

**Northern Ireland
Competitiveness Co- Financed
Programme 2007-2013**

Strategic Environmental Assessment

Final Environmental Report

August 2007

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NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Introduction

The Northern Ireland Department of Finance and Personnel is responsible for the preparation and implementation of the Northern Ireland Competitiveness European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Co-Financed Programme 2007 – 2013. The Department is required to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Programme under European Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004. This Environmental Report is the output of the SEA process.

SEA extends the assessment of environmental impacts from individual development projects to national, regional, county and district level plans, programmes and policies. It is a systematic process that assists authorities in the identification, assessment and mitigation of the significant environmental impacts of a programme.

The SEA process generally involves the following stages:

- Collecting and presenting information on the environmental baseline and its likely future evolution;
- Assessing the relationship of the programme with other relevant plans, policies and programmes;
- Assessing significant environmental effects of the programme, including those of strategic alternatives;
- Addressing adverse environmental effects through policy construction and / or mitigation measures;
- Consulting the public and authorities with environmental responsibilities as part of the assessment process; and

- Monitoring the environmental effects of the plan/programme during its implementation.

The SEA covers ten environmental and socio-economic topics; Biodiversity, soil & geology, water, landscape, climate, air, material assets, cultural heritage, human health, and population.

ERDF Programme

The European Regional Development Fund was established in 1975 to stimulate economic development in the least prosperous regions of the European Union (EU). It is provided for by the European Community and facilitates investment in socially and economically challenged areas of Europe. As EU membership has grown, the ERDF has developed into a major instrument for helping to redress regional imbalances.

The current ERDF programme in Northern Ireland is the Northern Ireland Competitiveness Co-Financed Programme 2007 – 2013 (hereafter referred to as the Competitiveness Programme) . This will focus on three related spending priorities in order to achieve the central objective of creating a more competitive and sustainable Northern Ireland:

- Increasing investment in research and technological development and promoting innovation.
- Promoting enterprise and entrepreneurship.
- Improving accessibility and protecting and enhancing the environment.

Links to Other Plans, Policies and Programme

The Programme has many direct and indirect relationships with a variety of European, national and regional plans and programmes. This includes those related to environmental protection and conservation, economic development and offsetting social disadvantage and deprivation. A full review of these and their relationship to the Competitiveness Programme is provided in the main SEA report.

Environmental Baseline

Indicators relating to each SEA topic were identified in discussion with Northern Ireland Environment & Heritage Services. Baseline data were then collected for each of the agreed indicators. This was done through a systematic desk study focusing on each topic in turn. In keeping with the principals of SEA, the focus was on identifying strategic issues and trends for each topic.

The principal sources of data were the Department for Environment, Environment & Heritage Service and other Northern Ireland Government Department websites. Where the required information could not be readily obtained from the website, then contact was made with the relevant Department.

Consideration of Alternatives

Consideration of the environmental impact of alternative means of delivering the programme is a key feature of the SEA process. This enables alternative environmentally preferable measures to be identified and considered in the programme's development. In this case, the consideration of alternative options is restricted by the need for the programme to conform with constraints already established at European and national level.

These constraints in combination greatly limit the range and choice of options that can be considered in the preparation of the programme. A SEA of a programme of this nature will therefore be inherently limited in terms of the alternative options it can consider. In identifying potential alternatives, the emphasis was therefore placed on potential alternative delivery mechanisms and approaches for the programme, rather than alternative programme priorities or objectives.

In consultation between ADAS and the Department, several potential alternative delivery mechanisms were identified. These are described in full in the main SEA report.

Environmental Assessment

The potential environmental impact of the Northern Ireland Competitiveness Programme was assessed against each of the SEA topics. The potentially significant environmental effects were identified as follows:

Potentially Significant Negative Effects	
SEA Topic Impacted	Aspect of Programme giving rise to a Potential Significant Effect
Climate	<u>Priority 2</u> To increase business start-up and survival rates To encourage growth of NI firms To promote direct foreign investment To facilitate a globally competitive and sustainable tourism industry
Potentially Significant Positive Effects	
SEA Topic Impacted	Aspect of Programme giving rise to a Potential Significant Effect
Population	<u>Priority 2</u> To increase business start-up and survival rates To encourage growth of NI firms To promote direct foreign investment To facilitate a globally competitive and sustainable tourism industry
Climate	<u>Priority 3</u> Investment in renewable energy

Other non-significant impacts, both positive and negative, are identified and are discussed in full in the main SEA report.

Mitigation

SEA requires that where potentially significant negative impacts are identified then mitigation measures to avoid, reduce or offset these impacts should be proposed.

The selection criteria for determining eligibility to funding provides a key opportunity for mitigating the potential negative climate impacts associated with the economic growth aspects of the programme. These criteria have yet to be developed, and there is therefore an opportunity for the findings of the SEA to be closely integrated into their development. The adoption of basic energy efficiency requirements or the installation of renewable micro-

generation capacity could for example be used as one of the selection criteria when determining the eligibility of applicants to funding under the programme.

Tourism proposals that aim to increase the numbers of visitors from outside of Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland should demonstrate that carbon saving or off-setting measures are incorporated into the proposal. This could for example be through the incorporation of energy conservation measures and renewable micro-generation into the associated tourist facilities. The selection criteria again provide a key opportunity for incorporating such measures into the programme.

Monitoring

Monitoring of the implementation of the programme is already a key feature of the existing Competitiveness Programme. Any additional monitoring of environmental impacts as required by the SEA will be incorporated into the monitoring framework. The precise nature of environmental monitoring will be finalised by the Department.

In accordance with the Regulations, monitoring should focus on aspects of the programme where significant environmental impacts are predicted.

Monitoring should therefore focus on the predicted climate impacts and will need to focus on the emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from projects or developments stimulated through programme funds.

Outcome of the Public Consultation

The draft SEA report was issued for public consultation on the 16 April 2007, closing on the 9 July. One response was received and the ERDF Operational Programme was amended according. In accordance with the SEA Directive 2001/42/EC an Article 9 statement will be made.

Appendix 7 provides a summary of the public consultation response and the action taken as a result.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

ADAS has been instructed by the Northern Ireland Department of Finance and Personnel (NI DFP) to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Northern Ireland European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Competitiveness Co-Financed Programme 2007 – 2013. This is hereafter referred to as the ‘Competitiveness Programme’, or the ‘programme’.

The SEA has been carried out under the terms of the European Union’s Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive 2001/42/EC, ‘Assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment’, and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004. These are hereafter referred to as the SEA Directive and the Northern Ireland SEA Regulations respectively.

1.1 Purpose of the SEA

SEA extends the assessment of environmental impacts from individual development projects to the broader perspective of national, regional, county and district level plans. It is a systematic process that assists authorities in the identification and assessment of the significant environmental impacts of a programme.

The stated objectives of the SEA Directive are to:

- Provide for a high level of protection of the environment; and
- Contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development.

1.2 SEA Process

The main stages of the SEA process are:

- The production of a Scoping Report
- The production of an Environmental Report identifying the likely significant environmental effects of the draft programme;
- Consultation on the draft programme and the accompanying Environmental Report;
- An SEA Statement taking into account the Environmental Report and the results of consultation in decision-making; and providing information when the programme is adopted and showing how the results of the SEA and consultation have been taken into account.

The output of the SEA process is the Environmental Report. In accordance with the requirements of Northern Ireland SEA Regulations, this must incorporate the following information:

- *Outline of contents, SEA objectives and relationship with other plans and programmes.*
- *Description of the current state of the environment, and likely future trends in the absence of the programme*
- *Consideration of Alternatives*
- *Outline of environmental characteristics and key environmental issues / problems likely to be affected by the plan.*

- *Environmental protection objectives that are relevant to the plan, and a description of how these have been accounted for in the preparation of the plan.*
- *Likely significant effects of the plan, assessed against population, human health, fauna, flora, biodiversity, soil & geology, water, air, climate, material assets, cultural heritage and landscape.*
- *Schedule of mitigation measures aimed at avoiding, reducing or offsetting any potentially significant environmental impacts.*
- *Schedule of monitoring in accordance with Regulation 10 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Northern Ireland) 2004.*
- *Non-technical summary*

The content and structure of this Environmental Report has been devised in compliance with these requirements. The Environmental Statement will follow, according to the consultation responses received on this Environmental Report.

1.3 SEA Topics

The topics to be considered in the SEA were determined in accordance with the statutory requirements of the Northern Ireland SEA Regulations, although for simplicity some have been combined (for example flora and fauna are listed separately in the Regulations, but for the purposes of this report are combined under the heading of biodiversity).

This approach led to the identification of ten SEA topics to be considered in the SEA. These were grouped under the two broad headings of Environmental Topics and Socio-Economic Topics as follows:

Group 1: Environmental Topics

- Biodiversity (including fauna and flora)
- Soil & Geology
- Water
- Landscape
- Climate
- Air

Group 2: Socio-Economic Topics

- Material Assets
- Cultural Heritage
- Human Health
- Population

1.4 Scoping Consultation

A Scoping Review outlining the proposed approach and key issues to be considered in the SEA was prepared and submitted to NI DFP on 15th February 2007. In accordance with the requirements of the Northern Ireland

SEA Regulations, this was then passed for comment to Environment and Heritage Services (EHS), the statutory consultee on SEA in Northern Ireland.

In accordance with the Northern Ireland SEA Regulations, EHS is required to provide a formal consultation response within five weeks of receipt of the Scoping Review, and this was received on 22nd March 2007. The comments contained within this consultation response are accounted for in the preparation of this Environmental Report. The Scoping Response received from EHS is included as Appendix 1.

Due to the short timescale between the receipt of the consultation response on the Scoping Review, and the deadline for the submission of the Environmental Report, a scoping workshop was held with representatives of EHS on 2nd March 2007. The purpose of this was to provide an opportunity for informal responses to be received and for any significant issues raised to be accounted for and incorporated into the SEA without the need to wait for the completion of the statutory five week consultation period.

Spatial and temporal scope

The spatial scope for the assessment is all of Northern Ireland. However, as required by the SEA Directive the assessment also accounts for trans-boundary impacts where it is identified that actions taken in Northern Ireland in response to the programme have the potential to impact on the topic areas identified in other states.

The Competitiveness Programme runs from 2007 through to 2013 and this is therefore adopted as the primary temporal scope. However, with certain aspects of the environment any positive or negative impacts associated with the programme may take effect over a much longer time period than that of the programme itself. For this reason, a longer- term view is taken on potential impacts where appropriate.

2.0 THE COMPETITIVENESS PROGRAMME

2.1 Context

The European Regional Development Fund was established in 1975 to stimulate economic development in the least prosperous regions of the European Union (EU). It is provided for by the European Community and facilitates investment in socially and economically challenged areas of Europe. As EU membership has grown, the Competitiveness Programme has developed into a major instrument for helping to redress regional imbalances.

Northern Ireland's Structural Funds' allocation under the Competitiveness and Employment Objective will be delivered through two separate programmes, one co-funded by the ERDF and the other co-funded by the European Social Fund (ESF). This Strategic Environmental Assessment only relates to the Competitiveness Programme. A single Competitiveness Programme will operate for the whole of Northern Ireland. The programme will be closely aligned with the Lisbon Jobs and Growth Agenda, with the requirement that at least 75% of the Programme's expenditure must be set aside for activities deemed compatible with the Lisbon priorities of promoting competitiveness and employment.

The overall objective of the Competitiveness Programme in Northern Ireland is to help to create a more competitive and sustainable Northern Ireland and to close the productivity gap with the UK. This will be achieved by stimulating economic growth and job creation. The new Competitiveness Programme builds on the successes and the lessons learnt from the Northern Ireland Single Programme 1994–99 and the Building Sustainable Prosperity Programme 2000-06.

UK Government strategy aims to use ERDF funds to promote investment in research and technological development (R&TD) and encourage enterprise

and entrepreneurship. The ERDF funding is prioritised towards promoting R&TD expenditure by local businesses and improving enterprise performance to catch up with the best performing regions in Europe. The aim is to create a better climate for existing businesses to expand, enhance the skills of the current workforce, promote new technology and encourage new entrepreneurs.

The Competitiveness Programme is not set in isolation to other strategies in Northern Ireland, but aims to support and enhance existing regional strategies. The programme will be achieved in the overall context of sustainability in order to create sustainable communities and lifetime opportunities for all throughout Northern Ireland. The programme has been developed with regard for the environment and promoting equality and good relations.

2.2 Programme Priorities and Objectives

The Competitiveness Programme will focus on three inter linked spending priorities in order to concentrate resources on achieving the central objective of creating a more competitive and sustainable Northern Ireland:

- Increasing investment in research and technological development and promoting innovation.
- Promoting enterprise and entrepreneurship.
- Improving accessibility and protecting and enhancing the environment.

Projects that meet with these spending priorities may be co funded during the seven-year programme period. The Programme Monitoring Committee established by NI DFP will agree the selection criteria for the projects. The selection criteria will be used to assess the eligibility of projects for funding

under Competitiveness Programme funds. Projects that are innovative will be encouraged to apply.

2.3 ERDF Spending Priorities

Priority 1: Increasing Investment in Research and Technological Development and Promoting Innovation

The objective is to assist the development and maintenance of a world class innovation system in Northern Ireland. This will be achieved by delivering a range of projects that will increase the capability of businesses to utilise knowledge, skills and innovation to create a unique competitive advantage.

Aims:

- To increase expenditure on R&TD, innovation and design by companies across all sectors.
- To build the absorptive capacity of Northern Ireland companies for R&TD and innovation.
- To promote better links between businesses and the research sector.

This priority will focus on three key areas:

- Increasing the level and quality of R&TD.
- Exploiting the commercial opportunities of the R&TD base.
- Promotion and mainstreaming of innovation.

Priority 2: Promoting Enterprise and Entrepreneurship

The objective is to encourage more people to consider starting a new business or to expand an existing business. The support infrastructure will be strengthened, ensuring appropriate services are accessible particularly for those groups that are under represented amongst the entrepreneurial population. Investment will develop the tourist infrastructure and industry competitiveness.

Aims:

- To increase business start up and survival rates.
- To encourage growth on Northern Ireland firms by encouraging companies of all types and sizes to become more market-aware, research aware, outward looking, export orientated, and committed to ongoing business development.
- To promote foreign direct investment.
- To facilitate a globally competitive and sustainable tourism industry.

This priority will focus on two key areas:

- Expanding the private Sector.
- Creating a world class business climate in Northern Ireland.

Priority 3: Improving Accessibility and Protecting and Enhancing the Environment

Objectives under this priority include bringing the next generation broadband services plus competition in the delivery of services throughout Northern Ireland up to the level in major urban areas in the UK and Europe. It is

intended that this will lead to an increase in productivity by SME's which should help to stimulate new jobs for all areas of Northern Ireland.

Aims:

- To improve Northern Ireland's basic infrastructure to support and complement sustainable economic and social development.

This priority will focus on two key areas:

- Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment.
- Promoting sustainable development and creating sustainable communities.

2.4 Cross Cutting Themes

The three spending priorities are underpinned by the cross cutting themes of:

- a) Equal opportunity and Good relations.
- b) Promoting Sustainable Development.
- c) Creation of Sustainable communities.

Projects funded under the Competitiveness Programme must demonstrate compatibility with these cross cutting themes. The activities that are funded under the Competitiveness Programme must meet not only with the objectives of the programme itself but also with the wider objectives of the Northern Ireland Administration.

2.5 Delivery

In Northern Ireland, NI DFP has the responsibility for fulfilling the role of the Member State and for all aspects of the preparation and delivery of the Competitiveness Programme. NI DFP will also Chair the Monitoring Committee to be established to ensure the quality of the implementation of the programme.

NI DFP will co ordinate the following:

- Preparation, negotiation and approval of Operational Programmes.
- Ex ante evaluation.
- Setting up of management, monitoring and control arrangements.

Expenditure on the programme will be delivered through a range of government departments and intermediary bodies. The majority of spending will be delivered by the Northern Ireland Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI).

Projects will be selected through open competition and activities may be delivered by any relevant public, private, voluntary or community sector provider.

2.6 Funding

Northern Ireland has been allocated 307 million Euros (approx £211million) to fund the Programme for the period 2007-2013.

2.7 Relationship to Former Programmes

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) was created in 1975 as a redistribution instrument and has become the main instrument of the Community's regional policy. It aimed to assist the least favoured regions and has focused mainly on productive investments, infrastructures and small and medium enterprises development. The ERDF 2007 – 2013 is the latest programme in a number of previous ERDF programmes.

Since the ERDF's creation in 1975 there have been a number of reforms to the programme, commencing in 1989 and continuing for the 1993–1999 programme. Further reforms of the Structural Funds occurred in 1999 where the priority objectives were redefined for the 2000-06 Agenda 2000 package.

The regulations reforming the Structural Funds in 1993 gave the ERDF the following objectives for the period 1994 - 99:

- development and structural adjustment of regions whose development is lagging behind;
- redevelopment of regions severely affected by industrial decline;
- development of rural regions;
- fostering the Arctic regions

The regulations adopted in 1999 for the period 2000 – 2006 limits the ERDF's objectives to:

- Promoting the development and structural adjustment of regions whose development is lagging behind.

- Supporting the economic and social conversion of industrial, rural, urban and fisheries areas facing structural difficulties.
- Supporting the adaptation and modernisation of policies and systems of education, training and employment.

The objectives for the period 2007-2013 build on the past periods objectives. The objectives of the ERDF 2007–2013 include helping to reinforce economic and social cohesion by redressing regional imbalances. This is to be achieved by supporting the development and structural adjustment of regional economies.

In Northern Ireland, the Competitiveness Programme replaces the Programme for Building Sustainable Prosperity. The new programme will not preclude rural areas and populations from benefiting from measures taken forward under other funding streams such as the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), and the European Fisheries Fund. Indeed it is designed to have synergy with and complement these other programmes.

2.8 Relationship to Needs Analysis and SWOT

A separate needs analysis in the form of a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis has been carried out and was submitted in the UK National Strategic Framework to the European Commission. This has been reviewed as part of the ex-ante evaluation of the programme.

The purpose of SEA is not to repeat that overall assessment but to look more closely at the environmental aspects.

3.0 CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES

3.1 Alternative Delivery Mechanisms

Consideration of alternatives is a key feature of the SEA process. The Northern Ireland SEA Regulations state that:

(2) The report shall identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of -

(a) implementing the plan or programme; and

(b) reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) guidance¹ on SEA recognises that it is not for the SEA to decide on the options to be considered. Instead the SEA should focus on the alternative delivery options actually considered in the preparation of the plan. These should be identified by the body responsible for writing the plan, in this case NI DFP. The SEA will then assess which of the identified options, or combination of options performs the best environmentally.

In this case, the consideration of alternative options is restricted by the need for the programme to conform with constraints already established at European and national level. In particular, the scope and range of activities that can be supported by European funds is heavily constrained by European regulations, and the need to conform with the requirement that at least 75% of the programme's expenditure must be set aside for activities deemed compatible with the Lisbon priorities of promoting competitiveness and

¹ A practical guide to the Strategic Environmental Directive. ODPM. 2005. Available for download at www.communities.gov.uk

employment. At a national level, the programme must be consistent with UK policies for the allocation of structural funds. These explicitly target the support and promotion of research and development, innovation and entrepreneurship.

These constraints in combination greatly limit the range and choice of options that can be considered in the preparation of the programme. A SEA of a programme of this nature will therefore be inherently limited in terms of the alternative options it can consider.

In identifying potential alternatives, the emphasis was therefore placed on potential alternative delivery mechanisms and approaches for the programme, rather than alternative programme priorities or objectives.

In consultation between ADAS and NI DFP, the potential alternative delivery mechanisms were identified. These are listed in Table 3.1. In each case, there are pre-existing economic or strategic priorities that decided why the existing programme delivery mechanism was preferred to the potential alternative. Nevertheless, it is the role of SEA to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the potential alternatives in comparison with the programme as adopted.

Full consideration of the potential environmental impacts of the alternatives are provided in the assessment of impacts section.

Table 3.1: Potential Alternatives

Existing Programme Delivery Mechanisms	Potential Alternatives
Alternative 1: Hard vs Soft Support	
<p><u>Soft support</u></p> <p>Competitiveness Programme focuses on supporting innovation, improving the skills base and encouraging business start-up with only limited support for infrastructure, for example, on the old military bases.</p>	<p><u>Hard support</u></p> <p>Funding for major infrastructure developments such as urban regeneration, roads & business parks.</p>
Alternative 2: Support of Innovation vs Support of Traditional Industries	
<p><u>Innovation</u></p> <p>Support for new business start-up and diversification of existing businesses. Encouragement of innovative and entrepreneurial businesses.</p>	<p><u>Support existing businesses</u></p> <p>Focus on supporting growth in existing businesses and traditional industries.</p>
Alternative 3: Stimulating NI Businesses vs Inward Investment	
<p><u>Focus on stimulating NI businesses</u></p> <p>Primary focus on stimulating growth and development of NI based businesses. Secondary focus on encouraging inward investment from UK, ROI or foreign business.</p>	<p><u>Focus on inward investment</u></p> <p>Primary focus on encouraging inward investment from UK, ROI or foreign business. Secondary focus on stimulating growth and development of NI based businesses.</p>
Alternative 4: Focus on Tourism vs No Focus on Tourism	
<p><u>Supporting tourism development</u></p> <p>Promotion of NI as tourist destination. Investment in improvements in tourist infrastructure.</p>	<p><u>No support of tourism</u></p> <p>No support for promotion of tourism or improvements in tourist infrastructure.</p>
Alternative 5: Focus on Renewable Energy vs No Focus on Renewable Energy	

<u>Supporting renewable energy</u> Support of schemes that provide greater diversity, security and sustainability of energy.	<u>No support of renewable energy</u> Preserve status quo in respect of energy supply. No support of schemes that provide greater diversity, security and sustainability of energy.
Alternative 6: Focus on Telecommunications vs No Focus on Telecommunications	
<u>Support of IT / telecommunications networks</u> Direct support of IT and telecommunication networks.	<u>No support of IT / telecommunications networks</u> No direct support of IT and telecommunication networks.

3.2 Selection Criteria

The Competitiveness Programme refers to selection criteria that would be used to determine the eligibility of projects for funding. These will be established by the Programme Monitoring Committee, which has yet to be formed. The selection criteria are therefore not available at the time of the production of this Environmental Report.

The selection criteria provide an opportunity for the incorporation of environmental objectives into the future delivery of the programme. Potential measures to maximise these opportunities are considered in the mitigation / enhancement sections of the Environmental Report.

4.0 RELATIONSHIP OF THE COMPETITIVENESS PROGRAMME WITH OTHER PLANS AND PROGRAMMES

The Northern Ireland SEA Regulations state that an Environmental Report should consider:

- *The programme's relationship with other relevant plans and programmes; and*

- *The environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.*

In order to fulfil this requirement, a review of the other relevant plans, policies, and programmes was undertaken to identify environmental objectives that may provide constraints or synergies with the programme being formulated. Such objectives are to be taken into account in the programme and SEA. This review has considered international conventions and EU Directives through to national and regional environmental protection objectives to local plans and strategies.

The following section provides a summary of the main outcomes of the review with the full review appearing in Appendix 2.

4.1 Programme Priorities and Connections to other Plans and Programmes.

Priority 1 – “Increasing Investment in Research and Technological Development and Promoting Innovation”

The Competitiveness Programme priority of increasing investment in Research and Technical development and promoting innovation supports the objectives of a number of existing plans and programmes. The Economic Vision for Northern Ireland (2005) emphasises the importance of increased investment in research and technical development and also stresses the importance of innovation and creativity.

The Regional Innovation Strategy for Northern Ireland, in its six key action plan areas, lists resourcing research and development and promoting innovation as priorities. Energy, waste and transport strategies such as the European Transport Policy 2010 (2001), the Strategic Energy Framework and the EU Waste Directive all emphasise the importance of innovation, research and technological development in meeting the challenge of providing sustainable solutions.

Advances in technology and innovation will help in achieving environmental targets such as those set in the Kyoto Protocol, the Air Quality Framework Directive and the Water Framework Directive. The Competitiveness Programme will work in conjunction with these plans.

Priority 2 – “Promoting Enterprise and Entrepreneurship”

Enterprise and entrepreneurship are important in creating an expansion in the private sector and world-class business in Northern Ireland. The private sector must be expanded if sustainable growth is to be achieved.

The Competitiveness Programme supports plans and programmes already in existence that seek to encourage enterprise and entrepreneurial activity.

Plans and programmes influencing these objectives operate from the international to the local level.

The European Social Fund's priority areas include improving the workforce skills and adaptability in order to provide people with the skill to set up businesses and encourage the growth of existing businesses.

The Economic Vision for Northern Ireland and the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland discusses enhancing people's skills and developing an infrastructure that will promote successful, competitive and sustainable regional economy. The Competitiveness Programme objectives will build on these plans and programmes.

Priority 3: "Improving Accessibility and Protecting and Enhancing the Environment".

