

AA SCREENING REPORT

IN SUPPORT OF

SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

OF

IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST SIGNAGE PLAN

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF
ARTICLE 6(3) OF THE EU HABITATS DIRECTIVE

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Section 1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Fáilte Ireland has prepared a Signage Plan for the "Ireland's Ancient East" brand.

This is the Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report in support of screening for AA of the Signage Plan in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive¹. This report is divided into the following three sections:

- Section 1 - Introduction
- Section 2 - Stage 1 Screening
- Section 3 - Conclusions

1.2 Legislative Context

The Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, better known as "The Habitats Directive", provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Articles 3 to 9 provide the legislative means to protect habitats and species of Community interest through the establishment and conservation of an EU-wide network of sites known as Natura 2000. These are candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSACs) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (Directive 2009/147/EC - codified version of Directive 79/409/EEC as amended), hereafter referred to as European sites.

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect Natura 2000 sites. Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for AA:

"Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [Natura 2000] site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subjected to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.

If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the [Natura 2000] site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature, Member States shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted.

Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest."

These requirements are implemented in the Republic of Ireland by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011. These Regulations consolidate the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997 to 2005 and the European Communities (Birds and Natural

¹ Directive 92/43/EEC

Habitats) (Control of Recreational Activities) Regulations 2010, as well as addressing transposition failures identified in judgments of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU)².

1.3 Stages of Appropriate Assessment

This AA Screening Report has been prepared in accordance with the following guidance:

- *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidance for Planning Authorities.* Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010.
- *Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC,* European Commission Environment DG, 2002.
- *Managing Natura 2000 sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC:* European Commission, 2000

AA comprises up to four stages:

Stage One: Screening

The process which identifies the likely impacts upon a European site of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant.

Stage Two: Appropriate Assessment

The consideration of the impact on the integrity of the European site of the project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site's structure and function and its conservation objectives. Additionally, where there are adverse impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of those impacts.

Stage Three: Assessment of Alternative Solutions

The process which examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the European site.

Stage Four: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain

An assessment of compensatory measures where, in the light of an assessment of imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI), it is deemed that the project or plan should proceed.

The Habitats Directive promotes a hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation and compensatory measures. First, the plan should aim to avoid any impacts on European sites by identifying possible impacts early in the plan-making process and writing the plan in order to avoid such impacts. Second, mitigation measures should be applied, if necessary, during the AA process to the point where no adverse impacts on the site(s) remain. If the plan is still likely to result in impacts on European sites, and no further practicable mitigation is possible, then it must be rejected. If no alternative solutions are identified and the plan is required for imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI test) under Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, then compensation measures are required for any remaining adverse effect. In the case of this AA Screening Report, it is found that the Plan only requires Stage 1 AA Screening.

² Notably cases C-418/04 and C-183/05, in respect of failure to transpose elements of the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive into Irish law.

Section 2 Stage 1 Screening

2.1 Description of the Signage Plan

Fáilte Ireland are implementing a marketing Strategy entitled "Ireland's Ancient East".

The Ireland's Ancient East (IAE) brand is rooted in rich history and a diverse range of cultural heritage experiences that are particularly prevalent in the East and South of the country (counties Carlow, Cavan, Cork, Kildare, Kilkenny, Laois, Longford, Louth, Meath, Monaghan, Offaly, Tipperary, Waterford, Westmeath, Wexford and Wicklow)

The IAE Strategy provides a brand but does not form policy on land use/infrastructural development and is part of the ongoing promotion of tourism in Ireland which has been active for many years. The first promotion of Irish tourism is generally credited to Thomas 4th Viscount Kenmare who began to promote Killarney and its environs in the 1750s. Touring guides to Ireland date to the late 18th century³ and large-scale touring in Ireland dates back to the latter part of the 19th century.

In order to help bring the brand to life on the ground, Fáilte Ireland have prepared a Signage Plan.

The signage plan includes details of the following:

- Details for branded IAE orientation signage at key attractions in IAE. Under the plan these signs will be installed at 83 locations across IAE initially, with signs to be installed at up to 22 locations subsequently. All locations are detailed in Appendix I to the Signage Plan. Signs will not be erected within SACs or SPAs.
- Details for upgrades to existing current county boundary signage on motorway, national and regional road networks to incorporate a branded plate with the IAE logo.

Fáilte Ireland will design and produce the signage and make it available to developers (local authorities and the Office of Public Works) who may decide to install new signage or upgrade existing signage, subject to the conditions designed into the Signage Plan.

With regard to works related to the signage, the developers are required to comply with the relevant legislative provisions in relation to AA screening. AA screening must be undertaken in advance of proposed developments by the developers.

[Note that: A local authority is unlikely to carry out an AA of their own development as the competent authority in such instances is likely to be An Bord Pleanála. A local authority must screen proposed developments for AA to determine whether a Section 177AE application (under the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended) to An Bord Pleanála is required. If proposals are screened out then planning exemptions are not lost. If a Stage 2 AA is required then planning exemptions are lost and planning permission must be sought. If a local authority is applying for the permission and Stage 2 AA is required, then the application must go to An Bord Pleanála. Developments or works by other groups or individuals may require planning permission or, if not, may require Ministerial consent in European sites. Local authorities are likely to be responsible for deciding whether there are restrictions on exemptions in the case of exempted development by a group or individual.]

The Signage Plan includes a number of measures which developers are required to comply with in order to be issued with signage and associated grants. Such measures will in some cases overlap with and in some cases will be in addition to both the requirements of environmental and planning legislation and

³ *A Tour in Ireland 1776-1779* Arthur Young.

the provisions contained within various plans and programmes including the various County Development Plans.

