

**National Water Resources Plan -
Framework Plan
Technical Appendices**

**Appendix A
Consultation**

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Data Disclaimer:

This document uses best available data at time of writing. Some sources may have been updated in the interim period. As data relating to population forecasts and trends are based on information gathered before the Covid 19 Pandemic, monitoring and feedback will be used to capture any updates. The National Water Resources Plan will also align to relevant updates in applicable policy.

1.1 Introduction

Public consultation and stakeholder engagement is a key element in ensuring stakeholders and members of the public have an opportunity to contribute to the development of plans and projects in Ireland. Irish Water is undertaking an accessible, transparent, meaningful, and accountable consultation and engagement process with stakeholders and members of the public throughout the development of our first National Water Resources Plan (NWRP). This NWRP is being delivered in two phases. We have now completed Phase 1 of the NWRP, delivery of the Framework Plan, and will now move to Phase 2 of the NWRP, delivery of the four Regional Water Resources Plans (RWRPs).

The environmental reports that accompany this Framework Plan as adopted are the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Statement and the Appropriate Assessment (AA) Determination. A Post Consultation Report which summarises the submissions received on the draft Framework Plan and our response to them, has also been completed and all documents are available on our website (www.water.ie/nwrp). The early involvement of stakeholders ensures the views of the public and stakeholders are taken into consideration throughout the development of the NWRP and in the preparation of the environmental reports. More detail on this is provided below, both as to what has taken place so far, and what will take place as we move to Phase 2.

1.2 NWRP Consultation Approach

The consultation approach involved a number of key stages in the development of the NWRP, as follows:

- NWRP Introduction
- Consultation on the Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report for the NWRP. Following this consultation, Irish Water decided to split the delivery of the NWRP into phases, so we are now referring to this consultation as “Phase 1 NWRP Framework Plan consultation one”
- Phase 1 NWRP - Framework Plan, consultation two (statutory);
- Phase 2 NWRP - RWRP consultation one, scoping and screening for the four Regional Plans and;
- Phase 2 NWRP - RWRP consultation two (statutory) on the four RWRPs and associated environmental reports.

This approach recognises that we will be engaging with stakeholders throughout the process. This allows the opportunity for stakeholders to contribute to the NWRP and outlines to stakeholders how they can influence the NWRP. It ensures continuous communication and engagement with environmental authorities, interested parties and the general public as the NWRP progresses. It also provides an opportunity to communicate the purpose and relevance of the NWRP, how it is being developed, and outlines how and when they can contribute to the NWRP.

1.2.1 NWRP Introduction

In October 2017, a dedicated NWRP webpage went live on the Irish Water website at www.water.ie/nwrp introducing the NWRP and the Consultation Roadmap. The NWRP Consultation Roadmap, as seen in Figure 1-1, set out the process for developing the NWRP and detailed the indicative timeline within which formal consultation would be undertaken in the development of the NWRP.