This priority focuses on protecting and enhancing the natural environment and promoting sustainable development and creating sustainable communities. It recognises the connection between a healthy environment, a thriving economy and sustainable communities. The aim is to improve Northern Ireland's basic infrastructure to support and complement sustainable economic and social development.

The Competitiveness Programme aims to promote sustainability. Other plans and programmes that deal with sustainability include the declaration of Sustainable Development 2002, the UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy 2005 and the Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Implementation Plan.

The programme also aims to protect the natural environment. Existing plans and policies that seek to protect and enhance the natural environment include the EU Nitrates Directive, Water Framework Directive (WFD), Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control Directive, the Environmental Liabilities

Directive , the EC Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats of Wild Fauna and Flora and many more. There are a number of plans and programmes in operation that are concerned with waste and energy. These include the Northern Ireland Environment and Renewable Energy Funding Package and the Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy launched in March 2006. The ERDF must work alongside these programmes to achieve favourable environmental outcomes.

The programme aims to promote economic and social development. Plans and programmes that recognise the interrelationship between the environment, economy and society include the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025 (Shaping our Future). This aims to enhance the infrastructure and regional economy whilst tackling social and environmental issues. The Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2005/15 also aims to tackle deficiencies in Northern Ireland's infrastructure while enhancing the economic and social environments.

The Competitiveness Programme aims to create a healthier living environment and thus a healthier workforce. Programmes such as the energy, waste and environment directives (such as for example the Water Framework Directive) all contribute to creating an improved natural environment. Plans and programmes such as the Community Strategic Guidelines 2007-2013, the European Social Fund, PEACE II and the People and Place – A strategy for neighbourhood Renewal 2003 aim to promote social cohesion and sustainable communities. The programme should be run in parallel to these plans and programmes and contribute favourably to their aims and objectives.

4.2 Summary of the Review

In summary, the Competitiveness Programme has many direct and indirect relationships with a variety of plans and programmes. This includes those related to environmental protection and conservation, economic development and offsetting social disadvantage and deprivation.

From the full review of relevant plans and programmes (attached as Appendix 2), key points that emerge are that in order to be consistent with environmental protection objectives and other plans, programmes and policies, the Competitiveness Programme should :-

- Ensure that the environment and sustainable development are embedded at the core of economic growth and job creation;
- Recognise the role of the environment as an economic driver;
- Contribute towards the aims of sustainable development so as not to damage or irreparably deplete resources for future generations;
- Ensure there is opportunity for access to information that supports the decision making process and for public consultation;
- Consider the importance of landscape in terms of cultural, ecological, environmental, social and economic value;
- Ensure that projects are developed with consideration of economic, social and environmental impacts at all geographical scales from international to local;
- Consider the cumulative environmental impact of proposals and avoid considering proposals in isolation of one another;
- Encourage the development of competitive, innovative and creative businesses in Northern Ireland and encourage local companies to grow and compete;
- Help in achieving improvement in performance in the market place, strengthening social and economic infrastructure,

- Help in developing a more sustainable environment, improved health and welfare of humans, animals, plants and fish;
- Create sustainable employment and improve workforce skills and capabilities;
- Promote EU social and economic cohesion;
- Promote social and environmental justice and support comprehensive and integrated action towards sustainable and equitable development of disadvantaged areas, and support work to eliminate poverty and social exclusion among all groups of people in Northern Ireland;
- Promote social well being, enhance quality of life, encourage social cohesion and create a stable peaceful society through the creation of prosperous and sustainable communities;
- Protect and enhance both the natural and manmade environment and cultural heritage of Northern Ireland. The programme should consider the impact it may have on Northern Ireland's natural resources and historic environments;
- Take account of the strategies supporting the development of the sustainable transport networks and modes of transport;
- Facilitate and promote innovation in the energy market. Encourage energy efficiency, promote renewable energy and the development of alternative forms of energy which will contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and work towards achieving targets on climate change;

- Contribute to the Framework Directive on waste, promote reduction, reuse and recycling of waste and work towards meeting the targets of the Landfill Directive;
- Facilitate and promote protection and enhancement of biodiversity, and avoiding/reducing habitat fragmentation, and achievement of biodiversity targets;
- Positively influence issues such as air quality, water quality, soil protection, the sustainable use of pesticides, natural resource use, waste prevention and recycling, and support achievement of relevant standards and targets;
- Reduce impacts on wetlands and where possible encourage the enhancement and restoration of wetland habitats, as well as minimising negative impacts on water resources;
- Ensure designated natural habitat types and species (under the Directive on Conservation of Natural Habitats of Wild Fauna and Flora 92/43EEC 1992) are given priority in the relevant measures;
- Help increase knowledge and understanding in regard to the positive interaction of biodiversity and the environment with sustainable tourism and help to ensure Northern Ireland's tourism potential is realised.

The plans, programmes and policies considered in providing this assessment are summarised in Table 4.1. The full evaluation of each of the listed plans, programmes and policies is included as Appendix 2.

Table 4.1: Plans, policies and programmes considered in the SEA

International and European Plans, Programmes and Policy	
1	Lisbon (1997) and Gothenburg (2001) European Councils
2	Community Strategic Guidelines (CSG's) 2007-2013
3	European Landscape Convention (signed by the UK 21/02/06)
4	EU Waste Directive (75/442/EEC)
5	EU Landfill Directive (99/31/EC)
6	Aarhus Convention
7	European Commission White Paper. European Transport Policy for 2010: Time to decide. (2001)
8	European Noise Directive 2002 (02/49/EC)
9	European Spatial Development Perspective 1999
10	European Social Fund
11	PEACE II
12	Nitrates Directive (91/67/EEC).
13	EC Environmental Liabilities Directive
14	Agenda 21
15	Air Quality Framework Directive (96/62/EC)
16	Convention on Biodiversity, Rio de Janeiro 1992
17	Council Directive on Ambient Air Quality Limits (1999/30/EC)
18	EC Directive on Conservation of Wild Birds 79/409/EEC
20	EC Directive on the Conservation of natural Habitats of wild Fauna and Flora (92/43/EEC) 1992
21	Our Future, Our Choice (EU Sixth Environment Action Programme)
22	Declaration of Sustainable Development 2002
23	Kyoto Protocol
24	Millennium Development Goals – World Summit 2005
25	Ramsar Convention
26	Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)
27	EC Freshwater Directive (78/659/EEC)
28	EC Shellfish Directive (79/923/EEC)

29	Bathing Water Directive (76/160/EEC)
National Plans, Programmes and Policy	
1	Environmental Protection Act 1990
2	Our Energy Future – Creating a Low Carbon Economy (2003)
3	UK National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF)
4	Climate Change: The UK Programme (2006)
5	UK Biodiversity Action Plan – UK BAP (Defra, 1994)
6	Securing the Future – UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy 2005
7	UK Air Quality Strategy (ODPM, 2000 amended in 2003)
Northern Ireland Plans, Programmes and Policy	
1	Draft Planning Policy Statement 14.
2	Economic Vision for Northern Ireland 2005
4	Natural Heritage Strategic Plan
3	Environment Northern Ireland – A vision for the future
5	People and Place – A Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal 2003
6	Regional Development Strategy 2025 (Shaping our Future)
7	Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland (ISNI) 2005
8	Regional Innovation Strategy for Northern Ireland (RIS) 2004-2006
9	Regional Transportation Strategy 2002-2012
10	Strategic Energy Framework.
11	DARDS Rural Strategy 2007-2013.
12	Anti Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy for Northern Ireland. 2006
13	Environment Northern Ireland – A Vision for the Future
14	Northern Ireland Waste management Strategy 2006 – 2020
15	Northern Ireland Forestry – A strategy for sustainability and growth
16	Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy.
17	Shared Horizon – Statement of policy on protected landscapes
18	Sustainable Development Strategy 2006.
19	“A Positive Step” – Northern Ireland – A Sustainable Development Implementation Plan. 2006
20	Renewable Energy Action Plan (DARD – 2007)

21	Northern Ireland Environment and Renewable Energy Funding Package (Feb 2006)
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5.0 BASELINE CONDITIONS

The Northern Ireland SEA Regulations specify that the Environmental Report must contain the following information in respect of baseline conditions:

2. The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme.

3. The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.

4. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds and the Habitats Directive.

5.1 Methodology

Indicators relating to each SEA topic were identified and included in the Scoping Report for comment by EHS.

Baseline data were then collected for each of the agreed indicators. This was done through a systematic desk study focusing on each topic in turn. In keeping with the principals of SEA, the focus was on identifying strategic issues and trends for each topic.

The principal sources of data were the Department for Environment, EHS and other Northern Ireland Government Department websites. The Defra website was used where appropriate to provide the UK context for each topic. Where the required information could not be readily obtained from the website, then contact was made with the relevant Department, either directly or through the

Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) representative on the SEA Steering Group.

5.2 Environmental Baseline Data

5.2.1 Biodiversity, fauna and flora

The most recent comprehensive assessment of the state of the natural environment is the Countryside Survey 2000. The Northern Ireland Countryside Survey (NICS) noted that between 1990 and 1998, the percentage of existing semi-natural habitats reduced considerably. For example, neutral grassland (less intensively managed) fell by 32%, fen, marsh and swamp by 19% and bog by 8%. Although not seen as significant, acid grassland also declined by 8%. Increased areas of habitat included improved grassland 33%, coniferous woodland 12% and broadleaved mixed and yew woodland by 9%.

Field boundaries are important for biodiversity. Northern Ireland holds 13% of the field boundary stock for the UK. They comprise mostly hedges, earth banks and fences. Dry stone walls, ruined dry stone walls and mortared walls, although present, are less common. The largest reductions in length were ruined dry stone wall – 12.4%, earth bank 10.2% and dry stone wall 7.1%.

Northern Ireland has, at 6%, the lowest forest cover of any of the UK regions. Although there has been an overall decline in new planting, there has been a private sector forest expansion of 26% since 1995, largely as a consequence of the Woodland Grant and Farm Woodland Premium Schemes, and much of this has been in broadleaved tree species. In 2004-5, 93% of new plantings fitted this type.

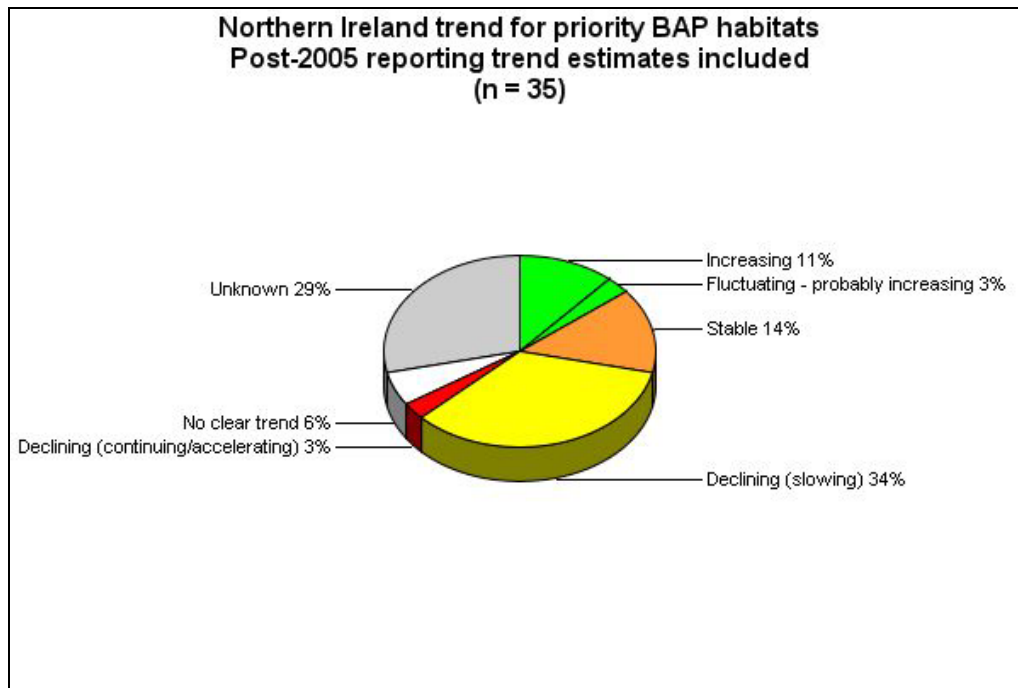
Designated Sites

There are 52 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) in Northern Ireland. They cover around 66,000 hectares (of these, 40,000ha are assessed as relevant to the Natura 2000 habitats of grassland, heathland, upland, peatland and wetland). Other designated sites include 19 Ramsar Sites, 211 Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs), and 14 Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Maps showing the distribution of most of these designated sites can be found in Appendix 3. Northern Ireland also has one Marine Nature Reserve (Strangford Lough) and one World Heritage Site (The Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast).

Biodiversity Action Plan

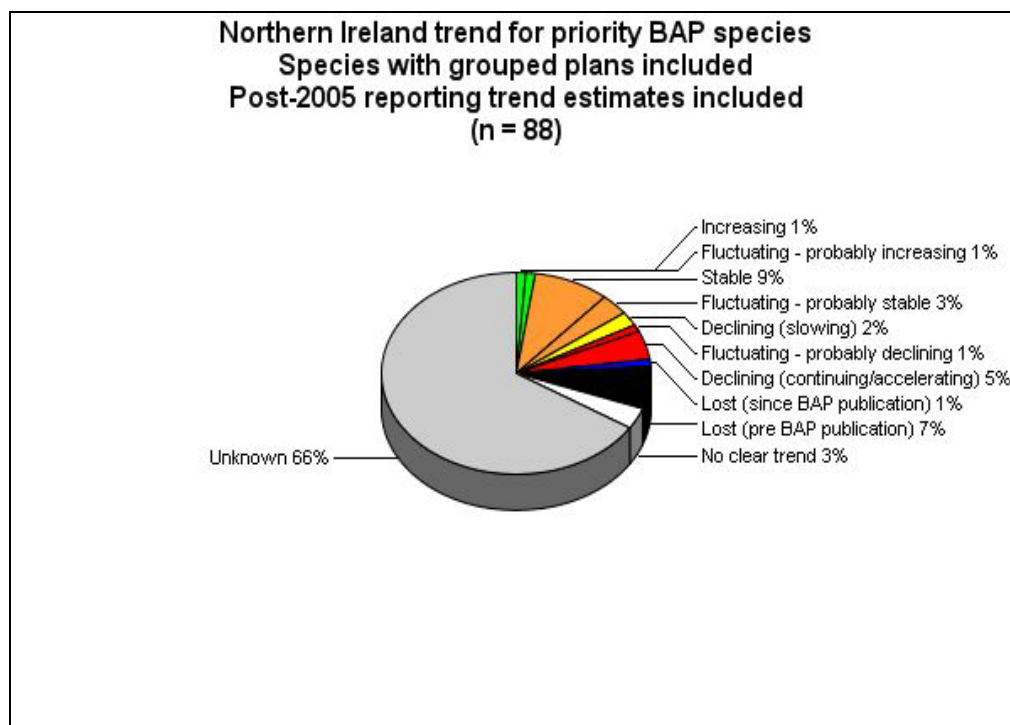
The Northern Ireland status and trends of UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitats and priority species in Northern Ireland are varied. Figures 5.1 and 5.2 below, from the Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS), show the current situation. Just over one third of priority BAP habitats are classed as “declining (slowing)”, whereas 14% are stable and 11% are increasing. Northern Ireland has 272 priority species. However, for around two thirds the situation is “unknown”. Only 9% are classed as “stable” and 1% as “increasing”.

Figure 5.1: Priority BAP habitat trends for Northern Ireland



Source: http://www.ukbap-reporting.org.uk/status/uk_chart.asp

Figure 5.2: Priority BAP species trends for Northern Ireland



Source: http://www.ukbap-reporting.org.uk/status/uk_chart.asp

Full details of the trend for all BAP habitats and species are included in Appendix 5. The table below shows the summary trends for priority BAP species (for which information is available) in Northern Ireland.

Table 5.1: Summary of Northern Ireland priority BAP species trends (including post-2005 reporting trend estimates)

NB: table contains only species relevant to Northern Ireland and where information exists. Source: <http://www.ukbap-reporting.org.uk>)

Trend	Number of species
Increasing	1
Fluctuating – probably increasing	1
Fluctuating – probably stable	3
Stable	8
Fluctuating – probably declining	1
Declining (slowing)	2
Declining (continuing/ accelerating)	4
No clear trend	3
Lost (pre BAP publication)	7

Table 5.2: Summary of Northern Ireland priority BAP habitats trends (including post-2005 reporting trend estimates)

NB: table contains only habitats relevant to Northern Ireland, where information exists. Source:<http://www.ukbap-reporting.org.uk>)

Trend	Number of habitats
Increasing	4
Fluctuating – probably increasing	1
Stable	5
Declining (slowing)	12
Declining (continuing/ accelerating)	1
No clear trend	2

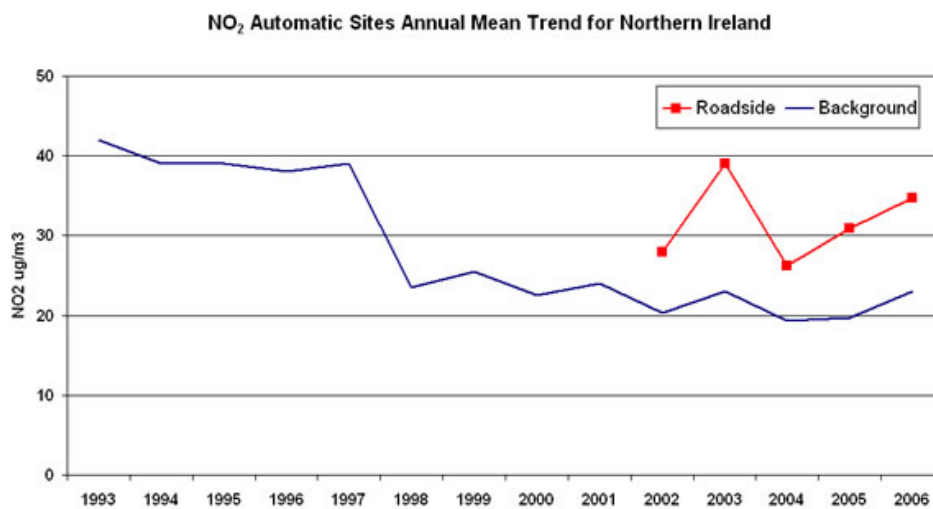
5.2.2 Climate and air

Mean annual maximum and minimum temperatures in Northern Ireland have been rising since the end of the 19th Century. Mean minimum temperatures in particular reaching their highest recorded levels in the 1990s. The number of hot days (mean daily temperature above 18°C) has been at high levels from 1980-2002. Such changes in temperature extremes have implications for agriculture and health. Rainfall is also important for agriculture. There is some evidence of an upward trend in mean annual rainfall, with less rain falling in summer months. The 1970s had lower levels of rainfall but there is no strong trend in recent years. Growing seasons fluctuate and since the 1980s, there has been a tendency for a longer growing season.

For another indicator of climate change in Northern Ireland, the arrival date of the swallow is becoming earlier in the year (mean date of arrival 11 April). There is a good inverse correlation between swallow arrival date and average spring temperature.

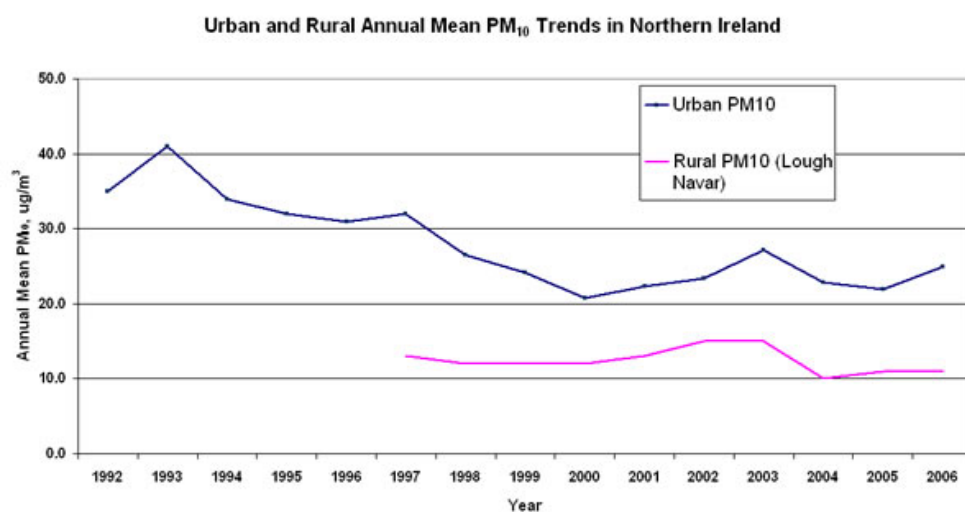
Air quality monitoring shows that standards for key pollutants, sulphur dioxide (SO₂), lead, and particulate matter (PM₁₀) were met by the end of 2004. In 2005, two sites failed to meet standards for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) for the annual mean and one site failed to meet the 24 hour mean standard for PM₁₀. In addition, both monitoring sites failed to meet the objectives set for polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH). All 26 District Councils have completed overall assessments of air quality and eleven identified areas that are likely to exceed Air Quality Objectives. Nine districts have declared Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs), with a total of 19 AQMAs between them. The two figures below show trends in two of the pollutants monitored in Northern Ireland.

Figure 5.3: Nitrogen dioxide monitoring in Northern Ireland



Source: www.airqualityni.co.uk

Figure 5.4: PM10 particulate matter monitoring in Northern Ireland



Source: www.airqualityni.co.uk

5.2.3 Landscape

The Landscape Character of the whole of Northern Ireland is described for the 130 Landscape Character Areas depicted in Appendix 2. Of particular note are designations which encompass more than one Landscape Character Area. There are nine Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) designated under either the 1965 Amenity Lands Act or the 1985 Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands Order.

Earlier designations were focused on development control and later designations on positive landscape management. Since 1985, there has been an ongoing process of re-designation to achieve a consistent approach.

Currently four areas have been re-designated, namely Mourne, the Causeway Coast, the Antrim Coast and Glens, and the Ring of Gullion. These AONBs are judged to fall within Category V - "Protected Landscapes" - of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) classification of Protected Areas. As such, the protection of cultural values, the promotion of

public enjoyment and the fostering of the social and economic well-being of local communities sit alongside nature conservation.

There is one World Heritage site based on the Giant's Causeway and there has been a recommendation that the Mourne Mountains is the area most suited for National Park designation.

5.2.4 Soil & Geology

Soil degradation is a factor largely of poor husbandry. Cross compliance conditions for the Single Farm Payment (specifically, the Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions – GAEC - requirements) aim to address the general condition. Organic farming makes a significant contribution to the enhancement soil condition. Organic farming occupied 3,257 hectares and 0.31 % of the Northern Ireland UAA in 2000, increasing to 6,483 hectares and 0.62% of UAA by 2004.

Upland blanket bogs and lowland raised bogs are well represented in Northern Ireland. Ninety percent of lowland raised bogs have been lost or altered due to peat extraction, forestry and drainage (which affect upland bogs too). Nutrient enrichment is also evident and the quality of habitats has been affected. Many are designated ASSI or given other protected status.

Northern Ireland is, for its size, one of the most geologically diverse regions in the world (source: EHS NI). Geological sites have historical, educational, recreational and landscape value. Notable sites in Northern Ireland include caves at Marble Arch, white cliffs at Antrim, Giant's Causeway, Slieve Gullion and the mountains of Mourne. Rocks and landforms have a major influence in determining the biodiversity of regions and more directly the physical character of the landscape. Potential threats to geological sites include

landfill, coastal defence work and changes to natural systems (including human-induced changes).

5.2.5 Water

Chemical quality of rivers has improved since 1995 with an increase from 45% to 64% in the length of monitored rivers classified as of Very Good or Good quality under the General Quality Assessment scheme. Compliance with the requirements of the EC Freshwater Fish Directive has also improved from 61% of designated rivers to 90% over the same period. Biological condition is mixed. Overall, 62% of monitored rivers were found to be of Very Good or Good biological quality in 2000. However, there was a deterioration of the biological quality of those rivers that were monitored in both 1995 and 2000, with a 9% drop over the period in the length classified as Very Good or Good and a corresponding increase in the length classified as Fairly Good. In 2005, 53% were classed as Very Good or Good, and nearly 30% classed as Fairly Good.

Ground water is generally of potable quality, although there are indications of some nitrate, pesticide and bacterial contamination.

In 2005, there was 99.78% compliance with drinking water standards in the Northern Ireland Water Regulations and 43% compliance with the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive in 2004.

Although the number of pollution incidents had been declining generally, the number of reported incidents rose in 2000 to almost 2,600. Of these, 1,700 (66%) were substantiated. Agriculture and industry accounted for around 60% of these.

