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STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA) SCREENING REPORT

SEA SCREENING REPORT FOR THE OFFSHORE RENEWABLE ENERGY (ORE) FUTURE FRAMEWORK POILCY STATEMENT

Prepared for:

Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications



**An Roinn Comhshaoil,
Aeráide agus Cumarsáide**
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SEA SCREENING REPORT FOR THE ORE FUTURE FRAMEWORK POILCY STATEMENT

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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Background

The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (the Department) has prepared the Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Future Framework Policy Statement.

The Future Framework Policy Statement outlines the Department's ambitions for ORE delivery for Ireland for the post-2030 period, the key processes needed for successful deployment, and a pathway to maximise economic benefits to the State. The key reasons for sustainably developing Ireland's considerable offshore resources are threefold:

- Decarbonising the Irish economy in line with legally binding national and international climate ambitions;
- Ensuring long-term energy security; and
- Developing green industrial opportunities for energy utilisation such as export markets.

The Future Framework Policy Statement is aligned with and complementary to, Ireland's existing climate, renewable energy and ORE policy and legislative frameworks. It further complements Government objectives contained within the pending National Industrial Strategy and the Offshore Transmission Strategy. As this is an overarching Framework for long-term delivery of ORE, the intention is not to encapsulate the intricacies of the energy landscape in Ireland and beyond. As such, the Future Framework sets out a number of key actions, future directions and intergovernmental dependencies that will be addressed through subsequent policy to develop and initiate the long-term, plan-led approach to Ireland's ORE future.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening of the Future Framework Policy Statement is required to determine whether a full SEA is required for the ORE Future Framework Policy. This report documents the SEA Screening undertaken.

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.

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)

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'*.

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 EPAs 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.

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.

Neither the Directive nor the transposing national legislation are prescriptive in their definition of a plan or programme. However, recent case law has clarified that plans and programmes should be interpreted to mean any legislative, regulatory or administrative standards. Specifically Case C 671/16 stipulates that “...besides the fact that it is apparent from the actual wording of the first indent of Article 2(a) of the SEA Directive that the notion of ‘plans and programmes’ can cover normative acts adopted by law or regulation, that directive does not contain any special provisions in relation to policies or general legislation that would call for them to be distinguished from plans and programmes for the purpose of that 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.

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 effect 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, and as such would require an Appropriate Assessment.

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

An AA Screening Report has also been prepared for the Future Framework Policy Statement in accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). The Report concludes the following:

It is concluded that the ORE Future Framework Policy Statement 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 ORE Future Framework Policy Statement.

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 POLICY

2.1 Background to the ORE Future Framework Policy Statement

The Phase Two Policy Statement³ adopted by Government in March 2023 provides for a plan-led, centralised approach to future ORE delivery in Ireland, previously indicated in the 2021 Policy Statement on the Framework for Ireland's Offshore Electricity System⁴. The move to a plan-led approach for ORE development in Ireland has taken place within the overarching frameworks of EU and national Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) policy and legislation. The first proposed South Coast DMAP was initiated as a response to energy security requirements, however future DMAPs under the Maritime Area Planning (MAP) Act⁵ will explore the untapped potential of ORE in Irish Waters, in a method which keeps pace with technological advances.

2.2 Overview of the ORE Future Policy Statement

This Future Framework Policy Statement outlines DECC's ambitions for the post-2030 period, the key processes needed for successful deployment, and a pathway to maximise economic benefits to the State. The key reasons for sustainably developing Ireland's considerable offshore resources are threefold:

- Decarbonising the Irish economy in line with legally binding national and international climate ambitions;
- Ensuring long-term energy security; and
- Developing green industrial opportunities for energy utilisation such as export markets.

Consistent with global efforts to combat climate change, Ireland has committed to reaching net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, which will require a dramatic increase of utilization of indigenous renewable energy sources, wholesale electrification of domestic demand, increasing electricity interconnection, and an emergent renewable hydrogen industry targeted towards hard-to-abate sectors. Realising Ireland's indigenous renewable energy potential will enhance our energy security by mitigating dependence on volatile international imports, through which Ireland currently receives 70% of current primary energy requirement.