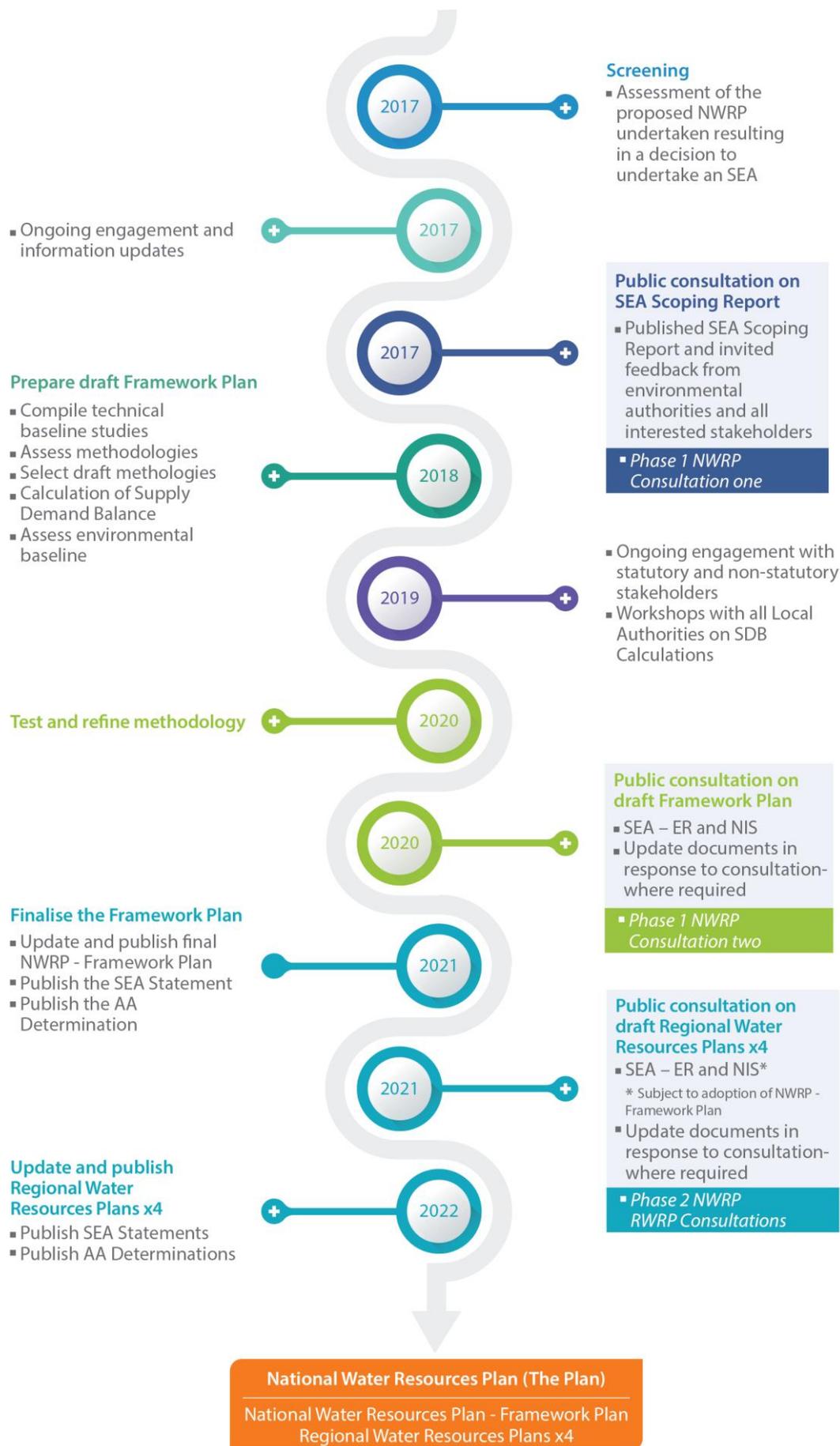


Figure 1.1 NWRP Consultation Roadmap

As well as the launch of the webpage in October 2017, an email was sent to the environmental authorities specified in the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (SI 435/2004) (SEA Regulations) along with other interested parties, introducing the NWRP and highlighting the upcoming consultation on the SEA Scoping Report. This email also outlined when consultation would be undertaken throughout its development and highlighting when stakeholders would have the opportunity to feed into the process. This stage of stakeholder engagement introduced the NWRP, outlined the main objectives of the NWRP and provided details on how to contact the NWRP team through the dedicated information service.

1.2.2 Phase 1 NWRP Consultation one on the Strategic Environmental Assessment

That first stage of formal consultation was to inform the development of the SEA Environmental Report and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) (the environmental reports that must accompany the NWRP). We have now termed that Phase 1 NWRP Framework Plan consultation one for ease of understanding. That process commenced on Thursday 9 November 2017 and ran for six weeks with the publication of the SEA Scoping Report (see Figure 1-1), concluding on Friday 22 December 2017. Members of the public, interested parties and environmental authorities were invited to contribute to the development of the NWRP, as part of the SEA and AA process, through public consultation.

