Appropriate Assessment Conclusion Statement

Project Reference	DET-2023-000052
Project Name	Great Western Lakes
Project Description	Historically, a number of large limestone lakes in the west of Ireland have been managed preferentially as wild Brown trout (Salmo trutta) fisheries. In accordance with Inland Fisheries Ireland's (IFI) most recent policy direction and their statutory remit for the management of Ireland's inland fisheries resources, seven lakes, primarily in the west of Ireland, are managed as salmonid waters. These lakes are Loughs Corrib, Mask, Carra, Cullen, Conn, Arrow and Sheelin. The emphasis of proposed management programmes for these lakes will be to protect, conserve and, where possible, enhance their natural attributes and native biodiversity which will, in turn, optimise their potential as sustainable wild Brown trout and, in some cases, Atlantic salmon (Salmo salar) fisheries. Atlantic salmon are listed in Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and their conservation is mandated in European countries. Brown trout are not specifically protected by the EU Habitats Directive. IFI's interest in other fish species not specifically protected by the EU Habitats Directive include the European eel (Anguilla anguilla) (Council Regulation (EC) No 1100/2007, establishing measures for the recovery of the stock of European eel), Arctic Char (Salvelinus alpinus) (which were once found in most of the 7 lakes but are now only found in Lough Mask) and Ferox trout (Salmo ferox) (large, long-lived trout that are behaviourally and genetically distinct from other wild Brown trout stocks) is also reflected in the plan. Through a series of targeted actions, connected to an overall strategy (The Long-term Management Plan for the Great Western Lakes), IFI will coordinate programmes under 7 categories of High-Level Objectives (HLO). Each HLO aligns to IFI's Corporate Plan (2021 to 2025) and is outlined in the following Sections of this document with an associated proposed series of actions.
Accompanying Report	NIS_GreatWesternLakes_IFI_WE_28Mar.pdf,

Consultations

Agency	*Observations*

European Sites

Site Name (1)	**IE0000297 - Lough Corrib SAC**
The qualifying interests of the sites	Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae) [3110] Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the Littorelletea uniflorae and/or Isoeto-Nanojuncetea [3130] Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp. [3140] Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation [3260] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) [6210] Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) [6410] Active raised bogs [7110] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150] Calcareous fens with Cladium mariscus and species of the Caricion

	davallianae [7210] Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220] Alkaline fens [7230] Limestone pavements [8240] Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0] Bog woodland [91D0] Margaritifera margaritifera (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029] Austropotamobius pallipes (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092] Petromyzon marinus (Sea Lamprey) [1095] Lampetra planeri (Brook Lamprey) [1096] Salmo salar (Salmon) [1106] Rhinolophus hipposideros (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303] Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355] Najas flexilis (Slender Naiad) [1833] Hamatocaulis vernicosus (Slender Green Feather-moss) [6216]
Potential Significant Impact	No
Mitigation Measure	Future plans or projects arising from this proposed Action must be Screened for Appropriate Assessment on a case-by-case basis. This can be viewed as a mitigation measure. If this mitigation measure is correctly implemented the Action, alone or in combination with other projects, will not have a significant adverse effect on the integrity of the Natura 2000 Network.
How will this be monitored?	Stakeholder engagement with IFI

Assessment & Determination

Assessment of likely significance of effects

An AA Screening was carried out leading to the requirement for a NIS as six of the proposed Actions will require mitigation measures. These measures may no longer be considered by competent authorities in the “screening stage” of the AA process when determining whether a proposed plan/project is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site. In the absence of mitigation measures the Great Western Lakes Management Plan may have adverse effects on the integrity of the Natura 2000 Network. This Natura Impact Statement, following objective scientific information and the Precautionary Principal, concludes that as a mitigation measure project and site-specific Appropriate Assessments must be carried out under each of the six proposed Actions (2.2, 2.3, 4.1. 5.1, 5.2 and 6.1). The proposed Actions involve the management of aquatic and riparian habitats and the installation of features to enhance the ecological conditions of the Great Western Lakes by improving the water quality, habitat quality and survival of all stages of salmonids. The management of the riparian and instream habitat aims to enhance salmonid spawning sites, including Atlantic Salmon, and can inadvertently improve habitat quality for other local biodiversity including species such as Otter, Crayfish and Lamprey.

Determination

No adverse effects on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites are likely. The proposed works are necessary to the Management of Natura 2000 sites and will positively impact on the Conservation Objectives and Features of Interest. The proposed Great Western Lakes Management Plan is not likely to have adverse effects on the Conservation Objectives or Features of interest of the Natura 2000 Network, alone or in combination with other Plans or Projects. As outlined above, following the implementation of mitigation the proposed Plan is not likely to have adverse effects on any features of interest or conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites or Natura 2000 sites with a hydrological link to the Great Western Lakes.