

Pillar I eco-schemes is a voluntary scheme that will strengthen the environment and climate outcomes achieved by Pillar I payments, by building on baseline improvements achieved through conditionality. Regulations require at least 25% of the Pillar I CAP budget to be devoted to Eco-Schemes. Ireland proposes to introduce an Eco-Scheme "for all farmers" with the objective being to maximise farmer participation to achieve climate and environmental improvements across all farmed lands.



Pillar II interventions represent voluntary environmentally focused interventions that aim to deliver significant long-term environmental improvement through participation by a significant number of farmers, with each making a strong improvement on their farm. This broad range of interventions will build on, and complement, achievements under Conditionality and Eco-Schemes.

2.2 Proposed Amendment No. 1

Most of the proposed amendments are text based or clerical corrections, some of the amendments also relate to text clarification to ensure the intended meaning of provisions are clearly understood. The remaining amendments are intended to provide additional data resources and/or align with higher order plans as well as ensuring the plan is pragmatic and implementable. A summary of the amendments is provided below - Table 2-1 - and these assessments should be read in conjunction with the amendment itself:

Table 2-1 Summary of the changes within Amendment No.1 to the Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan 2023-2027

Area	Summary of amendment
Section 2.3.3 Measures under the CAP Strategic Plan (Eligible Hectare)	Increased clarity / correction of a drafting error.
GAEC 8: Amendment to weighting factor under ASSAP	Remove the weighting / estimate process provided to the ASSAP areas and reflect the fact that Ireland can map these areas accurately.
GAEC 8	Stonewalls-This change is to ensure that traditional stonewalls made of rock / stones and which use traditional lime mortar are not excluded. Excluding such traditional stonewalls was not intended, and this change will ensure that all traditional stonewalls are accounted for appropriately. There is no risk in making this correction to align with our original intention.
Dairy Beef Welfare Scheme	Updated to allow for 3 star DBI bull to be used. Indicators changed to account for 2024 start date.
ACRES Genetic Resources Template	Update to indicators-R.25 added to the target plan since the support under ACRES GR will be granted to animals. Rectified technical error in Planned Unit Amounts.
ACRES Genetic Resources Template	Correction to the protection of Rare Breeds action so that it's clearer that the payment is per maternal livestock unit.
ACRES General	Clerical update-Correction to the protection of Rare Breeds action so that it is clearer that the payment is per maternal livestock unit.
GAEC 5 - Nitrates Action	GAEC 5 to align with the Nitrates Action Programme 2022-2025 Tillage management, reducing the risk of soil degradation and erosion, including consideration of the slope gradient. This change is to ensure alignment with the Nitrates Action Programme 2022-2025, focusing the GAEC on the main nitrates loss counties, and providing slightly additional flexibility to farmers to implement the GAEC in the most environmentally advantageous way (e.g. a slight increase in the cultivation period from 7 to 10 days to account for weather).



Area	Summary of amendment
AECMTR	Clerical update- A number of corrections have been added to Section 53AECMTR. This is where the name of the national scheme has now been decided and so phrases like "name to inserted" have been replaced with the scheme name (ACRES / ACRES Training etc).
Section 3.4	Correction to Section 3.4 Overview as regards the aim of fairer distribution and more effective and efficient targeting of income support: There was an incorrect reference made to table 6 in this section, it should have referred to table 4. This correction fixes that
Annex 7.3 IACS EAFRD	Annex 7.3 IACS EAFRD updated based on further refinements to controls and penalties across schemes.
Annex 7.3 IACS EAGF	Annex 7.3 IACS EAFRD updated based on further refinements to controls and penalties across schemes.
Section 7.3.1.1.4	The section has been updated to reflect the latest information on the development of Ireland's AMS, and to remove defunct text regarding Ireland's position in the development of draft secondary legislation that has now been adopted.
Section 7.2	Changed "Administrative Article 48 checks are also recorded and available for control purposes" to "Administrative checks are also recorded and available for control purposes" for clarity.
Sections 7.1 and 7.4.4	Clerical Update-a number of update / additions to email addresses for the relevant competent control bodies responsible for the checks of conditionality practices, statutory management requirements.
Section 3.1.3	Clerical update- Deleted the characters "[WJ1]" from section 3.1.3 for clarity / removal of an unnecessary reference.
F and V Producer Organisations	Indicators updated to reflect the Operational Programmes
F and V Producer organisations	Clerical update.
GAEC 7	GAEC 7 implementation of derogation for 2023. Notice added to the CSP that Ireland has availed of the derogation under Commission Implementing Regulation 2022/1317.
Knowledge Transfer	Clerical update- Simplification to language used in eligibility criteria for KT participants
Link for SEA Report in Annex 1	Clerical update.
Link for Ex ante Report in Annex I	Clerical update.
Organic Farming Scheme	Clerical update.
Suckler Carbon Efficiency Programme	Updated eligibility criteria to be clearer that the requirement is to be a member of Bord Bia Quality Assurance Scheme (SBLAS) by 16 October 2023 and retain this status for the duration of your participation in the scheme.
Suckler Carbon Efficiency Programme	Increase number of reference animals from 70% of animals to 80% of eligible cow-calf pairs that calve annually to provide for better data. Changed based on industry feedback.
Suckler Carbon Efficiency Programme	Clerical update- The correction has been made to the incorrect listing of output in hectares. It has changed it from 256,666 ha to 266,666 ha.