In particular, feedback was sought on the SEA Scoping Report and we invited comments and suggestions for consideration when developing the NWRP.

The following consultation questions were prepared to guide stakeholders in making a submission:

1. Do you have any suggestions that you would like Irish Water to consider in the preparation of its NWRP?
2. Section 2.1 in chapter two of the SEA Scoping Report outlines the objectives of the NWRP. Do you have any comments on these objectives?
3. Irish Water has reviewed plans, policies and programmes relevant to the NWRP in chapter three of the SEA Scoping Report. Are there any others that should be considered?
4. Chapter four of the SEA Scoping Report sets out the current baseline environment conditions and future trends. The environmental issues are summarised in table 4.4. Do you have any comments on these?
5. Chapter five of the SEA Scoping Report sets out the environmental objectives that will be used to assess the NWRP and its potential effects on the environment. Table 5.1 summarises these objectives. Have you any comments on these?
6. How would you like Irish Water to communicate with you as the plan progresses?

In order to generate awareness of and participation in the consultation, a range of communications tools were used to promote the consultation, including:

- NWRP webpage on the Irish Water website in English and Irish;
- Consultation information leaflet available in English and Irish;
- NWRP infographic;
- Press release to national and local media;
- Newspaper advert;
- Social media; and
- Correspondence and briefings to:

- Elected representatives;
- Local authorities;
- Interested parties; and
- Media.

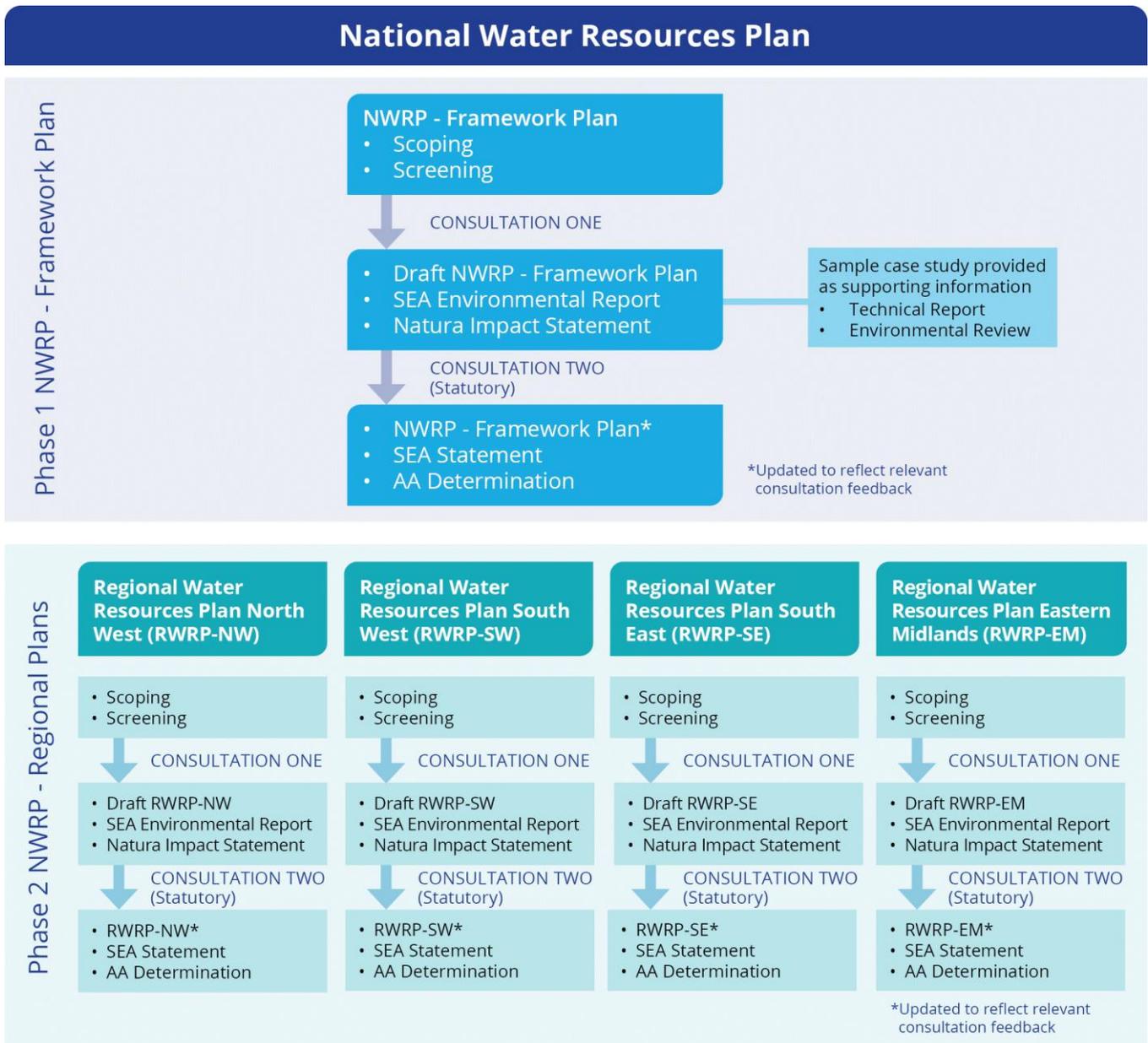
There were 17 written submissions received during this consultation, 15 from organisations and two from members of the public. An overview of the feedback in the submissions received is presented in the NWRP Consultation one report which can be viewed online at www.water.ie/nwrp. Feedback received during that consultation suggested further engagement with different organisations regarding different aspects of the NWRP, to be undertaken before completion of the NWRP, to allow stakeholders to feed into its development, prior to statutory consultation taking place.