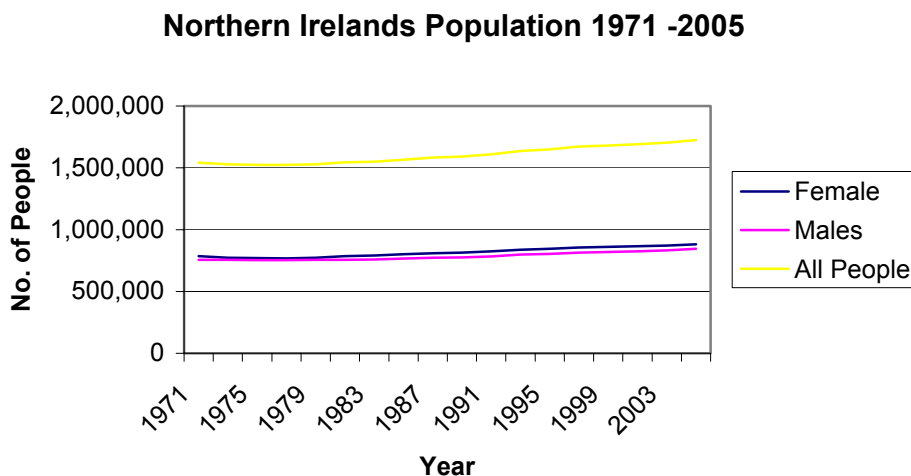
5.3 Socio-economic Baseline Data

5.3.1 Population

The Competitiveness Programme aims to create a more innovative, competitive and productive Northern Ireland. The workforce in Northern Ireland will play an essential part in achieving the aims of the Competitiveness Programme. It is therefore important to explore current and predicted future population trends to examine how the Competitiveness Programme could impact upon the population and how population could influence the success of the programme.

The population of Northern Ireland is estimated to be over 1.7 million. It has been steadily increasing to its present level.

Figure 5.5:

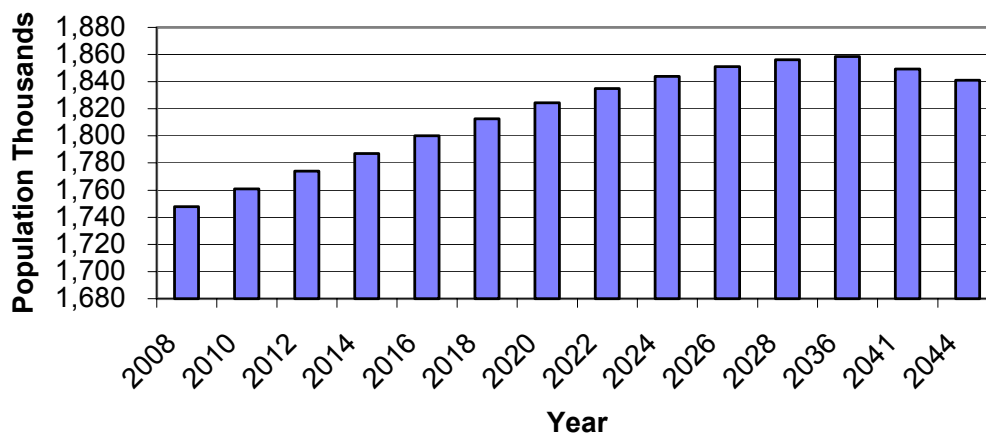


(Data from: <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/>)

Population projections for the 2007-2013 predict a growth rate of 2.3%. In the 2030's populations are expected to peak at 1.86 million before gradually falling.

Figure 5.6

Northern Ireland Population Projection 2008 - 2044

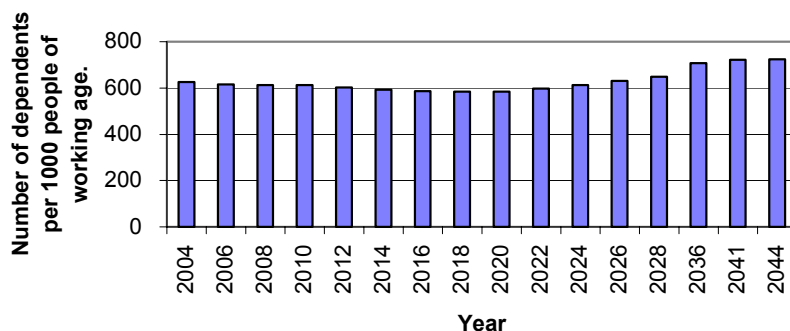


(Data from: <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/>)

Northern Ireland has a youthful population with 20.6% of people under 15 compared to the EU average of 16.2%. This has led to a high dependency ratio in NI, which is expected to persist until 2011.

Figure 5.7

Number of Dependents per 1000 people of working age in Northern Ireland



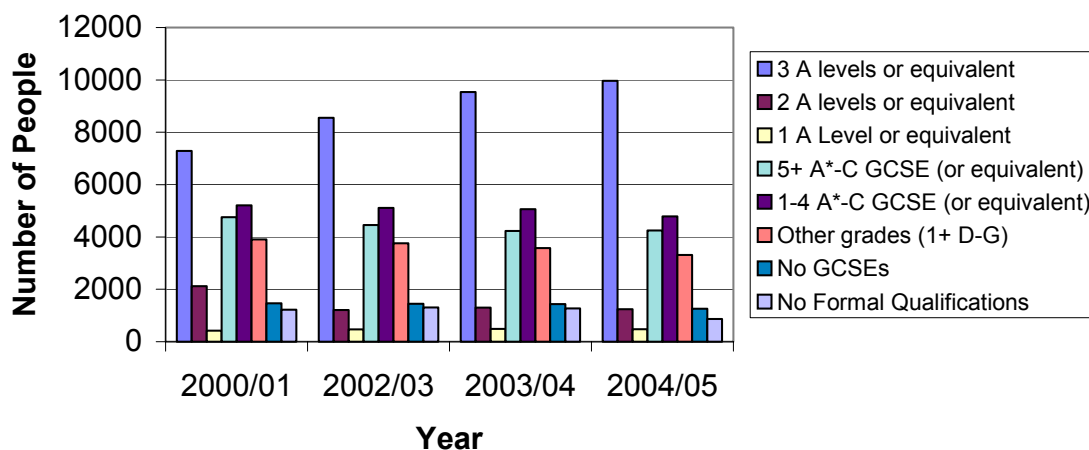
(Data from: <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/>)

Northern Ireland has been experiencing a sustained period of growth in employee jobs. The employment rate is currently at 66.6%, over 4% lower than the UK but higher than the EU average. The manufacturing sector has declined by 20% while the service sector and construction sector has grown. Unemployment has fallen but the remaining unemployment is long term and geographically concentrated. Northern Ireland has higher long term unemployment rates than the rest of the UK. Economic inactivity is a persistent problem in Northern Ireland.

Education attainments in Northern Ireland are rising rapidly. The number of school leavers with no qualifications fell from 4.8% in 2000/01 to 3.5% in 2004/05. The number of school leavers gaining three or more A levels in this period increased from 29% to 39.4%.

Figure 5.8

Qualifications of School Leavers in Northern Ireland

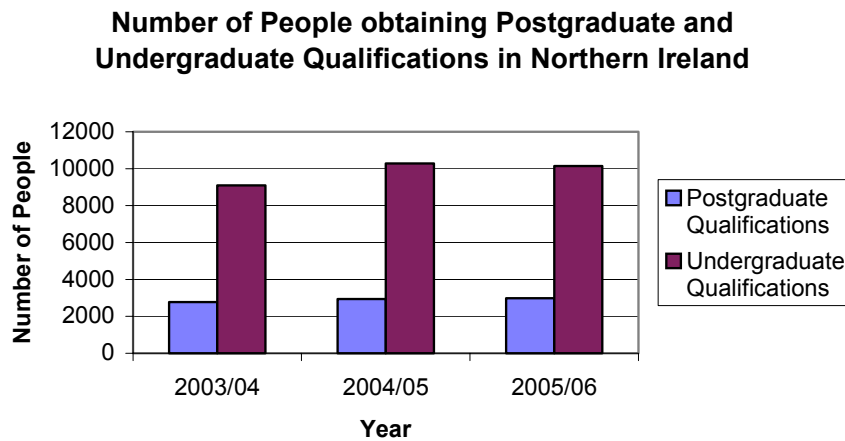


(Data from: <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/>)

Between 2003/04 and 2005/06, the number of higher degrees (including doctorates) awarded increased by 17% and other postgraduate (including PGCE) qualifications increased by 2%. Over the same period the number of

first degrees awarded increased by 9% and other undergraduate awards increased by 19%.

Figure 5.9

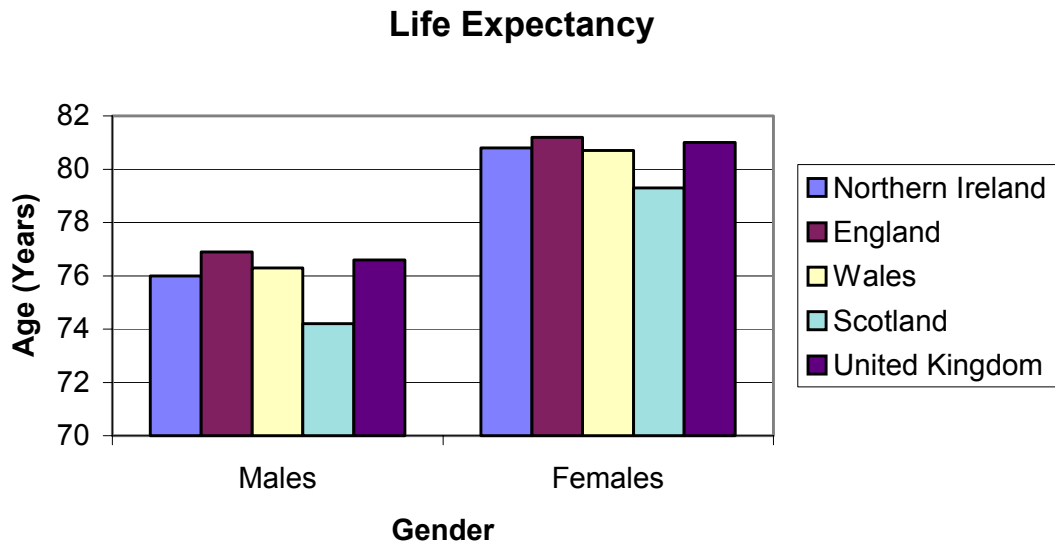


(Data from: <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/>)

5.3.2 Human Health

In Northern Ireland as in other parts of the UK the average life expectancy has been increasing. In Northern Ireland a man's life expectancy is 76.6 years and a woman's 81 years. The figures for Northern Ireland are only fractionally lower than in England.

Figure 5.10



(Data from: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/>)

In the UK there are pockets of deprivation. In Northern Ireland a high proportion of the land mass is classed as 'most deprived' in comparison to other areas in the UK.

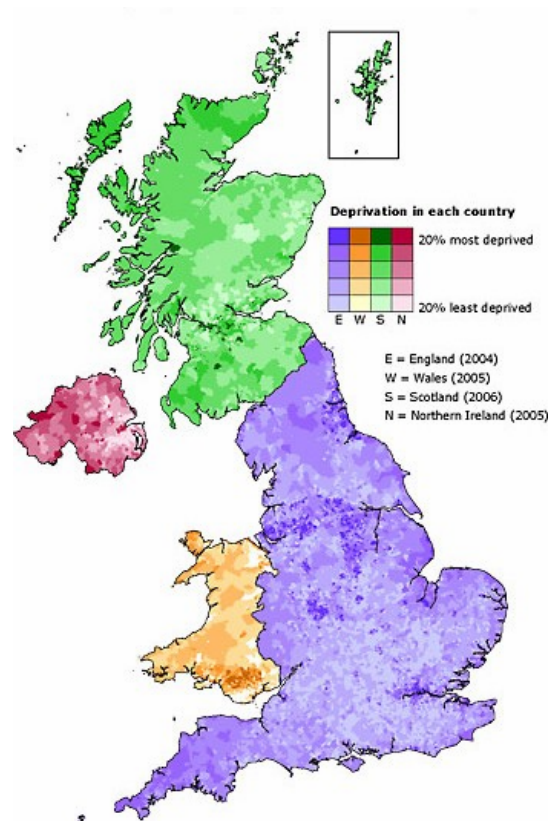
A higher proportion of families are in poverty in Northern Ireland than in either Britain or the Republic of Ireland. 185,000 households containing over 500,000 people were living below the poverty line in 2003 in Northern Ireland.

Overall Northern Ireland's health services compare favourably to other parts of the United Kingdom. For example in 2001, staffing levels for Hospital and Community Health Services direct care staff per head of population in NI (13.14) were below Scotland (15.35), but higher than England (10.94) and Wales (12.42).

The level of service provision and access to services in Northern Ireland varies geographically. Large towns and cities act as service centres but some

services are still maintained within local communities. Reliance on public and private transportation is essential to people's ability to access services.

Figure 5.11: Levels of Deprivation by Country



(Source: <http://www.ninis.nisra.gov.uk/>)

5.3.3 Health and Open Space

Open space and outdoor recreation can contribute to the physical and mental health of people and improve perceived quality of life. The government believes that everyone should have easy access to open space. The importance of open space is recognised in the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025 (Shaping our Future). Northern Ireland has also developed Planning Policy Statement (PPS 8) - Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation. This policy aims to safeguard existing open space,

ensure that open space is considered in new developments and to ensure equal access by all to open space.

In Northern Ireland there is a range of open spaces from parks and sports fields to wooded areas. However access to these areas by the population is not always equal. For example Northern Ireland has 115,192 ha of woodland area. 72% of this is publicly accessible. This compares favourably to the percentage of open access woods in England, 46%, Scotland, 61% and Wales, 53%. However when examined in terms of accessibility by people, Northern Ireland does not compare as favourably.

Table 5.3: Percentage of population with access to woodland

	% population with access to 2 ha+ of wood within 500m	% population with access to 20ha+ wood within 4km
England	10.18	55.18
Northern Ireland	7.45	50.32
Scotland	15.32	54.41
Wales	15.74	72.25

(Source: Woodland Trust, Space for People, Targeting action for woodland access).

Northern Ireland despite having the largest percentage of open access woodland has the lowest percentage of the population with access within 500m and 4km. This indicates a disparity to public access to woodland in Northern Ireland.

5.3.4 Cultural Heritage and Material Assets

Cultural heritage encompasses the qualities and attributes of places that have aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value. These values may be seen in a place's physical features, such as built and the natural environment, but can

also be intangible qualities such as people's association or feelings for a place, their customs, practices and values.

The built heritage of Northern Ireland includes archaeological sites and monuments, historic buildings, industrial and military remains, gardens, historic landscapes and maritime heritage sites such as shipwrecks. The built environment is of considerable importance in Northern Ireland. The table below indicates the number of listed building in Northern Ireland.

Table 5.4: Listed Buildings in Northern Ireland

Grade	Number of Buildings²
A	185
B	1900
B +	507
B 2	391
B 1	2286
Total	5269

As well as listed buildings there are also a significant number of buildings of historical and archaeological importance that do not meet the listed building criteria and are classed as 'record only'. The Northern Ireland Buildings database holds information on 9,000 listed and 'record only' historic buildings.

The Environment and Heritage Service and the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society have compiled an online Register of Buildings at Risk in Northern Ireland (BARNI). In February 2005 there were 433 buildings on this register.

² Figures as of 26th March 2007

Northern Ireland has over 180 state care sites and monuments. These represent all periods of human settlement from c.8,000BC to the 20th century. Currently there is a programme to repair and conserve these sites and monuments and to provide information for visitors.

As well as state care monuments and sites, in March 2006 Northern Ireland had 1718 scheduled historic monuments. Northern Ireland has many historic monuments that do not appear on the scheduled monument list. The importance of these non-listed sites should not be underestimated. The Northern Ireland Sites and Monuments Record (NISMR) has information on 15,950 sites, the majority of which are not on the scheduled list. These range from Mesolithic camp sites, Bronze Age landscapes and Early Christian monasteries through to the defended houses of the Plantation settlers.

There is a separate Industrial Heritage Record of 16,489 entries, a register of historic parks, gardens and demesnes of 154 sites, a Heritage Gardens Inventory of over 700 parks, gardens and demesnes and a Maritime Record. Maritime Records include details of coastal and foreshore sites.

Both the natural and man made environments are important economic assets to Northern Ireland. Tourism in Northern Ireland supports in excess of 20,000 jobs and contributes 2% to GDP. It is essential to maintain, enhance and protect Northern Ireland's cultural and built heritage and material assets. Custom, practice and values in Northern Ireland are also important with traditional music, dance and sports all providing valuable tourism.

5.4 Future Trends without the Competitiveness Programme

The Northern Ireland SEA Regulations require that information is provided on

“... the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the programme”.

The future baseline or “without the programme scenario” can be difficult to describe, as trend data are often not available, and even where they are it is often difficult to isolate trends due to the programme from those that are forecast to occur irrespective of the programme. This section will attempt to describe the future baseline, overall and looking at each SEA topic individually (Table 5.5).

For the purposes of this SEA, the ‘without the programme’ scenario has been based upon the following assumptions:-

- National support not transferred to the Competitiveness Programme but support previously available under other programmes will be available to communities and businesses.
- Climate, other economic and cultural trends continue.

Without the Competitiveness Programme, economic development would still continue and impacts would be controlled through existing mechanisms (e.g. planning control). However, it is less likely that the focus of development would be in the more disadvantaged areas.

Measures to improve environmental protection and quality are increasing and likely to continue with or without the Competitiveness Programme. In general, environmental safeguards built into the programme should mean that its absence could result in greater detrimental impacts across the board.

Table 5.5: Evolution of the Baseline without the Programme

SEA Topic	Evolution of the baseline without the programme
Biodiversity	EHS will continue to monitor biodiversity and work to protect and enhance it. Designations do not preclude impacts from development so it is likely that there would be some negative impacts or losses.

SEA Topic	Evolution of the baseline without the programme
	<p>The improvements resulting from current woodland, and agri-environment schemes will continue to be seen whilst the schemes are in operation and for some time after, but this will decline as contracts come to an end. Pressures on designated areas will increase.</p> <p>Land abandonment in some areas would lead to degradation of managed habitats but may deliver some new habitats. Environmental regulation would prevent degradation of farmed land.</p>
Climate and Air	<p>Trends will continue, and an increase in efforts to deal with climate change (e.g. adaptation, emissions restrictions, renewable energy developments etc.) can be expected. Evolution of this aspect without the Competitiveness Programme remains uncertain overall.</p>
Cultural heritage	<p>There may be an increase in the number of historic features due to the expansion of sites benefiting from statutory protection, although this would be offset with losses (e.g. demolition). Impacts on cultural heritage will continue to be positive and negative with features being protected while others are lost to development or damaged. Tourism which capitalises on cultural heritage is growing. The Competitiveness Programme would be likely to increase this.</p>
Landscape	<p>There will be greater landscape protection through the European Landscape Convention. Tools such as EIA can help to address the various issues with landscape changes, which are often difficult to assess and control. Developments such as wind farms have the potential to bring the most significant changes to sensitive landscapes, but these issues are likely to occur with or without the ERDF. Economic pressures from the reform of the CAP and the need to diversify will place increasing pressures on the landscape. There will be pressure to increase efficiency which is likely to increase rates of decline in linear features and important habitats.</p>
Material assets	<p>Pressure on environmentally designated areas will increase. Pressures to accelerate wider economic diversity and create employment will increase development pressures on communities. Controls on material assets such as land will increase, stressing the need for sustainable development. This will occur regardless of the Programme. Progress on restoring derelict and vacant land and improving environmental quality in areas requiring regeneration may be more limited without the Competitiveness Programme.</p>
Population and Human health	<p>Without the Competitiveness Programme, population would be largely expected to follow current trends.</p>
Soil &	<p>The rate of organic farming will only grow in response to market</p>

SEA Topic	Evolution of the baseline without the programme
Geology	demand, which is likely to continue current trends. Continuing degradation and loss of peatland habitats.
Water	Government agencies will continue to monitor and protect water quality in Northern Ireland. There will always be a demand for increased capacity from new developments even without the Competitiveness Programme. The Water Framework Directive carries significant protection for the water environment especially through river basin planning, which would continue without the Programme.

6.0 SEA OBJECTIVES

There are no formal statutory requirements regarding the setting of SEA Objectives, although best practice guidance on SEA such as the ODPM guidance recognises that the setting of SEA objectives provides a suitable basis for the assessment of impacts stage.

The SEA Objectives should cover each of the topics being considered. The impacts of the programme are then assessed against each Objective. The SEA Objectives should take account of:

- The topics to be included in the SEA
- The scope and content of the programme
- The key environmental and socio-economic issues in the region covered by the programme, as identified by the baseline data and the relationship of the Competitiveness Programmes with other plans, policies and programmes.

No.	Group 1 (Environmental) SEA Objectives
1	Biodiversity To conserve and enhance biodiversity, particularly those habitats and species referenced in the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Action Plan.
2	Soil & Geology To reduce degradation of soil and geological resources.

No.	Group 1 (Environmental) SEA Objectives
3	<p>Water</p> <p>To protect and enhance the quality of all waters.</p>
4	<p>Landscape</p> <p>To conserve and enhance landscape character and quality.</p>
5	<p>Climate</p> <p>To reduce NI's contribution to global climate change.</p>
6	<p>Air</p> <p>To protect and improve air quality for the protection of human health and natural ecosystems.</p>
7	<p>Material Assets</p> <p>To protect and conserve the natural and built environment.</p>
8	<p>Cultural Heritage</p> <p>To protect, conserve and promote appreciation of the man-made heritage of Northern Ireland.</p>
9	<p>Human Health</p> <p>To improve the health and social well-being of the people of Northern Ireland.</p>
10	<p>Population</p> <p>To create sustainable communities that foster an environment where people are committed to the social and economic development of their area.</p>

7.0 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS

In accordance with the Northern Ireland SEA Regulations the Environmental Report should meet the following requirements in respect of assessing the impact of the programme on the environment:

(2) The report shall identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of -

(a) implementing the plan or programme; and

(b) reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme.

The methodology described below was established to enable these requirements to be satisfied. Reference was also made to the Appendices 7 and 8 of ODPM Guidance, which provide best practice guidance on the assessment of impacts in SEA.

7.1 Methodology

The environmental impacts of the Competitiveness Programme are assessed using the assessment matrix included in Section 7.2 and are based on the expert judgement of a team of multi-disciplinary environmental specialists, and with reference to the evidence base provided by the baseline study.

The assessment methodology focuses on the evaluation of the ten SEA objectives, listed along the horizontal axis of the matrix, against each of the three stated Competitiveness Programme priorities, which are:





- Priority 1: Increasing Investment in Research and Technological Development and Promoting Innovation
- Priority 2: Promoting Enterprise and Entrepreneurship
- Priority 3: Improving Accessibility and Enhancing the Environment

Each priority is in turn split into constituent aims & objectives and targets which are listed in the programme. For Priorities 1 and 2, the environmental

impacts for each SEA objective were evaluated against these aims & objectives and targets. In the case of Priority 3, it was considered that the stated objective was insufficiently descriptive to provide an appropriate means for assessing the environmental impacts, and that the envisaged Priority 3 outputs listed in Table 3.3 of the Competitiveness Programme should instead be used.

The identified objectives / outputs of the Competitiveness Programme are listed down the vertical axis of the assessment matrix.

The potential impact of each Competitiveness Programme objective / output are then assessed against each of the SEA objectives. The envisaged impacts are recorded in the matrix using colour coding to accord with one of four impact descriptions:

	Potential positive impact
	Likely neutral impact
	Potential negative impact
	Uncertain impact

During scoping it was identified that the selection criteria for determining funding eligibility of projects under the Competitiveness Programme will be an important consideration in assessing the potential environmental impacts. These are not available at this stage of the programme development, and the assessment of impacts has therefore been determined with reference to the indicative activities listed against each Priority in the Competitiveness Programme, and in the context of the baseline environment in Northern Ireland. It is anticipated that the findings of the SEA will inform the future development of the selection criteria.

Where a potential positive or negative impact is predicted, a more detailed discussion is made in the comment tables which follow the impact matrix.

These tables provide a discussion of the type, duration and significance of each of the identified impacts, as demonstrated by the template below.

SEA Objective/topic, eg Water, Ecology etc	
Comment on impact:	<i>Description of likely impact</i>
Type of impact:	<i>e.g. positive or negative impact; primary or secondary; cumulative or synergistic.</i>
Duration of impact:	<i>e.g. short, medium or long term; permanent or temporary</i>
Impact magnitude:	<i>e.g. Negligible, slight, moderate, major or uncertain</i>
Significance:	<i>Links to sensitive issues in baseline and impact magnitude</i>
Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	<i>Recommendations of how plan could be modified to minimise negative effects or promote positive effects.</i>

Impact Significance

In SEA and EIA, the determination of impact significance is typically a semi-qualitative judgement based on impact magnitude and the value of the receptor being assessed. Thus, a small impact on an aspect of the environment that is of great value or sensitivity could be more significant than a major impact on an aspect of the environment that is assigned no particular value, or has a high capacity to accommodate change.

The anticipated impact magnitude is assigned for each impact in the Impact Magnitude cell of the comment tables.

Impact significance is then determined for each impact in the Impact Significance cell, taking into account both the impact magnitude and the baseline trends revealed in the baseline data section of this Environmental Report.

