

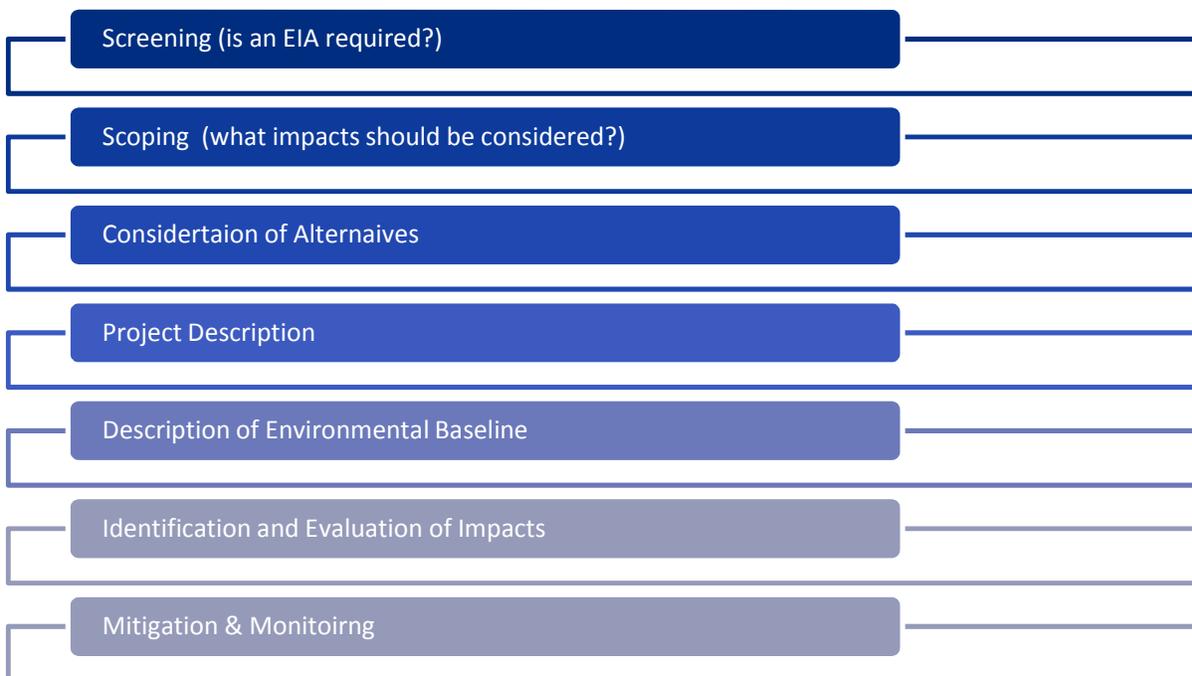
2. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Process

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is the process for anticipating the effects (both positive and negative) from a proposed development or project on various environmental receptors. If the anticipated effects are unacceptable, design measures or other relevant mitigation measures can be taken to reduce or avoid those effects. The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is the output which records the details of this assessment.

The first step in the EIA process is ‘Screening’ which determines if an EIA is required. If it is determined that an EIA is required the next step is to ‘Scope’ the content of the EIA. Scoping (see Section 2.2) identifies the key project specific issues that are likely to be impacted during the EIA and outlines possible alternative approaches where required.

Following on from scoping, the EIA process includes a baseline assessment to determine the status of the existing environment, impact prediction and evaluation, and determining appropriate mitigation measures, including monitoring and reinstatement.

The EIS, which will present the findings of the EIA process, will accompany Irish Water’s planning application to An Bord Pleanála who will determine whether consent should be granted.



2.1 Screening

Screening is the first stage of the EIS process, whereby a decision is made on whether or not an EIA is required.

The relevant classes of developments that require EIA are set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended (the “Planning Regulations”). In accordance with Part 1, Paragraph 12(a) of Schedule 5 an EIS is required for the following:

“Works for the transfer of water resources between river basins, where this transfer aims at preventing possible shortages of water and where the amount of water transferred exceeds 100 million cubic metres per year”

As the Water Supply Project proposes to abstract approximately 330MLD or 330,000 cubic metres per day (equiv. 120,450,000 cubic metres per year), it is above the threshold of 100 million cubic metres per year for EIA.

2.2 Scoping

Following screening, ‘scoping’ is the process of determining the content and extent of matters that should be covered in the environmental information submitted to the competent authority. Scoping requires the consideration of the nature and likely scale of the potential environmental impacts likely to arise from a proposed development or project.