The environmental authorities and other interested stakeholders were invited to pre-consultation workshops where the working draft Framework Plan and associated environmental reports were presented. These workshops gave the environmental authorities a platform to contribute once again to the development of the NWRP.

The purpose of these workshops was to present an overview of the NWRP with particular focus on the Options Assessment Methodology to the environmental authorities. The workshop also brought stakeholders through a specific case study to explain how the options methodology process works. Feedback received during the workshop was considered in the preparation of the NWRP.

All feedback received over the course of Phase 1 NWRP Framework Plan consultation one was reviewed by the NWRP team, and relevant feedback informed both the decision to deliver the NWRP in two Phases and the development of the draft Framework Plan. An overview of how that feedback influenced the draft Framework Plan was detailed in the SEA Environmental Report that accompanied that draft Framework Plan as described below relative to Phase 1 NWRP Framework Plan consultation two.

We are committed to continuously engaging with stakeholders and encourage feedback throughout the development of the NWRP as we move to Phase 2.



Phase 2 NWRP - Regional Plans

| Regional Water Resources Plan North West (RWRP-NW) | Regional Water Resources Plan South West (RWRP-SW) | Regional Water Resources Plan South East (RWRP-SE) | Regional Water Resources Plan Eastern Midlands (RWRP-EM) |
|--|--|--|--|
| • Scoping • Screening | • Scoping • Screening | • Scoping • Screening | • Scoping • Screening |
| ↓ CONSULTATION ONE | ↓ CONSULTATION ONE | ↓ CONSULTATION ONE | ↓ CONSULTATION ONE |
| • Draft RWRP-NW • SEA Environmental Report • Natura Impact Statement | • Draft RWRP-SW • SEA Environmental Report • Natura Impact Statement | • Draft RWRP-SE • SEA Environmental Report • Natura Impact Statement | • Draft RWRP-EM • SEA Environmental Report • Natura Impact Statement |
| ↓ CONSULTATION TWO (Statutory) |
| • RWRP-NW* • SEA Statement • AA Determination | • RWRP-SW* • SEA Statement • AA Determination | • RWRP-SE* • SEA Statement • AA Determination | • RWRP-EM* • SEA Statement • AA Determination |

*Updated to reflect relevant consultation feedback

Figure 1.2 Key elements of the NWRP showing Phase 1 and Phase 2 consultations.