Uncertainty

It is recognised that with a programme of this nature, the precise environmental impacts will often depend on the specific projects funded under the programme. These will emerge over the duration of the programme, and hence at this stage full details are not available. For this reason some impacts are recorded as uncertain. Where this is the case, a further discussion is again provided in the comment tables that follow.

Where an impact is deemed to be uncertain, it is usually not possible to assign an Impact Magnitude or Impact Significance score.

7.2 Impact Assessment Matrix

SEA OBJECTIVES	Population. To create sustainable communities that foster an environment where people are committed to the social and economic development of their area.
	Human Health. To improve the health and social well-being of the people of NI.
Cultural Heritage. To protect, record and promote appreciation of the man-made heritage of NI.	
Material Assets. To protect and conserve the natural and built environment	
Air. To protect and improve air quality for the protection of human health and natural ecosystems	
Climate. To reduce NI's contribution to global climate change.	
Landscape. To conserve and enhance landscape character and quality.	
Water. To protect and enhance the quality of all waters	
Soil & Geology. To reduce degradation of soil or geological resources	
Biodiversity. To conserve and enhance biodiversity, particularly those habitats and species referenced in the NI Biodiversity Action Plan	
Priority 1: Increasing investment in research and technological development and promoting innovation	

To increase expenditure on R&TD, innovation and design by companies across all sectors										
To build the absorptive capacity of NI companies for R&TD and innovation										
To promote better links between businesses and the research sector.										
Priority 2: Promoting enterprise and entrepreneurship										
To increase business start-up and survival rates										
To encourage growth of NI firms										
To promote direct foreign investment										
To facilitate a globally competitive and sustainable tourism industry										
Priority 3: Improving accessibility										
Investment in renewable energy										
Investment in IT										
Promoting sustainable development and creating sustainable communities										

	Potential positive impact
	Likely Neutral impact
	Potential negative impact
	Uncertain impact

7.3 Environmental Impacts by ERDF Objectives

Where a potential impact, positive, negative or uncertain is predicted, a description of the impact type, duration, magnitude and significance is

provided in the following tables. Potential mitigation and enhancement measures are also discussed.

PRIORITY 1: Increasing investment in research and technological development and promoting innovation

To increase expenditure on R&TD, innovation and design	
Water	
Comment on impact:	<p>Investment in R&TD arising through the Competitiveness Programme will focus mainly on improving productivity and economic efficiency with environmental considerations secondary.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the increasing political and regulatory pressure for improved efficiency and reduced environmental liability is likely to ensure that much R&TD work focuses on technologies that are less polluting than existing and traditional industries. More investment in R&TD could therefore lead to development of a wider range of clean technologies. This could in turn instigate the take up of cleaner technologies by existing industries.</p> <p>Water quality in NI is showing a trend of progressive improvement, and a continuation of this will be required for NI to meet its obligations under the WFD.</p> <p>Many 'quick-wins' in respect of water quality have already been adopted, and the development and adoption of newer technologies will be a key requirement for recent trends to continue.</p>
Type of impact:	Positive, indirect
Duration of impact:	Long-term / Permanent

Impact Magnitude:	<p>Uncertain, but likely to be slight.</p> <p>The extent of any improvements made will also depend on what new technologies are adopted, and what the links between these and water quality are.</p> <p>Emissions to water are already tightly controlled through existing legislation and so any incremental improvements made through R&TD are likely to be slight.</p>
Significance:	Not significant
Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	Introducing environmental criteria in determining the eligibility for funding of R&TD proposals could ensure that environmental priorities are better integrated into R&TD projects stimulated by the Competitiveness Programme. The selection criteria provide a particular opportunity for doing this, as at the time of compiling the SEA, these are yet to be produced.
Climate	
Comment on impact:	For the same reasons as outlined above, greater R&TD investment could lead to the development and adoption of more carbon-efficient technologies hence having a positive impact on climate objectives.
Type of impact:	Positive, indirect
Duration of impact:	Long-term / Permanent
Impact Magnitude:	<p>Uncertain.</p> <p>Impact magnitude depends on what new technologies are developed, and what the links between these and greenhouse gas emissions are.</p> <p>Reducing greenhouse gas emissions in NI is a major challenge, and at present they are not restricted to the same extent as, for example, emissions to water are. There is also a large global demand for R&TD advances that can stimulate greater uptake of cleaner technologies.</p>

Significance:	Uncertain, but unlikely to be significant
Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	Introducing environmental criteria in determining the eligibility for funding of R&TD proposals could ensure that environmental priorities are better integrated into R&TD projects stimulated by the Competitiveness Programme. The selection criteria provide a particular opportunity for doing this, as at the time of compiling the SEA, these are yet to be produced.
Air	
Comment on impact:	For the same reasons as outlined above, greater R&TD investment could lead to the development and adoption of cleaner technologies hence having a positive impact on air quality objectives.
Type of impact:	Positive, indirect
Duration of impact:	Long-term / Permanent
Impact Magnitude:	<p>Slight.</p> <p>The extent of any improvements made will as depend on what new technologies are adopted, and what the links between these and air quality are.</p> <p>Emissions to air are already tightly controlled through existing legislation and so any incremental improvements made through R&TD are likely to be slight.</p>
Significance:	Not significant
Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	Introducing environmental criteria in determining the eligibility for funding of R&TD proposals could ensure that environmental priorities are better integrated into R&TD projects stimulated by the Competitiveness Programme. The selection criteria provide a particular opportunity for doing this, as at the time of compiling the SEA, these are yet to be produced.
Build the absorptive capacity of NI companies for R&TD and innovation	

Water	
Comment on impact:	<p>As identified in the discussion of the preceding programme objective, more investment in R&TD is likely to lead to enhanced development of cleaner and more carbon efficient technologies.</p> <p>These will only have a benefit on water quality, climate and air and other environmental aspects, if NI businesses have the ability and willingness to take them up. Building the capacity for R&TD and innovation in NI businesses is therefore likely to lead to indirect benefits for water quality, climate and air.</p>
Type of impact:	Positive, indirect
Duration of impact:	Long-term / Permanent
Impact Magnitude:	Uncertain, as depends on what new technologies are adopted. On balance, any impacts likely to be slight.
Significance:	Uncertain, unlikely to be significant
Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	Including environmental priorities when promoting the absorption of R&TD and innovation could be of significant benefit. This could be in the form of promoting environmental schemes that also have an economic component, for example through waste minimisation or emissions trading.
Climate	
Comment on impact:	Better ability to take-up R&TD is likely to lead to increased adoption of more carbon efficient technologies.
Type of impact:	Positive, indirect
Duration of impact:	Long-term / Permanent

Impact Magnitude:	<p>Uncertain.</p> <p>Impact magnitude depends on what new technologies are adopted, and what the links between these and greenhouse gas emissions are.</p> <p>Reducing greenhouse gas emissions in NI is a major challenge, and at present they are not restricted to the same extent as, for example, emissions to water are. There is also a huge global demand for R&TD advances that can stimulate greater uptake of cleaner technologies.</p>
Significance:	Uncertain, unlikely to be significant.
Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	Including environmental priorities when promoting the absorption of R&TD and innovation could be of significant benefit. This could be in the form of promoting environmental schemes that also have an economic component, for example through waste minimisation or emissions trading.
Air	
Comment on impact:	Better ability to take-up R&TD is likely to lead to increased adoption of less polluting technologies
Type of impact:	Positive, indirect
Duration of impact:	Long-term / Permanent
Impact Magnitude:	Uncertain, as depends on what new technologies are adopted. On balance, any impacts likely to be slight.
Significance:	Uncertain, unlikely to be significant
Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	Including environmental priorities when promoting the absorption of R&TD and innovation could be of significant benefit. This could be in the form of promoting environmental schemes that also have an economic component, for example through waste minimisation or emissions trading.
Promote better links between businesses and the research sector.	

Water, Climate and Air	
Comment on impact:	Better links between research and business provide more opportunity for adoption of best practice approach, particularly in SMEs where opportunities for R&TD may be limited at present.
Type of impact:	Positive, indirect
Duration of impact:	Long-term / Permanent
Impact Magnitude:	Slight
Significance:	Not significant
Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	The Competitiveness Programme selection criteria should include provision for the promotion of new technologies which will enable Northern Ireland businesses to improve environmental performance.

PRIORITY 2: Promoting enterprise and entrepreneurship

To increase business start-up and survival rates	
Climate	
Comment on impact:	Stimulation of economic activity through new business start-up could lead to indirect impacts on air quality and climate, through the creation of additional demand for energy and transportation, and potentially through the creation of further industrial emissions.

Type of impact:	Uncertain
Duration of impact:	
Impact Magnitude:	Uncertain
Significance:	Potentially significant
Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	<p>The support of renewable energy schemes through the programme will provide a key opportunity for mitigating against any increased demand for transport or energy.</p> <p>The selection criteria for determining eligibility to funding also provide a key opportunity for minimising against the potential negative impacts associated with the growth of existing NI businesses. The adoption of basic environmental requirements could for example be used as one of the selection criteria when determining the eligibility of applicants to funding under the Competitiveness Programme.</p>
Air	
Comment on impact:	<p>Stimulation of economic activity through increasing business start-up could lead to indirect impacts on air quality, through the creation of additional demand for transportation and energy, and potentially through the creation of further industrial emissions.</p> <p>The impact type, magnitude and significance are uncertain, as this will depend on which types of business experience growth as a result of the Competitiveness Programme.</p>
Type of impact:	Uncertain
Duration of impact:	
Impact Magnitude:	Uncertain but likely to be slight
Impact Significance:	Uncertain but not likely to be significant

Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	Reliance can be placed on the existing pollution control regimes to ensure that any new businesses carrying a significant risk of air pollution are appropriately licensed and regulated by the relevant authorities.
Human Health	
Comment on impact:	Greater business start-up will lead to increased prosperity, and associated human health benefits
Type of impact:	Positive, indirect
Duration of impact:	Long-term / Permanent
Impact Magnitude:	<p>Slight</p> <p>Average life expectancy in NI is improving, but slightly below that for England and Wales, and is below the UK average.</p> <p>Health is indirectly linked to economic prosperity, and any improvements in prosperity resulting from the Competitiveness Programme will have an associated benefit for human health. Human health is also very dependent on behavioural factors, on which the Competitiveness Programme will only have a peripheral influence. On balance, the impact is predicted to be Slight.</p>
Significance:	Not significant
Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	Prioritisation of business start-up schemes to those areas experiencing the greatest levels of poor health will enable the opportunities presented by the programme to be maximised.
Population	
Comment on impact:	Greater prosperity will be of positive benefit to NI population. New business start-up will be required to offset the decline in traditional industries.
Type of impact:	Positive, direct
Duration of impact:	Long-term / Permanent

Impact Magnitude:	NI is economically depressed in comparison with rest of the UK, yet has a youthful and growing population. Education standards are rising rapidly. A strong demand therefore exists for new high quality employment opportunities. Stimulating new business start-up will be a key means for achieving this, and could provide a major positive impact to the NI population.
Significance:	Significant
Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	<p>Due to the youthful profile of the NI population, particular emphasis should be put on new business start-ups involving young entrepreneurs, and on new businesses that would provide high quality employment for young people.</p> <p>The positive impact provided by this aspect of the programme will also be maximised if spatial targeting is incorporated to target those areas where economic depression is at its highest levels.</p>
To encourage growth of NI firms	
Climate	
Comment on impact:	Stimulation of economic activity through growth of existing NI businesses could lead to indirect impacts on climate, through the creation of additional demand for energy and transportation, and potentially through the creation of further industrial emissions. Increasing economic activity will increase the demand for energy.
Type of impact:	Uncertain
Duration of impact:	
Impact Magnitude:	Uncertain
Significance:	Uncertain

Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	<p>The support of renewable energy schemes through the programme will provide a key opportunity for mitigating against any increased demand for transport or energy.</p> <p>The selection criteria for determining eligibility to funding also provide a key opportunity for minimising against the potential negative impacts associated with the growth of existing NI businesses. The adoption of basic environmental requirements could for example be used as one of the selection criteria when determining the eligibility of applicants to funding under the Competitiveness Programme.</p>
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Air

Comment on impact:	<p>Stimulation of economic activity through growth of NI firms could lead to indirect impacts on air quality, through the creation of additional demand for transportation and energy, and potentially through the creation of further industrial emissions.</p> <p>The impact type, magnitude and significance are uncertain, as this will depend on which types of business experience growth as a result of the Competitiveness Programme.</p>
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Type of impact:	Uncertain
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Duration of impact:	
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Impact Magnitude:	Uncertain but likely to be slight
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Impact Significance:	Uncertain but not likely to be significant
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Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	Reliance can be placed on the existing pollution control regimes to ensure that any new businesses carrying a significant risk of water pollution are appropriately licensed and regulated by the relevant authorities.
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Human Health

Comment on impact:	Greater growth of NI businesses will lead to increased prosperity, and associated human health benefits
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Type of impact:	Positive, indirect
Duration of impact:	Long-term / Permanent
Impact Magnitude:	<p>Slight</p> <p>Average life expectancy in NI is improving, but slightly below that for England and Wales, and is below the UK average.</p> <p>Health is indirectly linked to economic prosperity, and any improvements in prosperity resulting from the Competitiveness Programme will have an associated benefit for human health.</p> <p>Human health is also very dependent on behavioural factors, on which the Competitiveness Programme will only have a peripheral influence. On balance, the impact is predicted to be Slight.</p>
Significance:	Not significant
Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	Prioritisation of economic schemes to those areas experiencing the greatest levels of poor health will enable the opportunities presented by the programme to be maximised.
Population	
Comment on impact:	Greater prosperity will be of positive benefit to NI population. More growth in existing businesses will be required to offset the decline in traditional industries.
Type of impact:	Positive, direct
Duration of impact:	Long-term / Permanent
Impact Magnitude:	<p>Major</p> <p>NI is economically depressed in comparison with rest of the UK, yet has a youthful and growing population. Education standards are rising rapidly. A strong demand therefore exists for new high quality employment opportunities. Stimulating growth in existing NI businesses will be a key means for achieving this, and could provide a major positive impact to the NI population.</p>

Significance:	Significant
Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	<p>Due to the youthful profile of the NI population, particular emphasis should be put on the growth of businesses involving young entrepreneurs, and on new businesses that would provide high quality employment for young people.</p> <p>The positive impact provided by this aspect of the programme will also be maximised if spatial targeting is incorporated to target those areas where economic depression is at its highest levels.</p>
To promote direct foreign investment	
Climate	
Comment on impact:	Stimulation of economic activity through inward investment could lead to indirect impacts on climate, through the creation of additional demand for energy and transportation, and potentially through the creation of further industrial emissions. Increasing economic activity will also increase the demand for energy.
Type of impact:	Negative, indirect
Duration of impact:	Long-term / Permanent
Impact Magnitude:	<p>Slight</p> <p>As in the rest of Europe, the trend in NI is for increasing air travel. In this context any increases associated with the Competitiveness Programme are likely to be slight.</p>
Impact Significance:	Potentially significant, as although impact magnitude is slight, transport, and particularly aviation, is a sector in which carbon emissions continue to grow.

Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	The impact of this can be reduced through the use of IT investment to reduce the demand for transportation. This is already a key feature of this plan and should ensure that the impacts are minimised.
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Air

Comment on impact:	Stimulation of economic activity through inward investment could lead to indirect impacts on air quality, through the creation of additional demand for transportation and energy, and potentially through the creation of further industrial emissions. The impact type, magnitude and significance are uncertain, as this will depend on which types of business experience growth as a result of the Competitiveness Programme.
Type of impact:	Uncertain
Duration of impact:	
Impact Magnitude:	Uncertain but likely to be slight
Impact Significance:	Uncertain but not likely to be significant
Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	Reliance can be placed on the existing pollution control regimes to ensure that any new businesses carrying a significant risk of water pollution are appropriately licensed and regulated by the relevant authorities.

Human Health

Comment on impact:	Greater inward investment will lead to increased prosperity, and associated human health benefits
Type of impact:	Positive, indirect
Duration of impact:	Long-term / Permanent

Impact Magnitude:	<p>Slight</p> <p>Average life expectancy in NI is improving, but slightly below that for England and Wales, and is below the UK average.</p> <p>Health is indirectly linked to economic prosperity, and any improvements in prosperity resulting from the Competitiveness Programme will have an associated benefit for human health.</p> <p>Human health is also very dependent on behavioural factors, on which the Competitiveness Programme will only have a peripheral influence. On balance, the impact is predicted to be Slight.</p>
Impact Significance:	Not significant
Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	Prioritisation of inward investment to those areas experiencing the greatest levels of poor health will enable the opportunities presented by the programme to be maximised.
Population	
Comment on impact:	Greater prosperity will be of positive benefit to NI population. More inward investment will be required to offset the decline in traditional industries.
Type of impact:	Positive, direct
Duration of impact:	Long-term / Permanent
Impact Magnitude:	<p>Major</p> <p>NI is economically depressed in comparison with rest of the UK, yet has a youthful and growing population. Education standards are rising rapidly. A strong demand therefore exists for new high quality employment opportunities. Stimulating inward investment will be a key means for achieving this, and could provide a major positive impact to the NI population.</p>
Impact Significance:	Significant

Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	<p>Due to the youthful profile of the NI population, particular emphasis should be put on the inward investment of businesses that would provide high quality employment for young people.</p> <p>The positive impact provided by this aspect of the programme will also be maximised if spatial targeting is incorporated to target those areas where economic depression is at its highest levels.</p>
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Facilitate a globally competitive and sustainable tourism industry

Biodiversity, Soil & Geology and Landscape

Comment on impact:	<p>Increased tourist visitor numbers could lead to increased disturbance of sensitive ecological and landscape areas, and have a negative impact. Inappropriately sited tourism infrastructure developments could also have a negative impact. However, if managed sensitively increased tourism could be of positive impact through generating increased funds for the management of sensitive areas.</p>
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Type of impact:	Uncertain
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Duration of impact:	
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Impact Magnitude:	Uncertain
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Impact Significance:	Uncertain
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Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	<p>The development control and planning frameworks should ensure that tourist infrastructure developments are appropriately sited.</p> <p>A clear mechanism for ensuring that funds are re-directed to the management of areas attracting tourists should be established.</p>
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Water

Comment on impact:	Tourism developments could lead to increased potential for water pollution. Water related tourism, such as angling and sailing is likely to be of a net positive impact through providing a financial incentive to maintain good water quality.
Type of impact:	Uncertain
Duration of impact:	
Impact Magnitude:	Uncertain
Impact Significance:	Uncertain
Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	<p>Promotion of water related tourism should highlight the existing high quality nature of the water environment in NI, and establish a clear a link between the quality of this environment, and the quality of outdoor recreation that depends on it.</p> <p>A clear mechanism for ensuring that funds are re-directed to the management of areas attracting tourists should be established.</p>

Climate

Comment on impact:	Major development of tourist capacity, and significant increase in visitor numbers will lead to increased demand for air travel and an associated negative impact on climate objectives.
Type of impact:	Negative, indirect
Duration of impact:	Long-term / Permanent
Impact Magnitude:	<p>Slight</p> <p>As in rest of Europe, trend in NI is for increasing air travel. In this context any increases associated with the Competitiveness Programme are likely to be slight.</p>
Impact Significance:	Potentially significant, as although impact magnitude is slight, transport, and particularly aviation, is a sector in which carbon emissions continue to grow.

Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	Tourism proposals that aim to increase the numbers of visitors from outside of ROI or NI should demonstrate that off-setting / carbon saving measures are incorporated into the proposal. This could for example be through the incorporation of energy conservation measures and renewable micro-generation into the associated tourist facilities.
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Material Assets & Cultural Heritage

Comment on impact:	Increased visitor numbers to natural and manmade cultural assets will generate additional revenue for their upkeep and enhancement. It may also stimulate increased interest and appreciation of such assets among NI residents
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Type of impact:	Positive, indirect
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Duration of impact:	Long-term / Permanent
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Impact Magnitude:	Uncertain Impact magnitude depends on the numbers of additional visitors generated by the Competitiveness Programme, and which natural and manmade cultural assets receive the most benefit.
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Impact Significance:	Not significant
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Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	
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Human Health

Comment on impact:	Greater inward investment will lead to increased prosperity, and associated human health benefits. Greater appreciation of natural heritage assets could stimulate healthier, more active lifestyles.
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Type of impact:	Positive, indirect
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Duration of impact:	Long-term / Permanent
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Impact Magnitude:	<p>Slight</p> <p>Average life expectancy in NI is improving, but slightly below that for England and Wales, and is below the UK average.</p> <p>Health is indirectly linked to economic prosperity, and any improvements in prosperity resulting from greater numbers of overseas visitors will have an associated benefit for human health.</p> <p>The stimulation of tourism will also focus on NI residents, and this may play a small contribution in encouraging greater enjoyment of natural heritage assets and the adoption of healthier lifestyles.</p>
Impact Significance:	Not significant
Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	Promotion of tourism should not focus solely on overseas residents. Opportunities should also be sought to generate greater interest in NI's natural heritage among NI residents.
Population	
Comment on impact:	Greater prosperity will be of positive benefit to NI population. More development of tourist capacity will be required to offset the decline in traditional industries.
Type of impact:	Positive, direct
Duration of impact:	Long-term / Permanent
Impact Magnitude:	<p>NI is economically depressed in comparison with rest of the UK, yet has a youthful and growing population. Education standards are rising rapidly. Increasing tourism provides greater opportunities for existing and new businesses, and could provide a major positive impact to the NI population.</p> <p>As identified above, generating greater interest in NI's natural heritage among NI residents could also be of positive impact.</p>
Impact Significance:	Significant

Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	<p>Promotion of tourism should not focus solely on overseas residents. Opportunities should also be sought to generate greater interest in NI's natural heritage among NI residents.</p> <p>Maximum economic benefit to the NI population will occur if tourism schemes in economically deprived areas are assigned the highest priority for funding.</p>
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PRIORITY 3: Improving accessibility

Investment in renewable energy	
Biodiversity	
Comment on impact:	Depending on the nature of the development, and its location, renewable energy developments can have negative impacts on ecology. However, positive impacts may also arise due to the reduction in atmospheric emissions and climate change related impacts that are associated with development of renewable capacity.
Type of impact:	Uncertain
Duration of impact:	Long term / Permanent
Impact Magnitude:	Uncertain, could be moderate – major positive or negative, or both
Impact Significance:	Uncertain but potentially significant. However, the Competitiveness Programme in itself is not the principal driver of renewable energy development in Northern Ireland. In isolation, the impact of the programme is unlikely to be significant.
Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	Planning and development control procedures and tools such as EIA should ensure that developments are appropriately sited, and that project specific mitigation is implemented as necessary.

Landscape	
Comment on impact:	Renewable energy developments, particularly windfarms may have a negative impact on landscape. The nature and extent of impact is depend on the number and siting of developments but the strategic impact is likely to be negative.
Type of impact:	Negative, direct
Duration of impact:	Long term / Permanent
Impact Magnitude:	Uncertain, will depend on the number, nature and location of renewable schemes supported
Impact Significance:	Uncertain but potentially significant depending on the number and nature of schemes supported. However, the Competitiveness Programme in itself is not the principal driver of renewable energy development in Northern Ireland. In isolation, the impact of the programme is unlikely to be significant.
Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	Planning and development control procedures and tools such as EIA should ensure that developments are appropriately sited, and that project specific mitigation is implemented as necessary.
Climate	
Comment on impact:	Economic development stimulated under this plan will require clean, renewable sources of energy. Development of renewable energy capacity will reduce reliance on fossil fuel sources and reduce carbon emissions from energy generation.
Type of impact:	Positive, direct
Duration of impact:	Long term / Permanent
Impact Magnitude:	Uncertain, depending on the number and type of schemes supported
Impact Significance:	Uncertain, but potentially significant

Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	The benefits of renewable energy will be maximised where it is developed in close proximity to the areas of demand. The Competitiveness Programme provides an opportunity for economic development and renewable energy to be closely tied in, for example through the requirement for economic development schemes funded under the Competitiveness Programme to incorporate micro-generation or to demonstrate that a minimum proportion of energy demand is met from renewable sources.
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Air

Comment on impact:	Emissions from energy generation is a major source of atmospheric pollutants such as SO _x , NO _x and particulate matter. Renewable energy sources will be cleaner with reduced emissions of these pollutants. Any reduction in fossil fuel related emissions will therefore have a positive impact on air quality.
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Type of impact:	Positive, indirect
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Duration of impact:	Long-term / Permanent
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Impact Magnitude:	Uncertain, as it will again depend on the number and type of schemes supported
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Impact Significance:	Uncertain, but potentially significant
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Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	
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Population

Comment on impact:	The security of NI's energy supplies is largely dependent on access to fossil fuels imported from the rest of UK and overseas. Greater exploitation of renewable energy sources will reduce reliance on imported fossil fuels and improve security of supply.
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Type of impact:	Positive, direct
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Duration of impact:	Long-term / Permanent
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Impact Magnitude:	Uncertain, depending on the number and type of schemes supported
Impact Significance:	Uncertain, unlikely to be significant
Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	
Investment in IT	
Climate	
Comment on impact:	Greater investment in IT and telecommunications will reduce the need for travel, both within NI and between NI and the rest of the UK and beyond. This is likely to lead to a reduction in emissions of carbon dioxide from transport sources.
Type of impact:	Positive, indirect
Duration of impact:	Long-term / Permanent
Impact Magnitude:	Slight In the context of all carbon emissions, any benefits from investment in IT are likely to be small.
Impact Significance:	Not significant
Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	IT and telecommunications schemes that specifically focus on reducing the demand for travel should be favoured by the selection criteria.

