

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Scoping Report

May 2015



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1 INTRODUCTION

Irish Water is currently preparing a National Wastewater Sludge Management Plan (referred to as the NWSMP) which will set out Irish Water's high level strategies for wastewater sludge management over a 25 year horizon.

This document forms part of the official Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) scoping notification to the statutory consultees for SEA in Ireland under S.I. 435 of 2004 as amended by S.I. 200 of 2011. The purpose of the document is to provide preliminary information on the proposed NWSMP, with a view to establishing the scope, level of detail and approach required for the SEA of the NWSMP which will follow. It is intended that the information contained within the report will enable meaningful consultation with statutory and non-statutory consultees in relation to the proposed NWSMP.

Further information on the NWSMP can be found at www.water.ie. The NWSMP will support the objectives of the Water Services Strategic Plan which is a separate strategy document and is discussed further in Section 2 of this document.

1.1 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a process for evaluating, at the earliest appropriate stage, the environmental consequences of implementing Plan and Programme initiatives prepared by authorities at a national, regional or local level or which are prepared by an authority for adoption through legislative means. The purpose is to ensure that the environmental consequences of plans and programmes are assessed both during their preparation and prior to adoption. The SEA process also gives interested parties an opportunity to comment on the environmental impacts of the proposed plan or programme and to be kept informed during the decision making process.

The European Directive (2001/42/EC) on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment (the SEA Directive), was transposed into national legislation in Ireland by the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 435/2004) and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 436/2004), as amended.

Under Article 3 of the Directive, an environmental assessment shall be carried out for plans and programmes, including those related to water and waste. Irish Water undertook SEA Screening in 2014 and determined that SEA of the NWSMP is required. (See **Section 3.1.1** for more information on the screening process).

The next step in the SEA process requires definition of the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the Environmental Report. This document provides information in this regard and will form the basis for statutory and non-statutory consultation on the scope and level of detail for the Environmental Report of the NWSMP.

This report has been prepared independently on behalf of Irish Water by RPS.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED NWSMP

2.1 RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE NWSMP

Irish Water was incorporated in January 2014 under the Water Services (No. 2) Act of 2013. Irish Water has been established as a single utility providing water and waste water services nationally. Irish Water now have the responsibility for the provision of water and waste water services in Ireland from 31 local authorities. This includes the management of approximately 1,000 water treatment plants and approximately 1,000 waste water treatment plants (see **Figure 2.1**).

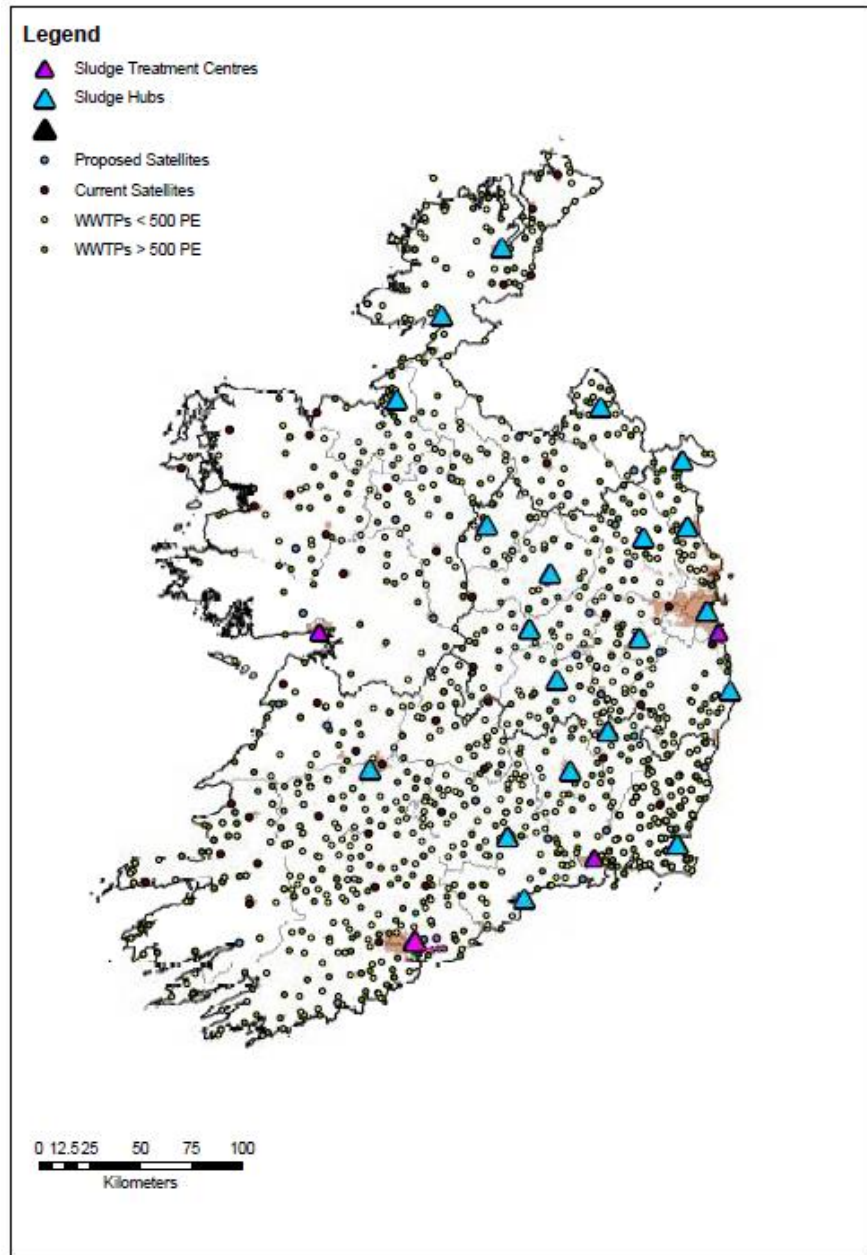


Figure 2.1 - Wastewater Treatment Plants in Ireland

2.2 BACKGROUND

Irish Water has commenced the process of preparing its Water Services Strategic Plan (WSSP) which is required under Section 33 of the Water Service No. 2 Act of 2013 (WSA). The WSSP will form the highest tier of asset management plans which Irish Water will prepare and it will set the overarching framework for subsequent detailed implementation plans and water services projects. **Figure 2.2** illustrates the position of the WSSP in terms of the overall Irish Water asset management planning and environmental assessment hierarchy context. A Strategic Environmental Assessment and an Appropriate Assessment of the draft WSSP is currently underway.