Area	Summary of amendment
Sheep Improvement Scheme	Clerical update.
Various tables in the CSP	Clerical update.
Young Farmer (Section 4.2.1.4)	Clerical update.
CIS-YF paragraph in Section 2.1.SO1.9	An additional reference has been added into the paragraph so that it is clearer when the paragraph is referring to a financial year or a calendar year.
LEADER	Correction of a technical error-correction to a technical drafting error in 53LEADER Section 13 where a row in a table was inadvertently and mistakenly filled in with detail that belonged to another row. This correction deletes the offending material.
Correction to Section 4.2.1.3	The text on convergence changed to adjust payment entitlement values in "four equal steps where financially possible".
Correction to Indicator C.19	Target value for R.33 changed from 80.14% to 52.48% because of the correction of the Indicator C.19 by the European Commission.
Clerical update to financial figures in other programmes	The allocation for ERDF, Interreg, JTF, ESF+ programmes referenced in the CSP was updated to match with the latest figures.
Clerical updates to NAP and RBMP	References to the fourth review of the NAP and the draft RBMP were corrected (i.e., it is the fifth review, and the RBMP is no longer draft).

2.3 Relationship with other Relevant Plans and Programmes

The Proposed Amendment must comply with the CSP and relevant higher-level strategic actions and may, in turn, guide lower-level strategic actions. The Proposed Amendment is subject to a number of high-level environmental protection policies and objectives with which it must comply, the Strategic Environmental Objectives in Section 6 of the CSP SEA Environmental Report and the mitigation measures within the Section 9 of the document and Section 6 of the Natura Impact Report (NIR). The NIR for the initial CSP concluded the following:

The CAP Strategic Plan does not indicate the precise location of any land use measures to be implemented under the Plan but is underpinned by an approach of the "right measure for the right place". This approach along with the mitigation measures and recommendations outlined in Section 6 that will be adhered to throughout the lifetime of the Strategic Plan will provide sufficient safeguards that will not have adverse effects on the integrity of any European Sites.

Therefore, the amendment must be considered in relation to the current CSP which has already been subject to SEA and AA considerations. All amendments are considered therefore in the context of potential additional sources for impacts/effects which were not previously considered.



3. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SCREENING

This section of the report documents the SEA Screening undertaken.

Stage 1 Applicability Analysis was undertaken initially. This analysis is detailed in Section 3.1 of this report (Table 3-1 and 3-2).

Stage 2 Screening Analysis was then undertaken. This analysis is detailed in Section 3.2 of this report (Table 3-3, 3-4 and 3-5).