Air

Comment on impact:	Greater investment in IT and telecommunications will reduce the need for travel, both within NI and between NI and the rest of the UK and beyond. This is likely to lead to a reduction in emissions of air pollutants from transport sources. Benefits are most likely to be significant in urban areas, where transport is the principal source of pollutants such as NO ₂ .
Type of impact:	Positive, indirect
Duration of impact:	Long-term / Permanent
Impact Magnitude:	Slight In the context of existing transport movements, any benefits from investment in IT are likely to be small.
Impact Significance:	Not significant
Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	Air Quality Management Areas declared by NI local authorities indicate those locations where issues with poor air quality have been identified. The Competitiveness Programme could use these as a basis for prioritising where IT investment aimed at reducing transport could be targeted to achieve maximum benefit. Such schemes could include the support of home working and tele-conferencing facilities.

Promoting sustainable development and creating sustainable communities

All Topics

Comment on impact:	Uncertain depending on precisely what measures will be taken to promote sustainable development.
Type of impact:	Uncertain but would anticipate a positive impact on the SEA topics.
Duration of impact:	
Impact Magnitude:	Uncertain

Impact Significance:	Uncertain, but potentially significant.
Mitigation of negative impacts/promotion of positive impacts:	Incorporating environmental or sustainability criteria into the process for determining funding eligibility would ensure that development or projects carried out under the Competitiveness Programme take full account of environmental and sustainability criteria.

7.4 Summary of Environmental Impacts

The assessment matrix and the tables that follow detail the anticipated environmental impacts associated with the Competitiveness Programme. At this stage, the magnitude and significance of the impacts is often uncertain as this will typically depend on the detailed implementation of the programme. Accurate determination of magnitude and significance would also require more detailed knowledge specifically relating the projects and schemes likely to be funded under the programme.

The predicted impact of the programme against each SEA topic is as follows:

Biodiversity

The programme is predicted to have a mostly neutral impact on biodiversity.

Potential but uncertain impacts are raised in respect of Priorities 2 and 3, relating to the promotion of:

- Tourism
- Renewable energy

Promoting sustainable development and sustainable communities would be expected to have a generally positive impact on biodiversity although the

extent of this is uncertain depending on exactly what measures to promote sustainable development are adopted.

Soil & Geology

The programme is predicted to have a mostly neutral impact on soil and geology.

Potential but uncertain impacts are raised in respect of Priorities 2 and 3, relating to the promotion of:

- Tourism

- Renewable energy

Promoting sustainable development and sustainable communities would be expected to have a generally positive impact on soil and geology although the extent of this is uncertain depending on exactly what measures to promote sustainable development are adopted.

Water

The programme is predicted to have a slight but generally positive impact on water quality in NI. The positive impact is mostly in the terms of promoting an increased culture of R&TD and innovation. While R&TD stimulated under this programme will not generally have the environment as its main focus, it would be expected that new technologies emerging from increased R&TD will better account for the demand to perform well environmentally than will traditional technologies.

As the water environment in Northern Ireland is already of generally good quality, with strong regulation to keep it that way, it is assumed that any improvements arising due to the Competitiveness Programme will be slight and not of significance.

Landscape

The programme is predicted to have a predominantly neutral impact on landscape.

A potential but uncertain impact is predicted in respect of the support of tourism developments.

Investment in renewable energy is predicted to have a negative impact on landscape, as this will typically unavoidably require the development of energy infrastructure, potentially in scenic and undeveloped landscapes.

The significance of this impact will depend on the number and nature of developments involved. However, the Competitiveness Programme in itself is not the principal driver of renewable energy development in Northern Ireland. In isolation, the impact of the programme is unlikely to be significant.

Climate

Different aspects of the programme are predicted to have both positive and negative impacts on the environment. It is uncertain whether the net impact is positive or negative.

Positive impacts are anticipated due to the increased investment in R&TD and innovation under Priority 1. Impact significance is uncertain, although there is a clear and growing environmental and economic demand to support the development of more carbon efficient technologies.

Positive impacts are also predicted under Priority 3 due to the investment in renewable energy and IT and telecommunications. The significance of any impact again depends on the nature and number of schemes supported, but any significant development of renewable energy capacity could lead to a significant positive impact.

Priority 2 is predicted to have a generally negative impact. This is because Priority 2 is focused on the direct stimulation of economic activity and in increasing tourist visitor numbers to Northern Ireland. Economic activity creates a demand for transportation and energy, both of which are major contributors to carbon emissions.

The significance of these impacts is again uncertain due to the lack of knowledge about the exact delivery mechanisms of the Competitiveness Programme. However, in the context of national and international targets to cut carbon dioxide emissions, anything causing an increase in emissions can be considered to be significant.

Air

The predicted impacts on air quality are similar to those for climate, and for similar reasons.

Priorities 1 and 3 are predicted to have a net positive impact on air quality, although this is unlikely to be significant. Priority 2 is predicted to have a potential but uncertain impact on air quality.

Material Assets

The programme is predicted to have a predominantly neutral impact on material assets.

Promotion of tourism is predicted to have a positive impact through the generation of additional funds for the management of natural and manmade heritage attractions.

Cultural Heritage

The programme is predicted to have a predominantly neutral impact on cultural heritage.

Promotion of tourism is predicted to have a positive impact through the generation of additional funds for the management of cultural heritage attractions, and through the stimulation of interest in the NI population of it.

Human Health

Human health has a clear linkage with economic prosperity, and the programme is therefore predicted to have a net positive impact on human health. As other factors are also important in affecting human health, it is considered that the effect of the programme in isolation will not be significant.

Population

The Competitiveness Programme is predicted to have a net positive impact on population. It is anticipated that this will be significant.

7.5 Significant Environmental Effects

Summarising the environmental impacts discussed above, the Significant Environment Effects are as follows:

Potentially Significant Negative Effects	
SEA Objective Impacted	Aspect of Competitiveness Programme giving rise to a Potential Significant Effect
Climate: To reduce NI's contribution to global climate change.	<u>Priority 2</u> To increase business start-up and survival rates To encourage growth of NI firms To promote direct foreign investment To facilitate a globally competitive and sustainable tourism industry

Potentially Significant Positive Effects	
SEA Objective Impacted	Aspect of Competitiveness Programme giving rise to a Potential Significant Effect
Population: To create sustainable communities that foster an environment where people are committed to the social and economic development of their area.	<u>Priority 2</u> To increase business start-up and survival rates To encourage growth of NI firms To promote direct foreign investment To facilitate a globally competitive and sustainable tourism industry
Climate: To reduce NI's contribution to global climate change.	<u>Priority 3</u> Investment in renewable energy

7.6 Trans-Boundary Effects

Where the programme has the potential to impact on climate, then any effects will by their nature extend beyond the boundaries of Northern Ireland, and could lead to impacts in other states. Any increase in climate related impacts in other states arising solely due to the programme will be very small in the context of pre-existing climate change trends due to a range of other national and global sources. A significant trans-boundary climate impact is therefore not anticipated. This applies equally to both the negative and positive impacts predicted to be caused by the programme.

Positive impacts on population are in time likely to extend to other states, in particular the Republic of Ireland. In the context of existing trends, any trans-boundary impact on population is unlikely to be significant.

7.7 Consideration of Alternatives

Part 2, Paragraph 11 of the Northern Ireland SEA Regulations state that:

(2) The report shall identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of -

(a) implementing the plan or programme; and

(b) reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme.

As discussed in full in Section 3, the consideration of alternative options is restricted by the need for the programme to conform with economic constraints already established at European and national level. These constraints in combination greatly limit the range and choice of options that can be considered in the preparation of the programme. A SEA of a programme of this nature will therefore be inherently limited in terms of the alternative options it can consider.

In identifying potential alternatives, the emphasis was therefore placed on potential alternative delivery mechanisms for the programme, rather than alternative programme priorities or objectives.

Potential alternative delivery mechanisms were identified and developed in consultation between NI DFP and ADAS. The alternatives considered were as follows:

Existing Programme Delivery Mechanisms	Potential Alternatives
Alternative 1: Hard vs Soft Support	
<u>Soft support</u> Competitiveness Programme focuses on supporting innovation, improving the skills base and encouraging business start-up	<u>Hard support</u> Funding for major infrastructure developments such as urban regeneration, roads & business parks.

with only limited support for infrastructure, for example, on the old military bases.	
Alternative 2: Support of Innovation vs Support of Traditional Industries	
<u>Innovation</u> Support for new business start-up and diversification of existing businesses. Encouragement of innovative and entrepreneurial businesses.	<u>Support existing businesses</u> Focus on supporting growth in existing businesses and traditional industries.
Alternative 3: Stimulating NI Businesses vs Inward Investment	
<u>Focus on stimulating NI businesses</u> Primary focus on stimulating growth and development of NI based businesses. Secondary focus on encouraging inward investment from UK, ROI or foreign business.	<u>Focus on inward investment</u> Primary focus on encouraging inward investment from UK, ROI or foreign business. Secondary focus on stimulating growth and development of NI based businesses.
Alternative 4: Focus on Tourism vs No Focus on Tourism	
<u>Supporting tourism development</u> Promotion of NI as tourist destination. Investment in improvements in tourist infrastructure.	<u>No support of tourism</u> No support for promotion of tourism or improvements in tourist infrastructure.
Alternative 5: Focus on Renewable Energy vs No Focus on Renewable Energy	
<u>Supporting renewable energy</u> Support of schemes that provide greater diversity, security and sustainability of energy.	<u>No support of renewable energy</u> Preserve status quo in respect of energy supply. No support of schemes that provide greater diversity, security and sustainability of energy.

Alternative 6: Focus on Telecommunications vs No Focus on Telecommunications	
<u>Support of IT / telecommunications networks</u> Direct support of IT and telecommunication networks.	<u>No support of IT / telecommunications networks</u> No direct support of IT and telecommunication networks.

Environmental Impacts Associated with Alternatives

Alternative 1: Hard vs Soft Support

The Competitiveness Programme in its current state focuses very much on soft support measures. A potential alternative means of delivering the programme would be through the direct financial support of economic infrastructure projects. This was identified as a valid alternative to be considered by the SEA, although in the practice, the adoption of this alternative would be constrained by European and UK policy frameworks that determine the allocation of ERDF funds.

The potential impacts associated with a shift in the emphasis of the programme towards more hard support measures is largely uncertain due to the lack of knowledge about specifically the type and location of hard support project that could be included in the programme.

However, by their nature, major infrastructure developments are more likely to have a direct impact on the environment than the soft support measures included in the Competitiveness Programme. Such impacts will include landtake for infrastructure developments, visual impact due to, for example, new roads and increased demand for transportation and energy and the associated increase in atmospheric emissions.

Conclusion: In conclusion, the adoption of a greater element of hard support into the Competitiveness Programme is likely to lead to increased environmental impacts when measured against the impact of the existing programme.

Alternative 2: Support of Innovation vs Support of Traditional Industries

There are sound economic and social reasons for the Competitiveness Programme to seek to reduce the economic reliance on traditional industries and to broaden the skill base of the Northern Ireland working population. To evaluate if this is the best option environmentally, a potential alternative of greater support of traditional industries was incorporated as an SEA alternative.

Again, much of the likely environmental impacts associated with this alternative are uncertain and would require more information regarding the type and location of projects that would be funded both under the existing programme and potentially under this alternative.

In many respects innovation developed now and over the immediate future would be expected to better account for the current demand for cleaner and more efficient technologies than would traditional industries using established processes and technologies developed before the need to improve environmental performance became a mainstream concern. In some aspects, therefore support of traditional industries may miss opportunities for supporting the development of environmentally sound new processes and technologies. This is likely to in particular affect water, climate and air.

The support of traditional industries would however mean that in environmental terms the effect of this aspect programme can be predicted with greater certainty due to the continuation of well established trends.

Although it would be expected that greater innovation would in most cases be of positive effect on the environment, it will by its nature increase uncertainty and risk when attempting to determine future environmental trend.

Conclusion: Adopting a greater element of support for traditional industries would be likely to have both positive and negative environmental effects. Whether the overall net effect would be positive or negative is uncertain at this stage.

Alternative 3: Stimulating NI Businesses vs Inward Investment

The programme in its existing form incorporates both of these objectives, so the alternative relates to the balance assigned to these in the programme.

In the assessment of the impacts of these activities as included in the programme, likely negative impacts were identified due to both stimulating existing Northern Ireland businesses and due to stimulating inward investment. The identified impacts related to the fact that economic growth in NI, whether by inward investment or growth of existing NI businesses, will generate additional demand for transportation and energy. These impacts were generally common to both objectives, suggesting that a shift in the balance to be more in favour in either of these options would be environmentally neutral.

Conclusion: This alternative is considered to be environmentally neutral.

Alternative 4: Focus on Tourism vs No Focus on Tourism

Several potential impacts associated with the development of NI as a tourist destination are identified in the assessment of impacts section of this report. These impacts include positive impacts as well as negative, although there are uncertainties relating to the extent, nature and significance of the impacts predicted.

Potentially the most significant impact associated with the development of tourism capacity is the additional demand that this would create for air travel. The assessment of impacts section identifies that this would have a potentially significant negative impact on climate objectives.

Positive impacts are predicted for population, human health, cultural heritage and material assets, both directly through the generation of additional economic growth and the associated benefits that this provides, but also indirectly through for example, encouraging interest and participation in outdoor activities and through increased visitor numbers to cultural heritage attractions providing more funds for their future management. Impacts on biodiversity, landscape, soil & geology and water could potentially be both positive and negative and are assessed as being uncertain.

Removing the tourism focus from the programme would therefore mitigate against the negative impacts predicted for climate, but would also remove many of the positive impacts predicted against some of the other SEA topics. Removing tourism from the programme would also free up funds for expenditure on other aspects, which could potentially have equal or greater environmental impact than tourism. It is therefore overly simplistic to conclude that removal of the tourism focus from the programme would remove the negative impacts potentially associated with development of tourism capacity.

The same is true of the positive impacts associated with some of the socio-economic SEA topics. However, it may be the case that in some areas of Northern Ireland, tourism provides the best opportunity for economic development and removing it from the programme could therefore remove

many of the predicted positive impacts, with limited opportunity to re-capture these through other measures.

Conclusion: The environmental effects of removing the focus on tourism from the programme are uncertain. Overall, it is considered that the net impact of removing tourism from the programme would be negative, as the positive impacts predicted for the socio-economic SEA topics are unlikely to be readily re-captured through other mechanisms.

Alternative 5: Focus on Renewable Energy vs No Focus on Renewable Energy

The focus on renewable energy in the existing programme is predicted to have positive and negative effects, depending on the SEA topic under consideration. Negative impacts are predicted for landscape, positive impacts are predicted for climate, air and population.

Potential but uncertain impacts are identified for ecology and landscape.

On balance therefore, the overall impact associated with the renewable energy aspect of the programme is positive. Removing this focus, while it may provide some small environmental gains, would therefore be of net negative effect.

As with Alternative 4, removing this aspect of the programme would make available funds for spending on other aspects of the programme, which may in turn have positive and negative environmental affects. The nature and significance of such impacts cannot be assessed with any certainty, as it is not known at this stage which areas of the programme these funds would be re-directed to.

Conclusion: Removing or reducing the programme's focus on renewable energy would have a negative impact on the environment.

Alternative 6: Focus on Telecommunications vs No Focus on Telecommunications

The investment in IT and telecommunications aspect of the programme is assessed as being of net positive effect due to the opportunities this provides for reducing the demand for transportation, through for example home working or video conferencing.

Removing or reducing this focus would therefore have a negative impact on the environmental performance of the programme.

Conclusion: Removing or reducing the programme's focus on investment in IT and telecommunication would have a negative impact on the environment.

8.0 MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENT

8.1 Mitigation

The Northern Ireland SEA Regulations require that the Environmental Report include the following in respect of mitigation:

7. The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme.

The assessment of impacts section of this report predicts that aspects of the programme have the potential to cause a significant negative impact on

climate, biodiversity and landscape. It is therefore a requirement of the SEA as a minimum to identify measures to mitigate against these impacts.

Selection Criteria and Development Path Analysis

The selection criteria for determining eligibility to funding provide a key opportunity for mitigating against the potential negative impacts associated with the economic growth aspects of the Programme. As highlighted earlier in this report, these have yet to be established and the findings of the SEA can therefore be fundamental to their development.

In addition, individual projects applying for funding will be allocated a Developmental Path Analysis (DPA) score. The DPA is the main tool for helping to guide the economy toward a more environmental sustainable path of development. It will also be the main tool for monitoring the extent to which this transformation is taking place. DPA consists of six Developmental Paths:

1. Actions that promote regional development activities within the context of environmental regulations (business as usual).
2. Actions that address the environmental damage arising from past regional development activities or that promote regeneration.
3. Actions that put in place environmental infrastructure to allow regional development activities whilst reducing their negative environmental impacts.
4. Actions that help existing organisations to meet increasing environmental standards.
5. Actions that improve resource efficiency ('eco-efficiency') of existing regional development activity.
6. Actions that encourage new types of activity/behaviour using fewer

environmental resources or producing less pollution than existing activities in the area.

The DPA was introduced for the 2000-2006 Competitiveness Programme and was designed to encourage people to think about activities that do more than meet environmental standards. Unfortunately DPA was implemented late in the programme period but lessons have been learnt and will be incorporated into this programme from the outset.

Detailed guidance for implementing the DPA will be issued. All project applications will be allocated a DPA score prior to project selection. The DPA score will be submitted to the selection panel and will help inform their funding decision.

Climate Mitigation Measures

Different aspects of the Competitiveness Programme are predicted to have both positive and negative impacts on the environment. It is uncertain whether the net impact is positive or negative.

Where potentially significant negative impacts are predicted, it is due to the stimulation of economic activity and tourism. Economic activity creates a demand for transportation and energy, both of which are major contributors to carbon emissions. Tourism, in addition to the other impacts associated with enhanced economic activity also creates an additional demand for transportation, particularly air travel.

The support of renewable energy schemes through the programme will provide a key opportunity for mitigating against any increased demand for transport or energy.

Where negative impacts are predicted, the selection criteria and development path analysis provide an opportunity to improve environmental performance,

through ensuring that environmental measures are closely integrated into the project design.

The adoption of basic energy efficiency requirements could for example be used as one of the selection criteria when determining the eligibility of applicants to funding under the Competitiveness Programme.

The impact of additional transportation related greenhouse gas emissions can be reduced through parallel investment in IT and telecommunications measures. This is already a key feature of this plan and should ensure that the impacts are minimised. Transport impacts can also be managed through the selection criteria in a similar way to that proposed above in respect of energy use.

Tourism proposals that aim to increase the numbers of visitors from outside of Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland should demonstrate that carbon saving or off-setting measures are incorporated into the proposal. This could for example be through the incorporation of energy conservation measures and renewable micro-generation into the associated tourist facilities.

8.2 Enhancement

Although not a statutory requirement of the Northern Ireland SEA Regulations, it is also considered good practice that the consideration of mitigation in SEA should consider measures to mitigate any non-significant negative impacts, and to enhance neutral or positive impacts.

Mitigation and enhancement measures were identified during the assessment of impact process detailed in the previous chapter. These are summarised by topic in the tables below.

Table 8.1: Mitigation and Enhancement Measures

Proposed Mitigation / Enhancement	SEA Topics Effected
Establishment of a mechanism for ensuring that additional funds generated by increased visitor numbers to natural and built heritage features are re-invested in the management of these sites.	Biodiversity, Landscape, Soil & Geology, Cultural Heritage, material Assets
Introducing environmental criteria in determining the eligibility for funding of R&TD proposals could ensure that environmental priorities are better integrated into R&TD projects stimulated by the Competitiveness Programme. The selection criteria provide a particular opportunity for doing this.	Water, Air, Climate
Including environmental priorities when promoting the absorption of R&TD and innovation could be of significant benefit. This could be in the form of promoting environmental schemes that also have an economic component, for example through waste minimisation or emissions trading.	Water, Air, Climate
Promotion of water related tourism should highlight the existing high quality nature of the water environment in NI, and establish a clear a link between the quality of this environment, and the quality of outdoor recreation that depends on it.	Water
Due to the youthful profile of the NI population, particular emphasis should be put on new business start-ups involving young entrepreneurs, and on new businesses that would provide high quality employment for young people.	Population
The positive impact already provided by the economic development aspects of the programme will also be maximised if spatial targeting is incorporated to target	Population

those areas where economic depression is at its highest levels.	
Promotion of tourism should not focus solely on overseas residents. Opportunities should also be sought to generate greater interest in NI's natural heritage among NI residents.	Cultural Heritage, Population
The benefits of renewable energy will be maximised where it is developed in close proximity to the areas of demand. The Competitiveness Programme provides an opportunity for economic development and renewable energy to be closely tied in, for example through the requirement for economic development schemes funded under the Competitiveness Programme to incorporate micro-generation or to demonstrate that a minimum proportion of energy demand is met from renewable sources.	Climate, Population
Air Quality Management Areas declared by NI local authorities indicate those locations where issues with poor air quality have been identified. These are often due to emissions from road traffic. The Competitiveness Programme could use these as a basis for prioritising where IT investment aimed at reducing traffic congestion could be targeted to achieve maximum benefit. Such schemes could include the support of home working and tele-conferencing facilities.	Air
Incorporating environmental or sustainability criteria into the process for determining funding eligibility would ensure that developments or projects carried out under the Competitiveness Programme take full account of environmental and sustainability criteria.	All Topics

9.0 MONITORING

The Northern Ireland SEA Regulations require that the Environmental Report include the following in respect of monitoring:

9. A description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with regulation 16.

Regulation 16 states:

16. - (1) The responsible authority shall monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of each plan or programme with the purpose of identifying unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and undertaking appropriate remedial action.

(2) The responsible authority's monitoring arrangements may comprise or include arrangements established otherwise than for the express purpose of complying with paragraph (1).

As agreed during the scoping consultation with EHS, it is a key requirement that any monitoring proposed by the SEA should aim to specifically monitor the impact of the programme rather than monitoring trends in the baseline environment that would have occurred regardless of the programme.

Monitoring of the implementation of the Competitiveness Programme is already a key feature of the existing programme. Any additional monitoring of environmental impacts as required by the SEA will be incorporated into the programme monitoring framework. The precise nature of environmental monitoring will be finalised by NI DFP.

In accordance with the Northern Ireland SEA Regulations, monitoring should also focus on aspects of the programme where significant environmental impacts are predicted.

Monitoring should therefore focus on the predicted climate impacts. Full details of the monitoring framework will be developed by NI DFP and incorporated into the overall monitoring scheme for the Competitiveness Programme. Monitoring will need to focus on the emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. To isolate the effects of the programme from baseline trends that would occur irrespective of the impact of the programme it will be necessary to establish a means of monitoring emissions specifically associated with schemes implemented under the Competitiveness Programme. This will apply to schemes having both a positive and negative impact on climate.

APPENDIX 1 - EHS Consultation Response on Scoping Review

Robert Edwards
ADAS Leeds
Hollyshaw House
Hollyshaw Lane
Whitkirk
Leeds
LS15 7BD

21 March 2007
2006/28

O/R Ref: EHS

Dear Robert,

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT – NORTHERN IRELAND'S ERDF CO-FINANCED PROGRAMME, 2007- 2013 – SCOPING REPORT.

I refer to our Scoping Report meeting on 2 March 2007, at which we discussed the detail required for the Environmental Report for the above named Programme. Please see below the Department's response.

AIR AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY UNIT'S (A&EQ) COMMENTS

P14 – Entry 2 – This is now the Climate Change Programme **2006**.

P14 – Entry 7 – 'UK CC Progrs Review Consultation' – suggest removing; incorporated into 2006 programme.

P22 – Indicators – Climate and Air – Suggest that the first 6 indicators (temp., rainfall, snow, growing season, swallow, sea level) are removed – inappropriate in this context - they are used to monitor climate only, not attribute causes or sources of changing climate.

P22 – Greenhouse Gas Emissions – Agricultural Emissions – Source should be **'AEAT / NETCEN / DOE'**

P22 – Greenhouse Gas Emissions – For the next 6 indicators, substitute **'AEAT / NETCEN / DOE'** for 'Defra / Sustainable Development Indicator'

P22 – Greenhouse Gas Emissions – Agricultural emissions (methane and ammonia) – Methane is fine, ammonia is not a greenhouse gas, therefore should be removed from this entry.

