



NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR ANGLING DEVELOPMENT

Habitats Directive Screening
Statement for Appropriate
Assessment

15th June 2015

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Table of Contents

<u>1</u>	<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	<u>2</u>
1.1	HABITATS DIRECTIVE ASSESSMENT	2
1.2	STAGES OF THE HABITATS DIRECTIVE ASSESSMENT	3
<u>2</u>	<u>SCREENING METHODOLOGY</u>	<u>5</u>
2.1	INTRODUCTION	5
<u>3</u>	<u>THE DRAFT NATIONAL ANGLING DEVELOPMENT PLAN</u>	<u>6</u>
3.1	INTRODUCTION	6
3.2	OBJECTIVES & ACTION PRIORITIES OF THE NSAD	6
<u>4</u>	<u>RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DRAFT NATIONAL ANGLING DEVELOPMENT PLAN & EUROPEAN SITES</u>	<u>8</u>
4.1.1	CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES	9
4.1.2	IS THE NSAD NECESSARY FOR THE CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT OF EUROPEAN SITES	10
<u>5</u>	<u>LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS TO EUROPEAN SITES</u>	<u>10</u>
5.1	SUMMARY OF ELEMENTS OF THE NSAD	10
<u>6</u>	<u>IN-COMBINATION EFFECTS</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>7</u>	<u>SCREENING CONCLUSION</u>	<u>19</u>

1 Introduction

Minogue & Associates and Doherty Environmental have been appointed by Inland Fisheries Ireland to undertake a Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the National Strategy for Angling Development (NSAD). This Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA) Screening for Appropriate Assessment has been undertaken in conjunction with the Screening for SEA of this Strategy and should be read in combination with the Strategy, supporting documents and the associated SEA Screening.

The purpose of this Habitats Directive Assessment is to assess whether this Strategy has the potential to result in likely significant effects to the integrity and conservation status of European Sites.

1.1 Habitats Directive Assessment

The Habitats Directive Assessment is an assessment of the potential effects of a land use plan or project on one or more Natura 2000 (N2K) Sites. It is noted that a Habitats Directive Assessment is commonly referred to as an “Appropriate Assessment” (Dodd *et al*, 2007). However “Appropriate Assessment” forms only one stage of the HDA process (all stages making up the assessment process are outlined in detail below). The EU Habitats Directive provides the legislative framework for the protection of habitats and species throughout Europe through the establishment of a network of designated conservation areas known as the N2K network. The N2K network includes sites designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), under the EU Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the EU Birds Directive. cSACs are designated in areas that support habitats listed on Annex I and/or species listed on Annex II of the Habitats Directive. SPAs are designated in areas that support: 1% or more of the all-Ireland population of bird species listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive; 1% or more of the population of a migratory species; and more than 20,000 waterfowl. Under national legislation both SACs and SPAs are referred to as European Sites.

Articles 6(1) & (2) of the Habitats Directive set out provisions for the conservation management of European Sites. Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of this Directive set out a series of procedural steps to test whether or not a plan or project is likely to affect a European Site. Article 6(3) also establishes the requirement for a HDA:

“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 and 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 implication 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 affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public”.

Therefore, the objective of this HDA is to conclude whether or not land use measures outlined in the NSAD will adversely affect the integrity of European Sites. Such a conclusion will be arrived at by assessing the implications of this Plan for each European Site’s “qualifying interests” (i.e. those Annex I

habitats and Annex II species of SACs and Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of SPAs) and associated conservation objectives.

The HDA is underpinned by the precautionary principle. Therefore, if the risk of adverse impacts to the conservation objectives of a European Site cannot be ruled out it is assumed that an adverse impact may exist. Where such uncertainties are identified during the assessment, measures will be proposed to avoid or mitigate the risk of adverse impacts occurring.