Furthermore, as Ireland continues to develop its ORE sector there will be increased opportunities for supporting the domestic green growth agenda and export market opportunities from co-location of large energy users with renewable generation to electricity interconnection with neighbouring states to the export of renewable hydrogen and its derivatives. Creating a flagship ORE sector will enable Ireland to achieve its binding climate targets while bolstering the security and prosperity of the Irish State.

With the adoption of a plan-led approach to ORE comes a government responsibility to set forth a robust pathway for the achievement of Ireland's ambitious targets out to 2040 and 2050. The purpose of the ORE Future Framework is to set out the future of ORE development in Ireland from 2030 in a manner which will maximise environmental and social welfare. The ORE Future Framework will be delivered through collaboration between State, industry and local communities.

³ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/f3bb6-policy-statement-on-the-framework-for-phase-two-offshore-wind/>

⁴ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/5ec24-policy-statement-on-the-framework-for-irelands-offshore-electricity-transmission-system/>

⁵ <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2021/act/50/enacted/en/html>

The Future Framework policy sets out the evidence base for Ireland's ORE targets as well as commits to the plan-led approach by outlining key priorities and processes to ORE delivery from 2030 to 2050. This includes identifying realistic potential for ORE generation as well as interconnection and renewable hydrogen production post-2030. Additionally, this document consolidates information provided by existing policy to clarify the regulatory pathway to successful delivery including any opportunities or barriers to implementation. Crucially, the Future Framework policy outlines how a plan-led approach will link all relevant components of the energy system, streamline the ORE consenting process, and integrate key priorities – such as environmental assessments and consultation processes – into the foundation of a sustainable regime for ORE delivery in Ireland.

2.3 Actions within the ORE Future Policy Statement

Most of the actions are process based to provide an evidence base for future works. The actions facilitate, support or explore the feasibility of commitments made in a plan-led approach by outlining key priorities and processes to ORE delivery from 2030 to 2050. A summary of the actions is provided below - Table 1-1 - and these assessments should be read in conjunction with the ORE Framework policy document itself.

Table 2-1: Summary of the actions within the ORE Future Framework Policy Statement

ORE Delivery		
1	Conduct a viability study, or a series of studies, to assess the feasibility of deploying floating offshore wind in Irish waters.	Q2 2024
2	Investigate the feasibility of an Irish coastal FLOW demonstrator site.	Q3 2024
3	Maintain State support for our existing test sites and explore the feasibility of supporting additional test sites.	ongoing
4	Conduct an analysis to determine the economic and practical viability of various innovative technologies with consideration to international market conditions and cost-competitiveness.	Q3 2024-Q4 2025
5	Provide the structures and supports necessary to establish a future DMAP roadmap including timeline for deployment in accordance with all relevant legislative and regulatory processes and in alignment with technology maturity and offtake availability.	Q3 2024
6	Continue to support streamlining of the consenting process for ORE projects including the competitive MAC process and indicative timelines for implementation.	2024
Route to Market		
7	Establish and maintain a single schedule for all upcoming State tenders for ORE, including non-grid connected ORE, in alignment with Action 5.	Q2 2024 - ongoing
8	Design a competitive process to procure 2GW of non-grid connected capacity in 2025, to be in development by 2030.	Q1 2024- Q2 2025