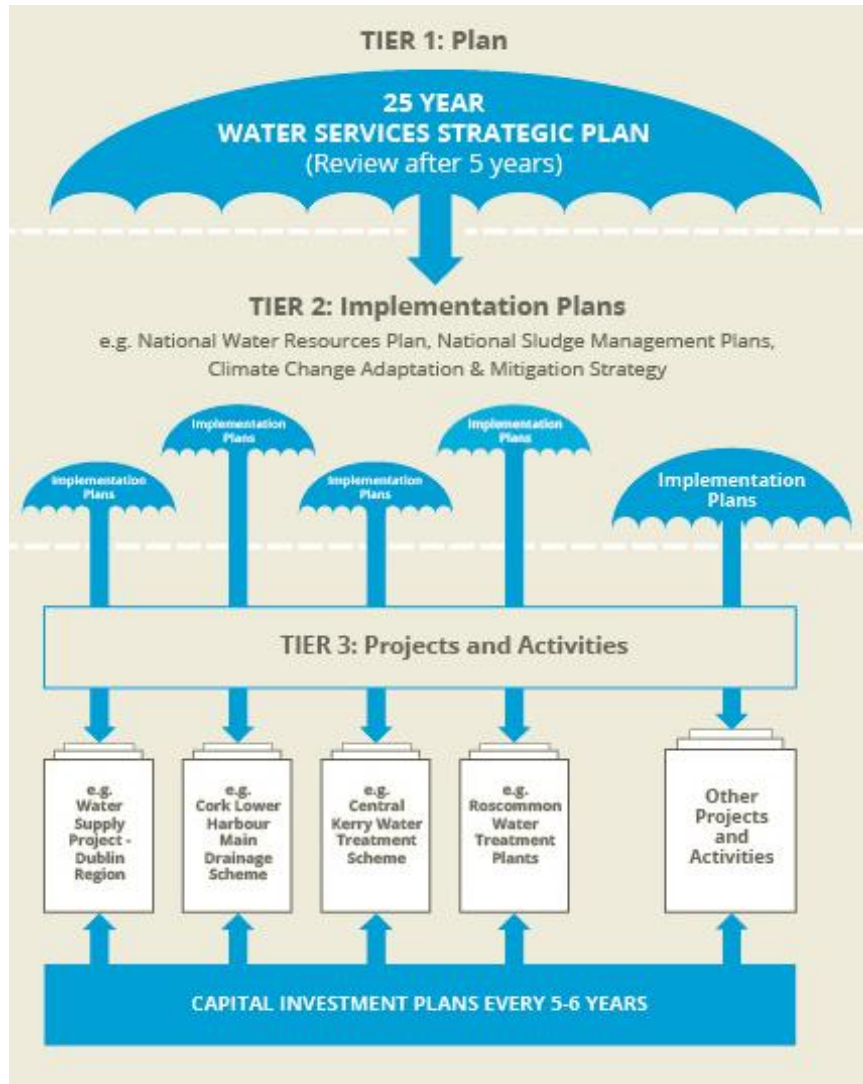


Figure 2.2 - Planning and Environmental Assessment Hierarchy for Water Services

As identified in the WSSP Scoping Report for SEA¹, the implementation of the strategies identified in the WSSP will be detailed in a number of Implementation Plans (Tier II) which will be prepared by Irish Water. These Implementation Plans will include, for example, a National Water Resources Management Plan, this National Sludge Management Plan, Water Conservation Plans, Water Safety Plans (note: this list is not exhaustive and titles of plans may change). These plans will be reviewed on a cyclical basis; and will be subject to environmental assessment as appropriate.

2.3 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE NWSMP

The NWSMP is required in order to set out the long-term strategy for the management of wastewater sludge produced at wastewater treatment plants under the control of Irish Water. A separate report will be undertaken for sludge from water treatment plants. The NWSMP will take into account current legislation and guidance documents in relation to the treatment and utilisation of wastewater sludge in addition to potential environmental impacts and sustainability of proposals. The recommendations of the NWSMP will be used to inform future capital and operational activities in relation to sludge management.

The principle criterion which must be met by the preferred option for the NWSMP is that it must provide a secure, sustainable, cost-effective solution to management of wastewater sludges over the life of the NWSMP, taking into account current and anticipated legislative and operational constraints. This includes a review of existing and new technologies and risks associated with all options within the plan. The NWSMP will set out the current status and the short, medium and long-term goals for management of wastewater sludge. Recommendations will include the preferred options to achieve sustainable sludge management including regional plans outlining future infrastructure.

The following sludge management objectives are considered in the NWSMP:

- Protection of the environment and prevention of harmful effects on soil, vegetation, animals and man;
- Compliance with all regulatory and legislative controls;
- Establishment of long term, secure and sustainable disposal routes and outlets;
- Cost-effective and efficient treatment and reuse/disposal techniques;
- Control of potential for nuisance from sludge transport and sludge facilities;
- Extraction of energy and other resources where economically feasible;
- Development of operational efficiencies, e.g. through use of regional sludge treatment centres.

As the NWSMP is a Tier II plan sitting below the WSSP it is intended that, where appropriate, the links between these plans will be recognised throughout this SEA and AA of the NWSMP. In this regard, the recommendations arising from the SEA and AA of the WSSP will be reviewed and incorporated as relevant into the SEA and AA of the NWSMP. Similarly, the method of assessment used in this SEA and AA will be influenced, as appropriate by the approach taken for the higher tier plan.

¹ <http://www.water.ie/docs/SEA-Scoping-Report.pdf>

2.4 PROPOSED CONTENT OF THE NWSMP

The proposed content of the NWSMP is presented below, however it is noted that this is subject to modification as the draft NWSMP evolves.

Chapter	Proposed Content of NWSMP
Chapter 1. Introduction	This chapter will outline the purpose and objectives of the NWSMP in relation to wastewater sludge management including its context with other relevant policy and a timescale for delivery of the objectives.
Chapter 2. Sludge Loads and Outlets	The current sludge loads including quantity, type and current level of treatment is assessed in this section and a review of the level of existing data undertaken. The predicted future changes to sludge loads are assessed in terms of population projections and changes to wastewater and sludge treatment processes. Sludge loading will take into account potential future imports of Domestic Wastewater Treatment Plant (septic tank) sludge. Recommendations for collection and assessment of future data are included to optimise future sludge management.
Chapter 3. Review of Standards, Guidance Documents and Plans	A review of current legislation, guidance documents and plans has been undertaken to assess current requirements and recommendations. This includes an assessment of predicted changes to legislation and any likely impacts on sludge treatment or disposal. Existing sludge management plans and any works undertaken as a result of these plans is also reviewed in this section.
Chapter 4. Consultation Process	It is proposed as part of the development of the NWSMP to undertake consultation with relevant stakeholders and consultees. A number of stakeholders have issued guidance on use of wastewater sludge and in some cases have excluded the use of wastewater sludge. This consultation phase will be carried out in parallel with the consultation for the Strategic Environmental Assessment and associated reports.
Chapter 5. Sludge Treatment Processes	The current level of sludge treatment, both on Irish Water plants and facilities owned and operated by private contractors are reviewed in this section. Locations where treatment may not be adequate will be identified. Appropriate treatment processes for agricultural reuse, energy recovery and alternative outlets will be considered.
Chapter 6. Sludge Transport Strategy	Existing information on sludge transport is reviewed in this section and options for sludge volume to reduce transport identified. Options for minimising sludge transport by capital works and optimising use of existing infrastructure are assessed. Existing sludge import facilities are reviewed and locations where there is a shortfall of suitable sludge import facilities assessed. A comparison of transport versus treatment options is being undertaken with the benefits of providing additional storage, thickening or sludge reed beds being assessed. Upgrade options for wastewater treatment plant sites will be identified including a comparison of on-site and thickening options. Options and criteria for sludge dewatering satellites will be identified.
Chapter 7. Sludge Infrastructure	This section reviews the infrastructure required at sites for sludge satellite centres and sludge hub centres. The current level of sludge treatment facilities including satellite dewatering and final sludge treatment is reviewed. Options for future sludge satellite and hub centres for sludge dewatering and treatment will be identified including assessment of potential for energy recovery.
Chapter 8. Sludge Options	Potential sludge treatment and disposal options are assessed in this section with respect to their ability to meet the criteria of providing a secure, sustainable, cost-effective solution over the life of the NWSMP taking into account current and anticipated legislative and operational constraints. This includes a review of existing and new technologies and risks associated with all options.
Chapter 9. Options	The selection of options and alternatives reviews all aspects of sludge management

