

## **Environmental and Do No Significant Harm (DNSH) Appraisal – NWR ERDF 2021 - 2027**

*The Northern and Western Region has a world class quality of life and a physical environment of outstanding natural beauty. The region has extensive flora, fauna, biodiversity, and cultural heritage assets, many of which are protected through European and National legislation, including Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Natural Heritage Areas, and Proposed Natural Heritage Areas. The Programme includes environmental assessment documents on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), an Appropriate Assessment (AA) and also a Strategic Flood Risk Appraisal and Screening (SFRA).*

*Reflecting the importance of tackling climate change in line with the Union's commitments to implement the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the programme will contribute to mainstreaming climate actions and to support activities that would respect the climate and environmental standards and priorities of the Union and would Do No Significant Harm (DNSH) to environmental objectives within the meaning of Article 17 of Regulation (EU) 2020/852 of the European Parliament and of the Council. To ensure compliance with the requirements for DNSH the programme will endeavour to support projects and activities that protect biodiversity, water, air & land quality, and marine resources, that encourages circular economy initiatives that reduce waste and increases recycling and that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.*

*At the project level, all applications for development consents for projects emanating from any policies that may give rise to likely significant effects on the environment will need to be accompanied by one or more of the following, as relevant:*

- *Ecological Impact Assessment Report (EclA)*
- *Environmental Report*
- *Environmental Impact Assessment Report - if necessary, under the relevant legislation*
- *Natura Impact Statement - if necessary, under the relevant legislation*

### **Environmental Assessment**

*(a) Any reference to support for all plans, projects, activities and development in the Programme should be considered to refer to 'environmentally sustainable development' that has no adverse effects on the integrity of European sites and no net loss of biodiversity, that shall be subject to appropriate feasibility studies, best practice site/route selection (to consider environmental constraints such as landscape, cultural heritage, the protection of water quality, flood risks and biodiversity as a minimum), environmental assessment including EclA to support development management and where required, the completion of statutory SEA, EIA and AA processes as appropriate.*

*(b) The Programme seeks to protect, manage, and through enhanced ecological connectivity, improve the coherence of the Natura 2000 Network in the Region.*

*(c) Support for actions included in this Programme (and initiatives arising) is on the basis of appropriate SEA, SFRA, EIA and AA processes being undertaken in order to*

*ensure the avoidance of adverse effects on European Sites and ensure implementation of mitigation measures where required.*

*(d) The Programme encourages relevant development proposals that aim to protect inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters, and groundwater, preventing pollution, further deterioration of water quality, promotes sustainable water use and enhances improvement of the aquatic environment.*

*(e) Any planning consent process emanating from support through the programme will ensure compliance with the EU's Waste Framework Directive and EU Action Plan for the Circular Economy as such projects will be subject to:*

- i. the objectives of City and County Development Plans and Local Area Plans supporting the circular economy and prioritising waste prevention followed by re-use, recycling and recovery before landfill.*
- ii. adhere to Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects published by the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage and any updated guidelines and*
- iii. adhere to the new National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy (NWMPCÉ)*

*Thereby, minimising the use of natural resource inputs, reducing waste, pollution, and carbon emissions, and improving the productivity of resources used in development through extending the life span of materials and facilitating the repurposing, recycling, and re-use of these resources at end of life.*