9	Develop and obtain State Aid clearance for a successor support scheme to ORESS, be in operation from 2026-2030, to procure at least 9.5GW for deployment from 2033.	2024-2025
10	Assess the enabling supports and/or frameworks that may be required to maximise capacity from alternative routes to market.	Q1 2024-Q4 2025
11	Collaborate with EirGrid to support the rollout of EirGrid's Grid Implementation Plan and future iterations to aid in the alignment of infrastructure efficiencies in a manner which considers offshore generation, grid, and routes to market.	Q2 2024- Q2 2025
12	Within a regulatory review of CRU and EirGrid, consider provision for expanding capacity for proactive, anticipatory investment in onshore and offshore grid.	Q1 2024- Q4 2024
13	Align resourcing needs across Government Departments and agencies to ensure all Government bodies in relevant marine and ORE disciplines are properly resourced to discharge the expanded responsibilities as set out under the Future Framework.	ongoing
Data Policy		
14	Procure, consolidate and publish all relevant data to support and contribute towards the establishment of data pertaining to the marine environment and to making this information available to the public.	Q3 2023-ongoing
15	Establish a priority process to incorporate cumulative impact studies into the DMAP process as required by the MAP Act.	2024
16	Conduct additional studies and data modelling to inform future ORE DMAP delineation given increasing frequency of weather extremes and future conditions.	Q3 2024-Q1 2025
17	Develop an overarching data policy statement for ORE to be coordinated by DECC in late 2024.	Q4 2024
Alignment		
18	Work with DETE and other key stakeholders to explore potential investment incentives which could be developed to encourage foreign direct investment in domestic supply chain facilities.	Q3 2024- Q1 2025
19	Establish Offshore Bidding Zone Frameworks necessary to maximise utilisation of offshore renewable energy potential for domestic and international markets, in order to meet the objectives of the EU Green Deal.	Q4 2024

20	Conduct an analysis to determine the financial optimisation of the hydrogen industry in Ireland contrasting pipeline and shipping options for hydrogen production and associated derivatives, including the viability of a hydrogen pipeline by 2040.	Q3 2024-Q2 2025
21	In order to safeguard community benefit for coastal and marine communities regardless of technology type and route to market, and to ensure that community benefits persist for the lifetime of ORE projects, the Community Benefit Fund provisions developed in ORESS will be transferred to MAC terms and conditions, from the ORESS 2.1 project onwards.	Q2 2024

2.4 Relationship with other Relevant Plans and Programmes

ORE policy and ambitions are developed within the broader context of both national, EU and international climate, energy and environmental policy and legislative frameworks. The Future Framework builds on previous commitments, strategies and directions as outlined by both national policy – including the Climate Action Plan, the National Energy and Climate Plan, the National Marine Planning Framework⁶, the National Planning Framework, the National Policy Statement on Interconnection 2023⁷, and the National Hydrogen Strategy⁸ – and EU policy such as RePowerEU⁹ and the EU Strategy on Offshore Renewable Energy¹⁰.

Ireland's Offshore Wind Delivery Taskforce (OWDT) was established in April 2022 to drive delivery of offshore wind targets in the Climate Action Plan, and to mobilise the Irish economy towards realising associated economic and societal opportunities through effective cross-Government collaboration. Membership of the OWDT, chaired by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC), comprises senior officials from the Government Departments and Agencies considered vital to the delivery of Ireland's ORE ambitions.

Among others, relevant objectives of the OWDT include:

- Developing a consolidated plan, collating all activities underway across departments and agencies to ensure delivery of offshore wind and related targets as set out in the Programme for Government and Climate Action Plan Ensuring the potential economic and societal benefits from establishing the offshore wind industry are maximised; and
- Ensure alignment in the development of the ORE sector with work being progressed to improve and protect marine biodiversity through designation of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), Marine Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Marine Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and implementation of the Birds, Habitats and Marine Strategy Framework Directives more broadly.

⁶ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/60e57-national-marine-planning-framework/>

⁷ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/3d96f-national-policy-statement-on-electricity-connection-2023/>

⁸ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/624ab-national-hydrogen-strategy/>

⁹ https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/repowereu-affordable-secure-and-sustainable-energy-europe_en

¹⁰ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2020%3A741%3AFIN&qid=1605792629666>

The 2023 Key Actions of the OWDT were published in March 2023¹¹ across all workstreams including supply chain, ports policy, skills and workforce, and regulatory consenting. A progress report will be submitted for Government approval in Q1 2024, with publication soon afterwards, including Key Actions for 2024.