1.2.3 Phase 1 NWRP Framework Plan consultation two

Members of the public interested parties and environmental authorities were invited to make a submission on the development of the draft Framework Plan and accompanying SEA Report and Natura Impact Statement between Tuesday 8 December 2020 and an extended deadline of Monday 12 of March 2021. The following consultation questions were prepared to guide stakeholders in making a submission:

1. Do you have any suggestions that you would like Irish Water to consider as part of the draft Framework Plan?
2. Do you have any suggestions that you would like Irish Water to consider as part of how we assess supply/ demand balance, water quality, quantity and resilience?
3. The draft Framework Plan sets out Irish Water’s methodology to find high level solutions to address short, medium and long term issues. Do you have any comments on our methodology?

4. Do you have any comments on the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report and associated Natural Impact Statement (NIS) which accompanies the draft National Framework Plan?
5. The project roadmap has been updated. Do you have any comments or feedback on this?
6. How would you like Irish Water to communicate with you as the NWRP progresses?

A number of communication tools were developed to promote the consultation and to further engage the environmental authorities and encourage public participation in the consultation process. In order to publicise the consultation period, the following communications tools were used:

- Update to the NWRP webpage on the Irish Water website in English and Irish;
- Information leaflet available in English and Irish;
- NWRP infographic;
- Press release to national and local media;
- Newspaper advert;
- Hard copies of the draft Framework Plan, environmental reports, non-technical Summary and consultation leaflet made available at planning counters nationally;
- FAQs;
- Freephone number 1800 46 36 76;
- Social media; and
- Correspondence and briefings to:
 - Elected representatives;
 - Local authorities;
 - Environmental authorities;
 - Interested parties; and
 - Media.

A sample Case Study of the Framework Plan methodology applied to a number of Water Resource Zones (including sample environmental review information) was also provided as supporting material for the consultation two. This was for illustrative purposes only and did not form part of the consultation.

All 84 submissions made on the draft Framework Plan and associated environmental reports were reviewed and relevant feedback incorporated into the final Framework Plan and associated SEA Statement and AA Determination. While submissions were not individually responded to, they have been summarised in a Post Consultation Report, together with our response and an explanation of changes made to the draft Framework Plan prior to adoption, which Report is published on www.water.ie/nwrp.

1.2.4 Phase 2 NWRP – RWRPs consultations

For Phase 2 of the NWRP, we are preparing four draft RWRPs for consultation during 2021 and 2022. These RWRPs are divided into:

1. Eastern and Midlands
2. South West
3. North West
4. South East

This process will commence very shortly with an initial consultation process (we are terming this Phase 2 NWRP RWRP-EM consultation one) on the screening and scoping for the draft RWRP for the Eastern & Midlands region. During this stage of Phase 2, we will be inviting feedback from the environmental

authorities as required by the SEA Regulations. Subsequently, there will be a full public consultation when we publish the draft RWRP – EM with accompanying environmental reports, which we expect to take place in Autumn 2021 and which will be referred to as Phase 2 NWRP RWRP-EM consultation two. The other three RWRPs are also being developed and will follow on from the first RWRP with consultation on those in the same way. All submissions received during the relevant consultation periods will be considered and amendments made to the relevant draft RWRP as required. We expect that this process will go into 2022. SEA and AA considerations will be fully taken into account as we go through the process (as outlined in Figure 1.2).

Our first NWRP will be complete at that stage and will comprise of the Framework Plan and Four RWRPs once they are all adopted by Irish Water. We expect our next NWRP to be a composite single document. We are committed to continually reviewing and updating our approach to water resource planning as we collect more data and as the regulatory environment evolves.