P22/23 – Areas of sensitive habitats exceeding critical loads... - for these 2 indicators, substitute 'Defra / Sust. Dev. Indicator' with **'Centre for Ecology and Hydrology / DOE'**

P23 – For the 3 indicators based on air quality, source, substitute 'EHS' with **'DOE Air and Environmental Quality'**

P23 – No. of projects focused on CC adaptation, source, **'DOE'**

P31 – 'Carbon emissions per capita in Northern Ireland are well below the UK average' – this statement is based on Experimental Statistics (from reference) – more accurate national statistics do not agree with this statement. Suggest removing.

NB: 'Climate' entry in Table on P36 will need to be amended in light of this.

P31 – Air Quality – Summary of Key Issues -

Northern Ireland is positioned on the Western edge of the European land mass, and benefits from the prevailing westerly and south-westerly airstreams bringing clean air off the Atlantic. This means that background air quality is very good in comparison with other areas of the UK and Europe, particularly outside of urban areas. Background levels of industrial and traffic related

pollutants such as sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter are low in comparison with the rest of the UK

– inaccurate – replace with:

Northern Ireland is positioned on the Western edge of the European land mass, and benefits from the prevailing westerly and south-westerly airstreams bringing clean air off the Atlantic. This means that rural background air quality is generally good; however some urban areas in Northern Ireland experience raised levels of air quality pollutants, and have designated Air Quality Management Areas in response to these.

P35 – ‘Climate Change’ entry – see point 9 above.

P39 – ‘Climate’ entry – as above.

WATER MANAGEMENT UNIT’S (WMU) COMMENTS

Section 2.1 ERDF Priorities and Objectives

Under this section WMU notes that the selection criteria for projects are to be established. WMU would like to know what the selection criteria are.

Table 4.1

WMU would like to see included in this list of policies the Nitrates Directive 91/676/EEC.

Section 6.0 Water

WMU believes that under the Environmental Protection Objective the wording should be consistent i.e. “To protect and enhance...” rather than “To conserve and enhance...” This re-wording should be used throughout the document for this objective.

Also under the summary of Key issues WMU would like to see reference made to the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and its aims to achieve good ecological status for all waters by 2015

Section 6.0 Proposed SEA Objectives

In the table under Group1 (Environmental) SEA Objectives No 3 Water, WMU feels that this should reflect the aims of the WFD namely to protect and enhance the quality of all waters not just surface and groundwater quality. The wording of this SEA objective should be used throughout the document.

BUILT HERITAGE COMMENTS

We would note at the outset that the relationship of this programme with the cultural heritage (including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape, and the interrelationship these have with the other SEA topics) is unclear.

Further, we have to note that as this programme is part of a much larger one, it has a very broad geographical scope. In that context, the individual Member State's participation in the Programme, in this case Northern Ireland will be subject to a very broad range of environmental considerations, not least of all the treatment of the cultural heritage (including architectural and archaeological heritage).

Section 5.0 of the Scoping Review document contains no reference to baseline data on the cultural heritage of Northern Ireland, including its historic buildings, archaeological sites and monuments, cultural landscapes, maritime cultural resource, or indeed any of the items noted in the EHS (and UK) guidance on the compilation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Some consideration of these elements is included at page 32, though both the statistical information and discussion included here is incorrect.

If a Strategic Environmental Assessment is being completed for this programme we would expect the subsequent Environmental Report to present an appropriate assessment of the relationships between the programme and the SEA objectives, as indicated on pages 39-40 of the Scoping Review.

In terms of the assessment of effects, it should be noted that there are cross-cutting issues between the conservation of built heritage (archaeology and architecture), nature interests, sustainable development and especially the Spending Priority outlined at page 6 of the Scoping Review of 'improving accessibility and protecting and enhancing the environment'.

NATURAL HERITAGE COMMENTS

INTRODUCTION

Nil comment

Programme Summary

Nil Comment

ERDF Priorities and Objectives.

Natural Heritage notes that the Programme Monitoring Committee set up by the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) will establish the selection criteria for projects. We consider that it is important for the Environmental Report to indicate the relationship between the Northern Ireland's ERDF Co-Financed Programme 2007-2013 consultation document and the selection criteria for projects i.e. will the contents of the document influence the selection criteria.

Under each aim Natural Heritage suggests that the focus of each priority be mentioned prior to its aims in the text.

SEA Scoping

Natural Heritage is content with the proposed topic groupings.

Plans and programmes.

Natural Heritage is content with the other plans and programmes that have been identified for consideration during the SEA process.

Baseline data.

Natural Heritage considers that the proposed data is suitable for showing the current state of the environment. However, we consider that the data should not be considered as baseline data that could be used to monitor impacts of the plan. The likely evolution of the state of the environment data without implementation of the plan should be explored.

SETTING OF SEA OBJECTIVES

Although not a necessity in the SEA process we acknowledge that the use of SEA objectives is a common methodology used to assist the assessment of likely significant effects.

Natural Heritage considers that SEA objectives identified in Section 6.0 should be consistent throughout the Environmental Report. It is noted that several identified objectives are absent in the proposed objectives that are to form the basis of the environmental assessment. We consider that all of the identified objectives be utilized in the environmental assessment process. In addition we would encourage the use of additional objectives that focus upon the conservation and enhancement of areas designated for their nature conservation interest, especially Natura 2000 sites. We acknowledge that this section has highlighted some existing environmental problems.

Consideration of alternatives.

Natural Heritage considers that the Environmental Report should indicate the processes used to select the priorities of their programme and the aims and objectives. Alternatives considered during this process could also be described.

Assessments of Impacts

Natural Heritage would suggest careful consideration of the assessment of impacts in relation to what the SEA objectives will be evaluated against. It has been suggested that the SEA objectives will be evaluated against the priorities. Natural Heritage considers that this may not provide an accurate indication of the potential impacts of the programme. Natural Heritage is of the opinion that the evaluation of the aims and objectives or the targets and indicators of the programme would provide a more realistic indication of the impacts of the plan.

General Comments

Please pay special attention to Regulation 11 and Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004. In addition please ensure that assessment matrices / graphics are supported by explanatory information that highlights relevant comments noted during the assessment and justification off all decisions.

I hope this helps and we look forward to receiving the Environmental Report in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Brown
SEA Co-ordinator

APPENDIX 2 - Full Review of Plans, Policies and Programmes

International and European Plans, Programmes and Policy

Document Title	OBJECTIVES/REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLANS/PROGRAMMES	Implications for the NI ERDF and SEA
Lisbon (1997) and Gothenburg (2001) European Councils	<p>Through these two Councils the EU embedded respect for the environment and sustainable development at the core of growth, job generation and competitive advantage.</p> <p>The Gothenburg Council agreed a strategy for sustainable development. It encompassed an environmental dimension to the Lisbon process for employment, economic reform and social cohesion.</p>	<p>These are the highest level agendas that set the context for economic development within the EU. It is essential that the programme must meet the requirements of these agendas in terms of job creation, economic growth and sustainability.</p>
Community Strategic Guidelines (CSG's)2007-2013	<p>The CSG's provide guidance on the priorities that will be funded under the structural funds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing Competitiveness • Increasing Growth Potential • Increasing Productivity • Strengthening social cohesion <p>A number of sections of the CSG's are concerned with the environment. These include guidance on the support for investment in infrastructure to comply with environmental legislation. The careful use of natural and cultural resources, meeting Kyoto commitments, risk prevention and the use of renewable/alternative technologies.</p>	<p>The NI ERDF must ensure that it meets with the CSG's. The programme must address the key themes of the CSG's namely growth and productivity, but the guidelines also illustrate how the environment can play its part as an economic driver.</p>
European Landscape Convention (signed by the UK 21/02/06)	<p>Landscape is a key factor in social well being and quality of life. It has important cultural, ecological, environmental, social and economic role. Recent developments in society and economy have impacted significantly on the landscape.</p> <p>The aims of the convention are to promote European Landscape protection, management and planning and to organise European co-operation on landscape issues. It is part of the Council of Europe's work on natural and cultural heritage, spatial planning and environment.</p>	<p>The impact of the NI ERDF programme on the landscape will need to be explored. The impact of developments on the cultural, ecological, environmental, social and economic value of the landscape will need to be considered. Given the requirement for European co-operation impacts will need to be considered in a European context. It is particularly</p>

Document Title	OBJECTIVES/REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLANS/PROGRAMMES	Implications for the NI ERDF and SEA
	<p>Member states will be required co-operate to ensure the protection, management and planning of landscapes through the adoption of national measures and cross Europe measures.</p>	<p>important to consider the affects of cumulative developments on the landscape.</p>
<p>EU Waste Directive (75/442/EEC)</p>	<p>Directives 75/442/EEC (as revised by Directive 91/156/EEC) is referred to as the Framework Directive on Waste. It sets the requirements for the permitting and operation of waste management facilities. It is concerned with the disposal and movement of waste into and out of the EU. The Framework Directive on Waste places five general requirements on Member States. These are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the prevention and reduction of waste and reduce its potential for harm through cleaner technologies, new disposal techniques and new, more environmentally benign products. • Encourage waste recovery such as recycling, reuse, reclamation and energy recovery. • Ensure the above without endangering human health or harming any other part of the environment. • Ensure an integrated and adequate network of waste installations using the 'Best Available Technology.' 	<p>The NI ERDF needs to ensure that it helps to support the five general requirements of the Framework Directive on Waste. The NI ERDF needs to ensure that waste is considered at all stages in the program. Efforts must be made to ensure that the reduction of waste and the use and development of BAT's are objectives of the NI ERDF.</p>
<p>EU Landfill Directive (99/31/EC)</p>	<p>The EU Landfill Directive (99/31/EC) came into force in 1999. The UK had two years to implement this legislation. The landfill directives overall aim is to prevent or reduce the negative effects on the environment caused by the landfilling of waste. In particular the directive is intended to limit the negative impacts on surface water, groundwater, soil, air and human health. This will be done by implementing stringent technical requirements for wastes and landfills. The directive aims to cut the amount of waste going to landfill and to increase recycling rates.</p> <p>The Landfill Directive sets a number of targets. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reduce biodegradable waste going to landfill to 75% of 1995 figures by 2010 and to 35% by 2020. • To ban the co-disposal of hazardous and non-hazardous waste by 2004. • The requirement to treat most wastes before they are landfilled. By 2004, all hazardous wastes going to landfill will have to be treated first. • To ban the disposal of whole tyres at landfill sites by 2003 and by 2006 tyre granules will not be allowed in landfills. 	<p>It is essential that NI ERDF programme supports the objectives of the Landfill Directives by contributing to the reduction of waste volumes to landfill.</p>

Document Title	OBJECTIVES/REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLANS/PROGRAMMES	Implications for the NI ERDF and SEA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ban landfilling of liquid wastes, certain clinical waste and certain hazardous wastes. This is already in place in the UK. • Increase the level of control, monitoring and reporting at landfill sites. This is already in place in the UK. 	
Aarhus Convention	<p>The Aarhus Convention establishes a number of rights of the public (citizens and their associations) with regard to the environment. Public authorities (at national, regional or local level) are to contribute to allowing these rights to become effective.</p> <p>The convention provides for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The right of everyone to receive environmental information that is held by public authorities. This can include information on the state of human health and safety where this can be affected by the state of the environment. Public authorities are obliged, under the Convention, to actively disseminate environmental information in their possession; • The right to participate from an early stage in environmental decision-making. Arrangements are to be made by public authorities to enable citizens and environmental organisations to comment on, for example, proposals for projects affecting the environment, or plans and programmes relating to the environment. • The rights to challenge, in a court of law, public decisions that have been made without respecting the two aforementioned rights or environmental law in general. <p>The Convention creates obligations in three fields or pillars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public access to environmental information. • Public Participation in decision-making on matters related to the environment: provision. • Access to justice (i.e. administrative or judicial review proceedings) in environmental matters. 	Public consultation and access to information supporting the decision making process must be introduced in the procedures for selecting NI ERDF projects. The SEA directive requires that public consultation is carried out on the Draft Plan and its accompanying environmental report.

Document Title	OBJECTIVES/REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLANS/PROGRAMMES	Implications for the NI ERDF and SEA
European Commission White Paper. European Transport Policy for 2010: Time to decide. (2001)	<p>This paper describes what has been achieved so far both at the Union and the Member State Levels and what should be done in the near future in order to create a sustainable transport system.</p> <p>The principal measures suggested in the White paper include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revitalising the railways. • Improving quality in the road transport sector. • Striking a balance between growth in air transport and the environment • Turning inter-modality into reality • Improving road safety • Adopting policy on effective charging for transport • Recognising the rights and obligations of users • Developing high-quality urban transport • Developing medium and long-term environmental objectives for a sustainable transport system 	<p>Any projects funded under the ERDF program in NI must consider the impact that they will have on the transport network and the environment. Wherever possible the program should contribute to creating a sustainable transport network and promoting the use of sustainable forms of transport.</p>
European Noise Directive 2002 (02/49/EC)	<p>The new EU Noise Directive came into effect on the 3rd January 2002. This had a big impact on outdoor power equipment. The directive affects all outdoor power equipment used in the UK such as lawnmowers and strimmers used at outdoor stadium, golf courses, public gardens, cemeteries etc. The equipment is affected through labelling requirements or sound power limits. 22 items are subject to limits and labelling while 57 types of equipment are subject to labelling alone. Some examples of the first category include compressors, welding equipment, lawnmowers, power generators and earth moving equipment, whilst second category examples include brush cutters, chainsaws, conveyor belts, trenchers and water pump units.</p>	<p>The NI ERDF should aim to ensure the avoidance, reduction and mitigation of manmade noise.</p>

Document Title	OBJECTIVES/REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLANS/PROGRAMMES	Implications for the NI ERDF and SEA
European Spatial Development Perspective 1999	<p>By adopting the ESDP, the Member States and the Commission reached agreement on common objectives and concepts for the future development of the territory of the European Union.</p> <p>The aim of spatial development policies is to work towards a balanced and sustainable development of the territory of the European Union. The ESDP aims to ensure that the three fundamental goals of European policy are achieved equally in all the regions of the EU:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic and social cohesion; • Conservation and management of natural resources and the cultural heritage; • More balanced competitiveness of the European territory. <p>European cultural landscapes, cities and towns as well as a variety of natural and historic monuments are part of European Heritage. Its fostering should be an important part of modern architecture, urban and landscape planning in all regions of the EU.</p> <p>A big challenge for spatial development policy is to contribute to the objectives announced by the EU during international conferences concerning the environment and climate, of reducing emissions into the global ecological systems.</p>	<p>The NI ERDF should consider the impacts it may have on natural resources and historic environments. The SEA should include objectives on natural resources (e.g. soil) and cultural heritage.</p>

Document Title	OBJECTIVES/REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLANS/PROGRAMMES	Implications for the NI ERDF and SEA
European Social Fund	<p>The European Social Fund is one of the four EU structural funds. These structural funds were developed to help to promote economic and social cohesion in the EU. The ESF was created by the Treaty of Rome in 1957. Over the period 2007 to 2013, the intention is to use the ESF to support the Lisbon Strategy.</p> <p>The ESF aims to achieve the goals set out in the European Employment Strategy. ESF funded Programmes are designed to help prevent and fight unemployment and to prevent people losing touch with the labour market. Its purpose is to increase employment by enhancing people's skills through training. Unlike the ERDF it does not provide capital grants for infrastructure.</p> <p>The ESF has 3 priority areas in Northern Ireland. They are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Helping people into sustainable employment. 2) Improving workforce skills and adaptability. 3) Promoting sustainable development and creating sustainable communities. <p>The ESF money goes to long-term programmes in Member States. Seven-year programmes are planned by Member States together with the European Commission and then implemented through a wide range of organisations, both in the public and private sector. The ESF is granting some €70 billion to people and projects across the EU.</p>	<p>Programmes funded by the ERDF should aim to support the ESF funded programmes. Impacts of the programmes funded by the ESDF on ESF funded programmes should be taken into account.</p>
PEACE II	<p>The Peace II programme is a European Union Structural Funds Programme. It aims to reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society and to promote reconciliation.</p> <p>It carries forward aspects of the EU Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (1995-1999) ("Programme for Peace and Reconciliation" or "PEACE I" Community Initiative). It has an economic focus. The Peace 2 programme will compliment the Building Sustainable Prosperity Programme for Northern Ireland and the Urban Community Initiative focused on North Belfast.</p> <p>A total of €102 million of Structural Funds has been allocated to this Operational Programme.</p>	<p>Programmes funded by the ERDF should aim to build sustainable prosperity in Northern Ireland. They should support the PEACE II programmes by helping to facilitate moves towards a stable, peaceful society.</p>

Document Title	OBJECTIVES/REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLANS/PROGRAMMES	Implications for the NI ERDF and SEA
Nitrates Directive (91/67/EEC)	<p>The Nitrates Directive's objective is to reduce water pollution caused by nitrates that come from agricultural sources. It is intended to safeguard groundwater and to prevent ecological damage in the form of eutrophication of freshwater and marine waters.</p> <p>The main aims of the directive is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a code of practice, to be implemented on a voluntary basis by farmers, to protect waters from pollution by nitrates, • Identify waters polluted by nitrates from agricultural sources. • Identify land areas contributing to pollution and designate these lands as Nitrate Vulnerable Zones. • Establish action programmes in relation to designated NVZ's within one year of designation. • Implement the action programmes within four years of their establishment. 	<p>The ERDF programme must ensure that it contributes to meeting the objectives of the Nitrates Directive by promoting developments and projects that assist in reducing nitrate losses from agricultural sources.</p>
EC Environmental Liabilities Directive	<p>The proposed Directive is aimed at the prevention and remedying of environmental damage - specifically, damage to habitats and species protected by EC law, damage to water resources, and land contamination which presents a threat to human health.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is based on the polluter pays principle. • Polluters would meet their liability by remediating the damaged environment directly, or by taking measures to prevent imminent damage, or by reimbursing competent authorities. • Competent authorities would be responsible for enforcing the regime. • Strict liability would apply in respect of damage to land, water and biodiversity from activities regulated by specified EU legislation. • defences would exist for events such as damage caused by an act of armed conflict or a natural phenomenon. 	<p>Projects and programmes incited under the ERDF programme must ensure that they help to prevent and remediate environmental damage through innovation and planning and so contribute to meeting the aims of the directive.</p>

Document Title	OBJECTIVES/REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLANS/PROGRAMMES	Implications for the NI ERDF and SEA
Agenda 21	<p>The text of Agenda 21 was first revealed at the Rio summit in 1992. 179 countries initially signed their agreement to the plan, which includes a wide array of targets for relieving social and environmental inequity and preserving natural processes. The 40 chapters of the plan are split into 4 sections, these include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social and Economic Dimensions • Conservation and Management of Resources for Development • Strengthening the Role of Major Groups • Means of Implementation <p>Rio +10, or the Johannesburg Earth summit confirmed the UN commitment to the full implementation of the plan</p> <p>Alongside international involvement in the implementation of Agenda 21 there was also a call for a more localised approach to facilitate community involvement in the aims. These have been termed Local Agenda 21 or LA21 with the tag line 'Think Global act local'. While the implementation of LA21 varied considerably from authority to authority the principals remain the same.</p>	<p>The ERDF should support the aims of Agenda 21 both at a national level and at the local level through the various LA21 schemes. The SEA should consider the aims of Agenda 21 and understand the varying context of LA21 within different local authorities throughout NI.</p>
Air Quality Framework Directive 1996/62/EC	<p>This Directive covers the revision of previously existing legislation and the introduction of new air quality standards for previously unregulated air pollutants, setting the timetable for the development of daughter directives on a range of pollutants. The list of atmospheric pollutants to be considered includes sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter, lead and ozone – pollutants governed by already existing ambient air quality objectives- and benzene, carbon monoxide, poly-aromatic hydrocarbons, cadmium, arsenic, nickel and mercury. Establishes mandatory standards for air quality and sets limits and guides values for sulphur and nitrogen dioxide, suspended particulates and lead in air.</p>	<p>The ERDF should help to improve air quality and ensure that standards for air quality are not exceeded. The SEA should include objectives on air quality.</p>

Document Title	OBJECTIVES/REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLANS/PROGRAMMES	Implications for the NI ERDF and SEA
Convention on Biodiversity, Rio de Janeiro (1992)	The convention requires development of strategies plans and programmes for conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. The declaration includes 27 principals, which guide the future targets for continued and sustainable development within the limits of our natural resources.	The ERDF should aim to encourage development which fits within the definition of sustainability. The ERDF programme should also encourage innovation to support tackling the problem of continued economic growth which doesn't damage or irreparably deplete resources for future generations. The SEA should include objectives on encouraging sustainable development.
Council Directive 1999/30/EC on Ambient Air Quality Limits	This Directive reached a common position across European Member States for the setting of Limit Values for sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, particulate and lead. The directives prescribe how they should be assessed in a way that covers the entire EU territory, in terms that are sometimes general and sometimes specific, how the assessment should be reported to the Commission as well as to the public and when reduction plans should be developed to reduce the pollutant concentrations where they are too high.	The ERDF should ensure that standards for air quality are not exceeded. The SEA should include objectives on air quality.
EC Directive on Conservation of Wild Birds 79/409/EEC 1979	Member States have the duty to sustain populations of naturally occurring wild birds by sustaining areas of habitats in order to maintain populations at ecologically and scientifically sound levels. This applies to birds, their nests and habitats.	The strategy should be to promote this aim by promoting biodiversity and avoiding/reducing the impact of development and industry on habitat fragmentation. The SEA should include objectives on biodiversity.

Document Title	OBJECTIVES/REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLANS/PROGRAMMES	Implications for the NI ERDF and SEA
<p>EC Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats of Wild Fauna and Flora 92/43/EEC 1992</p>	<p>Maintain or restore in a favourable condition designated natural habitat types and habitats of designated species listed in Annexes I and II respectively of the Directive. If a project compromising one of these habitats must proceed in spite of negative conservation impacts due to it being in the public interest, compensatory measures must be provided for. Linear structures such as rivers/streams, hedgerows, field boundaries, ponds, etc., that enable movement and migration of species should be preserved.</p>	<p>Accept the primacy of nature conservation objectives and clearly take note of these designations in setting SEA objectives and defining options in the ERDF. Ensure the locations of designated sites are clear and taken into account in any options. Review the extent to which policy options would damage or destroy these features, or sever habitats over a wide area or long distance, and use less damaging options or appropriate mitigation measures. Where the impact is unavoidable, encourage innovative solutions that incorporate the sustainable use of features.</p>

Document Title	OBJECTIVES/REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLANS/PROGRAMMES	Implications for the NI ERDF and SEA
<p>Our Future, Our Choice (EU Sixth Environment Action Programme)</p>	<p>The latest Environment Action Programme gives a strategic direction to the European Commission's environmental policy over the decade 2001 - 2010, as the Community expands its boundaries. The programme identifies four environmental areas to be tackled for improvements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Change • Nature and Biodiversity • Environment and Health and Quality of Life • Natural Resources and Waste <p>Recognises that land use planning and management decisions in the Member States can have a major influence on the environment, leading to fragmentation of the countryside and pressures in urban areas and the coast. Also includes objectives on stabilising greenhouse gases, halting biodiversity loss, reducing pollution and resource use. Under the EAP framework, Thematic Strategies are being developed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air quality • Soil Protection • Sustainable use of Pesticides • Waste Prevention and Recycling • Sustainable Use of Natural Resources • Urban Environment 	<p>The plan makers need to be aware of these strategies and consider how their programme can positively influence issues such as air quality, soil protection, natural resource use, waste prevention and recycling. The fund should aim to encourage innovative approaches to tackling these issues with the aim of adopting sustainable strategies for new and existing business.</p>

Document Title	OBJECTIVES/REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLANS/PROGRAMMES	Implications for the NI ERDF and SEA
Declaration of Sustainable Development 2002	This declaration was signed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) 2002, Johannesburg, where the principles of international commitment to sustainable development were reaffirmed, 30 years after the Stockholm Summit and ten years after the Rio Declaration of 1992. Undertake to strengthen and improve governance at all levels, for the effective implementation of Agenda 21.	The ERDF should consider the aims of the declaration and aim to contribute towards their achievement.
Kyoto Protocol	Signing up to the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, 38 Countries (plus the EU) have committed to individual, legally binding targets to limit or reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. These add up to a total cut in greenhouse-gas emissions of at least 5% from 1990 levels in the commitment period 2008-2012. Different countries and nation states have committed to different EU countries have committed to 8% reductions while the UK has committed to a 12.5% reduction in green house gasses (base year = 1990).	The ERDF should support the national targets for CO2 emissions. Encourage innovative methods for tackling emissions and energy use. The ERDF should ensure all reasonable opportunities are taken forward to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote renewable energy and higher energy efficiency. The SEA should include objectives on climatic factors.