A key workstream of the OWDT is the development of the Future Framework Policy Statement document for offshore renewable energy policy beyond 2030.

¹¹ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/c8749-offshore-wind-delivery-taskforce/>

3. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SCREENING

This section of the report documents the SEA Screening undertaken.

Stage 1 Applicability Analysis / Pre-Screening Check was undertaken initially (See Table 3-1). The output of the Applicability Analysis indicated that the ORE Future Framework Policy Statement is not of a type of plan or programme that is required to be subjected to SEA.

3.1 Stage 1 - SEA Applicability Analysis

Table 3-1 SEA Applicability Analysis/ Pre-screening Check

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? and Is the P/P required by legislative, regulatory, or administrative provisions?	The Policy Statement has been prepared by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, a government agency established by Ministerial Order under S.I. No. 298/2022. As such the Policy Statement can be considered a document prepared by an authority at a national level. The Policy Document is not prepared for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government. The Policy Document is not required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions. The ORE Policy has been developed by the Offshore Wind Delivery Taskforce, the establishment of which is provided for under the Climate Action Plan, and whose function is to drive delivery of offshore wind targets through cross-Government collaboration. As such the ORE Future Framework Policy Statement screens out of the SEA process at this point.
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 Policy Statement is being prepared for the Energy sector.
Does the P/P provide a framework for the development consent for projects listed in the EIA Directive?	EPA guidance clarifies that a 'framework for development consent' is a measure set out in a plan or programme which "<i>defines criteria and detailed rules for development and subjects the implementation of one or more projects to rules and procedures for scrutiny</i>". The ORE Future Framework Policy Statement does not provide a framework for development consent, it is not a substitute nor a replacement for the National Planning Framework or elements thereof, it does not come within the scope of Ireland's planning hierarchy.

SEA Applicability Analysis

	The development consent framework for ORE in Ireland is structured within the Designated Maritime Area Plans (DMAPs) and the Maritime Area Consent (MAC) processes, as provided for under the Maritime Area Planning (MAP) Act. A DMAP is a forward-looking sub-national plan that will contribute to the overall management of the maritime area. DMAPs will support sustainable development of the maritime area and facilitate coherent and transparent decision-making. While the Policy Statement commits to the provision of "structures and supports necessary to establish a future DMAP roadmap" it does not in itself set a framework for future consent. Individual strategies or plans related to the implementation of any Policy Action contained in the ORE Future Framework Policy Statement (e.g. the DMAP Roadmap) must be considered on their own merits under the SEA process at the appropriate level of governance control. Given that the Policy Statement does not provide a framework for development consent of projects listed in the EIA Directive, it would screen-out of the process had it not already screened-out in relation to the "Status of Plan/Programme Maker/Legislative provisions".
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. The AA Screening concluded no potential for significant effects on Natura 2000 sites.
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.

As summarised in Table 3-2, the ORE Future Framework Policy Statement is not required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions and as such screens out of the SEA process at Step 2 of the EPA's 8-step approach, as part of the Pre-Screening Check.

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?	No
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

4. CONCLUSIONS

SEA Screening was carried out to determine the need for a SEA for the Department's ORE Future Framework Policy Statement. It has been concluded, based on the pre-screening check that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

The Policy Statement screens out on two specific grounds: 1) it is not required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions and 2) it does not create a framework for development consent for projects listed in the EIA Directive.

Additionally, the SEA Directive requires that SEA is undertaken where Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (AA) is being undertaken. AA Screening of the ORE Future Framework Policy Statement has been undertaken and it has concluded that the Policy Statement, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is not likely to have significant effects on any Natura 2000 site in view of its conservation objectives and as such it has been determined that it is not necessary to carry out an Appropriate Assessment.

As per the provisions of the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 435 of 2004) as amended by European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 200 of 2011) SEA is not required.

This SEA Screening process will continue throughout the ORE Future Framework Policy Statement preparation process and will be informed by public/stakeholder submissions received on the ORE Future Framework Policy Statement.



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