3.1 Stage 1 - SEA Applicability Analysis

Table 3-1 SEA Applicability Analysis

SEA Applicability Analysis	
Status of Plan/Programme Maker	
Is the P/P prepared and/or adopted by an authority at national, regional or local level or prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government?	<p>The Guidance Document has been prepared on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. A competent authority for the purpose of SEA is defined under S.I. 435 of 2004 as <i>'the authority which is, or the authorities which are jointly, responsible for the preparation of a plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme.'</i></p> <p>As such the Guidance Document can be considered a document prepared by an 'authority' at a national level.</p>
Is the P/P required by legislative, regulatory, or administrative provisions?	<p>The CSP was required under the following European Union Regulations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 establishing rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the common agricultural policy (CAP Strategic Plans) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1305/2013 and (EU) No 1307/2013 <p>The purpose of the first amendment to the CSP is to improve clarity, make clerical corrections and to give better effect to the plan.</p> <p>GAEC 5 of the CSP is being changed to ensure alignment with the Nitrates Action Programme 2022-2025, which is given effect by the European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2022 (S.I. No. 113 of 2022).</p> <p>Having regard to the foregoing, the first amendment to the CSP can be considered to be required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions.</p>



SEA Applicability Analysis	
Nature of the Plan/Programme	
Is the P/P prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use?	The CSP and its first amendment have been prepared for the agriculture sector.
Does the P/P provide a framework for the development consent for projects listed in the EIA Directive?	Neither CSP nor its first amendment provide a framework for development consent
Is the P/P likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site which leads to a requirement for Article 6 or 7 assessments?	AA Screening Conclusion text here: <i>It is concluded that the proposed amendment No. 1 will not give rise to any adverse effects on designated European sites³, alone or in combination with other plans or projects. Consequently, a Stage 2 AA is not required for the amendment.</i>
Exemptions	
Is the sole purpose of the P/P to serve national defence or civil emergency or is it a financial/budget P/P or is it co-financed by the current SF/RDF programme?	No, for all questions.

³ Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be:

- a) no alternative solution available,
- b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the plan/programme/strategy/project etc. to proceed; and
- c) Adequate compensatory measures in place.



Table 3-2 Summary of SEA Applicability Analysis

Summary of SEA Applicability Analysis	
Applicability Analysis Criterion	Outcome (Yes or No)
Is the P/P prepared and/or adopted by an authority at national, regional or local level or prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government?	Yes
Is the P/P required by legislative, regulatory, or administrative provisions?	Yes
Is the P/P prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use?	Yes
Does the P/P provide a framework for the development consent for projects listed in the EIA Directive?	No
Is the P/P likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site which leads to a requirement for Article 6 or 7 assessments?	No
Is the sole purpose of the P/P to serve national defence or civil emergency or is it a financial/budget P/P or is it co-financed by the current SF/RDF programme?	No
Conclusion	
Having regard to the SEA Screening steps identified by the EPA guidance in Figure 1-1, Stage 2 SEA Screening Analysis is required to whether the first amendment to the CSP is likely to have significant effects on the environment and whether SEA must be carried out in conjunction with the proposed amendment for this reason.	



3.2 Stage 2 - SEA Screening Analysis

To inform the Stage 2 SEA Screening Analysis, an evaluation of the potential environmental implications of each proposed amendment to the CSP has been carried out. This evaluation is presented in Table 3-3.

Table 3-3 Evaluation of Potential Environmental Implications of each Proposed Amendment to the CSP

Area	Summary of amendment	Evaluation of Potential Environmental Implications of each Proposed Amendment to the CSP
Section 2.3.3 Measures under the CAP Strategic Plan (Eligible Hectare)	Increased clarity / correction of a drafting error.	Clerical amendment only.
GAEC 8: Amendment to weighting factor under ASSAP	Remove the weighting / estimate process provided to the ASSAP areas and reflect the fact that Ireland can map these areas accurately.	The process for estimating ASSAP areas (e.g., riparian zones) has now been removed to reflect the fact that these areas can now be accurately mapped. This amendment does not introduce any sources of additional environmental impacts not previously considered.
GAEC 8	Stonewalls-This change is to ensure that traditional stonewalls made of rock / stones and which use traditional lime mortar are not excluded. Excluding such traditional stonewalls was not intended, and this change will ensure that all traditional stonewalls are accounted for appropriately. There is no risk in making this correction to align with our original intention.	GAEC 8 has been updated to clarify that traditional stone walls are not excluded from the definition of stone walls. Excluding traditional stone walls was not intended. This change adds clarity and supports the implementation of GAEC 8. It does not introduce any sources of additional environmental impacts not previously considered.
Dairy Beef Welfare Scheme	Updated to allow for 3 star DBI bull to be used. Indicators changed to account for 2024 start date.	The Dairy Beef Welfare Scheme has been updated to allow for the inclusion of 3 star DBI bulls. DBW indicators have been changed to account for a 2024 start date. This supports the implementation of the scheme but does not materially change the scheme in a manner that introduces additional environmental impacts not previously considered.