Document Title	OBJECTIVES/REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLANS/PROGRAMMES	Implications for the NI ERDF and SEA
Millennium Development Goals – World summit 2005	<p>The Millennium Declaration has 8 objectives, adopted by 189 world leaders during the summit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger • Achieve universal primary education • Promote gender equality and empower women • Reduce child mortality • Improve maternal health • Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases • Ensure environmental sustainability • Develop a global partnership for development <p>The primary aim was to achieve these goals through action by 2015.</p>	<p>The ERDF should contribute towards the achievement of these aims at a national level through encouragement of initiatives/development at the local level. The ERDF has the potential to contribute to a wide range of these objectives including education, equality and environmental sustainability. The ERDF should encourage business development that contributes towards these goals through innovation and sustainable business. The SEA should consider objectives on sustainable development, equality and training/education.</p>

Document Title	OBJECTIVES/REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLANS/PROGRAMMES	Implications for the NI ERDF and SEA
Ramsar Convention	<p>The Ramsar Convention on wetlands of international importance especially as waterfowl habitat (1971) provides a framework for the conservation of wetlands and their resources. 146 parties signed the convention with 1469 wetland sites, totaling 128.9 million hectares, designated for inclusion in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance. The mission of the Ramsar Convention is "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local, regional and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world". Contracting Parties are requested to make a commitment to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate at least one site that meets the Ramsar criteria for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance. • Protect the ecological character of listed sites. • Include wetland conservation within their national land-use planning. • Establish nature reserves on wetlands and promote wetland training. • Consult with other Contracting Parties about the implementation of the Convention. 	<p>To support this convention the ERDF should ensure that development doesn't directly or indirectly effect wetland habitat. If impacts are unavoidable then steps should be taken to ensure a sustainable use strategy which protects the resource. The SEA should include objectives on sustainable use/protection of biodiversity.</p>

Document Title	OBJECTIVES/REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLANS/PROGRAMMES	Implications for the NI ERDF and SEA
Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC	<p>The Water Framework Directive seeks to protect surface freshwaters, estuaries, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater. It sets environmental objectives focused on ecological quality, which take account of the full range of pressures upon the aquatic environment (pollution, abstraction, flow regulation/transfer and habitat impact). Ecological quality is divided into five classes (high, good, moderate, poor and bad) and is derived from measurements of biological, hydro morphological and physio-chemical elements. The Directive also promotes the sustainable use of water resources that include drinking water sources and nature conservation sites. It defines a planning, management and reporting system centered on River Basin Districts and International River Basin Districts. These are based upon river catchment basins and associated groundwater. The Directive involves social participation and transparency along with an economic analysis of water use. Member States have to involve as many parties as possible (e.g. stakeholders, local and regional authorities, water users and environmental groups) in drafting, discussing and updating River Basin Management Plans. The primary aim of the Water Framework Directive is to achieve 'good' status for all waters by 2015' It has the following key aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding the scope of water protection to all waters, surface waters and groundwater • Achieving "good status" for all waters by a set deadline • Water management based on river basins • "Combined approach" of emission limit values and quality standards • Getting the prices right • Getting the citizen involved more closely • Streamlining legislation 	<p>The ERDF should contribute to the objectives of the framework by minimising negative impacts on water resources. There should also be encouragement to businesses to adopt innovative methods to minimise negative impacts and contribute to monitoring and research. The SEA should include objectives on water resources.</p>

Document Title	OBJECTIVES/REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLANS/PROGRAMMES	Implications for the NI ERDF and SEA
EC Freshwater Directive 78/659/EEC	<p>The Freshwater Directive seeks to protect freshwater bodies identified by member states as water suitable for sustaining fish populations. It requires that certain designated stretches of water (rivers, lakes or reservoirs) meet quality standards that should enable fish to live or breed in the designated water, although this will also depend on physical conditions. The Directive identifies two categories of water; those suitable for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salmonid fish (salmon and trout) - these are generally fast flowing stretches of river that have a high oxygen content and a low level of nutrients • cyprinid fish (coarse fish - carp, tench, barbel, rudd, roach) - these are slower flowing waters, that often flow through lowlands The Directive sets different standards for salmonid and cyprinid waters. 	<p>The ERDF should contribute to the protection of the chemical and physical quality of stretches of water identified by the state under this Directive. This should be encouraged either as a sustainable use option or a reduction of impact. New business or development encouraged under this plan should aim to protect fresh water resources from their activities. The SEA should include objectives on water quality and biodiversity</p>
EC Shellfish Directive 79/923/EEC	<p>The Shellfish Directive seeks to protect and improve shellfish waters in order to support shellfish life and growth and contribute to the high quality of shellfish products directly edible by man. The Directive sets physical, chemical and microbiological water quality requirements that designated shellfish waters must either comply with or endeavour to meet.</p>	<p>The ERDF should contribute to the protection of shellfish sites designated under this Directive through the encouragement of new business and development to reduce impact and protect resources. This should be either as a sustainable use option or a reduction of impact. The SEA should include objectives on water quality and biodiversity.</p>
Bathing Water Directive 76/160/EEC	<p>The objective of the Bathing Water Directive is to protect public health and the environment from faecal pollution at bathing waters. The Directive requires Member States to identify popular bathing areas and monitor the bathing waters for indicators of microbiological pollution throughout the bathing season which runs from May to September. A revised Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC) came into force on 24 March 2006 and must be transposed into UK law within two years of this date. Key changes include a tightening of water quality standards and a requirement to provide information about bathing waters to the public.</p>	<p>The ERDF should consider the impacts new development or business may have on bathing water quality. The SEA should include objectives on water quality.</p>

National Plans, Programmes and Policy

Document Title	OBJECTIVES/REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLANS/PROGRAMMES	Implications for the NI ERDF and SEA
Environmental Protection Act 1990	<p>Environmental Protection Act (EPA) 1990 controls many aspects of how the environment is protected and regulated. It deals with the control of pollution arising from industry and other processes.</p> <p><i>The EPA 1990 (amended 1995) provides the main statutory framework in relation to waste. In particular the document:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defines waste • Outlines the roles and functions of the waste collection authorities, the disposal authorities and the Environment Agency • Establishes the criminal offences in relation to waste • Outlines the waste management licensing system • Defines the statutory duty of care in relation to waste 	<p>The NI ERDF program and the projects that receive funding must comply with all the EPA 1990 legal requirements in relation to waste.</p>
Our Energy Future – Creating a Low Carbon Economy (2003)	<p>The white paper defines a long-term strategic vision for energy policy combining our environmental, security of supply, competitiveness and social goals. The implementation of the White Paper is being taken forward via the Sustainable Energy Policy network (SEPN).</p> <p>The four goals for the energy policy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To cut the UK's Carbon emissions by 60% by 2050 with real progress by 2020. • To maintain the reliability of supplies. • To promote competitive markets in the UK and beyond, helping to raise the rate of sustainable economic growth and to improve our productivity. • To ensure that every home is adequately and affordably heated. <p>Energy efficiency will be key in addressing all four goals.</p>	<p>The program needs to help deliver the goal of reducing carbon emissions. The programme should encourage adoption of regulations to improve energy efficiency in all building works. The program should also support the use of renewable energy and other low carbon technologies.</p>

Document Title	OBJECTIVES/REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLANS/PROGRAMMES	Implications for the NI ERDF and SEA
National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF)	<p>The NSRF translates the key themes of the CSG's to be relevant to the National context and economic development aims of individual member states.</p> <p>In terms of the environment the key concern is climate change and the need for the UK to become more resource and energy efficient. Environmental technologies and innovation are seen to be key to this and sustainable development in general.</p>	<p>Within the Northern Ireland chapter the key issues are sustainable development, competitiveness, productivity, enterprise, knowledge and innovation, transport and infrastructure, skills, employment and environment (including waste issues). By addressing these issues it is hoped that a more competitive sustainable Northern Ireland will develop.</p>
Climate Change: The UK Programme (2001)	<p>The UK's climate change program sets out Government's and the devolved administrations' approaches to the challenge of climate change. It explains why the climate is changing and what its effects might be. Moreover, it explains the new measures the Government and the devolved administrations are introducing to reduce emissions further and achieve the UK's climate change targets, Also explains how climate change is expected to affect the UK, how the UK might need to adapt, and the action the Government and the devolved administrations have started to take to prepare for this.</p>	<p>The ERDF should consider the aims of the UK's climate program. The ERDF should promote measures to improve energy efficiency by stimulating both investment in energy saving and cost cutting actions targeted at reducing carbon emissions. The program should also promote innovative methods for reducing the carbon footprint of new business and development. The SEA should include objectives relating to climate change.</p>
UK Biodiversity Action Plan - UK BAP (Defra, 1994)	<p>The UK BAP is the UK Government's response to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) signed in 1992. It describes the UK's biological resources, and commits a detailed plan for the protection of these resources. It contains 391 Species Action Plans, 45 Habitat Action Plans and 162 Local Biodiversity Action Plans with targeted actions. Overall objectives are to maintain, promote and enhance biodiversity.</p>	<p>The program should aim to encourage development, which adopts an approach that causes minimum impact or, preferably, benefits species and habitats as identified in the UK BAP. The scheme should aim to support the specific targets set out in the 6 local biodiversity action plans in Northern Ireland through encouraging innovation and sustainable use/impact by business and communities.</p>

Document Title	OBJECTIVES/REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLANS/PROGRAMMES	Implications for the NI ERDF and SEA
<p>Securing the Future – UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy (2005)</p>	<p>This strategy aims to promote sustainable development. It contains</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five principles (with a more explicit focus on environmental limits) • Four agreed priorities (sustainable consumption and production, climate change, natural resource production and sustainable communities) • A new indicator set with new indicators such as on well being The new objectives included within the strategy are: • Living within environmental limits • Promoting good governance • Using sound science responsibly 	<p>The program must help to deliver the measures set out in the sustainable development action plan for Northern Ireland. It should also take account of the Community Action 2020 program, providing skills training and improved access to funding and mentoring. The SEA should address the need for R&D and community/business involvement through the adoption and encouragement of innovative and sustainable practices.</p>
<p>UK Air Quality Strategy (ODPM, 2000 amended in 2003)</p>	<p>This Strategy describes the plans drawn up by the Government and the devolved administrations to improve and protect ambient air quality in the UK in the medium term. The plan sets a number of air quality objectives for pollutants including sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter, lead and ozone. The purpose of the air quality strategy is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide the best practicable protection to human health by setting health based objectives for eight main air pollutants (objectives are maximum recommended exposure levels). • To contribute to the protection of the natural environment by setting objectives for two pollutants (nitrogen and sulphur dioxide) for the protection of vegetation and ecosystems. 	<p>The program needs to consider its direct or indirect contribution to air pollution either as an impact on human health or through its impact on the natural environment. The SEA should include objectives on air quality considered appropriate.</p>

Document Title	OBJECTIVES/REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLANS/PROGRAMMES	Implications for the NI ERDF and SEA
UK Climate Change Programme Review: Consultation (Defra, 2004)	The devolved administrations are committed to making an equitable contribution to efforts aimed at meeting the UK's Kyoto target, moving towards the UK's national goal.	The programme should recognise the importance of sustainable innovation for business through the development and adoption of new technologies and techniques with the aim of reducing carbon emissions. The programme should encourage entrepreneurs with business concepts that are energy efficient and adopt sustainable techniques. The programme should consider its direct and indirect contribution to the generation of atmospheric CO ₂ . The program should be compatible with the Strategic energy framework. The SEA should include objectives on climate change.

Northern Ireland Plans, Programmes and Policy

Document Title	OBJECTIVES/REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLANS/PROGRAMMES	Implications for the NI ERDF and SEA
Draft Planning Policy Statement 14.	<p>Reinforces the commitment to conserve the landscape and natural resources of the rural area and to protect them from excessive, inappropriate or obtrusive development and from actual and potential effects of pollution.</p> <p>The aim of the PPS 14 is to manage development in the countryside in a manner consistent with achieving the strategic objectives of the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025.</p> <p>The aim of PPS 14 are: To manage growth in the countryside to achieve appropriate and sustainable patterns of development that meet the essential needs of a vibrant rural community: to conserve the landscape and natural resources of the rural area an to protect it from excessive, inappropriate or obtrusive development and from the actual or potential effects of pollution; to facilitate development necessary to achieve a sustainable rural economy; and to promote high standards in the design, sizing and landscaping of development in the countryside.</p>	<p>The NI ERDF should aim to help in achieving sustainable patterns of development whilst recognising the constraints on development set out in PPS14 relating to investments on farms, re-use and adaptation of existing buildings, the nature of their use and issues such as scale and character, as well as the particular constraints of particularly sensitive areas designated as Special Conservation Areas.</p>

Document Title	OBJECTIVES/REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLANS/PROGRAMMES	Implications for the NI ERDF and SEA
Economic Vision for Northern Ireland (2005)	<p>The Economic vision sets the direction for economic policy over the next ten years. The overarching driver to the vision is improving global competitiveness through increased productivity and value-added leading to enhanced market share in products and services. This will result in reduced economic inactivity and unemployment. The aim is to close the productivity gap with the UK and to increase the percentage of the working age population who are economically active.</p> <p>The Economic Vision Identifies the following key drivers for the future development of the Northern Ireland Economy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase Investment in R&D and promote innovation/creativity. • Promote and encourage enterprise. • Ensure our people have the right skills for future employment opportunities. • Ensure we have modern infrastructure in place to support business and consumers. <p>The vision should be achieved with minimal government intervention. The main role of the government will be ensuring that the conditions are right for growth. The vision recognised the importance of ensuring that economic growth is environmentally and socially sustainable and balanced.</p>	<p>The ERDF should support the Economic Vision for Northern Ireland. It should encourage firms to grow and expand enabling them to compete on a global market. It should work towards ensuring that people have the correct skills required to take Northern Ireland's economy forward. This should be achieved in the overall context of environmental and social sustainability.</p>
Natural Heritage Strategic Plan (2003)	<p>This sets out the direction in which the EHS plan to continue their work on conservation and protection of the natural heritage in Northern Ireland. It concentrates on a variety of themes which cover: conserving biodiversity; policy; safeguarding sites; management of designated sites; sustainable use of the countryside; enjoyment of the countryside and working with others.</p> <p>It has no fixed timetable and defines the routes that will be taken not the rate at which it is achieved.</p>	<p>The ERDF should support improvements in the natural environment. It should support the conservation of biodiversity and promote sustainable development. The ERDF should support the management of conservation areas and Sites of Special Scientific Interest.</p>

Document Title	OBJECTIVES/REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLANS/PROGRAMMES	Implications for the NI ERDF and SEA
People and Place – A Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (2003)	<p>Launched in June 2003 the Strategy seeks to target those communities throughout Northern Ireland who are suffering the highest levels of deprivation. It promotes the development of economic activity in these areas and links them with the wider economy. This includes encouraging investment and business development. It also includes assisting people in overcoming barriers to work such as low skills, poor transport, lack of childcare. It involves supporting training and transport schemes and social economy programmes that can encourage community and social enterprise.</p>	<p>Encouraging the development of the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland should be included in the programme. The programme should support balanced community development, equal access to employment and training for all.</p>
Regional Development Strategy – Shaping Our Future. (2000)	<p>A comprehensive policy framework for the development of Northern Ireland up to 2025. The Strategy is an important reference document for Government Departments in the development of policies and programmes and the setting of funding priorities. It has been prepared in consultation with the community and seeks to define an agreed vision for the Region and to frame an agenda, which will lead to its achievement.</p> <p>It establishes a spatial planning framework for all public bodies undertaking development. It seeks to make better use of regional assets, deliver balanced and integrated development and to tackle regional disparities. It promotes more sustainable patterns of development.</p> <p>The Strategy highlights the importance of taking an integrated approach that brings together environmental, social and economic policies.</p>	<p>The ERDF should support decentralised growth. This should include issues associated with employment, renewal and revitalisation of towns and villages, accessibility to employment, services and amenities, and enhance the natural and built heritage. It should recognise the designation of most deprived areas.</p>

Document Title	OBJECTIVES/REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLANS/PROGRAMMES	Implications for the NI ERDF and SEA
Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland (ISNI) (2005)	<p>The Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland (ISNI) was launched in December 2005. It details how the government plans to increase the amount and pace of spending on public sector infrastructure. It sets out a ten year view of the investment in infrastructure. Planned investment is to be 40% higher than in 2005-06. Investment will be made in health and social services such as schools, hospitals, roads, transport and water.</p> <p>The ISNI will help to create a firm base on which Northern Ireland can become a successful, competitive and sustainable regional economy that is able to withstand short term fluctuations. The ISNI will aim to create economic prosperity, tackle regional disparity, develop greater social cohesion and deliver economic and environmental returns. It aims to improve the lives of everyone in Northern Ireland and support a successful, competitive regional economy.</p> <p>This strategy supports the Economic Vision for Northern Ireland and the Sustainable Development Strategy. It not only considers today's infrastructure requirements but also the anticipated future requirements.</p>	Programmes funded under the ERDF should support the ISNI's aims of delivering economic and environmental returns.
Regional Innovation Strategy for Northern Ireland (September 2004 –August 2006)	<p>The Regional Innovation Strategy for Northern Ireland' was published in June 2003. The vision of the RIS is to:</p> <p>"Create a culture and environment within which Northern Ireland will prosper by using its knowledge, skills and capacity to innovate."</p> <p>In order to realise that vision, the RIS included an action plan which listed some 103 deliverables under which there were 106 individual targets. In the RIS Action Plan there were 6 Key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resourcing R&D & Innovation • Supporting Knowledge and Technology Transfer. • Developing awareness of Intellectual property management • Leading the regional Innovation System. • Promoting cross-sectional Collaborations. • Enhancing Interregional Collaborations. 	The ERDF funded programmes must work towards achieving the visions of the Regional Innovation Strategy for Northern Ireland. The program must support innovation and enhance NI's knowledge and skills base.

Document Title	OBJECTIVES/REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLANS/PROGRAMMES	Implications for the NI ERDF and SEA
Regional Transportation Strategy 2002-2012	<p>The ten year Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) is a component of the Regional Development Strategy (RDS). The purpose of the RTS is to support the RDS and to contribute to achieving the longer-term vision for transportation.</p> <p>The RTS identifies the importance of developing sustainable transport networks in order to promote economic development and improve quality of life. The RTS recognises priorities for investment in transport and evaluates potential funding sources and affordability of planned initiatives over the strategy period.</p>	<p>The ERDF needs to consider its impact upon transportation. Plans should be formulated with the view to promote the use and development of sustainable forms of transport.</p>
Strategic Energy Framework	<p>The primary objective of the Strategic Energy Framework is:</p> <p>“to achieve a competitive, sustainable, reliable energy market at the minimum cost necessary in an all island, UK and European context.”</p> <p>The objective has 4 goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce energy costs relative to other UK/EU regions. • Build competitive energy markets. • Protect out future by enhancing the sustainability of out energy supply and consumption. • Maintain the reliability of energy supplies. 	<p>By promoting energy efficiency and innovation in the energy production and energy use the ERDF should contribute the achieving the objectives of the Strategic Energy Framework. The ERDF should encourage the use of sustainable forms of energy supply and consumption.</p>
DARDS Rural Strategy 2007-2013.	<p>The DARD Rural Strategy 2007 was launched on 9 October 2006. It outlines provides a broad strategic context for rural policy in Northern Ireland over the next seven years.</p> <p>The overall theme of the Strategy is ‘diversifying the rural economy, protecting the rural environment and sustaining rural communities’.</p> <p>It focuses on four key aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creating a rural champion; • improving performance in the marketplace; • conserving and investing in the rural environment; and • strengthening the social and economic infrastructure of rural areas. <p>The Strategy includes an Action Plan indicating how the Department intends to take forward the Strategy’s main elements in the short to medium term.</p>	<p>The impact on rural areas of the ERDF programme should be considered. The ERDF must ensure that funding is not only directed towards urban areas. Economic development in rural areas should be considered.</p>

Document Title	OBJECTIVES/REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLANS/PROGRAMMES	Implications for the NI ERDF and SEA
<p>Anti Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy for Northern Ireland 2006.</p>	<p>The Anti Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy or <i>Lifetime Opportunities</i> aims to ensure that by 2020 no one is denied the opportunities they deserve.</p> <p>The challenges it aims to meet are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate Poverty • Eliminate social exclusion • Tackle area based deprivation • Eliminate poverty from rural areas • Shared futures – Shared Challenges – Promote respect and tolerance between different communities. • Tackle inequality in the Labour Market. • Tackle Health Inequalities • Tackle cycles of deprivation. <p>Poverty and social exclusion affects people of all ages. The Strategy reflects the need to consider the needs of different age groups.</p>	<p>The impact of ERDF programmes on poverty and social exclusion should be considered. The program should direct its funding towards projects that will work towards eliminating poverty and reducing deprivation. People of all ages should be considered.</p>

Document Title	OBJECTIVES/REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLANS/PROGRAMMES	Implications for the NI ERDF and SEA
Environment NI - A Vision for the Future	<p>Outlines EHS's vision for Northern Ireland's environment with the objective of meeting compliance by 2016. Three areas are considered –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the environment, • Changing public attitude and behaviour and • Environmental sustainability- The Vision covers 13 measures, each with clear targets. 	<p>The programme should aim to encourage environmental improvement through investment in education, business development, R&D and innovation that meets the goals of the Vision for the Future and offers a sustainable solution to growth. The SEA should include objectives relating to climate, biodiversity, cultural heritage, and water quality.</p>
NI Waste Management Strategy 2006-2020	<p>Sets out plans to modernise waste management policies and practices to take account of new EU Directives and recent advances in waste management technologies. Recognises the need for an approach that realises the resource potential and opportunities in waste. Waste prevention is the fundamental principle with disposal being the last resort and this approach needs to become integral to our thinking at home and for business.</p>	<p>The ERDF should recognise and not frustrate the specific waste regulations that apply to business and development, and support related biodiversity, landscape, water, and sustainable use of natural resources. It should also support innovative businesses which offer reduced waste output or which offer sustainable solutions for new and existing waste. The ERDF should support training and education in waste minimisation. The SEA should include objectives which relate to waste minimisation.</p>
Northern Ireland Forestry - A Strategy For Sustainability And Growth	<p>Focuses on how more forests can be created and the sustainable management of existing forests. Target at present is to secure an additional 1,500 hectares of forest area by 2008.</p>	<p>Support for the increase in sustainable management of forests and an increase in new afforestation (including transfer from agriculture) should feature in the ERDF. This should include fostering increase access, measures to control pests and sympathetic and sustainable land use including improvements in biodiversity. Relevant SEA objectives will be on biodiversity and landscape.</p>

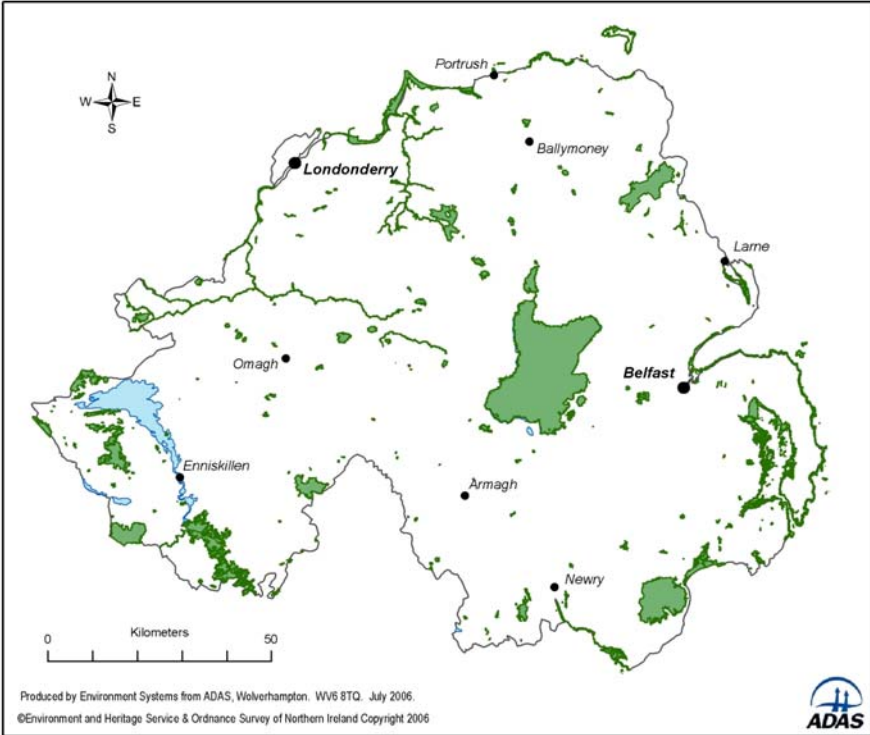
Document Title	OBJECTIVES/REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLANS/PROGRAMMES	Implications for the NI ERDF and SEA
Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy	Sets out a series of actions to protect and enhance biodiversity in Northern Ireland. The Strategy contains 76 recommendations aimed at halting Northern Ireland's biodiversity loss by 2016. The majority of the recommendations are for Government to achieve and an independent Biodiversity Group has been appointed to oversee the achievement of these recommendations.	The ERDF should help to redress the loss of biodiversity in Northern Ireland, recognising the need for increased knowledge and understanding. The ERDF should support the development of sustainable businesses that adopt a strategy of sustainable use or minimal impact.
Shared Horizons - Statement of Policy on Protected Landscapes	Sets out the issues associated with the protection and sustainable use of Northern Ireland's finest landscapes and indicates the way in which we plan to address them. These areas fall within the internationally recognised description of 'Protected Landscapes' and are usually recognised by some form of designation, which sets them apart from the wider countryside.	The ERDF should recognise the fragility and diversity of protected landscapes. The SEA objectives should include Landscape.
Sustainable Development Strategy 2006	This Strategy represents the first steps in establishing the focus for tackling the challenges ahead toward the long term objective of securing a better future for the present generation and protecting the future for generations to come. The principles underpinning the strategy recognise the need to link actions to ensure a healthy environment, a thriving economy, prosperity and quality of life.	The ERDF should be closely aligned with the principals of sustainable development, namely the preservation of resources for future generation. The SEA should consider objectives relating to sustainable communities, social equality and the environment.
"A Positive Step – Northern Ireland - A Sustainable Development Implementation Plan", published in November 2006.	Following on from the Sustainable Development Strategy, this plan aims to embed the principals of sustainable development securely within society. While containing 60 key targets the plan is based on three spotlight themes. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sustainable communities – Sustainable energy strategy – An aim to influence markets through encouraging change in other sectors Under these themes come a variety of targets relating to education, investment and development.	The ERDF programme is potentially a strong component of this plan, rooted in all three of the main spotlight themes. In particular it represents a mechanism to influence markets through the funding of business development. The SEA should consider the key targets of the plan and identify linkages and actions which will contribute towards its goals.
Renewable Energy Action Plan (DARD - 2007)	The Renewable Energy Action Plan emerged from the 2004 energy framework review. It outlines a plan for rural communities and agricultural industries to contribute towards the goals of the energy framework and the wider international goals for energy efficiency and climate change.	The ERDF should support the renewable energy plan. The SEA should consider objectives relating to renewable energy.