Overarching Ecological Measures from the Signage Plan are detailed on Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Overarching Ecological Measures from the Signage Plan

Title	Requirement ⁴
<p>Protection of Biodiversity including Natura 2000 Network</p>	<p>The developer shall contribute, as appropriate, towards the protection of designated ecological sites including candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs); Ramsar Sites; Salmonid Waters; Shellfish Waters; Freshwater Pearl Mussel catchments; Flora Protection Order sites; Wildlife Sites (including Nature Reserves); certain entries to the Water Framework Directive Register of Protected Areas; Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs); Wildfowl Sanctuaries (see S.I. 192 of 1979) ; and Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).</p> <p>The developer shall demonstrate compliance with relevant EU Environmental Directives and applicable National Legislation, Policies, Plans and Guidelines, including the following and any updated/superseding documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU Directives, including the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC, as amended)⁵, the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC)⁶, the Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC)⁷, the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (85/337/EEC, as amended), the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC). • National legislation, including the Wildlife Act 1976⁸, the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1989 (SI No. 349 of 1989) (as amended), the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000, the European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (as amended), the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011), the European Communities (Environmental Liability) Regulations 2008⁹ and the Flora Protection Order 1999. • Catchment and water resource management Plans, including River Basin District Management Plans 2009-2015 (including any superseding versions of same). • Biodiversity Plans and guidelines, including Actions for Biodiversity 2011-2016: Ireland’s 2nd National Biodiversity Plan (including any superseding version of same).
<p>Appropriate Assessment</p>	<p>Decision making processes will include project level Appropriate Assessment (AA) as appropriate. Proposals for development must be screened for the need to undertake AA as per the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (Part 5, Section 42).</p> <p>[Note that: A local authority is unlikely to carry out an AA of their own development as the competent authority in such instances is likely to be An Bord Pleanála. A local authority must screen proposed developments for AA to determine whether a Section 177AE application to An Bord Pleanála is required. If proposals are screened out then planning exemptions are not lost. If a Stage 2 AA is required then planning exemptions are lost and planning permission must be sought¹⁰. If a local authority is applying for the permission and Stage 2 AA is required, then the application must go to An Bord Pleanála.]</p> <p>A plan or project will only be authorised after the competent authority has ascertained, based on scientific evidence, Screening for Appropriate Assessment, and a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment where necessary, that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Plan or project will not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary effects on the integrity of any European site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects); or 2. The Plan or project will have significant adverse effects on the integrity of any European site (that does not host a priority natural habitat type/and or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all

⁴ The provisions listed under this column are the requirements which the developers will have to comply with in order to get funding.

⁵ Including Annex I habitats, Annex II species and their habitats and Annex IV species and their breeding sites and resting places (wherever they occur). Note that the NPWS provide sensitive areas mapping for Freshwater Pearl Mussels which are listed under Annex II of the Directive.

⁶ Including Annex I species and other regularly occurring migratory species, and their habitats (wherever they occur).

⁷ Including protected species and natural habitats.

⁸ Including species of flora and fauna and their key habitats.

⁹ Including protected species and natural habitats.

¹⁰ *As per Part I, Section 4 (4) of the Planning Act 2000 as amended states that [Notwithstanding paragraphs (a), (i), (ia) and (l) of subsection (1) and any regulations under subsection (2)]: development shall not be exempted development if an environmental impact assessment or an appropriate assessment of the development is required.*

	<p>compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000; or</p> <p>3. The Plan or project will have a significant adverse effect on the integrity of any European site (that hosts a natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons for overriding public interest, restricted to reasons of human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000.</p> <p>The methodology followed by the Appropriate Assessment should follow, as relevant and appropriate, that outlined in DEHLG (2009) <i>Appropriate Assessment of Plans & Projects - Guidance for Planning Authorities</i>.</p>
Protection of Natura 2000 Sites	No projects giving rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on Natura 2000 sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall be permitted on the basis of the Signage Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects ¹¹).
NPWS & Integrated Management Plans	<p>Regarding, integrated management plans, Article 6(1) of the Habitats Directive requires that Member States establish the necessary conservation measures for Special Area of Conservation involving, if need be, appropriate management plans specifically designed for the sites or integrated into other development plans. The NPWS's current priority is to identify site specific conservation objectives; management plans may be considered after this is done.</p> <p>Where Integrated Management Plans are being prepared for Natura sites (or parts thereof), Fáilte Ireland and developers shall engage with the National Parks and Wildlife Service in order to ensure that plans are fully integrated with the Signage Plan and other plans and programmes, with the intention that such plans are practical, achievable and sustainable and have regard to all relevant ecological, cultural, social and economic considerations and with special regard to local communities.</p>
Coastal Zone Management	Developers shall demonstrate that any works in coastal zones will be undertaken in accordance with best practice and developers shall, as appropriate: support measures to protect the coast, the coastal edge and coastal habitats; and facilitate an Integrated Coastal Zone Management approach to ensure the conservation, management and protection of man-made and natural resources of the coastal zone.
Biodiversity and Ecological Networks	Developers shall demonstrate, as appropriate, protection and enhancement of biodiversity and ecological connectivity, including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, semi-natural grasslands, rivers, streams, natural springs, wetlands, geological and geo-morphological systems, other landscape features and associated wildlife where these form part of the ecological network and/or may be considered as ecological corridors or stepping stones in the context of Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.
Protection of Riparian Zone and Waterbodies and Watercourses	Developers shall demonstrate that waterbodies and watercourses are protected from inappropriate development, including rivers, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains. This will include protection buffers in riverine, wetland and coastal areas, as appropriate.
Non-Designated Sites	Developers shall demonstrate the appropriate protection of non-designated habitats and landscapes and to conserve the biological diversity.
Non-native invasive species	Developers shall support, as appropriate, the National Parks and Wildlife Service's efforts to seek to control the spread of non-native invasive species on land and water.