Chapter	Proposed Content of NWSMP
Assessment and Alternatives	and will consider current practices, alternatives available and the preferred option. This will include a review of environmental, social and economic aspects and risks associated with the preferred options.
Chapter 10. Monitoring and Reporting	This section reviews current requirements for monitoring and reporting of sludge management activities. Recommendations for ensuring full quality assurance and any additional monitoring and control measures are included.
Chapter 11. Review Research and Opportunities	This section gives an overview of research identified in relation to sludge treatment and disposal. Much of this research is related to energy recovery and reduction of sludge volumes for disposal.
Chapter 12. Financial Evaluation	The financial evaluation includes a cost estimate for treatment and disposal of sludge over the life of the plan and assesses the potential impact changes in the availability of the agricultural outlet for sludge. A preliminary cost estimate of the expected potential capital works be undertaken NWSMP with a more detailed assessment of costs for recommended capital works undertaken by detailed studies to undertaken separately. The NWSMP will also include an evaluation of potential cost savings if works are undertaken. Other areas where there are potential cost savings, such as maximising use of existing facilities are also identified.
Chapter 13. Conclusions and Recommendations	The NWSMP will set out the current status and the short, medium and long-term goals for management of wastewater sludge. Recommendations will include the preferred options to achieve sustainable sludge management including regional plans for future infrastructure.

3 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a process for evaluating, at the earliest appropriate stage, the environmental quality and consequences of Policy, Plan or Programme initiatives by statutory bodies. The purpose is to ensure that the environmental consequences of plans and programmes are assessed both during their preparation and prior to adoption. The SEA process also gives interested parties an opportunity to comment on the environmental impacts of the proposed plan or programme and to be kept informed during the decision making process.

The European Directive (2001/42/EC) on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment (the SEA Directive), was transposed into national legislation in Ireland by the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 435/2004) and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 436/2004). Both pieces of legislation were amended in 2011 under S.I. 200/2011 and S.I. 201/2011.

3.1 OVERVIEW OF SEA PROCESS

Under SEA legislation, the following process stages are recognised (and further illustrated in **Figure 3.1**):

- Screening: Decision on whether or not SEA is required;
- Scoping: Statutory consultation with the defined statutory consultees on the scope and level of detail to be considered in the assessment;
- Environmental Assessment: An assessment of the likely significant effects on the environment as a result of implementation of the NWSMP including consideration of alternatives;
- Preparation of an Environmental Report;
- Statutory public consultation on the NWSMP and associated Environmental Report; including evaluation of the submissions and observations made on the NWSMP and Environmental Report and consideration of any amendments to the NWSMP as a result of consultation; and
- Issuance of a SEA Statement identifying how environmental considerations and consultation have been integrated into the Final NWSMP.



Figure 3.1: Overview of SEA Process

3.1.1 Screening of SEA

The SEA Directive requires that certain Plans and Programmes, prepared by statutory bodies, which are likely to have a significant impact on the environment, be subject to the SEA process. Screening of the proposed NWSMP was undertaken by Irish Water in 2014 and a decision was taken to undertake SEA. A copy of the SEA Screening Statement is available on www.water.ie.

3.1.2 Scoping

Under Article 6 of the SEA Directive the competent authority preparing the plan or programme is required to consult with specific “environmental authorities” (statutory consultees) on the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the Environmental Report. This document records the scoping process for the NWSMP. As part of the scoping process, consideration is also given to the requirement for Appropriate Assessment under the EU Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, Articles 6(3) and 6(4). This is further discussed in **Section 3.2** of this Scoping Document.

3.1.3 Environmental Assessment and Report

The Environmental Report will assess the strategic aims and objectives contained within the NWSMP. It will outline the alternatives considered by the NWSMP and provide mitigation measures where required. The Environmental Report will also assess potential in-combination effects with other plans and programmes and will have regard to the findings of the parallel process of Appropriate Assessment.

3.1.4 Consultation and Review of Submissions

The draft NWSMP will then be issued for public consultation along with the SEA Environmental Report and the relevant outputs from the Appropriate Assessment process for a period not less than 4 weeks. Following receipt of the submissions the plan / SEA /AA teams will review and evaluate the submissions and determine what modifications may be necessary to the draft NWSMP prior to finalisation. The proposed amendments to the NWSMP will be further screened by the SEA and AA teams to determine if additional assessment is required under either the SEA legislation or that relating to the Habitats Directive.

3.1.5 SEA Statement

Following finalisation of the NWSMP, an SEA Statement will be prepared to outline how environmental considerations have been integrated and how consultation has influenced the final NWSMP. The SEA Statement will include reference to the following;

- How environmental considerations have been integrated into the NWSMP;
- How the Environmental Report, submissions, observations and consultations have been taken into account during the preparation of the NWSMP;
- The reasons for choosing the proposed recommendations within the NWSMP document, as adopted in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and
- The measures decided upon to monitor the significant environmental effects of implementation of the NWSMP.

3.2 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

The requirements for Appropriate Assessment and the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect European Sites derive directly from Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora) which is one of the most important articles of the Directive in determining the relationship between conservation and site use.

Article 6(3) states:

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.

Article 6(4) states:

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 [IROPI], 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.

The NWSMP is not directly connected to the conservation of any Natura 2000 site. The NWSMP has the potential to impact on habitats and species for which Special Areas of conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA) have been designated and it has therefore been determined that the NWSMP will undergo screening for AA in a parallel process to the SEA.

It is noted that there are requirements of the Birds and Habitats Directives that are not encompassed by AA (e.g. annex IV species as per Articles 12 and 13 of the Habitats Directive, disturbance and deterioration of bird habitats as per article 4(4) of the Birds Directive) and these will be addressed in the SEA.