The HDA was undertaken with reference to the following case law and guidance documents on Habitats Directive Assessments:

- European and National case law (ECJ C-258/11 & High Court case ref 2014-320-JR).
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities (2010). DEHLG.
- Scottish Natural Heritage (2012) Habitats Regulations Appraisals of Plans: Guidance for Plan-making bodies in Scotland.
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites – The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats directive 92/43/EEC. European commission (2000). (To be referred to as MN 2000).
- Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites – Methodological Guidance of the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission (2001).
- Guidance on Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC – Clarification of the Concepts of: Alternative Solutions, Imperative reasons of Overriding Public Interest, Compensatory Measures, Overall coherence, Opinion of the Commission. European Commission (2007).
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans. Scott Wilson, Levett-Therivel sustainability Consultants, Treweek Environmental Consultants and Land Use Consultants (2006).

1.2 Stages of the Habitats Directive Assessment

The European Commission (2001) Guidance has outlined a staged process for the completion of a HDA.

- Stage 1 – Screening: This stage defines the proposed plan, establishes whether the proposed plan is necessary for the conservation management of the European Site and assesses the likelihood of the plan to have a significant effect, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, upon a European Site.
- Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment: If a plan or project is likely to have a significant effect an Appropriate Assessment must be undertaken. In this stage the impact of the plan or project to the Conservation Objectives of the European Site is assessed. The outcome of this assessment

will establish whether the plan will have an adverse effect upon the integrity of the European Site.

- Stage 3 – Assessment of Alternative Solutions: If it is concluded that, subsequent to the implementation of mitigation measures, a plan has an adverse impact upon the integrity of a European Site it must be objectively concluded that no alternative solutions exist before the plan can proceed.
- Stage 4 – Where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain but imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) exist for the implementation of a plan or project an assessment of compensatory measures that will effectively offset the damage to the Natura site 2000 will be necessary.

The remainder of this document sets out the Methodology and Results of the Stage 1 Screening Assessment. It is structured as follows:

- Section 2: Habitats Directive Assessment Methodology;
- Section 3: Summary Description of the NSAD
- Section 4: Defining the Relationship between the NSAD and European Sites;
- Section 4: Screening of Likely Significant Effects to European Sites;
- Section 5: Stage I Screening Conclusion

2 Screening Methodology

2.1 Introduction

The function of the Screening Assessment is to identify whether or not Action Priorities proposed in the NSAD will have a likely significant effect on European Sites. In this context “likely” means any effect that may be reasonably predicted and “significant” means not trivial or inconsequential but an effect that is potentially relevant to the Site’s conservation objectives¹. Any effect, which would compromise the functioning and viability of a Site and interfere with achieving the conservation objectives of the Site, would constitute a significant effect.

The nature of the likely interactions between the NSAD and the integrity of European Sites will depend upon the underlying goals of each Action Measure and its implication for European Sites and associated qualifying features of interest and whether appropriate safeguards are embedded within the Plan to ensure that negative effects to European Sites are avoided from the outset.

The European Commission Guidelines (2001) outline the stages involved in undertaking a Screening assessment of a plan or project that has the potential to have likely significant effects on European Sites. The methodology adopted for the Screening of the NSAD is informed by these guidelines and was undertaken in the following stages:

1. Describe the NSAD and determine whether it is necessary for the conservation management of European Sites;
2. Identify European Sites occurring within the sphere of influence of the NSAD;
3. Review the aims, policies and objectives proposed by the NSAD to determine which have the potential to affect European Sites and determine whether the European Sites are vulnerable to the effects; and
4. Identification of other plans or projects that, in combination with the policies and proposals of the NSAD, have the potential to affect European Sites;

¹ See English Nature’s Habitat Regulations Guidance Note No. 3, 1999.

3 The National Strategy for Angling Development

3.1 Introduction

IFI is committed to the delivery of the NSAD in a manner that:

1. Prioritises projects which have the greatest potential to improve angling's impact from a social and economic perspective;
2. Complies with all legislative requirements including the Water Framework Directive and Habitats Directive amongst others;
3. Uses a partnership approach with other statutory and non statutory bodies, agencies and organisations involved in the conservation, management, promotion and use of the angling resource;
4. Supports rural and local communities through angling development;
5. Is sustainable and resilient
6. Maximises training and employment opportunities
7. Ensures 'Access for all' and social inclusion in angling participation.