¹¹ Except as provided for in Section 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be:

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

Specific Ecological Control Measures from the Signage Plan are detailed on Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Specific Ecological Control Measures from the Signage Plan

No.	Specific Ecological Control Measure to be applied where relevant
ECM1	<p>All waste material shall be segregated and removed to prevent contamination, stored appropriately and covered where required. Removal of waste materials from site shall be undertaken by an approved contractor for treatment/disposal.</p> <p>Hazardous waste material shall be stored separately from other inert waste materials and kept covered in an appropriate area/container(s) to ensure that the material does not inadvertently enter any existing surface water drainage network materials. The hazardous waste materials shall be removed from site by an approved contractor for treatment at a licenced facility.</p> <p>Particular care shall be taken in the removal of stockpiles of material such as gravel and chippings. (Such stockpiles are frequently sources of non-native invasive plants, such as Japanese knotweed). Disposal of contaminated material may require transport to an approved, licensed facility.</p>
ECM2	<p>Prior to removal, all vegetation shall be free of non-native invasive species, such as Japanese knotweed. Should any such species be encountered, the area shall be treated as directed by expert advice on the management of invasive species.</p>
ECM3	<p>Works involving the removal or clearing of vegetation that would have any impacts on nesting birds shall be undertaken outside the bird nesting season (i.e. outside the period 1st March to 31st August).</p> <p>In addition, the possible presence of roosting bats shall be considered prior to the undertaking any works that may disturb the roosts.</p>
ECM4	<p>Should they be required, all hazardous substances, such as fuels, oils, cement and concrete products, shall be: stored on-site in a secure, dry and contained area and isolated from drainage connections to any existing surface water drainage network; and used in a manner that ensures that contamination of other materials does not occur and that they do not inadvertently enter any existing surface water drainage network.</p>
ECM5	<p>Where possible, machinery shall only operate from existing parking or built surfaces, and shall not enter any sensitive or designated ecological habitat.</p>
ECM6	<p>All resurfacing and other minor construction or demolition works (including removal and consolidation of existing features, such as signage, litter bins, picnic tables) should be undertaken in a manner that ensures that no materials can inadvertently enter any watercourse or sensitive ecological habitat, and in a manner that ensures there are no impacts on fauna such as birds and bats.</p>
ECM7	<p>Prior to use, resurfacing materials, including hardcore and sub-surface fill material will be stored in a manner that ensures that they do not inadvertently enter any existing surface water drainage network, or any sensitive ecological habitat.</p>
ECM8	<p>Removal and consolidation of existing signage shall be undertaken in a manner that ensures that there are no impacts on any watercourse or sensitive ecological habitat.</p>
ECM9	<p>Signage shall be placed within existing hard standing areas where possible and installed in a manner that ensures that there are no impacts on any sensitive or designated ecological habitat.</p>

2.2 European Sites in and within 15 km of the Plan Area

This section of the screening process describes the European sites which have the potential to be impacted upon by the Signage Plan. The zone of potential impact has been selected as all counties within which signage is proposed as well as an area within 15km of these counties (having regard to the DoE document *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects - Guidance for Planning Authorities*). Given the nature of the works involved it is determined that this approach is more than adequately precautionary.

Based on the above approach, various European Sites, require consideration in the AA process. A map indicating the locations of the sites is presented as Figure 1.

Table 2.3 lists the sites within the zone of potential impact.

cSAC sites are selected for a range of different habitats and species listed on Annex I and Annex II of the Habitats Directive, known as Qualifying Interests (QIs). SPA sites have been selected for the

protection of endangered species of wild birds and the features for which SPAs have been selected are referred to as Special Conservation Interests (SCIs). SCIs fall under one of the following headings:

- Listed rare and vulnerable species (as listed on Annex I of EU Birds Directive 2009/147/EC);
- Regularly occurring migratory species, such as ducks, geese, and waders;
- Wetlands, especially those of international importance, which attract large numbers of migratory birds each year.

In order to determine the potential for impacts from the Plan, information on the qualifying features, known vulnerabilities and threats to site integrity pertaining to all potentially affected European sites was also taken into account¹². Since the conservation objectives for the European sites focus on maintaining the favourable conservation condition of the qualifying features of each site, the screening process concentrated on assessing the potential implications of the implementing the Plan against the qualifying features of each site.

The Habitats Directive requires the focus of the assessment at this stage to be on the integrity of the site as indicated by its Conservation Objectives. The Department of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG) is in the process of drawing up Site Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCOs) for all European sites. These SSCOs aim to define favourable conservation condition for the qualifying habitats and species at that site. The maintenance (or restoration) of the favourable condition for these habitats and species at the site level will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at a national level.