Area	Summary of amendment	Evaluation of Potential Environmental Implications of each Proposed Amendment to the CSP
ACRES Genetic Resources Template	Update to indicators-R.25 added to the target plan since the support under ACRES GR will be granted to animals. Rectified technical error in Planned Unit Amounts.	This change will support the implementation of the ACRES Generic Resource measures which are intended to 'Contribute to halting and reversing biodiversity loss, enhance ecosystem services and preserve habitats and landscapes.' The change also corrects a technical error. It does not introduce any sources of additional environmental impacts not previously considered.
ACRES Genetic Resources Template	Correction to the protection of Rare Breeds action so that it's clearer that the payment is per maternal livestock unit.	Clerical amendment only.
ACRES General	Clerical update-Correction to the protection of Rare Breeds action so that it is clearer that the payment is per maternal livestock unit.	Clerical amendment only.
GAEC 5 - Nitrates Action	GAEC 5 to align with the Nitrates Action Programme 2022-2025 Tillage management, reducing the risk of soil degradation and erosion, including consideration of the slope gradient. This change is to ensure alignment with the Nitrates Action Programme 2022-2025, focusing the GAEC on the main nitrates loss counties, and providing slightly additional flexibility to farmers to implement the GAEC in the most environmentally advantageous way (e.g. a slight increase in the cultivation period from 7 to 10 days to account for weather). The Department considers it important that farmers have full clarity in a timely fashion. Farmers have already been advised of the changes made to the Nitrates Action Programme and that our proposed implementation of GAEC 5 will align with it.	This change ensures GAEC 5 aligns with and better supports the Nitrates Action Programme 2022 - 2025. The Nitrates Action Programme is designed to protect surface waters and groundwater. The change does not introduce any sources of additional environmental impact not previously considered.
AECMTR	Clerical update- A number of corrections have been added to Section 53AECMTR. This is where the name of the national scheme has now been decided and so phrases like "name to inserted" have been replaced with the scheme name (ACRES / ACRES Training etc).	Clerical amendment only.



Area	Summary of amendment	Evaluation of Potential Environmental Implications of each Proposed Amendment to the CSP
Section 3.4	Correction to Section 3.4 Overview as regards the aim of fairer distribution and more effective and efficient targeting of income support: There was an incorrect reference made to table 6 in this section, it should have referred to table 4. This correction fixes that	Clerical amendment only.
Annex 7.3 IACS EAFRD	Annex 7.3 IACS EAFRD updated based on further refinements to controls and penalties across schemes.	This update makes small changes to the administrative controls and penalties defined in the 'Governance and Coordination System' section of the plan. It does not introduce any sources of additional environmental impacts not previously considered.
Annex 7.3 IACS EAGF	Annex 7.3 IACS EAFRD updated based on further refinements to controls and penalties across schemes.	This update makes small changes to the administrative controls and penalties defined in the 'Governance and Coordination System' section of the plan. It does not introduce any sources of additional environmental impacts not previously considered.
Section 7.3.1.1.4	The section has been updated to reflect the latest information on the development of Ireland's AMS, and to remove defunct text regarding Ireland's position in the development of draft secondary legislation that has now been adopted.	This change adds further detail on Ireland's Area Monitoring System. It does not alter the nature, scope or purpose of the Area Monitoring System. It does not introduce any sources of additional environmental impacts not previously considered.
Section 7.2	Changed "Administrative Article 48 checks are also recorded and available for control purposes" to "Administrative checks are also recorded and available for control purposes" for clarity.	Clerical amendment only.
Sections 7.1 and 7.4.4	Clerical Update-a number of update / additions to email addresses for the relevant competent control bodies responsible for the checks of conditionality practices, statutory management requirements.	Clerical amendment only.
ASSAP	Mapping of ASSAP to be done accurately, no need to apply a weighting and estimate. CSP updated to reflect this.	The process for estimating ASSAP areas (e.g. Riparian zones) has now been removed to reflect the fact that these areas can now be accurately mapped. This amendment does not introduce any sources of additional environmental impacts not previously considered.
Section 3.1.3	Clerical update- Deleted the characters "[WJ1]" from section 3.1.3 for clarity / removal of an unnecessary reference.	Clerical amendment only.