Fundamentally, this plan will strive to make angling an accessible and attractive pursuit for all. In this regard the NSAD is the foremost statement of intent for the future of our angling resource since the establishment of IFI in 2010. The core research and work strands employed in the development of the NSAD can be summarised as follows:

- Economic analysis
- Angling Product Evaluation Criteria
- Market Research
- Current Angling Product Evaluation
- Project Register

A SWOT analysis was also undertaken to assist defining issues and opportunities and inform how the NSAD should progress. A series of stakeholder workshops were also undertaken that facilitated the views of a range of consultees as well as a call for open submissions.

3.2 Objectives & Action Measures of the NSAD

A set of three strategic objectives have been established to guide the delivery of the NSAD over the coming years. These strategic objectives act as a statement of intent and focus for Ireland's angling resource, and its development into the future. These three strategic objectives are:

- a. ***Making Angling Accessible & Attractive through information, infrastructure and support***
- b. ***Tourism Development*** through the promotion of our Angling resource
- c. Angling development as a key ***Leisure & Recreation*** pursuit

These objectives are expanded further through Action Measures and sub-measures for delivery. These measures are as follows:

1. Identify funding for this NSAD and future fisheries development and management
2. Encourage stakeholder engagement and involvement in fisheries development and management
3. Ensure sustainable development of the natural angling resource
4. Ensure protection and conservation of the fisheries resource
5. Set standards for fisheries and related services
6. Marketing and Promotion of angling domestically and abroad
7. Achieve access to angling for all.

The Strategic Objectives of the NSAD are grouped around the measures above, ie; making angling accessible and attractive, leisure and recreation and tourism development and then developed into sub-measures for action. It is the strategies outlined under each of the Action Measures that have potential land use implications and are therefore central to this Screening Assessment. Under these measures and associated strategies a number of projects have been identified. These projects cover a wide range of development activity including information, training, promotion, licensing, R&D, compliance and other non capital related expenditure, to physical access and infrastructure projects and investment in key angling resources and equipment on the capital side.

Clearly the physical access and infrastructure projects present as potentially giving rise to direct physical environmental effects. In order to ensure such projects would be compliant and avoid significant effects (including cumulative) two elements of the NSAD have been developed. The first relates to a project register that may be considered a 'live' register, projects may be entered on the register as they are identified and will be prioritised on the basis of the Project Scoring Framework . .

The second element is the IFI Environmental Charter developed specifically for the NSAD. The aim of this is to ensure IFI's statutory remit and compliance requirements are embedded through all projects (physical and non physical) that may arise from the NSAD. The environmental charter underpins the NSAD and will be utilised throughout its implementation. Proposals will be only progressed in line with the IFI Environmental Charter and are contingent on funding being made available. The Charter is attached as an annex to this Screening report for information. Key elements include: decision trees for helping to identify if projects or programmes would require SEA, AA or at project level EIA and /or AA, reference to key issues and measures relating to works close to watercourses, reference to relevant legislation and IFI best practice guidelines. Given the fact that the majority of the coastline, rivers and lakes are covered by designations, frequently under the EU Habitats Directive, assessing this impact of proposals will be a critical consideration; however it must also be recognised that the maintenance and enhancements of the fisheries resource is dependent on a high quality freshwater or coastal habitat and environment. Working with the variety of state and angling interests is also recognised in the NSAD, another critical consideration given that various state or semi state bodies also have responsibility and remit in the area of water resources and management. The key partner agencies and statutory bodies that IFI will continue to foster partnership and joint working for the betterment of the inland fisheries resource and sea angling include the following but not limited to:

- Government Departments
- Fáilte Ireland & Tourism Ireland
- Waterways Ireland
- National Parks & Wildlife Service
- Coillte
- Teagasc
- Marine Institute
- Sea Fisheries Protection Authority
- Office of Public Works
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Local Authorities
- ESB

4 Relationship between the National Strategy for Angling Development & European Sites

Many of the inland watercourses under the remit of IFI are designated as European Sites. The majority of these are designated as SACs. In addition numerous estuarine areas at the mouth of inland watercourses are designation for both SACs and SPAs. A number of watercourses have also been designated SPAs, specifically for the protection of kingfishers.