- ***Favourable conservation status of a species*** can be described as being achieved when: *'population data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself, and the natural range of the species is neither being reduced or likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.'*
- ***Favourable conservation status of a habitat*** can be described as being achieved when: *'its natural range, and area it covers within that range, is stable or increasing, and the ecological factors that are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and the conservation status of its typical species is favourable.'*

For those sites where no SSCOs are available, the DAHG has provided generic Conservation Objectives for designated European sites. Generic Conservation Objectives for cSACs have been provided as follows:

- *To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.*

One generic Conservation Objective has been provided for SPAs as follows:

- *To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.*

SSCOs have been published for a minority of European sites that have been considered as part of this assessment. The conservation objectives of each qualifying habitat and species for European sites are presented as a selection of attributes against which targets are set. Detailed SSCOs are likely to be more useful for project level AA.

Any significant adverse effects on QIs/SCIs are likely to give rise to impacts on site integrity as indicated by the conservation objectives of individual sites.

¹² Derived from a variety of sources, including: Ireland's Article 17 Report to the European Commission "Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland" (NPWS, 2013), Site Synopses and NATURA 2000 Standard Data Forms

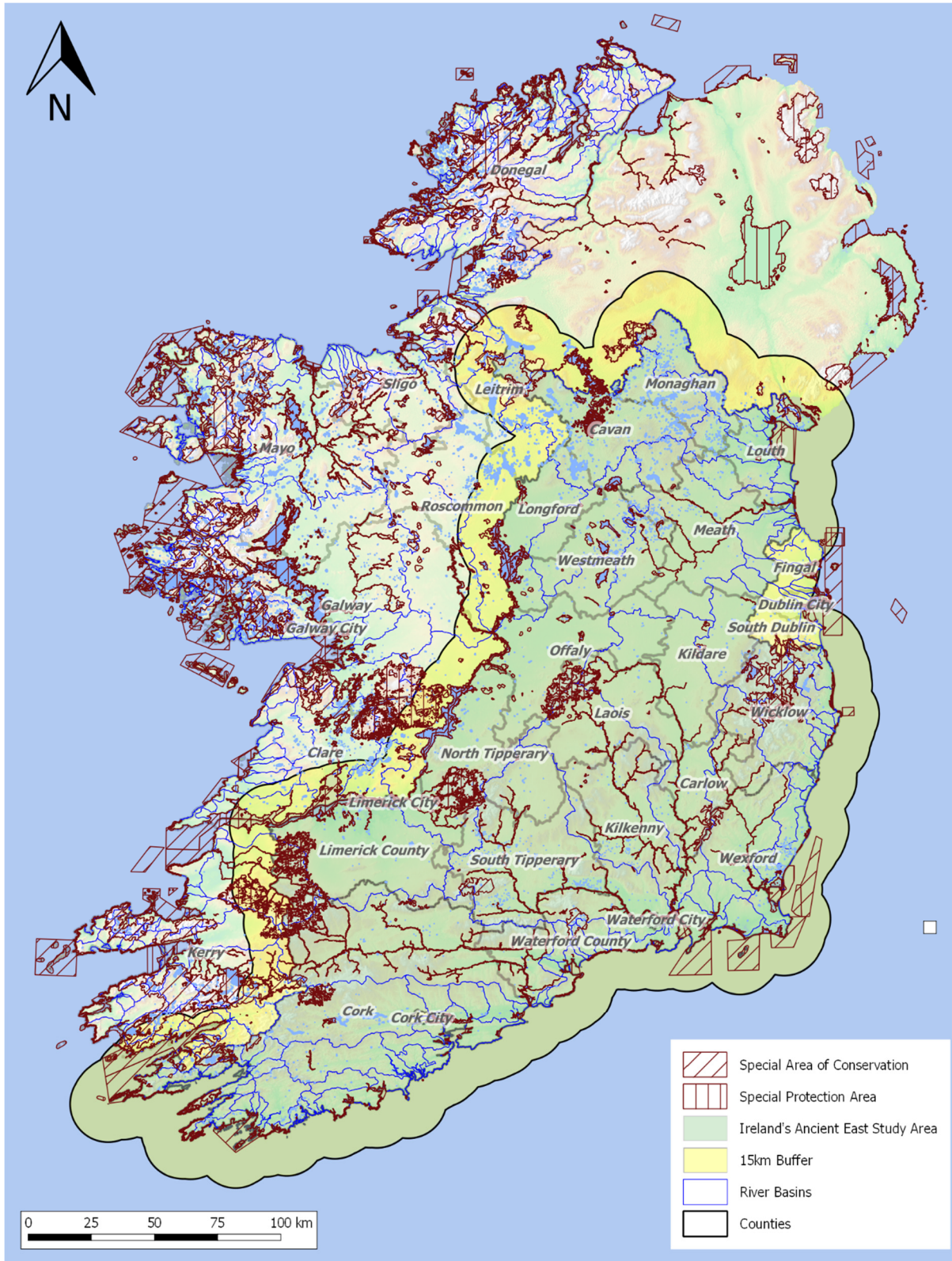


Figure 1 Map of European sites within the precautionary zone of potential impact

Table 2.3 List of European sites within the precautionary zone of potential impact

(listed according to their NPWS site code)