Area	Summary of amendment	Evaluation of Potential Environmental Implications of each Proposed Amendment to the CSP
F and V Producer Organisations	Indicators updated to reflect the Operational Programmes – significant amount of work involved across multiple interventions.	<p>Various targets and results indicators for the Fruit & Vegetable Producer Organisation Support Scheme have been updated. Targets and indicators relating to farmer training, improved financial risk management measures and farm modernization and improvements have been updated.</p> <p>The target for investments related to climate change has been increased slightly. The target has been increased for 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. These more ambitious targets have support bringing about environmental and climate change improvements in the sector.</p> <p>The target for renewable energy generation for agriculture from supported investments in renewable energy production capacity has increased (from 25.54 MW to 39.4 MW).</p> <p>These changes do not introduce any sources of additional environmental impact not previously considered or mitigated against in the CSP. Mitigation Measures No. 6 defined in the SEA Statement for the CSP will ensure that additional renewable energy development promoted by this objective/target will be subject to suitable statutory environmental assessment processes embedded in Ireland's development planning system.</p>
GAEC 7	GAEC 7 implementation of derogation for 2023. Notice added to the CSP that Ireland has availed of the derogation under Commission Implementing Regulation 2022/1317.	<p>A notice that Ireland has availed of the derogation under Commission Implementing Regulation 2022/1317 for the year 2023 has now been included. This derogation gives farmers greater flexibility to make use of their available arable land for food production due to need for the production capacity as a result of the conflict in Ukraine. This derogation is limited to 2023.</p> <p>This change temporarily limits the objectives of GAEC 7 but does not introduce any additional sources of environmental impacts.</p>



Area	Summary of amendment	Evaluation of Potential Environmental Implications of each Proposed Amendment to the CSP
Knowledge Transfer	Clerical update- Simplification to language used in eligibility criteria for KT participants	Clerical amendment only.
Link for SEA Report in Annex 1	Clerical update.	Clerical amendment only.
Link for Ex ante Report in Annex I	Clerical update.	Clerical amendment only.
Organic Farming Scheme	Clerical update.	Clerical amendment only.
Suckler Carbon Efficiency Programme	Updated eligibility criteria to be clearer that the requirement is to be a member of Bord Bia Quality Assurance Scheme (SBLAS) by 16 October 2023 and retain this status for the duration of your participation in the scheme.	This change supports the implementation of the Suckler Carbon Efficiency programme. It does not introduce any additional sources of environmental impacts.
Suckler Carbon Efficiency Programme	Increase number of reference animals from 70% of animals to 80% of eligible cow-calf pairs that calve annually to provide for better data. Changed based on industry feedback.	This change supports the implementation of the Suckler Carbon Efficiency programme. It does not introduce any additional sources of environmental impacts.
Suckler Carbon Efficiency Programme	Clerical update- The correction has been made to the incorrect listing of output in hectares. It has changed it from 256,666 ha to 266,666 ha.	Clerical amendment only.
Sheep Improvement Scheme	Clerical update.	Clerical amendment only.
Various tables in the CSP	Clerical update.	Clerical amendment only.
Young Farmer (Section 4.2.1.4)	Clerical update.	Clerical amendment only.
CIS-YF paragraph in Section 2.1.SO1.9	An additional reference has been added into the paragraph so that it is clearer when the paragraph is referring to a financial year or a calendar year.	Clerical amendment only.