On a river basin district level, at least sections of all the major watercourses of each of the eight river basin districts in Ireland are designated as European Sites. As such it can be stated that the vast majority of watercourses in Ireland, whether designated or not, are likely to have hydrological links to the European Sites. Therefore, rather than examining the relationship between the NSAD and individual European Sites, it is considered more appropriate to examine the relationship between the NSAD and freshwater-dependent Annex I habitats and Annex II species for which waterbodies in Ireland are designated.

Freshwater-dependent Annex I habitats for which SACs are designated include both lakes and turloughs and watercourses. There are six Annex I habitats listed under the broader group of lakes and turloughs, while there are five Annex I habitats listed under the broad classification of watercourse.

There are 17 freshwater species, seven of which are fish, listed on Annex II of the Habitats Directive occurring in Ireland.

A range of bird species rely on freshwater waterbodies. These species are dominated by waders and waterfowl but also included other species listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive such as kingfishers and corncrake.

4.1.1 Conservation Management Objectives

The NPWS is in the process of preparing detailed Conservation Objectives for all European Sites under the current Conservation Objectives Series. These conservation objectives are focused on qualifying habitats and species occurring within specific European Sites and outline targeted actions for the conservation of qualifying features of interest and special conservation interests occurring within the boundary of these sites. At the time of writing detailed Conservation Objectives have been published for 113 of a total 578 European Sites occurring in Ireland. Generic conservation objectives are outlined for the majority of European Sites.

The Generic Conservation Management Objectives for cSAC are as follows:

- To maintain the Annex I habitats for which the cSAC has been selected at favourable conservation status;
- To maintain the Annex II species for which the cSAC has been selected at favourable conservation status;
- To maintain the extent, species richness and biodiversity of the entire site; and
- To establish effective liaison and co-operation with landowners, legal users and relevant authorities.

The Generic Conservation Management Objectives for SPAs are as follows:

- To maintain the bird species of special conservation interest, for which the SPA has been designated, at favourable conservation status.

Furthermore to acknowledge the importance of Irish wetland habitats for wintering birds, “Wetland and Waterbirds” may be included as a Special Conservation Interest for some SPAs that have been designated for wintering waterbirds and that contain a wetland site of significant importance to one or more of the species of special conservation interest. Thus, a second generic objective is frequently outlined for SPAs. This generic objective is as follows:

- To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the wetland habitat as a resource for the regularly occurring migratory waterbirds that utilise it.

4.1.2 Is the NSAD necessary for the Conservation Management of European Sites

The IFI have responsibility for the ongoing conservation and protection of the fisheries resource in Ireland. This key role of the organisation underpins and contributes to the ongoing conservation of European Sites and their qualifying features of interest. The NSAD's Measure for the Protection and Conservation of the Fisheries resource cements the ongoing conservation role of the IFI in the Strategy. This Measure is deemed to be necessary and beneficial for the conservation management of European Sites and their associated qualifying features of interest. The successful implementation of this Measure will have the potential to result in positive conservation effects for water-dependent European Sites.

The Strategic Objectives of the Plan are:

Making Angling Accessible and Attractive;

Leisure and Recreational Pursuits;

Tourism Development;

These elements of the plan are not necessary to the future conservation of water-dependent European Sites and do not have the aim of contributing to the ongoing conservation of water-dependent European Sites.