Site Code	Site Name	County ¹³	Distance (km) ¹⁴
000006	Killyconny Bog (Cloghbally) SAC	cv, me	0
000007	Lough Oughter And Associated Loughs SAC	cv	0
000030	Danes Hole, Poulnalecka SAC	cl	11.49
000051	Lough Gash Turlough SAC	cl	8.69
000064	Poulnagordon Cave (Quin) SAC	cl	14.92
000077	Ballymacoda (Clonpriest And Pillmore) SAC	co	0
000090	Glengarriff Harbour And Woodland SAC	co	0
000091	Clonakilty Bay SAC	co	0
000093	Caha Mountains SAC	co, ke	0
000097	Lough Hyne Nature Reserve And Environs SAC	co	0
000101	Roaringwater Bay And Islands SAC	co	0
000102	Sheep's Head SAC	co	0
000106	St. Gobnet's Wood SAC	co	0
000108	The Gearagh SAC	co	0
000109	Three Castle Head To Mizen Head SAC	co	0
000174	Curraghchase Woods SAC	li	0
000199	Baldoyle Bay SAC	du	14.37
000205	Malahide Estuary SAC	du	8.3
000206	North Dublin Bay SAC	du	14
000208	Rogerstown Estuary SAC	du	8.98
000210	South Dublin Bay SAC	du	8.55
000216	River Shannon Callows SAC	ga, of, ro, ti, wm	0
000231	Barrougter Bog SAC	ga	3.03
000248	Cloonmoylan Bog SAC	ga	2.8
000261	Derrycrag Wood Nature Reserve SAC	ga	6.29
000308	Loughatorick South Bog SAC	cl, ga	7.27
000319	Pollnacknockaun Wood Nature Reserve SAC	ga	6.67
000335	Ballinskelligs Bay And Inny Estuary SAC	ke	13.45
000353	Old Domestic Building, Dromore Wood SAC	ke	9.47
000364	Kilgarvan Ice House SAC	ke	7.24
000365	Killarney National Park, Macgillycuddy's Reeks And Caragh River Catchment SAC	co, ke	0
000391	Ballynafagh Bog SAC	kd	0
000396	Pollardstown Fen SAC	kd	0
000397	Red Bog, Kildare SAC	kd	0
000404	Hugginstown Fen SAC	kk	0

¹³ County abbreviations: cv=Cavan, m=Meath, cl=Clare, co=Cork, ke=Kerry, li=Limerick, du=Dublin, ga=Galway, ro=Roscommon, ti=Tipperary, wm=Westmeath, kd=Kildare, kk=Kilkenny, la=Laois, le=Leitrim, lf=Longford, lh=Louth, wa=Waterford, wx=Wexford, wi=Wicklow, cw=Carlow, mo=Monaghan, fe=Fermanagh (Northern Ireland), do=Down (Northern Ireland), ty=Tyrone (Northern Ireland), ar=Armagh (Northern Ireland)

¹⁴ A distance of 0km indicates that the site is within or immediately adjacent to the IAE area. A distance of >0km indicates that the site is outside of the IAE area.

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Site Code	Site Name	County ¹³	Distance (km) ¹⁴
000407	The Loughans SAC	kk	0
000412	Slieve Bloom Mountains SAC	la, of	0
000428	Lough Melvin SAC	le	13.23
000432	Barrigone SAC	li	0
000439	Tory Hill SAC	li	0
000440	Lough Ree SAC	lf, ro, wm	0
000448	Fortwilliam Turlough SAC	lf	0
000453	Carlingford Mountain SAC	lh	0
000455	Dundalk Bay SAC	lh	0
000566	All Saints Bog And Esker SAC	of	0
000571	Charleville Wood SAC	of	0
000572	Clara Bog SAC	of	0
000575	Ferbane Bog SAC	of	0
000576	Fin Lough (Offaly) SAC	of	0
000580	Mongan Bog SAC	of	0
000581	Moyclare Bog SAC	of	0
000582	Raheenmore Bog SAC	of	0
000584	Cuilcagh - Anierin Uplands SAC	cv, le	0
000585	Sharavogue Bog SAC	of	0
000588	Ballinturly Turlough SAC	ro	12.49
000609	Lisduff Turlough SAC	ro	14.66
000610	Lough Croan Turlough SAC	ro	13.12
000611	Lough Funshinagh SAC	ro	7.71
000641	Ballyduff/Clonfinane Bog SAC	ti	0
000646	Galtee Mountains SAC	li, ti	0
000647	Kilcarren-Firville Bog SAC	ti	0
000665	Helvick Head SAC	wa	0
000668	Nier Valley Woodlands SAC	wa	0
000671	Tramore Dunes And Backstrand SAC	wa	0
000679	Garriskil Bog SAC	wm	0
000685	Lough Ennell SAC	wm	0
000688	Lough Owel SAC	wm	0
000692	Scragh Bog SAC	wm	0
000696	Ballyteige Burrow SAC	wx	0
000697	Bannow Bay SAC	wx	0
000700	Cahore Polders And Dunes SAC	wx	0
000704	Lady's Island Lake SAC	wx	0
000707	Saltee Islands SAC	wx	0
000708	Screen Hills SAC	wx	0
000709	Tacumshin Lake SAC	wx	0
000710	Raven Point Nature Reserve SAC	wx	0
000713	Ballyman Glen SAC	du, wi	0
000714	Bray Head SAC	wi	0
000716	Carriggower Bog SAC	wi	0