Document Title	OBJECTIVES/REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLANS/PROGRAMMES	Implications for the NI ERDF and SEA
Northern Ireland Environment and Renewable Energy Funding Package (Feb 2006)	<p>Within this context the overall aim of the Environment and Renewable Energy Fund is to enhance the long term sustainability of the Northern Ireland energy system in a manner which increases security and diversity of supply, encourages innovation and the development of new skills, underpins employment and creates new job opportunities, particularly in the rural community and contributes to the reduction of energy costs which aids industrial competitiveness and alleviates fuel poverty.</p> <p>The Fund will support action in four programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and Demonstration • Building Market Capacity through the Provision of Infrastructure and Supply Chain Development • Accelerated Deployment • Underpinning Knowledge and Raising Awareness <p>The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment will lead on this £59.2 million package over the next two years.</p>	The ERDF should encourage investment in renewable forms of energy. Innovation and the development of the workforce should be encouraged.

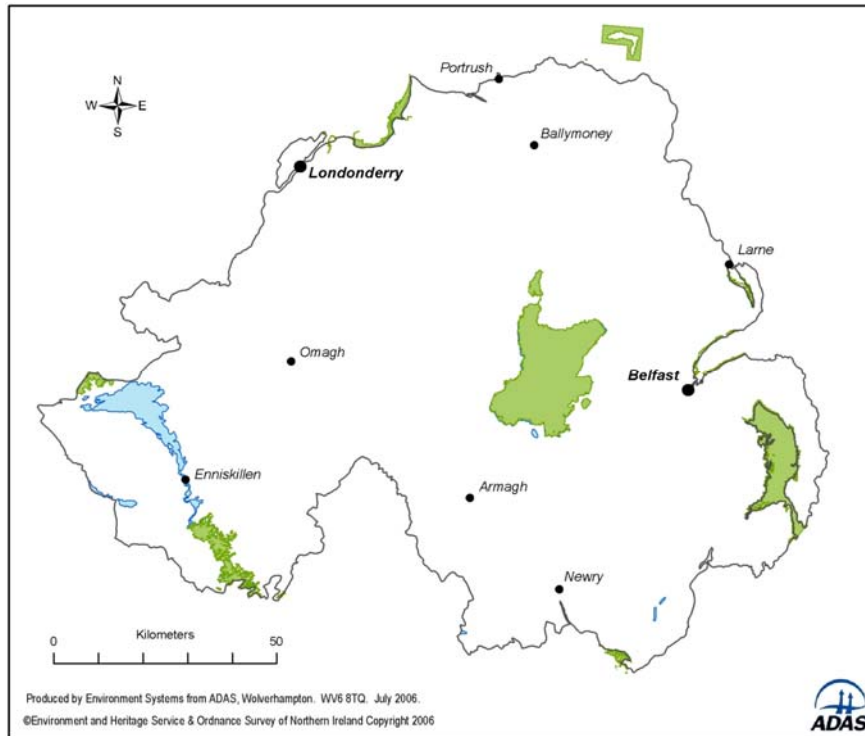
APPENDIX 3 – Maps of Protected Areas

**Designations and Other Spatial Characteristics of Northern Ireland
Biodiversity, fauna and flora**

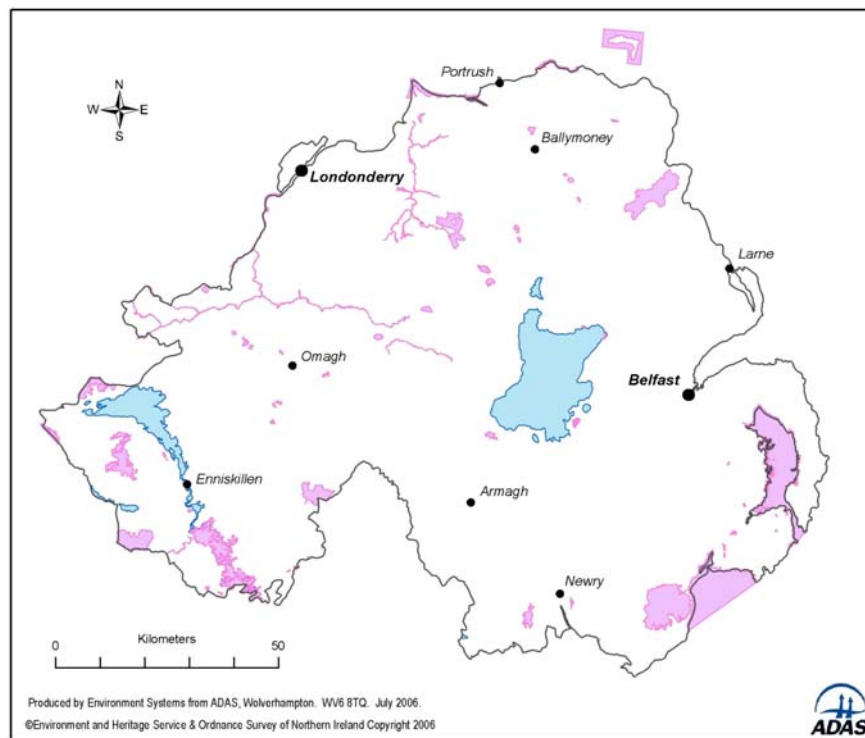
Map 1: Areas of Special Scientific Interest



Map 2: Special Protection Areas*



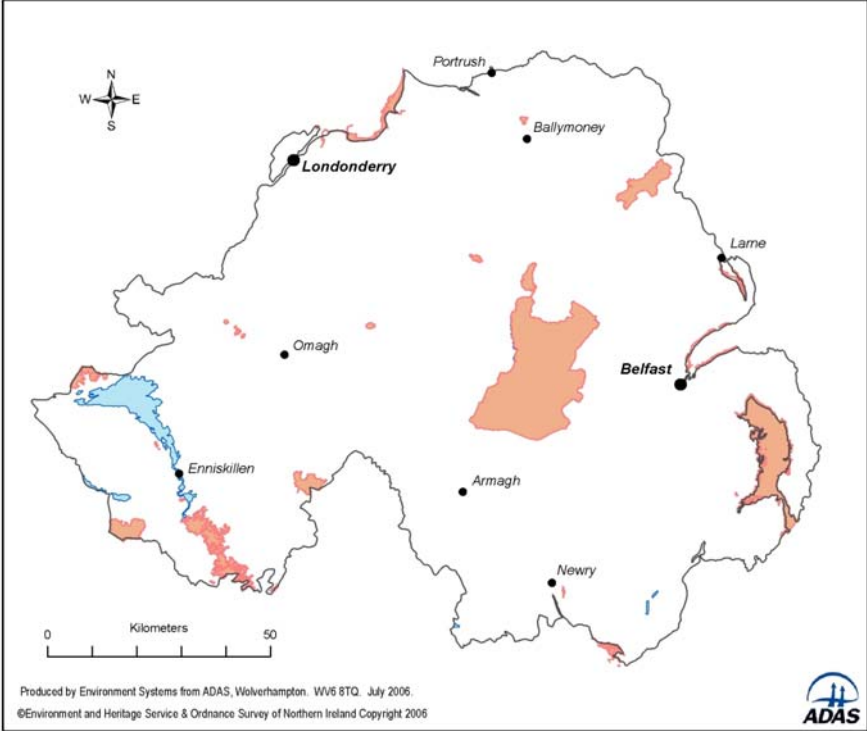
Map 3: Special Areas of Conservation*



* Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are designated under the European Commission Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (The Birds Directive).

* SACs are designated under the Habitats Directive

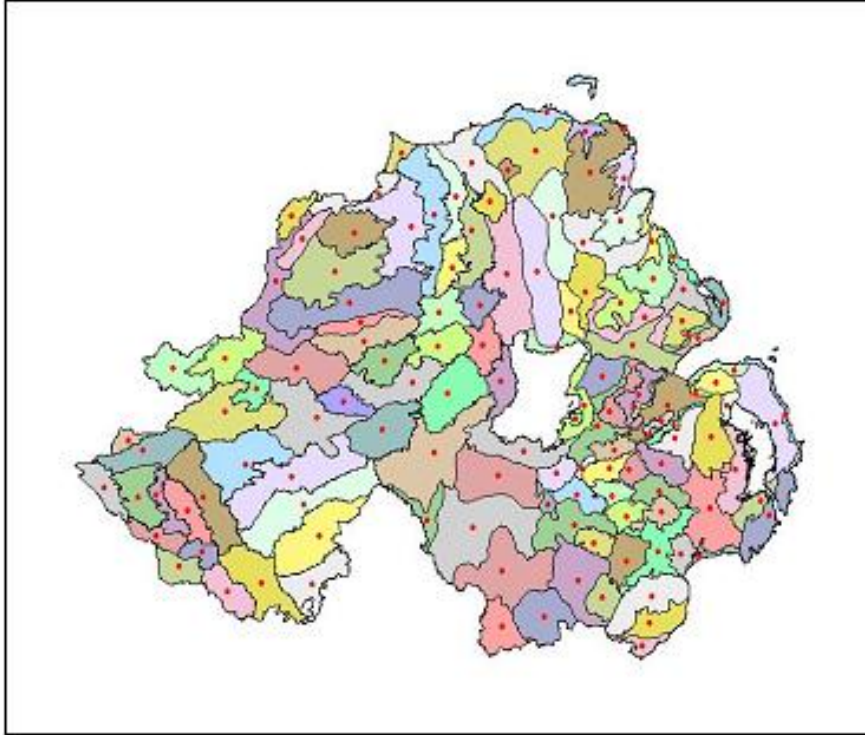
Map 4: Ramsar Sites[#]



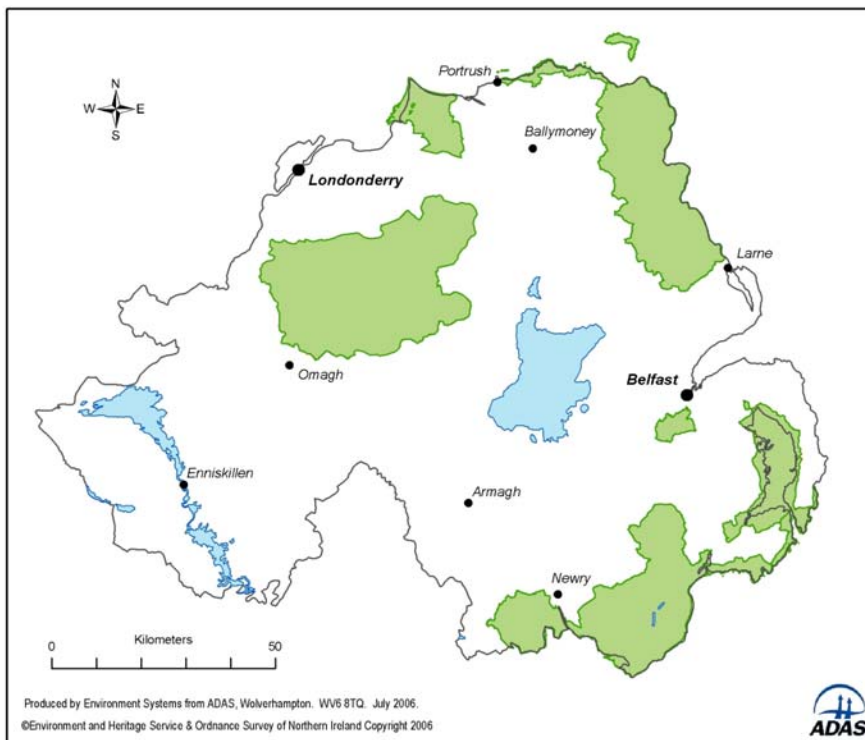
[#] Sites are designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat – Ramsar Convention

APPENDIX 4 - Landscape Character Areas

Map 4: Landscape Character Areas



MAP 5: AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY



APPENDIX 5 - BAP SPECIES AND HABITAT TRENDS

Table A5.1: Northern Ireland priority BAP species (including post-2005 reporting trend estimates)

NB: table contains only species relevant to Northern Ireland and where information exists. Source: <http://www.ukbap-reporting.org.uk>)

Species name	Common name	Trend	Accuracy
<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Skylark	Stable	Sample or full survey
<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>	White-clawed crayfish	Declining (continuing/accelerating)	Partial survey
<i>Bembidion argenteolum</i>	a ground beetle	Lost (pre BAP publication)	Best guess
<i>Bombus distinguendus</i>	Great yellow bumblebee	Lost (pre BAP publication)	Sample or full survey
<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	Nightjar	Lost (pre BAP publication)	Best guess
<i>Colletes floralis</i>	Northern colletes	No clear trend	Partial survey
<i>Coregonus autumnalis</i>	Pollan	No clear trend	Partial survey
<i>Crex crex</i>	Corncrake	Fluctuating - probably increasing	Sample or full survey
<i>Donacia aquatica</i>	a reed beetle	No clear trend	Best guess
<i>Donacia bicolora</i>	a reed beetle	Stable	Partial survey
<i>Euphydryas aurinia</i>	Marsh fritillary	Declining (slowing)	Sample or full survey
<i>Formica aquilonia</i>	Scottish wood ant	Stable	Best guess

Species name	Common name	Trend	Accuracy
<i>Hemaris tityus</i>	Narrow-bordered bee hawk-moth	Declining (slowing)	Best guess
<i>Lutra lutra</i>	Otter	Fluctuating - probably stable	Sample or full survey
<i>Melanitta nigra</i>	Common scoter	Lost (pre BAP publication)	Sample or full survey
<i>Mentha pulegium</i>	Pennyroyal	Fluctuating - probably stable	Sample or full survey
<i>Orthodontium gracile</i>	Slender thread-moss	Lost (since BAP publication)	Sample or full survey
<i>Ostrea edulis</i>	Native oyster	Fluctuating - probably declining	Best guess
<i>Perdix perdix</i>	Grey partridge	Lost (pre BAP publication)	Best guess
<i>Raja batis</i>	Common skate	Declining (continuing/accelerating)	Best guess
<i>Saxifraga hirculus</i>	Yellow marsh saxifrage	Stable	Sample or full survey
<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>	Red squirrel	Declining (continuing/accelerating)	Best guess
<i>Sium latifolium</i>	Greater water-parsnip	Declining (continuing/accelerating)	Partial survey
<i>Stenus palposus</i>	a rove beetle	Lost (pre BAP publication)	Sample or full survey
<i>Sterna dougallii</i>	Roseate tern	Fluctuating - probably stable	Sample or full survey

Species name	Common name	Trend	Accuracy
<i>Trichomanes speciosum</i>	Killarney fern	Stable	Best guess
<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Song thrush	Increasing	Sample or full survey
<i>Vertigo angustior</i>	Narrow-mouthed whorl snail	Stable	Best guess
<i>Vertigo geyeri</i>	Geyer's whorl snail	Stable	Best guess
<i>Weissia rostellata</i>	Beaked beardless-moss	Stable	Sample or full survey

The table below shows the trends for priority BAP habitats (for which information is available) in Northern Ireland.

Table A5.2: Northern Ireland priority BAP habitats (including post-2005 reporting trend estimates)

NB: table contains only habitats relevant to Northern Ireland, where information exists. Source: <http://www.ukbap-reporting.org.uk>)

Habitat name	Trend	Accuracy
Ancient and/or species-rich hedgerows	Declining (slowing)	Sample or full survey
Aquifer fed naturally fluctuating water bodies	No clear trend	Sample or full survey
Blanket bog	No clear trend	Best guess
Cereal field margins	Increasing	Sample or full survey

Habitat name	Trend	Accuracy
Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	Declining (slowing)	Best guess
Coastal saltmarsh	Stable	Partial survey
Coastal sand dunes	Declining (slowing)	Partial survey
Eutrophic standing waters	Declining (slowing)	Best guess
Fens	Declining (slowing)	Partial survey
Limestone pavements	Declining (slowing)	Partial survey
Lowland dry acid grassland	Declining (slowing)	Best guess
Lowland heathland	Declining (slowing)	Best guess
Lowland meadows	Declining (slowing)	Best guess
Lowland raised bog	Declining (slowing)	Partial survey
Lowland wood-pasture and parkland	Declining (slowing)	Best guess
Maerl beds	Stable	Best guess
Modiolus modiolus beds	Declining (continuing/accelerating)	Partial survey
Purple moor grass and rush pastures	Declining (slowing)	Best guess
Saline lagoons	Stable	Best guess
Seagrass beds	Fluctuating - probably increasing	Sample or full survey
Tidal rapids	Stable	Best guess
Upland calcareous grassland	Stable	Best guess
Upland mixed ashwoods	Increasing	Best guess
Upland oakwood	Increasing	Best guess
Wet woodland	Increasing	Best guess

APPENDIX 6 – References

Cultural Heritage	
Indicator	Source
Number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments	Environment and Heritage Service www.ehsni.gov.uk
Number of Historic Listed Buildings	Environment and Heritage Service www.ehsni.gov.uk
Number of Archaeological Sites	Environment and Heritage Service www.ehsni.gov.uk
Number of World Heritage Sites	Environment and Heritage Service www.ehsni.gov.uk

Material Assets	
Indicator	Source
Ramsars	Environment and Heritage Service www.ehsni.gov.uk Joint Nature Conservation Committee www.jncc.gov.uk
ASSI	Environment and Heritage Service www.ehsni.gov.uk
SPA's	Environment and Heritage Service www.ehsni.gov.uk Joint Nature Conservation Committee www.jncc.gov.uk
SAC's	Environment and Heritage Service www.ehsni.gov.uk Joint Nature Conservation Committee

Material Assets	
Indicator	Source
	www.jncc.gov.uk
AONB's	Environment and Heritage Service www.ehsni.gov.uk
Nature Reserves	Environment and Heritage Service www.ehsni.gov.uk

Population	
Indicator	Source
Population Density	Northern Ireland Statistics Research Agency. www.nisra.gov.uk
Population Structure Age/Sex.	Northern Ireland Statistics Research Agency. www.nisra.gov.uk

Population	
Indicator	Source
Population Projections	<p>Northern Ireland Statistics Research Agency. www.nisra.gov.uk</p> <p>National Statistics. www.statistics.co.uk</p>
Education levels of Population	<p>Northern Ireland Statistics Research Agency. www.nisra.gov.uk</p> <p>Compendium of NI Education Statistics 2004/05 Participation rates in full-time education post-16</p>
Employment levels of Population	<p>Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment www.detini.gov.uk</p> <p>Monthly Labour Market Report – January 2007</p>
Total Workforce.	<p>Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment www.detini.gov.uk</p>

Population	
Indicator	Source
Unemployment Levels.	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment www.detini.gov.uk

Human Health	
Indicator	Source
Life Expectancy	Northern Ireland Statistics Research Agency. www.nisra.gov.uk
Levels of Deprivation	Northern Ireland Statistics Research Agency. www.nisra.gov.uk http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/deprivation/NIMDM2005FullReport.pdf Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service (NINIS) www.ninis.nisra.gov.uk
Access to Health Services	Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service (NINIS)

Human Health	
Indicator	Source
	www.ninis.nisra.gov.uk National Statistics. www.statistics.co.uk

Environmental data	
Indicator	Source
Biodiversity, flora and fauna (Protected Sites)	JNCC http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-4 EHS http://www.ehsni.gov.uk/biodiversity/designated-areas.htm
Biodiversity, flora and fauna (Countryside Survey)	Cooper, A. and McCann, T. (2002) Habitat change in the Northern Ireland countryside: summary report of the Northern Ireland Countryside Survey 2000. Environment and Heritage Service, Belfast.
Biodiversity, flora and fauna (Priority Habitats and species)	Biodiversity Action Reporting System http://www.ukbap-reporting.org.uk/ DARD http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/countryside.htm
Climate and air (climate)	EHS (2004) Climate change indicators for Northern Ireland. http://www.ehsni.gov.uk/climate/air-climatechange/air-indicators.shtml

Environmental data	
Indicator	Source
Climate and air (air quality)	<p>AEA Energy and Environment (2005) Air quality monitoring in Northern Ireland 2005. Produced on behalf of the Department of the Environment in Northern Ireland by AEA Energy and Environment.</p> <p>NI Air quality http://www.airqualityni.co.uk/</p>
Landscape	<p>World Heritage Sites http://www.ehsni.gov.uk/landscape/designated-areas/whs.htm</p> <p>Landscape Character Areas http://www.ehsni.gov.uk/landscape/country_landscape.htm</p> <p>Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty http://www.ehsni.gov.uk/landscape/designated-areas/aonb.htm</p>
Soil and geology	<p>Eurostat http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu</p> <p>IRENA http://dataservice.eea.europa.eu/dataservice/metadetails.asp?id=657</p> <p>DARD http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/fisheries-farming-and-food.htm</p>

Environmental data	
Indicator	Source
	Geological information http://www.ehsni.gov.uk/landscape/earth_science.htm
Water (river water quality)	River water quality http://www.ehsni.gov.uk/water/quality/rivers/river_results.htm EEA http://www.eea.europa.eu/
Water (bathing water)	Bathing water http://www.ehsni.gov.uk/water/quality/bathingqualityni/data.htm
Water (drinking water)	Drinking water: EHS (2006) Drinking water quality in Northern Ireland 2005. A report by the Northern Ireland Drinking Water Inspectorate.

Department of Finance and Personnel Response to the Consultation on the Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) Report for the draft Northern Ireland EU Competitiveness Programme 2007-2013 launched 16 April 2007

Introduction

In accordance with the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) European Directive 2001/42/EC and the Environmental Assessment Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004 a preliminary screening exercise was carried out on the draft Northern Ireland ERDF Competitiveness Programme 2007-2013. The outcome of the exercise, agreed by the responsible environmental authority, Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland, Environment and Heritage Service, was that a full SEA was not necessary. However in the interest of transparency and in the view that some projects which may be included in the Programme in the future might have an environmental impact it was decided to undertake a full SEA although this is not strictly necessary.

The SEA report was prepared by an external consultant following consultation with the Northern Ireland consultative body, the Department of the Environment, Environment and Heritage Service the report was issued for public consultation on 16 April 2007 for response by 9 July 2007.

Responses

One response was received from the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside (CNCC) and is attached for reference. In the main the response is supportive and makes six points summarised below:

- Welcomes the decision to conduct a full SEA and considers the exercise has been justified;
- Recommends consideration of complementarity of environmental monitoring and mitigation with other EU Programmes;
- Welcomes the integration of DPA scoring into project selection;

- Generally agrees with the analysis of alternative delivery mechanisms;
- As regards monitoring it is vital that the identification of 'unforeseen' adverse effects are identified at an early stage and remedial action is taken; and
- CNCC believes that monitoring only the predicted climate change is inadequate and due attention should be paid to cumulative impacts on bio-diversity, landscape and water.

Action Taken

With reference to the above, the following action will be taken:

- Complementarity of environmental monitoring – all EU programmes within Northern Ireland will utilise the DPA tool to monitor environmental impacts;
- The Environmental Working Group, to be established under the Programme Monitoring Committee, will be tasked with monitoring environment impacts, both positive and negative; and
- Programme evaluations will include an assessment of Sustainable Development impacts.

Another aspect arising from the consultation is the request to monitor cumulative impacts on bio-diversity, landscape and water in addition to climate change. The Programme as a whole was assessed against each of the SEA topics and identified only climate to have any potential significant negative impact. The programme will include a target to reduce green house emission.

The Programme has been amended accordingly.