4 OTHER RELEVANT PLANS AND PROGRAMMES

4.1 HIERARCHY OF PLANS WITHIN IRISH WATER

Irish Water operates to a Planning and Environmental Assessment hierarchy for water services as presented in **Figure 2.2**. The NWSMP is considered a Tier II plan and sits under the overarching Water Services Strategic Plan. The NWSMP will in turn inform projects and activities required to implement the sludge strategy.

4.2 INTERACTION WITH OTHER PLANS AND PROGRAMMES

As part of the SEA process the context of the NWSMP must be established with regard to other plans and programmes that have been adopted at the international, European and national levels. In particular the interaction of the environmental protection objectives and standards included within these plans and programmes with the NWSMP requires consideration.

A preliminary initial review of environmental plans and programmes, adopted at international, European Community or Member State level, which would be expected to influence, or be influenced by the NWSMP is presented below. A more detailed list will be compiled as part of the Environmental Report and suggestions are welcomed as part of the scoping consultation.

International Legislations, Plans, Policies and Programmes

- The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC),
- The EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC- codified version of 79/409/EEC),
- The EU Biodiversity Strategy,
- Bern Convention (Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats),
- EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC),
- EU Floods Directive (2007/60/EC),
- The Groundwater Directive (1980/68/EC),
- Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC),
- The Valletta Convention (1992),
- Sewage Sludge Directive (86/278/EEC),
- EU Common Agricultural Policy,
- The Gothenburg Strategy (2001),
- The Seventh Environmental Action Programme (EAP) of the European Community 2013-2020,
- The SEA Directive (2001/42/EC),
- The EIA Directive (85/337/EC as amended).

National Legislations, Plans, Policies and Programmes

- The Protection of the Environment Act 2003;
- Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended);
- The Wildlife Act 1976 and Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000;
- Waste Management Act of 1996
- European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2014 (S.I. No. 31 of 2014),
- European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477 of 2011),
- European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations 2010 (S.I. 9 of 2010).
- Waste Management (Registration of Sewage Sludge Facility) Regulations 2010, (S.I. No. 32 of 2010);
- European Communities Environmental. Objectives (Surface Water) Regulations (S.I. 272 of 2009),
- European Communities Environmental Objectives (FPM) Regulations 2009 (S.I. 296 of 2009),
- Waste Management (Facility Permit and Registration) Regulations 2005 (S.I. 821 of 2005) as amended by S.I. 86 of 2008 and S.I. 320 of 2014;
- European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, (S.I. 435 of 2004) as amended by S.I. 200 of 2011;
- European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003, (S.I. 722 of 2003);
- Local Government (Water Pollution) Act, 1977 (Water Quality Standards for Phosphorus) Regulations 1998 (S.I. 258 of 1998);
- Waste Management (use of sewage sludge in agriculture) Regulations 1998 (S.I. No.148 of 1998) as amended by the S.I. 267 of 2001;
- Quality of Salmonid Waters Regulations 1988 (S.I. 293 of 1988);
- Quality of Bathing Waters Regulations 1988 (S.I. 84 of 1988) as amended,
- Flora Protection Order 1999;
- The National Biodiversity Plan 20011-2016;
- National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012;
- National Policy Position on Climate Action and Low-Carbon Development;
- National Heritage Plan (2002);
- National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 (2002);
- National Development Plan from 2007 to 2013;
- Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland (1997) (DEHLG); and
- NPWS Conservation Plans and/or Conservation Objectives for SAC and SPAs,

4.3 SEA GUIDANCE

The Environmental Report will contain the findings of the assessment of the likely significant effects on the environment resulting from implementation of the proposed NWSMP. It will reflect the requirements of the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment and also the transposed regulations in Ireland (S.I. 435/2004) as amended in 2011.

The following principal sources of guidance will be used during the overall SEA process and during preparation of the Environmental Report.

- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Checklist - Consultation Draft. January 2008. Environmental Protection Agency.
- GISEA Manual – Consultation Draft. April 2009. Environmental Protection Agency.
- Implementation of SEA Directive (2001/42/EC). Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment. Guidelines for Regional Planning Authorities. November 2004. Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.
- Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland. Synthesis Report. 2003. Environmental Protection Agency.
- Guidelines on SEA. Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.
- Article 8 (Decision Making) of EU Directives 2001/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as amended, Circular Letter PL 9/2013. Department of Environment, Community and Local Government
- Further Transposition of EU Directive 2001/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Circular Letter PSSP 6/2011. Department of Environment, Community and Local Government
- Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment – Streamlining AA, SEA and EIA Processes: Practitioner’s Manual. EPA Strive Programme 2007-2013. Strive Report Series No. 106.

The SEA will also have regard to the findings of the EPA’s 2012 Review of SEA Effectiveness in Ireland.

4.3.1 Department Circulars

In addition the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government have issued a number of relevant circulars in relation to SEA which will have relevance for the environmental assessment of the proposed NWSMP and will be taken into account during the course of the SEA. These circulars are as follows:

- PSSP 6/2011: ‘Further Transposition of the EU Directive 2001/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)’.
- Circular PL 9 of 2013: ‘Article 8 (Decision Making) of EU Directive 2001/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as amended’.

5 SCOPE OF THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Under Article 6 of the SEA Directive, the competent authority preparing the plan or programme is required to consult with specific “environmental authorities” (statutory consultees) on the scope and level of detail of information to be included in the Environmental Report. The competent authority in relation to the NWSMP is Irish Water. The statutory consultees for SEA are established within the national legislation as being:

- Environmental Protection Agency;
- Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government;
- Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht;
- Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR); and
- Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.
- Transboundary, if relevant

The main objective of scoping is to identify key issues of concern that should be addressed in the assessment of the NWSMP and the appropriate level of detail to which they should be considered. The scoping exercise should answer the following questions:

- What are the relevant significant issues to be addressed by the SEA?
- Against what environmental objectives should the potential options be evaluated?

The steps involved in the scoping process are outlined in **Figure 5.1**.

5.1 GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

The NWSMP is a national plan for the management of sludges arising primarily from facilities under the control of Irish Water. As such the assessment will be focussed at a national strategic level and collection of baseline data will reflect this.

5.2 TEMPORAL

It is proposed that the NWSMP will have ongoing five yearly reviews. In line with the SEA Directive, short, medium and long-term impacts (including reference to secondary, cumulative, synergistic, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects) will be considered during the assessment.