5 Likely Significant Effects to European Sites

5.1 Summary of Elements of the NSAD

Table 5.1 lists the strategies outlined in the NSAD under each of the action measures and assesses their potential to result in likely significant effects to European Sites. Where the potential for likely significant effects are identified these are assessed against the following safeguards which underpin the approach to the NSAD:

- A commitment to comply with all legislative requirements including the Water Framework Directive and Habitats Directive amongst others;
- The preparation of a "live" project register and the prioritisation of projects on the basis of the Project Scoring Framework; and
- The IFI Environmental Charter the aim which is to ensure IFI's statutory remit and compliance requirements are embedded through all projects (physical and non physical) that may arise from the NSAD.

The Screening of each Action Measure and associated sub-measure is also guided by best practice guidance and relevant environmental case law.

Measure	Strategy	Will the Strategy have the Potential to Result in Liely Significant Effects	Are Sufficient Safeguards outlined in the Plan
Sub-measure 1: Funding			
It is IFI's objective to make access to, and use of funding streams as transparent as possible.	M1.1 Identify/create a specific fisheries fund that can be accessed by IFI and 3 rd parties to undertake development works.	<p>The establishment of a fund will facilitate development works. Angling Development works at waterbodies will have the potential to result in adverse effects to aquatic habitats and species. Such works could lead to a disturbance to instream and riparian Annex I habitats and the habitats upon which Annex II species (and Annex I bird species) rely.</p> <p>Such works may also have the potential to undermine water quality, the morophology and hydrological regime of waterbodies.</p> <p>Due to the high level of the NSAD the potential receptors of these potential generic impacts of development adjacent to or within waterbodies cannot be identified at this stage.</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The draft NADP is underpinned by a commitment to comply with the Habitats Directives and will not support or provide funding for any projects arising out of the Plan that will result in likely significant effects to European Sites. 2. The "live" project register will ensure that projects identified as being likely to result in significant effects to European Sites will not be prioritised. 3. The adherence to the IFI Environmental Charter will ensure that the requirements of the Habitats Directive are met.
	M1.2 Provide stakeholder workshops and information regarding the application, allocation and drawdown	This strategy will not have the potential to effect European Sites. It will not, in itself, result in land use activity	NA

Measure	Strategy	Will the Strategy have the Potential to Result in Liely Significant Effects	Are Sufficient Safeguards outlined in the Plan
	of funds.		
	M1.3 . Adopt an easily accessible online application and award process for funding schemes operated by IFI.	This strategy will not have the potential to effect European Sites. It will not, in itself, result in land use activity	NA
Measure 2: Stakeholder Engagement	M2.1 IFI apply current best practice regarding stakeholder engagement to ensure appropriate communication and engagement with all angling stakeholders at th e appropriate level.	This strategy will not have the potential to effect European Sites. It will not, in itself, result in land use activity	NA

Measure	Strategy	Will the Strategy have the Potential to Result in Liely Significant Effects	Are Sufficient Safeguards outlined in the Plan
	<p>M2.2 Angling stakeholders will be invited/encouraged to co-operate and support angling development through the provision of on-line resources by IFI</p>	<p>The encouragement of angling development will have the potential to lead to an increase in land-use activity adjacent to and within waterbodies.</p> <p>Angling Development works at waterbodies will have the potential to result in adverse effects to aquatic habitats and species. Such works could lead to a disturbance to instream and riparian Annex I habitats and the habitats upon which Annex II species (and Annex I bird species) rely.</p> <p>Such works may also have the potential to undermine water quality, the morophology and hydrological regime of waterbodies.</p> <p>Due to the high level of the NSAD the potential receptors of these potential generic impacts of development adjacent to or within waterbodies cannot be identified at this stage</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The draft NADP is underpinned by a commitment to comply with the Habitats Directives and will not support or provide funding for any projects arising out of the Plan that will result in likely significant effects to European Sites. 2. The “live” project register will ensure that projects identified as being likely to result in significant effects to European Sites will not be prioritised. 3. The adherence to the IFI Environmental Charter will ensure that the requirements of the Habitats Directive are met.
	<p>M2.3 IFI will maximise the use of volunteerism where it is of benefit to angling development</p>	<p>This strategy will not have the potential to effect European Sites. It will not, in itself, result in likely significant effects to European Sites.</p>	<p>NA</p>
<p>Measure 3: Sustainable development of the natural angling resource</p>	<p>M3.1 The formulation of a database of development projects, prioritised by reference to the strategic</p>	<p>This approach to future project developments will ensure that only those projects that comply with the Habitats Directive, other relevant environmental legislation and the conservation aims of the IFI will be prioritised</p>	<p>NA</p>

