

Strategic Investment Framework: Environmental Sustainability Integration:

Purpose:

This guidance is to be used in conjunction with the *Guidance for Integrating Sustainable Development into EU Programmes and Projects*.

Background:

As concurrent with both the Convergence and Competitiveness Operational Programmes cross cutting themes should be integrated into all levels of project development, commissioning activity and delivery.

At a project level SIF Delivery Partners must ensure that environmental sustainability is considered across all six strands of environmental integration. However, Strategic Investment Framework (SIFs) delivery plans should also consider all strands at a higher strategic level ensuring that negative impacts are mitigated against and positive impacts are identified, quantified and where possible enhanced and developed.

Strategic Investment Framework and Environmental Sustainability Integration:

SWRDA propose that at a delivery framework/plan level environmental sustainability should be considered under the following framework and loosely follow the principles of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). This should not be considered an onerous task and should accommodate a qualitative, (increasingly quantitative assessment will be required at a project level), assessment of environmental risks and opportunities, with a focus on local circumstances and issues:

1. Information relating to environmental problems and issues which relate to the delivery of the framework and/or the area of delivery
2. Any significant anticipated impacts (+ve & -ve) inc population, biodiversity (flora & fauna), human health, energy, pollution, soil, water, air, climatic factors, assets, culture, heritage, landscape, environmental sector development and carbon literacy
3. Measures to prevent, reduce, adapt and as fully as possible off-set any significant adverse impacts
4. Measures to enhance, develop, promote and exploit as fully as possible any anticipated positive environmental outcomes or opportunities
5. Information regarding alternative options considered, adopted and rejected

Consideration should be given to short, medium, long-term and cumulative impacts and opportunities.

Targets and Objectives:

Delivery Frameworks should consider how proposals will align themselves to:

- a) Mandatory targets and outputs within the Operational Programmes
- b) Any specific objectives, targets and/or indicators that can be used to assess the environmental impact of the proposal against 'business as usual' and/or a 'do minimum' baseline.

- c) Consideration as to how carbon monitoring can be accommodated into the proposed delivery plan and how this will be monitored against the baseline scenarios in point (b) above