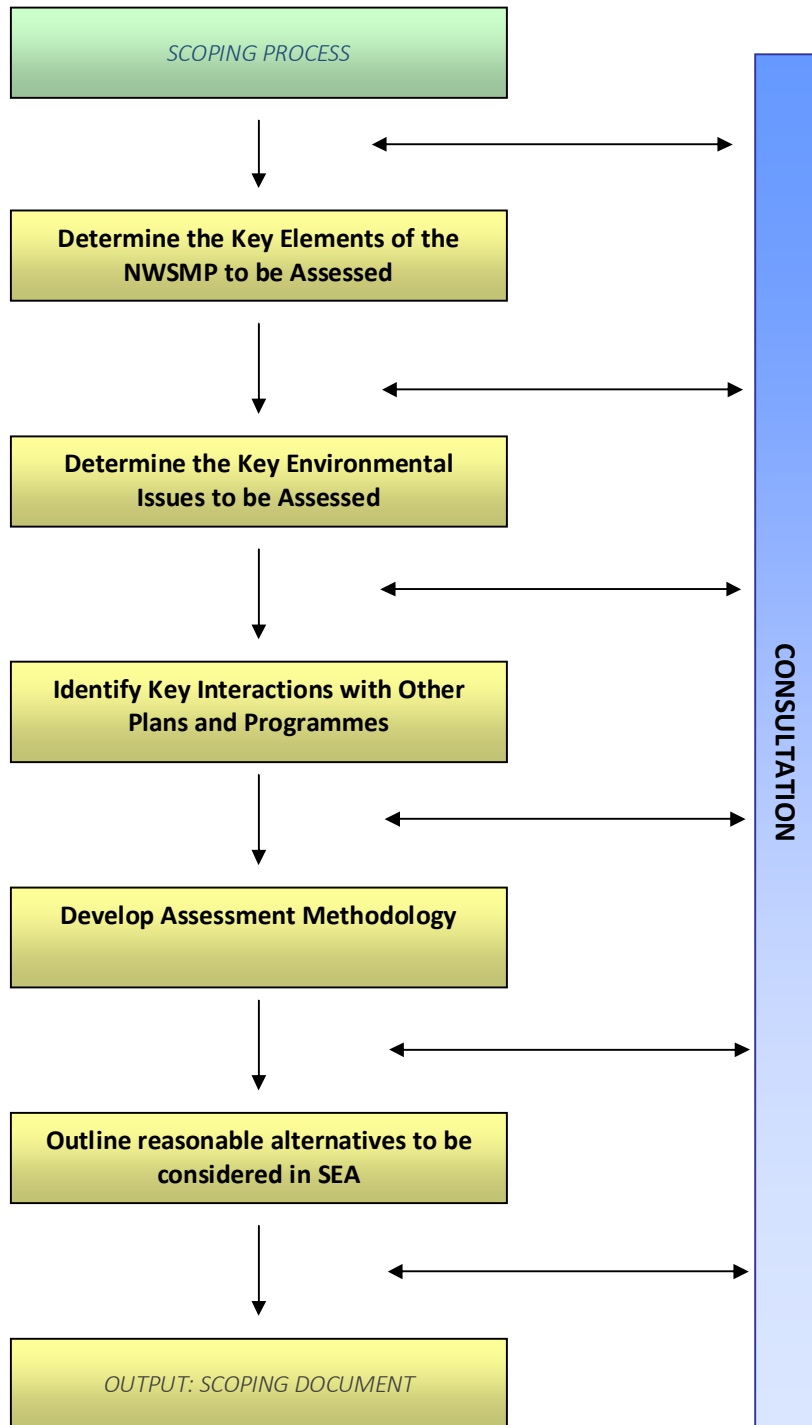


Figure 5.1: Steps involved in the Scoping Process (Adapted from EPA, 2003²)

² Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland, Synthesis Report, EPA 2003

5.3 KEY ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS ARISING FROM THE NWSMP

In accordance with S.I. 435 of 2004, as amended, consideration has been given to whether the environmental effects, both positive and negative, of the NWSMP are likely to be significant. Potential impacts associated with implementation of the NWSMP are outlined below. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list but a guide to the type of impacts that will be addressed in the SEA Environmental Report.

- Leaching of metals and other materials bound in sludges;
- Population effects associated with increased provision of production, treatment and storage including noise, transport;
- Potential for odour to cause nuisance at all stages of sludge management;
- Chemical or microbial contamination from managed sludges;
- Runoff – either direct runoff of sludge or indirect nutrient runoff causing eutrophication in receiving waters;
- Air quality emissions; and
- Energy usage for treatment and transport options.

Consideration has been given in this scoping process as to whether specific issues should be scoped in or out at this stage of the process. **Table 5-1** summarises this information including reasons why each SEA environmental topic has been scoped in or out. It is noted that at this stage in the process all environmental topics have been scoped in.

Table 5-1 - Scoping of SEA Issues

SEA Issue	Scope In/Out	Significant Environmental Issues with Potential to Occur and Reason for Scoping In / Out
Biodiversity Flora and Fauna	In	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects on protected areas: European (e.g. SACs, SPAs, Ramsar sites) and National (e.g. (p)NHAs); • Effects on flora and fauna, (including migratory bird species, invertebrates etc.) and habitats; • Effects on Freshwater Pearl Mussel; • Effects on salmonids, other protected fish and shellfish species; • Effects on sensitive habitats; and • Potential for interaction with Habitats Directive, i.e. Articles 6, 10, 12.
Population	In	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity of wastewater treatment facilities and infrastructure to population centres; • Improving function and operation of wastewater management facilities and infrastructure affecting land quality and water quality; • Nuisance issues etc.; • Effects on recreational land uses; and • Possible effects on tourism (e.g. eco-tourism, site seeing, activity holidays, fishing, water sports).
Human Health	In	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects on air quality; • Effects on soil; • Effects on water quality (recreational and drinking); • Effects on traffic and transport networks;

SEA Issue	Scope In/Out	Significant Environmental Issues with Potential to Occur and Reason for Scoping In / Out
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for nuisance (noise, odour); and • Attraction of vectors and pathogens.
Soil and Landuse	In	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future wastewater management facilities and infrastructure land requirements; • Influence on land use practices; and • Effects on soil from land-spreading.
Water	In	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water pollution; • Impacts on surface water and groundwater bodies from leachates; • Impacts on water bodies from upgrading infrastructure ; • Impacts on water bodies from land spreading of organic wastes; • Impacts on groundwater quality and quantity; • Pressures and impacts on ecological status of water bodies; and • Impacts on surface water and groundwater from leachates.
Air Quality	In	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effect of odour generated by sludge management; • Effect of air emissions from collection and transport of sludges; • Effect of air emissions from treatment and processing facilities; • Effect of air emission from land spreading practices; and • Effect of air emissions from any events or incidents on site at sludge management facilities and infrastructure.
Climatic Factors	In	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenhouse gas emissions from collection, transport and processing of sludges; • Greenhouse gas emissions from land spreading practices; and • New sludge processing technologies generating energy and used as alternatives to fossil fuels.
Material Assets	In	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of resources (building material and energy) in upgrading of sludge management facilities and infrastructure; • Reuse of sludge materials; • Use of transport networks in collecting and transporting sludge; • Energy usage / generation potential; and • Use of water and energy in operation of sludge management facilities and infrastructure.
Architectural, Archaeological and Cultural Heritage	In	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nationally designated sites in close proximity to sludge management facilities and infrastructure; • Effects on cultural, architectural and archaeological heritage features in the vicinity of proposed and existing wastewater facilities and infrastructure; and • Potential for disturbance of previously undiscovered archaeological remains near or within development of sludge management facility and infrastructure development site.
Landscape	In	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects on areas of designated landscape quality and scenic views; and • Effects on general landscape character and sensitive receptors as a result of wastewater treatment activities.