Measure	Strategy	Will the Strategy have the Potential to Result in Liely Significant Effects	Are Sufficient Safeguards outlined in the Plan
	objectives on the basis of the project scoring framework		
Measure 4: Protection and conservation of the fisheries resource	M4. 1 Ensure the provision, implementation and appropriate review of policies for all key angling species.	No. This strategy will have the potential to result in positive effects for the future conservation waterbodies and the fisheries interests that they support. The implementation of this strategy will ensure that up to date scientific knowledge informs angling related land use and conservation efforts under the NSAD.	NA
	M4. 2 Update of legislation to reflect current policies and practices and also mitigate against current threats	No. This will have the potential to result in positive effects for the future conservation of waterbodies by ensure that the fisheries conservation and protection practices of the IFI are underpinned by legislation.	NA
	M4. 3 The designation of nursery areas/no keep areas in inshore areas. Regulatory support for designated Catch and Release fisheries – eg the Waterways Ireland	No. This will have the potential to result in positive effects for the future conservation of fisheries interests.	NA

Measure	Strategy	Will the Strategy have the Potential to Result in Liely Significant Effects	Are Sufficient Safeguards outlined in the Plan
	network		
	M4. 4 Increased focus on the protection of all species and their habitat.	No. This will have the potential to result in positive effects for European Site waterbodies and associated freshwater-dependent qualifying species.	
<p>Measure 5: Standards – Fisheries and Services</p> <p>To ascertain what makes a good fishery, IFI have created an ‘Angling Product Evaluation Criteria’ by which fisheries can be classified. The use of this criteria will identify gaps and allow for prioritised and focused development. Minimum standards for many service providers, such as angling guides are not in place, and are a clear requirement in the current marketplace.</p>	<p>M5. 1 Classification of fisheries against the Angling Product Evaluation Criteria to identify gaps and necessary developments that will provide the fishery with greater potential to attract anglers and economic benefits.</p> <p>M5.1.1 On going evidence-based review of the Angling Product Evaluation Criteria</p>	<p>No. This strategy encourages an evidence-based approach to working towards a high quality sustainable angling resource to promote. This is considered to be of benefit for environmental management and provide greater consistency and quality in both angling products and supporting services such as angling guides.</p>	<p>NA</p>

Measure	Strategy	Will the Strategy have the Potential to Result in Liely Significant Effects	Are Sufficient Safeguards outlined in the Plan
	M5.2 The development of a minimum standard for angling guides and ghillies and other angling specific providers that can be promoted on the www.fishinginireland.info website.	No. This will have the potential to result in positive effects for the conservation of European Sites, waterbodies and freshwater-dependent habitats and species.	NA
Measure 6: Marketing and Promotion			
Marketing and promotion activity will ensure that the Ireland's angling product is developed to address customer requirements and thereby deliver on the strategic objectives. This priority action will demonstrate anglings attractiveness, develop tourism and increase participation in angling for leisure and recreation. IFI has, with its partners, consistently marketed the angling product which has	M6.1 Ensure the consistent provision of up to date marketing information and analysis.	This strategy relates to promotion, marketing and building of relationships. It does not directly relate to landuse activities and is not considered to give rise to significant effects.	NA
	M6.2 Maintain and build on relationships with the tourism agencies and other agencies with angling promotion remits	This strategy relates to promotion, marketing and building of relationships. It does not directly relate to landuse activities and is not considered to give rise to significant effects.	NA