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Site Code	Site Name	County ¹³	Distance (km) ¹⁴
000717	Deputy's Pass Nature Reserve SAC	wi	0
000719	Glen Of The Downs SAC	wi	0
000725	Knocksink Wood SAC	du, wi	0
000729	Buckronev-Brittis Dunes And Fen SAC	wi	0
000733	Vale Of Clara (Rathdrum Wood) SAC	wi	0
000764	Hook Head SAC	wx	0
000770	Blackstairs Mountains SAC	cw, wx	0
000781	Slaney River Valley SAC	cw, wi, wx	0
000831	Cullahill Mountain SAC	kk	0
000849	Spahill And Clomantagh Hill SAC	kk	0
000859	Clonaslee Eskers And Derry Bog SAC	la	0
000869	Lisbigney Bog SAC	la	0
000919	Ridge Road, SW Of Rapemills SAC	of	0
000925	The Long Derris, Edenderry SAC	of	0
000930	Clare Glen SAC	li, ti	0
000934	Kilduff, Devilsbit Mountain SAC	ti	0
000939	Silvermine Mountains SAC	ti	0
000979	Corratirrim SAC	cv	0
001013	Glenomra Wood SAC	cl	4.38
001040	Barley Cove To Ballyrisode Point SAC	co	0
001043	Cleanderry Wood SAC	co	0
001058	Great Island Channel SAC	co	0
001061	Kilkeran Lake And Castlefreke Dunes SAC	co	0
001070	Myross Wood SAC	co	0
001197	Keeper Hill SAC	ti	0
001209	Glenasmole Valley SAC	du	1.78
001230	Courtmacsherry Estuary SAC	co	0
001313	Rosturra Wood SAC	ga	5.09
001342	Cloonee And Inchiquin Loughs, Uragh Wood SAC	ke	1.72
001371	Mucksna Wood SAC	ke	8.54
001387	Ballynafagh Lake SAC	kd	0
001398	Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC	kd, me	0
001403	Arroo Mountain SAC	le	13.72
001430	Glen Bog SAC	li	0
001432	Glenstal Wood SAC	li	0
001459	Clogher Head SAC	lh	0
001547	Castletownshend SAC	co	0
001625	Castlesampson Esker SAC	ro	6.66
001626	Annaghmore Lough (Roscommon) SAC	ro	13.25
001683	Liskeen Fen SAC	ti	0
001741	Kilmuckridge-Tinnaberna Sandhills SAC	wx	0
001742	Kilpatrick Sandhills SAC	wx	0
001757	Holdenstown Bog SAC	wi	0
001766	Magherabeg Dunes SAC	wi	0

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Site Code	Site Name	County ¹³	Distance (km) ¹⁴
001776	Pilgrim's Road Esker SAC	of	0
001786	Kilroosky Lough Cluster SAC	mo	0
001810	White Lough, Ben Loughs And Lough Doo SAC	me, wm	0
001818	Lough Forbes Complex SAC	lf, ro	0
001831	Split Hills And Long Hill Esker SAC	wm	0
001847	Philipston Marsh SAC	ti	0
001858	Galmoy Fen SAC	kk	0
001873	Derryclogher (Knockboy) Bog SAC	co	0
001879	Glanmore Bog SAC	co, ke	0
001881	Maulagowna Bog SAC	ke	1.74
001890	Mullaghanish Bog SAC	co, ke	0
001952	Comeragh Mountains SAC	wa	0
001957	Boyne Coast And Estuary SAC	lh, me	0
001976	Lough Gill SAC	le	6.98
002032	Boleybrack Mountain SAC	cv, le	0
002036	Ballyhoura Mountains SAC	co, li	0
002037	Carrigeenamronety Hill SAC	co, li	0
002041	Old Domestic Building, Curraglass Wood SAC	ke	6.12
002091	Newhall And Edenvale Complex SAC	cl	14.95
002098	Old Domestic Building, Askive Wood SAC	ke	6.11
002120	Lough Bane And Lough Glass SAC	me, wm	0
002121	Lough Lene SAC	wm	0
002122	Wicklow Mountains SAC	du, wi	0
002123	Ardmore Head SAC	wa	0
002124	Bolingbrook Hill SAC	ti	0
002125	Anglesey Road SAC	ti	0
002126	Pollagoona Bog SAC	cl	13.83
002137	Lower River Suir SAC	kk, ti, wa	0
002141	Mountmellick SAC	la	0
002147	Lisduff Fen SAC	of	0
002158	Kenmare River SAC	co, ke	0
002161	Long Bank SAC	wx	1.98
002162	River Barrow And River Nore SAC	cw, kd, kk, la, of, ti, wa, wx	0
002165	Lower River Shannon SAC	cl, co, ke, li, ti	0
002170	Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC	co, ke, li, ti, wa	0
002171	Bandon River SAC	co	0
002173	Blackwater River (Kerry) SAC	ke	11.27
002187	Drongawn Lough SAC	ke	5.84
002189	Farranamanagh Lough SAC	co	0
002213	Glenloughaun Esker SAC	ga	13.83
002214	Killeglan Grassland SAC	ro	14.67
002236	Island Fen SAC	of	0
002241	Lough Derg, North-East Shore SAC	ga, ti	0
002249	The Murrrough Wetlands SAC	wi	0