5.4 PARTS OF THE NWSMP TO BE ASSESSED

As part of the SEA scoping process a decision needs to be made as to what parts of the NWSMP should be assessed and to what level of detail. The purpose of the SEA is to provide a meaningful assessment of those parts of the NWSMP that may lead to significant environmental effects. In doing

this it will ensure that the requirements of the SEA Directive and associated environmental regulations are being met in adopting the NWSMP.

Table 5-2 identifies those elements of the NWSMP proposed to be assessed as part of the SEA and also explains why they are / are not to be assessed. Again this information is provided to generate discussion during the consultation process and is subject to change based on the comments received and the final scope and content of the NWSMP.

Table 5-2: Elements of the NWSMP Proposed for Assessment

Chapter	
Chapter 1. Introduction	No. This provides factual information about the background to wastewater sludge management.
Chapter 2. Sludge Loads and Outlets	No. This provides factual baseline information.
Chapter 3. Review of Standards, Guidance Documents and Plans	No. This provides factual information about the regulatory environment in the wastewater sludge management sector.
Chapter 4. Consultation Process	No. This provides factual information about IW consultation process.
Chapter 5. Sludge Treatment Processes	Yes. Appropriate Treatment processes will be considered.
Chapter 6. Sludge Transport Strategy	Yes. Options for treatment versus transport of sludge will be considered.
Chapter 7. Sludge Infrastructure	Yes. The SEA will assess options for future sludge satellite and hub centres for sludge dewatering and treatment.
Chapter 8. Sludge Options	Yes. The SEA will assess the sludge treatment and disposal options, existing and new technologies and risks associated with the options.
Chapter 9. Options Assessment and Alternatives	Yes. The SEA will contribute to the alternatives identification and will assess the reasonable options.
Chapter 10. Monitoring and Reporting	No. This provides factual information about IW monitoring and reporting processes. SEA may influence scope of this section.
Chapter 11. Review Research and Opportunities	No. This provides factual information about possible research opportunities. SEA may influence scope of this section.
Chapter 12. Financial Evaluation	No. This information will however be considered by the plan team alongside the SEA / AA outputs.
Chapter 13. Conclusions and Recommendations	No. This sets out the preferred option for the NWSMP. Recommendations and or mitigation from the SEA and AA should feature in this chapter.

6 PRELIMINARY BASELINE

In line with the SEA Directive, an environmental baseline will be compiled for the NWSMP. This will include; a description of the state of the environment at present; a discussion of the key problems/ issues currently being faced; and a description of the expected evolution of the environment should the NWSMP not be implemented.

The SEA Environmental Report will present a full description of the relevant aspects of the environmental baseline data for the region. The baseline will reflect the strategic nature of the plan. The environmental baseline will be presented in the Environmental Report under a number of Strategic Environmental Assessment topic headings as follows:

- Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna (BFF);
- Population (P);
- Human Health (HH);
- Soils and Land Use (SL);
- Water (W);
- Air Quality (AQ)
- Climatic Factors (CF);
- Material Assets (MA);
- Architectural, Archaeological and Cultural Heritage (AACH); and
- Landscape (L).

Under each of the SEA topic heading the current state of the environment will be identified along with the key problems/ issues and the expected evolution of the environment in the absence of the NWSMP. The data sources that will be used to compile the current state of the environment are identified in **Section 6.1**.

6.1 BASELINE DATA SOURCES

It will be key that the current state of the environment is described using the most up to date environmental data, information and reports. Where updates of significant environmental data and associated reports become available during the SEA process, consideration will be given to incorporating the new information into the description of the current state of the environment. Where data gaps are found for particular aspects of the current state of the environment, the significance of these data gaps will be clearly stated. In addition, it will be stated whether these gaps can be reasonably and realistically addressed during the SEA process.

A key document that will be referenced will be the fifth EPA State of the Environment Report: *An Assessment. Ireland's Environment 2012*, which identifies four priority challenges for the environment. These four priority challenges comprise:

1. Value and Protecting our Natural Environment;
2. Building a Resource-Efficient Low Carbon Economy;
3. Implementing Environmental Legislation and
4. Putting the Environment at the Centre of Our Decision Making.

The NWSMP will be put in context in relation to these four components.

It is intended to utilise Geographical Information Systems (GIS) where possible to display and analyse information relevant to the region. **Table 6-1** provides a preliminary overview of each of the SEA Topics that will be outlined in the SEA baseline. The table also includes a non-exhaustive list of the potential data sources that will be used to compile the baseline and in addition it outlines the preliminary extent of the assessment based on these available data sources. Given the strategic nature of the NWSMP, it is recognised that there are limitations on the extent of the scope of an environmental assessment and therefore it is beneficial to outline such limitations at this early stage.

Table 6-1: Baseline Data Sources and Extent of Assessment

SEA Topic	Potential Data Sources	Potential Extent of Assessment based on Data Sources
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) database; • National Biodiversity Data Centre; • Irelands National Biodiversity Plan (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht); • Birdwatch Ireland database; • Inland Fisheries Ireland; • Invasive Species Ireland website; • Wfdireland website; • Freshwater pearl mussel project website; and • Bat Conservation Ireland database. 	National and regional datasets are available for aspects relating to biodiversity, flora and fauna. Given the scale of the plan the assessment will be focussed on designated sites such as SPA, SAC, NHA.
Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Statistics Office (CSO) database, including census 2011 data; • Myplan.ie; • County Development Plans; and • Failte Ireland database. 	National datasets are available for population density and distribution and the potential impacts of the NWSMP can be assessed relative to the available information.
Human Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Soils, Water and Air Quality entries. 	There is no available National datasets for Human Health however, this topic is often referenced in relation to indirect impacts from air quality, noise, water quality etc.
Soils and Landuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corine Landcover and Land Use Database; • Coillte Forestry Database; • Teagasc Soil Information; • Geological Survey of Ireland Online Mapping; and • County Development Plans. 	National high level datasets are available for soil and land use resources at a county / national scale. This is in keeping with the strategic nature of the plan and is considered adequate at this scale.
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPA ENVision (Environmental Mapping); • EPA database reports including but not 	National datasets are available for surface water and groundwater and issues relating to waste and

SEA Topic	Potential Data Sources	Potential Extent of Assessment based on Data Sources
	<p>limited to: Water Quality in Ireland 2007-2009; Integrated Water Quality Reports (2011 and 2012 for specific regions); and Quality of Estuarine and Coastal Waters 2007-2009);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Framework Directive 'Water Matters' (Mapping); • National Catchment Flood Risk Management Programme (CFRAM), Office of Public Works (OPW); • Inland Fisheries Board database; and • Waterways Ireland database. 	water quality can be identified.
Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPA database (air quality); and • Local Authority air quality monitoring network. 	National and regional datasets are available for relevant air quality parameters.
Climatic Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPA Irelands Greenhouse Gas Emission Projections 2012-2030; • Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEAI), Energy in Ireland Report (1990-2012); and • EPA SAFER database. 	National datasets are available for carbon emissions and greenhouse gases.
Material Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPA database (municipal solid waste); • ENVision (licenced waste facilities); and • Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEAI), Energy in Ireland Report (1990-2012). 	National datasets are available for certain resources that may be affected by the NWSMP
Architectural, Archaeological and Cultural, Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Monuments Service (Archaeological Survey Database); • National Inventory of Architectural Heritage; and • Discovery Ireland Programme. 	National datasets are available for archaeology and architectural heritage, however the scale of the datasets are directed towards local project specific sources.
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no national datasets for Landscape. A National Landscape Strategy has been proposed but is not yet published. 	There are no national datasets available for landscape and the information that is available at a county level is not consistent across all of the counties.