Measure	Strategy	Will the Strategy have the Potential to Result in Liely Significant Effects	Are Sufficient Safeguards outlined in the Plan
the greatest potential to grow tourist angler numbers and economic return. Angling marketing activity is consistent with the current Department of Transport Tourism and Sport's policy – People, Place and Policy, Growing Tourism to 2025.	through MOUs and partnerships		
	M6.3 Develop a transparent mechanism through which angling stakeholders can engage in promotional shows	This strategy relates to promotion, marketing and building of relationships. It does not directly relate to landuse activities and is not considered to give rise to significant effects.	NA
	M6.4 Further development of the www.fishinginireland.info for licence and permit sales and distribution	This strategy relates to promotion, marketing and building of relationships. It does not directly relate to landuse activities and is not considered to give rise to significant effects.	NA
Measure 7: Access to angling for all	M7.1 Develop and implement a policy on state fisheries that ensures the consistent management and access to state fisheries for all.	No. Any policy regarding access to fisheries to be developed on foot of the NSAD will be formulated in compliance with the conservation aims underpinning the NSAD. The establishment of such a policy under this frameowrk will not be likely to give rise to significant effects to European Sites.	NA
	M7.2 Update legislation to make provision for the investigation of ownership and title to fisheries.	No. This strategy does not relate to land use activities and will not have the potential to reuslt in likely significant effects to European Sites.	NA
	M7.3 Bring the angling to the people – the provision of designated	Yes. This strategy will have the potential to lead to an increase in angling, with an increase in the potential for human disturbance to freshwater-	Yes. 1.The NSAD is underpinned by a

Measure	Strategy	Will the Strategy have the Potential to Result in Liely Significant Effects	Are Sufficient Safeguards outlined in the Plan
	stocked beginner fisheries, coaching and angling hub support and novice angler projects	dependent habitats and species.	<p>commitment to comply with the Habitats Directives and will not support or provide funding for any projects arising out of the Plan that will result in likely significant effects to European Sites.</p> <p>2. The “live” project register will ensure that projects identified as being likely to result in significant effects to European Sites will not be prioritised.</p> <p>3.The adherence to the IFI Environmental Charter will ensure that the requirements of the Habitats Directive are met.</p>

6 In-Combination Effects

Individual elements of the Plan could combine to result in cumulative effects to European Sites and associated water-dependent habitats and species. Cumulative effects have greatest potential to occur with the intensification of angling activity along watercourses and waterbodies.

Without adequate assessment and mitigation the implementation of other plans and projects could also combine with future angling activities facilitated by this Plan to result in negative cumulative impacts to water-dependent habitats and species. Examples of such plans include other recreational activities such as walking and cycling promoted at a national, regional and local level; freshwater resource use as outlined in national, regional and local development plans; and other land use activities which have implications for water quality such as agriculture and forestry.

At this strategic level, it is not possible to fully assess the potential for cumulative effects, as impacts will become more apparent once local plans and projects are developed. However the “live” project register proposed as part of the NSAD and the commitment outlined in the NSAD to adhere to the Habitats Directive and associated Article 6 assessment process will ensure that all future local plans and projects arising from this Plan will examine the potential for cumulative effects with other plans or projects.

7 Screening Conclusion

As part of this Screening Assessment the NSAD was examined for its potential to result in land use activities which could have implications for European Sites and water-dependent habitats and species for which European Sites are designated.

The land use activities identified within the NSAD are outlined in Section 3: NSAD Action Measures. Each of the strategies seeking to implement the action measures of the Strategy have been assessed for their potential to result in likely significant effects. Many of these have been identified as having a positive effect on the future conservation status of water-dependent habitats and species.

A number of these strategies however, will, in the absence of safeguards, have the potential to result in negative pressures to these receptors. These pressures relate to strategies that aim to promote angling as a leisure and tourism resource. However, the NSAD has been established with the aim of not only promoting angling as a recreational and tourism resource but also as a high-level strategy for the future conservation of fisheries. This approach has led to the inclusion of a range of safeguards, such as the environmental charter, whose implementation will ensure that the NSAD will not have the potential to result in likely significant effects to European Sites.