Area	Summary of amendment	Evaluation of Potential Environmental Implications of each Proposed Amendment to the CSP
LEADER	Correction of a technical error-correction to a technical drafting error in 53LEADER Section 13 where a row in a table was inadvertently and mistakenly filled in with detail that belonged to another row. This correction deletes the offending material.	Clerical amendment only.
Correction to Section 4.2.1.3	The text on convergence changed to adjust payment entitlement values in "four equal steps where financially possible".	Clerical amendment only.
Correction to Indicator C.19	Target value for R.33 changed from 80.14% to 52.48% because of the correction of the Indicator C.19 by the European Commission	Clerical amendment only.
Clerical update to financial figures in other programmes	The allocation for ERDF, Interreg, JTF, ESF+ programmes referenced in the CSP was updated to match with the latest figures.	Clerical amendment only.
Clerical updates to NAP and RBMP	References to the fourth review of the NAP and the draft RBMP were corrected (i.e., it is the fifth review, and the RBMP is no longer draft).	Clerical amendment only.



Table 3-4 Criteria for Determining the Likely Significance of Environmental Effects - Characteristics of the Plan

Potential Significant Effects	
Characteristics of the plan or programme having regard, in particular to:	
The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	<p>The proposed amendments do not set out a development control related framework for projects or activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.</p> <p>The amendments will not result in the occurrence of any significant environmental effects in this regard.</p>
The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	<p>The first amendments generally have a negligible influence on other plans or programmes. They do support the achievement of measures and objectives set out in the Nitrates Action Programme 2022 - 2025 and the National River Basin Management Plan as examples.</p> <p>The amendments will not result in the occurrence of any significant environmental effects in this regard.</p>
The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	<p>Many of the measures contained in the plan are for the purpose of supporting environmental and climate change related improvements in the agricultural sector. It contains measures that will help to achieve significant improvements in the areas of biodiversity and water quality, as well as contributing to national and EU climate and environmental targets, including through increased sequestration and carbon removal.</p> <p>The first amendments to the plan are broadly intended to add clarity and give better effect to the plan. Some of the proposed amendments relate to Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAEC) defined in the plan, which are for the purpose of improving environmental performance in the agriculture sector.</p> <p>The amendments will not result in the occurrence of any significant environmental effects.</p>
Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	<p>The first amendments are broadly intended to add clarity and give better effect to the plan. They do not give rise to any environmental problems not previously considered. The amendments will not result in the occurrence of any significant environmental effects.</p>
The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g., plans linked to waste-management or water protection)	<p>The first amendments to the plan do not have the express purpose of facilitating the adoption of any other environmental legislation. They will broadly support the achievement of principles and policies of various pieces of legislation, including relating to habitats, water quality and environmental protection.</p> <p>The amendments will not result in the occurrence of any significant environmental effects.</p>



Table 3-5 Criteria for Determining Potential for Significant Effects - Characteristics of the Effects

Potential for Significant Effects	
Characteristics of the Effects and the Area likely to be affected, having regard in particular to:	
The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	<p>The first amendments to the CSP will not result in the occurrence of any additional environmental impacts not previously considered or mitigated against in the plan.</p> <p>The amendments will not create any cumulative or transboundary environmental impacts.</p> <p>They will not create any risks to human health or the environment.</p> <p>They will not have any environmental effect that will affect the sensitivity of the receiving environment or result in the exceedance of any prescribed Environmental Quality Standards.</p> <p>They will not result in an intensive land use not previously considered.</p> <p>They will not give risk to any significant landscape related impacts not previously considered in the SEA completed for the CSP.</p>
The cumulative nature of the effects	
The transboundary nature of the effects	
The risks to human health or the environment (e.g., due to accidents)	
The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	
The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensive land-use 	
The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status	



Table 3-6 **Summary of SEA Screening Analysis**

Summary of SEA Screening Analysis
Having regard to the evaluation undertaken in Table 3-3 and the Stage 2 Screening Analysis undertaken in Table 3-4 and 3-5, it is concluded that the first amendments to the CSP will not result in the occurrence of any additional environmental impacts not previously considered or mitigated against in the plan.



4. CONCLUSIONS

SEA Screening was carried out to determine the need for a SEA for the Department's first amendment to the CSP. It has been concluded, based on the pre-screening check, and review against the environmental significance criteria as set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive, that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

The principal reason for this is that the proposed amendments are either of a clerical nature, are for providing additional clarity, or are for giving better effect to the plan, having regard to the intention of the measures set out in the plan. They do not introduce any potential environmental effects that have not already been considered in the existing SEA/AA processes undertaken for the CSP.



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