7 PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESSING ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

7.1 CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES

The assessment of reasonable alternatives as part of the SEA process is required as part of an Environmental Report under Article 5(1) of the SEA Directive. Due to the strategic nature of the NWSMP and the far reaching effects it is considered best practice to outline the framework of alternatives being considered at this stage of the SEA process although it is recognised that development of alternatives is at an early stage of the plan making process. Alternatives can be described as a range of options available to the plan makers for delivering the objectives of the plan. The identification of alternatives enables more informed decision-making and the assessment allows more sustainable options to be identified. The strategic alternatives to be considered must be realistic, reasonable and relevant. It is anticipated that the Environmental Report will explore alternatives at a number of levels: strategic; policy actions etc.

Early consideration of alternatives is summarised below in **Table 7-1**, however it is noted that the SEA will be fully integrated with the plan process to elaborate on the reasonable and realistic alternatives for the various sludge streams within these broad categories as part of the Environmental Report. As part of the scoping process, feedback on reasonable alternatives to be considered in the NWSMP would be welcomed.

7.2 IDENTIFICATION OF OBJECTIVES, TARGETS AND INDICATORS

A key purpose of scoping is to set out sufficient details about the proposed methodological framework for the assessment of environmental effects to allow the consultees to form a view on this matter. It is proposed to use an objectives-led assessment which will involve comparing the proposed alternatives against defined SEA Environmental Objectives for each of the identified issue areas.

The preceding sections have identified the environmental characteristics and key environmental issues relating to the NWSMP and the key influences from external plans, policies and strategies. This section uses that information to set out a series of draft SEA objectives, indicators and associated targets. These will be used in the Environmental Report to predict the likely environmental effects of the NWSMP and subsequently, monitor implementation of the plan. The use of these objectives ensures that following this scoping stage the SEA focuses only on those issues that are most relevant and significant to the study in the NWSMP. For the purpose of consistency, the draft objectives, targets and indicators proposed for the NWSMP have been based on the objectives, targets and indicators already used for the WSSP. As a Tier II Plan, the NWSMP sits below the WSSP and would have similar context. Only those relevant to wastewater sludge management have been included. **Table 7-2** are the draft SEA objectives, targets, indicators.

Table 7-1: Draft SEA Alternatives for Discussion

Options	Issues to be Considered
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Liquid Sludge</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer unthickened sludge to satellite • Thicken on site and transfer thickened sludge to satellite • Thicken and dewater on site and transfer dewatered sludge cake to sludge hub centre for treatment • Onsite sludge thickening, dewatering and treatment • Onsite sludge reed bed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital and operation cost of thickening / dewatering versus transport • Distance to suitable satellite / hub for dewatering / treatment • Access to site and traffic impacts • Suitability of site for on-site treatment
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Sludge Cake</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-site dewatering and treatment • Transfer sludge cake to designated sludge hub centre for treatment • Transfer sludge cake to off-site private sludge treatment facility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital and operation cost of on-site treatment versus transport to sludge hub centre / off-site treatment • Distance to suitable sludge hub centre • Distance to suitable private sludge treatment facility
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Sludge Outlet</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-use on agricultural land / non-agricultural crops • Use in land remediation • Thermal treatment with or without energy recovery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital and operation cost of re-use on land versus thermal treatment • Distance to suitable land bank for reuse / remediation • Environmental sustainability

Table 7-2 : Draft SEA Objectives, Targets and Indicators

Environmental Component	Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs)	SEO Targets	SEA Indicators	Data Source
Biodiversity and flora and fauna	Prevent damage to terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, particularly EU designated sites and protected species resulting from Irish Water’s activities.	<p>Halt spread of invasive alien species and their associated impact to the aquatic environment.</p> <p>Halt deterioration of habitats or their associated species due to water quality related issues, in line with the Water Framework Directive.</p> <p>Maintain and restore the favourable conservation status for all habitats and species protected under national and international legislation.</p>	<p>Interim Indicators: Geographical spread of Alien Species. (NI and Ire)</p> <p>Number of Margaritifera Plans put in place. (Ire)</p> <p>Status of Northern Ireland Priority Species as reported in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (every 3 years). (NI)</p> <p>Status of Northern Ireland Priority Habitats listed under the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy (every 3 years). (NI)</p> <p>Long term Indicators: The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland (reports due every 6 years, first report in 2007). (Ire)</p> <p>Report by the UK under Article 17 on the implementation of the Habitats Directive (reports due every 6 years, second report in 2007). (NI)</p> <p>Condition of Selection Features in</p>	<p>Invasive Species (NPWS/NIEA)</p> <p>NPWS</p> <p>JNCC</p> <p>JNCC</p> <p>Not currently compiled</p> <p>NIEA</p> <p>NPWS</p>

Environmental Component	Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs)	SEO Targets	SEA Indicators	Data Source
			<p>sites designated for nature conservation (SACs, SPAs, Ramsar and NHAs). (Ire)</p> <p>Condition of Selection Features in sites designated for nature conservation (SACs, SPAs, Ramsar, ASSIs) (reports every six years). (NI)</p>	NPWS
Population and Human Health (PHH)	Protect and reduce risk to human health in undertaking water services.	<p>All drinking water areas (including groundwater), as identified on the register of protected areas, to achieve good status, or maintain high status.</p> <p>All bathing waters, as identified on the register of protected areas, to achieve good status, or maintain high status.</p> <p>All economic shellfish waters, as identified on the register of protected areas, to achieve good status, or maintain high status.</p> <p>All water bodies designated for salmonids, as identified on the register of protected areas, to achieve good status, or maintain high status.</p> <p>Long term reduction in drinking</p>	<p>Interim Indicators: Compliance with Drinking Water Standards. (Ire and NI)</p> <p>Compliance with Bathing Water Standards. (Ire and NI)</p> <p>Compliance with the Shellfish Pollution Reduction Programmes (Ire and NI)</p> <p>Condition of salmonids in water bodies designated for these. (NI)</p> <p>Water quality in designated salmonid waters. (Ire) Long Term Indicator: Parameters to be measured in accordance with the environmental quality standards</p>	<p>EPA</p> <p>NIEA / EPA</p> <p>NIEA / EPA</p> <p>NIEA EPA</p> <p>NIEA / EPA</p>