Scoping is the process of determining what information should be included in an EIS and which methods should be used to collect and assess that information.

This EIS Scoping Report sets out the proposed scope of work and methodologies to be applied in the development of the EIS for the Water Supply Project Eastern and Midlands Region and outlines the proposed structure of the EIS document.

The EIS Scoping Report is a key element of the EIA process as a whole and the main objectives of this report are to:

- Provide a description of the proposed project
- Identify likely significant impacts which may arise during the construction and operation of the proposed development;
- Outline proposed assessment methodologies for completing the EIS;
- Outline the likely contents of the EIS; and
- Form a basis of common reference for consultation about the scope and methodology for the EIS.

2.3 EIS Methodology

The assessment of environmental impacts will be conducted in accordance with the *Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Statements, 2002* and *Advice Notes on Current Practice (in the Preparation of Environmental Impact Statements), 2003* as prepared by the EPA, will be followed in the preparation of the EIS.

It is understood that the EPA is currently revising this EIA Guidance (draft EPA Guidelines issued for consultation in 2015) and any new guidance document published in the timeframe of the EIS will be adhered to in the EIS lodged with the Board. (The original and subsequent draft EPA Guidelines and Advice Notes will

remain applicable until such date as the final revision of the Guidelines is published post transposition of Directive 2014/52/EU on the 16 May 2017).

In addition to the applicable EIA legislation and guidance, all EU Directives and national legislation relating to the specialist areas will also be considered as part of the process.

The EIS will provide the following:

1. a description of the project comprising information on the site, design, size and other relevant features including the physical characteristics of the whole project and the land-use requirements during the construction and operational phases;
2. a description of the likely significant effects of the project on the environment;
3. a description of the features of the project and/or measures envisaged in order to avoid, prevent or reduce and, if possible, offset likely significant adverse effects on the environment;
4. a description of the reasonable alternatives studied, which are relevant to the project and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for the option chosen, taking into account the effects of the project on the environment;
5. a non-technical summary of the information referred to in points 1-4 above; and
6. any additional information specified in Annex IV of Directive 2014/52/EU (as transposed to Irish Law) relevant to the specific characteristics of the project and to the environmental features likely to be affected.

2.3.1 Potential Impacts

The assessment will be structured to ensure that assessment criteria (i.e. which receptors are considered sensitive) and standards of significance, sensitivity and magnitude used as part of the assessment are identified and documented and that the level of certainty of data is recorded. An explanation will be provided for each environmental aspect on the criteria that have been applied, including reference to the appropriate published guidance for each of the environmental aspects.

The assessment will evaluate the construction and operational phases of the proposed development and the likelihood, extent, magnitude, duration and significance of potential impacts will be described. The potential for cumulative impacts to arise will also be considered.

For all environmental aspects, the significance of residual impacts, i.e. those impacts predicted once mitigation is taken into consideration, will be assessed.

2.3.2 Mitigation Measures

The EIS will address potential environmental effects associated with the proposed development and propose mitigation where significant effects are identified. All measures proposed as mitigation for the proposed development will be reported within the relevant chapter of the EIS.

The EIS will also include a final chapter that contains a Schedule of Environmental Commitments which will bring together all of the mitigation measures recommended in the various EIS sections for ease of reference.

2.3.3 EIA Directive 2014/52/EU

Directive 2014/52/EU amending the Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment came into force on the 15 May 2014 and Member States have up to three years to transpose the Directive into national law (by 16 May 2017)

The preparation of the EIS will take into consideration any national legislative amendments introduced in order to transpose Directive 2014/52/EU into National Law.

2.4 Appropriate Assessment (AA)

European Sites (Natura 2000), i.e. Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are classified under the European Union Birds Directive (2009/147EC) and Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). The procedures that must be followed when considering developments affecting a Natura 2000 site are specified in Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of Habitats Directive.

The Appropriate Assessment (AA) process will be undertaken concurrently with the EIA, but both processes will be clearly distinguished. The AA will be documented in a Screening Statement and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) for the proposed development and these documents will be submitted to the competent authority as part of the planning application with the EIS. More details on AA relevant to the proposed development are provided in Section 9.5 of this report.

2.5 Water Framework Directive (WFD)

A Water Framework Directive (WFD) Compliance Assessment relevant to the proposed abstraction location is being prepared and on river crossings as deemed required by the assessment and in consultation with relevant Stakeholders. Impacts on water quality, ecology and hydromorphology will be assessed in accordance with the requirements of the WFD. Additional information on the WFD Compliance Assessment is provided in Section 11.4.1 of this report.