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Site Code	Site Name	County ¹³	Distance (km) ¹⁴
002252	Thomastown Quarry SAC	kk	0
002256	Ballyprior Grassland SAC	la	0
002257	Moanour Mountain SAC	ti	0
002258	Silvermines Mountains West SAC	ti	0
002269	Carnsore Point SAC	wx	0
002274	Wicklow Reef SAC	wi	0.47
002279	Askeaton Fen Complex SAC	li	0
002280	Dunbeacon Shingle SAC	co	0
002281	Reen Point Shingle SAC	co	0
002299	River Boyne And River Blackwater SAC	cv, lh, me, wm	0
002306	Carlingford Shore SAC	lh	0
002312	Slieve Bernagh Bog SAC	cl	1.15
002313	Ballymore Fen SAC	wm	0
002315	Glanlough Woods SAC	ke	4.61
002316	Ratty River Cave SAC	cl	9.62
002318	Knockanira House SAC	cl	13.97
002319	Kilkishen House SAC	cl	13.84
002324	Glendine Wood SAC	wa	0
002331	Mouds Bog SAC	kd	0
002332	Coolrain Bog SAC	la	0
002333	Knockacoller Bog SAC	la	0
002336	Carn Park Bog SAC	wm	0
002337	Crosswood Bog SAC	wm	0
002339	Ballynamona Bog And Corkip Lough SAC	ro	7.13
002340	Moneybeg And Clareisland Bogs SAC	me, wm	0
002341	Ardagullion Bog SAC	lf	0
002342	Mount Hevey Bog SAC	me, wm	0
002346	Brown Bog SAC	lf	0
002348	Clooneen Bog SAC	lf	0
002349	Corbo Bog SAC	ro	3.19
002351	Moanveanlagh Bog SAC	ke	3.98
002353	Redwood Bog SAC	ti	0
002356	Ardgraique Bog SAC	ga	6.24
002953	Blackwater Bank SAC	wx	3.05
003000	Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC	du	4.16
UK0016603	Cuilcagh Mountain SAC	fe	0
UK0016614	Upper Lough Erne SAC	fe	0
UK0016615	Eastern Mournes SAC	do	11.83
UK0016619	Monawilkin SAC	fe	13.29
UK0016620	Derryleckagh SAC	do	4.38
UK0016621	Magheraveely Marl Loughs SAC	fe	0
UK0016622	Slieve Beagh SAC	fe, ty	0
UK0030045	Largalunny SAC	fe	13.35
UK0030047	Lough Melvin SAC	fe	14.88

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Site Code	Site Name	County ¹³	Distance (km) ¹⁴
UK0030068	Fardrum and Roosky Turloughs SAC	fe	14.46
UK0030116	Cladagh (Swanlinbar) River SAC	fe	0
UK0030212	Moninea Bog SAC	fe	0.5
UK0030268	Rostrevor Wood SAC	do	2.76
UK0030277	Slieve Gullion SAC	ar	3.31
UK0030300	West Fermanagh Scarplands SAC	fe	6.06
004002	Saltee Islands SPA	wx	0
004006	North Bull Island SPA	du	13.98
004009	Lady's Island Lake SPA	wx	0
004014	Rockabill SPA	du	10.34
004015	Rogerstown Estuary SPA	du	9.83
004016	Baldoyle Bay SPA	du	14.37
004017	Mongan Bog SPA	of	0
004019	The Raven SPA	wx	0
004020	Ballyteigue Burrow SPA	wx	0
004021	Old Head of Kinsale SPA	co	0
004022	Ballycotton Bay SPA	co	0
004023	Ballymacoda Bay SPA	co	0
004024	South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA	du	8.54
004025	Broadmeadow/Swords Estuary SPA	du	8.67
004026	Dundalk Bay SPA	lh	0
004027	Tramore Back Strand SPA	wa	0
004028	Blackwater Estuary SPA	co, wa	0
004030	Cork Harbour SPA	co	0
004032	Dungarvan Harbour SPA	wa	0
004033	Bannow Bay SPA	wx	0
004038	Killarney National Park SPA	ke	12.57
004040	Wicklow Mountains SPA	du, wi	0
004043	Lough Derravaragh SPA	wm	0
004044	Lough Ennell SPA	wm	0
004045	Glen Lough SPA	lf, wm	0
004046	Lough Iron SPA	wm	0
004047	Lough Owel SPA	wm	0
004049	Lough Oughter SPA	co	0
004058	Lough Derg (Shannon) SPA	cl, ga, ti	0
004061	Lough Kinale and Derragh Lough SPA	co, lf, wm	0
004063	Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA	kd, wi	0
004064	Lough Ree SPA	lf, ro, wm	0
004065	Lough Sheelin SPA	co, me, wm	0
004066	The Bull and The Cow Rocks SPA	co	1.93
004076	Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA	wx	0
004077	River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA	cl, ke, li	0
004078	Carlingford Lough SPA	lh	0
004080	Boyne Estuary SPA	lh, me	0

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Site Code	Site Name	County ¹³	Distance (km) ¹⁴
004081	Clonakilty Bay SPA	co	0
004086	River Little Brosna Callows SPA	of, ti	0
004091	Stabannan-Braganstown SPA	lh	0
004092	Tacumshin Lake SPA	wx	0
004094	Blackwater Callows SPA	co, wa	0
004095	Kilcolman Bog SPA	co	0
004096	Middle Shannon Callows SPA	ga, of, ro, ti, wm	0
004097	River Suck Callows SPA	ga, ro	0
004101	Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA	lf, ro	0
004102	Garriskil Bog SPA	wm	0
004103	All Saints Bog SPA	of	0
004109	The Gearagh SPA	co	0
004118	Keeragh Islands SPA	wx	0
004122	Skerries Islands SPA	du	9.46
004124	Sovereign Islands SPA	co	0.67
004127	Wicklow Head SPA	wi	0
004137	Dovegrove Callows SPA	of	0
004139	Lough Croan Turlough SPA	ro	13.14
004143	Cahore Marshes SPA	wx	0
004154	Iveragh Peninsula SPA	ke	6.49
004155	Beara Peninsula SPA	co	0
004156	Sheep's Head to Toe Head SPA	co	0
004158	River Nanny Estuary and Shore SPA	me	0
004160	Slieve Bloom Mountains SPA	la, of	0
004161	Stack's to Mullaghareirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle SPA	co, ke, li	0
004162	Mullaghanish to Musheramore Mountains SPA	co	0
004165	Slievefelim to Silvermines Mountains SPA	li, ti	0
004167	Slieve Beagh SPA	mo	0
004168	Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA	cl, ga	2.85
004172	Dalkey Islands SPA	du	6.52
004175	Deenish Island and Scariff Island SPA	ke	10.21
004186	The Murrough SPA	wi	0
004190	Galley Head to Duneen Point SPA	co	0
004191	Seven Heads SPA	co	0
004192	Helvick Head to Ballyquin SPA	wa	0
004193	Mid-Waterford Coast SPA	wa	0
004219	Courtmacsherry Bay SPA	co	0
004232	River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA	co, lh, me, wm	0
004233	River Nore SPA	kk, la	0
UK9020071	Upper Lough Erne SPA	fe	0
UK9020161	Carlingford Lough SPA	do	1.19
UK9020091	Slieve Beagh-Mullaghfad-Lisnaskea SPA	ty, fe	0