Environmental Component	Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs)	SEO Targets	SEA Indicators	Data Source
		water restriction notices.	to determine Good Status. (Ire and NI) Notices in place for more than 200 days	Irish Water
Water (W)	Prevent deterioration of the status of water bodies with regard to quality and quantity due to Irish Water activities and contribute towards the improvement of water body status for rivers, lakes, transitional and coastal waters and groundwaters to at least good status, as appropriate to the Water Framework Directive.	<p>No deterioration in status of waters currently with high or good status (WFD Objective).</p> <p>Restoration to good status of waters currently at moderate, poor or bad status (WFD Objective).</p> <p>Progressively reduce chemical pollution in waters (WFD).</p> <p>Limit pollution inputs to groundwaters and prevent deterioration (WFD Objective).</p>	<p>Interim Indicators: Interim Water status in 2011 report. (Ire)</p> <p>Environmental Quality Statistics relating to water quality published in the Northern Ireland Environmental Statistics Report (to be published annually). (NI)</p> <p>Long Term Indicator: Water status in 2015 (and subsequent years) report. (NI and Ire)</p>	<p>EPA</p> <p>NISRA</p> <p>NIEA / EPA</p>
	Minimise increases in flood risk resulting from Irish Water's activities.	No increase in properties at risk from flooding as a result of Irish Water's activities.	Number of properties at risk of flooding from combined sewers.	Irish Water
Air and Climatic Factors	Minimise contributions to climate change and emissions to air (including greenhouse gas emissions) as a result of Irish Water activities and ensure the resilience of water supply and treatment infrastructure to the effects of climate change.	<p>Minimise total emissions to air associated with wastewater collection, treatment and disposal.</p> <p>Minimise total emissions to air (including greenhouse gases) associated with drinking water abstraction, treatment and provision.</p>	<p>Amount of emissions to air associated with wastewater collection, treatment and disposal.</p> <p>Amount of emissions to air associated with drinking water abstraction, treatment and provision.</p> <p>Number of complaints received</p>	<p>Irish Water</p> <p>Irish Water</p>

Environmental Component	Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs)	SEO Targets	SEA Indicators	Data Source
		Compliance with odour criteria to prevent deterioration in amenity beyond the site boundary as set out in license for new or upgraded wastewater infrastructure. Improve energy efficiency by 33% by 2020 (from the 2009 baseline).	related to odour. % increase in overall energy efficiency at Irish Water facilities.	Irish Water Irish Water
Material Assets (MA)	Provide new, and upgrade existing, water and wastewater management infrastructure to protect human health and ecological status of water bodies.	Interim Target: Increase investment in water management infrastructure. Long Term Target: Full compliance with the requirements of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive and its associated regulations.	Interim Indicator: Water services investment expenditure per annum. Long Term Indicator: Number of exceedances of the standards contained in the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive.	Irish Water EPA
	Protect water as an economic resource.	Achieve sustainable use of water in the context of maintaining its economic benefit. Achieve a reduction in leakage.	Change in economic value of water relative to the baseline report The 'Economic Analysis of Water Use and Economic Analysis of Water Use in Ireland'. Leakage as a % of water treated.	Economic studies carried out by the EPA as a part of the plan making process during the 2nd cycle of RBMP. Irish Water
Soil	Avoid conflicts with, and contribute towards, where possible, the appropriate management of soils.	Avoid conflicts with, and contribute towards, where possible, the appropriate management of peatlands as per the National Peatlands Strategy. Utilise previously developed	Information from the NPWS on the management of Peatlands. Number/floorspace of water	NPWS Irish Water

Environmental Component	Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs)	SEO Targets	SEA Indicators	Data Source
		(brownfield) land where possible.	infrastructure built on previously developed land.	
Cultural Heritage (CH)	Avoid damage to cultural heritage resources resulting from Irish Water's activities.	No unauthorised physical damage or alteration of the context of cultural heritage features due to Irish Water activities.	Changes in the condition of monuments on the Record of Monuments and Places due to Irish Water activities. Number of National Monuments and Protected Structures at risk due to WSSP implementation	Archaeological Survey of Ireland Sites and Monuments Record Heritage Council Ireland / Local Authorities
Landscape (L)	Avoid damage to designated landscapes resulting from Irish Water's activities.	No damage to designated landscapes as a result of WSSP implementation.	Number of new wastewater / drinking water treatment plants sited in landscapes with a high sensitivity to change.	Irish Water/ Local Authorities

8 CONSULTATION

8.1 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR CONSULTATION

The following questions form the terms of reference for the consultation on the SEA Scoping for the NWSMP.

- Based on the plans, policies and programmes outlined Chapter 4 of the SEA Scoping Report, are there any other key relevant international, national or regional plans, policies or programmes that should be considered in the SEA Environmental Report?
- Are there any other significant information sources that should be considered?
- Do you agree with the list of potential significant effects that have been identified in Chapter 5 of the SEA Scoping Report? Should any be added or removed?
- Are there any other existing environmental issues which should be considered?
- Do you have any comments regarding the draft SEA Objectives outlined in Chapter 7 of the SEA Scoping Report?
- Do you have any suggestions in relation to the overall approach to alternatives?

8.2 STATUTORY CONSULTATION

As part of the Scoping Process for the SEA for the NWSMP, consultation will be undertaken with the SEA statutory consultees, as designated by the relevant SEA legislation and listed in **Table 8-1: Consultees in SEA Scoping Process**. A meeting will be offered to all statutory consultees to further discuss the proposals in advance of formal submissions.

Table 8-1: Consultees in SEA Scoping Process

Consultee	Statutory / Non-Statutory
Environmental Protection Agency	Statutory
Department of Environment, Community and Local Government	Statutory
Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources	Statutory
Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht	Statutory
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Statutory
Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)	Transboundary

8.3 NON-STATUTORY CONSULTATION

In addition to the statutory consultation noted above, wider non-statutory public consultation to encourage further participation by stakeholders and the public in the consultation process will also be undertaken in parallel.

In this respect, the Scoping Report will be published on the Irish Water website [www.water.ie]. Written submissions or observations in relation to the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the environmental report may be made to the undersigned on or before **5pm on Wednesday 24th June 2015** as follows:

Email: nwsmp@water.ie

Post to: National Wastewater Sludge Management Plan,
Irish Water,
P.O. Box 860,
South City Delivery Office,
Cork.

8.4 NEXT STEPS

Following receipt of submissions, the Project Team will review the issues raised and these will be taken into account in the scope and level of detail developed in the SEA Environmental Report and the draft NWSMP being prepared. Scoping is a dynamic process and is expected to continue throughout the SEA process, up to the publication of the SEA Environmental Report.