



**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY
JULY 2015**

SPED
STRATEGIC PLAN FOR ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

- 1.1 This Environmental Report describes the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Strategic Plan for Environment and Development (SPED) issued for public consultation in March 2014. This plan is required by the Environment and Development Planning Act of 2010 to be based on an integrated planning system that regulates the sustainable use and management of land and sea resources.

2. Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development

- 2.1 The SPED will replace the previous Structure Plan (which was published in 1990 and adopted in 1992). It is to provide a strategic spatial policy framework for environment and development up to 2020 complementing Government's economic, social and environmental objectives for the same period. The SPED will cover the marine waters up to the extent of 25 nautical mile limit of the Fisheries Conservation Zone (adopted by Council Regulation EC No. 1967/2006).
- 2.2 The SPED's reflects government policy direction and action identified in Government plans, programmes and policies. It shall guide the same plans, programmes and policies as well as potential new ones and in particular those related to development planning and the environment with respect to use of land and maritime territory.

3. SEA Process

- 3.1 The Scoping Report was published for information together with the draft Strategic Plan for Environment and Development. The environmental baseline was collated from the National Environment Policy of 2012 and its ancillary documentation, the State of Environment Reports and various environmental policies such as the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, Air Quality Plan, Water Catchment Management Plan and the Waste Management Plan.
- 3.2 The SEA process for the SPED included the identification of SEA objectives and indicators against which the alternatives and policies of the SPED were assessed and the likely environmental impacts described. The SEA objectives and indicators were developed in line with the environmental issues highlighted in Schedule I of the SEA Regulations and on the basis of the relevant national and EU environmental priorities including those emerging from the National Environment Policy process. The SPED's performance against the SEA objectives is generally measured by these indicators.
- 3.3 Considering that the spatial coverage and strategic nature of the SPED and on the basis of the key environmental issues identified, all of the potential environmental factors listed in Schedule I of LN 497 of 2010 were considered in the environment assessment process. The following factors are addressed:
 - Biodiversity
 - Fauna and flora
 - Population and human health
 - Soil
 - Water
 - Air
 - Noise
 - Climatic factors
 - Material assets

- Waste
- Cultural heritage including architecture, archaeological artefacts and landscape

3.4 In the formulation of the plan a number of strategic options were considered prior to the selection of the strategy for the SPED. The Status Quo (or Zero Option) was discarded a priori since the impacts on the environment necessitated a different approach to current developmental behaviour. Government guidance for the preparation of the SPED included both economic oriented and environmental protection priorities. Three alternatives were generated to enable an informed analysis on different modes of reaching these priorities. These were

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Dispersal of urban development within the Urban Area.	Most new jobs directed to existing and new economic development hubs and the bulk of residential development within the Urban Area's conurbation.	Most new jobs within consolidated existing economic development hubs and the bulk of residential development within designated residential areas in the Urban Area.
A wider range of acceptable uses in the Rural Area.	Facilitating a range of acceptable uses (to support rural diversification) in the Rural Area.	Limited range of acceptable uses (for informal recreation and agriculture) in the Rural Area.
All Uses can be accommodated along all the coast and marine area.	Only legitimate coastal uses accommodated on the Coastal Zone and Marine Area within sub zones.	Legitimate coastal uses can only be accommodated on committed space on the Coastal Zone and the Marine Area.
The development strategy should be implemented whilst protecting and managing natural and cultural resources; safeguarding the rural distinctiveness; and maintaining and enhancing environmental quality.		

3.5 Following the analysis of the impact assessment, Option 2 was deemed to be the option that best addresses this guidance whilst seeking to avoid significant environmental concerns. This Option directs most urban development towards the urban conurbation and concentrates economic development within existing hubs whilst allowing the creation of new hubs to accommodate additional economic growth and/or develop specialised businesses. The range of uses for farm diversification which support agricultural activities is wide but excludes urban development and cannot replace an individual agricultural holding. Only development which requires a coastal and marine location can be accommodated in specific designated areas and sub-areas in the Coastal Zone and Marine Area.