2.3 Assessment Criteria

2.3.1 Is the Plan Necessary to the Management of European Sites?

Under the Habitats Directive, plans that are directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site do not require AA. For this exception to apply, management is required to be interpreted narrowly as nature conservation management in the sense of Article 6(1) of the Habitats Directive. This refers to specific measures to address the ecological requirements of annexed habitats and species (and their habitats) present on a site(s). The relationship should be shown to be direct and not a by-product of the plan, even if this might result in positive or beneficial effects for a site(s).

The primary purpose of the Signage Plan is not the nature conservation management of European sites. Therefore, the Plan is not considered by the Habitats Directive to be directly connected with or necessary to the management of European designated sites.

2.3.2 Elements of the Plan with Potential to Give Rise to Significant Effects

The Plan has been assessed in relation to its potential to result in likely significant effects on European sites within a precautionary zone of potential impact.

As outlined in the European Commission Environment DG document "*Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*", impacts that require consideration can be categorised under a number of headings:

- Loss / reduction of habitat area (e.g. due to the footprint of signage);
- Disturbance to Key Species;
- Habitat or species fragmentation;
- Reduction in species density; and
- Changes in key indicators of conservation value such as decrease in water quality/quantity (e.g. through run-off of pollutants during installation).

In summary, it is determined that the Plan is not expected to result in any significant effects upon European sites.

The Plan does not set the framework for future development consent of projects. With regard to works related to the signage, developers are required to comply with the relevant legislative provisions in relation to AA screening. AA screening must be undertaken in advance of proposed developments.

The measures included in the Signage Plan which developers are required to comply with in order to be issued with signage and associated grants will ensure that no effects on European sites occur. These measures which are detailed on Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 will in some cases overlap with and in some cases will be in addition to both the requirements of environmental and planning legislation and the provisions contained within various plans and programmes including the various County Development Plans.

2.4 Other Plans and Programmes

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive requires an assessment of a plan or project to consider other plans or programmes that might, in combination with the Plan, have the potential to adversely impact upon European sites.

The Plan does not set a framework for future development consents – this is done by other sets of plans, programmes and processes which are subject to SEA, EIA and/or AA as appropriate.

As part of normal branding for tourism initiatives, Fáilte Ireland will prepare an overall strategy for the IAE brand and they will prepare experience development plans for individual areas and/or sites. These documents will focus on developing the brand and improving the experience of visitors at keys sites.

These future IAE documents as well as plans, programmes and projects related to sectors outside of local authority land use planning and other sectoral planning will undergo Appropriate Assessment as required. Such procedures associated with this are overseen by the relevant governmental competent authority as relevant and appropriate.

The measures included in the Signage Plan which developers are required to comply with in order to be issued with signage and associated grants will ensure that no effects on European sites occur. These measures which are detailed on Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 will in some cases overlap with and in some cases will be in addition to both the requirements of environmental and planning legislation and the provisions contained within various plans and programmes including the various County Development Plans.

With regard to works related to the signage, developers are required to comply with the relevant legislative provisions in relation to AA screening. AA screening must be undertaken in advance of proposed developments.

Having regard to the foregoing, no significant effects on European Sites have been identified or are currently envisaged. Furthermore, as all of the provisions have been assessed as not having the potential, in their own right, to result in effects, there will be no potential for them to combine with each other to result in cumulative negative effects.

Taking into account all of the above it is determined that there are no 'in-combination' effects arising from the Plan.

Section 3 Conclusion

The requirement for a Stage 2 AA would arise if the Signage Plan were likely to have significant effects on the integrity of the network of designated ecological sites known as Natura 2000. This screening report evaluates the Plan in order to determine if it needs to be the subject of a Stage 2 AA.

The AA Screening finds that the Plan shall not give rise to significant effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites. Therefore, in accordance with the methodological guidance on the provision of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/3/EEC, it is concluded that the Plan does not require any further assessment to demonstrate compliance with the Directive.

It is noted that a number of the Natura 2000 sites which fall within 15km of counties which are included within the Plan area are located within Northern Ireland. The NPWS' AA Guidance recommends that the consultation procedures outlined in the SEA Guidelines (DEHLG, 2004) are followed in relation to AA in this regard including where a plan impacts on a Natura 2000 site. The SEA Guidelines outline the process for consultation in relation to Strategic Environmental Assessment whereby these Plans or Programmes would be likely to result in significant environmental effects. As it has been determined that the Plan shall not give rise to significant effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites, consultation in Northern Ireland is not considered relevant.