3.6 The table overleaf contains the summary of impacts of the SPED policies when assessed against the environmental objectives. The legend is depicted below.

Symbol	Key	Definition
++	Significant Positive Impact	Highly positive benefit for the environment which is of considerable importance in terms of its overall policy implications
+	Positive Impact	Positive effect on the environment which is not considered to be significant
±	Neutral	No effect envisaged, or positive and negative impacts outweigh each other
-	Negative Impact	Negative impact on the environment which is not considered to be significant

--	Significant Negative Impact	Highly adverse impacts on aspects of the environment which seriously demand to be addressed through revision of current stated policy
?	Uncertainty	Effect could not be determined due to lack of data or information

ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
POLICIES	TO1	-?	-	-?	--	-?	-?	+	--	-?	-	--	++	
	TO2	-?	-?	-	--	-	-	▣	-	-?	-	-	-?	
	TO3	-	-	-	-	-	-	▣	-	-	-	▣	▣	
	TO4	-?	-?	-?	--	-?	-	▣	++	-?	-?	-?	-	
	TO5	+	+	+	-?	+	+	▣	-	+	▣	++	++	
	TO6	+	++	++	▣	++	++	-	+	▣	+	++	+	
	TO7	-	-	++	++	-	-	++	+	+	+	+	+	+
	TO8	++	++	++	▣	+	+	-	▣	++	++	+	++	
	TO9	-	+	+	+	++	▣	++	++	--	--	+	+	
	TO10	-?	-	-	-?	+	+	▣	+	-?	-?	+	+	
	TO11	▣	▣	▣	▣	++	++	▣	++	▣	+	++	▣	
	TO12	-?	-	-?	-?	--	--	+	-	--	--	--	-?	
	UO1	-?	-?	-?	--	-	-	▣	+	+	--	-	-?	
	UO2	+	+	+	+	▣	▣	--	-	+	++	+	++	
	UO3	+	+	+	-	++	++	▣	▣	+	++	++	▣	
	UO4	▣	▣	++	++	+	+	++	++	+	++	++	▣	
	RO1	-?	+	+	+	▣	▣	++	++	-?	-?	+	+	
	RO2	+	+	+	▣	▣	▣	-	▣	++	+	++	▣	
	RO3	-?	-?	-?	+	-?	-?	+	-?	-?	-?	-?	+	
	RO4	++	++	++	-?	▣	▣	--	▣	++	+	++	-?	
	RO5	++	+	++	▣	▣	▣	-	▣	++	+	+	+	
	CO1	+	▣	++	-?	-	?	++	-	-	-?	+	+	
	CO2	-?	▣	-?	▣	▣	-	-?	▣	-?	▣	-	-	
	CO3	+	▣	+	-	▣	▣	--	-?	++	+	++	+	
	GO1	-?	▣	-?	-?	-	-	-	-	+	++	+	-?	

4. Conclusions

- 4.1 The environmental assessment identified that the development required to reach the growth targets of the country is expected to result in significant environmental concerns relating to Waste, Landscape and Townscape, Biodiversity and Water.
- 4.2 Furthermore the impact on Air, Noise, Soil, Energy, Human Health and Material Assets is also of concern. The Plan seeks to address these concerns through three main policy thrusts:
 - 1) Integrating environmental safeguards in the growth promoting policies themselves
 - 2) Inclusion of policies specifically targeted at addressing the above issues
 - 3) Integration with other Government plans and policies that are directly intended to protect the environment & those which include environmental safeguards
- 4.3 These issues and corresponding safeguards are to be taken forward in the next tier of plan making and internalised in the implementation of other relevant Government plans and policies.
- 4.4 Furthermore the addressing of these environmental concerns requires the strengthening of the necessary administrative and procedural arrangements across Government. This will ensure coordinated implementation and monitoring of these environmental policies and mitigation measures, including at decision making level.