

Gas Networks Ireland

# Network Development Plan 2023

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report

Reference: Draft 1

Draft 1 | 30 January 2024

This report takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our client. It is not intended for and should not be relied upon by any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party.

Job number 29966900

**Ove Arup & Partners Ireland Limited**  
50 Ringsend Road  
Dublin 4  
D04 T6X0  
Ireland  
[arup.com](http://arup.com)

## Document Verification

**Project title** Network Development Plan 2023  
**Document title** Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report  
**Job number** 29966900  
**Document ref** Draft 1  
**File reference** Draft 1

Revision	Date	Filename			
Draft	30 January 2024	Description	Draft		
			<b>Prepared by</b>	<b>Checked by</b>	<b>Approved by</b>
		<b>Name</b>	Daire Byrne	Ailsa Doyle	Sinead Whyte
		<b>Signature</b>			
		<b>Filename</b>			
		<b>Description</b>			
			<b>Prepared by</b>	<b>Checked by</b>	<b>Approved by</b>
		<b>Name</b>			
		<b>Signature</b>			
		<b>Filename</b>			
		<b>Description</b>			
			<b>Prepared by</b>	<b>Checked by</b>	<b>Approved by</b>
		<b>Name</b>			
		<b>Signature</b>			

Issue Document Verification with Document

## Contents

---

1.	Introduction	1
2.	The draft NDP	1
2.1	Overview	1
2.2	Positioning of the draft NDP in the GNI Plan Framework	2
2.3	Legislative Background	2
3.	Strategic Environmental Assessment	4
3.1	Overview	4
4.	Guidance and Legislation	5
4.1	Legislative Overview	5
4.2	Guidance Documents	5
5.	Overview of the Screening Process	6
6.	Mandatory Requirements	7
7.	Assessment of applicability of SEA process	8
8.	Conclusion	11
9.	References	11

### Tables

Table 1	SEA Applicability	8
---------	-------------------	---

### Figures

Figure 1	Plan Hierarchy (relationship between the draft NDP and NIP)	2
Figure 2	Screening in the overall SEA process	4
Figure 3	SEA Decision Tree adapted from the research report Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 4	SEA screening process under S.I. 435/2004, as amended	6

# 1. Introduction

Gas Networks Ireland (referred to hereinafter as ‘GNI’) has prepared the Network Development Plan 2023 (referred to hereafter as ‘the draft NDP’). The draft NDP is a rolling annual document that provides a view of how the gas network may develop over the coming ten-year period. It is based on current supply and demand for gas, as well as projected changes in gas consumption and development of infrastructure.

Arup has been commissioned by GNI to carry out Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening of the NDP.

This report provides an analysis of the draft NDP and considers whether an SEA is required.

## 2. The draft NDP

### 2.1 Overview

As previously discussed, the draft NDP provides a view of how the gas network may develop over the coming ten-year period, based on current supply and demand for gas, as well as projected changes in gas consumption and development of infrastructure. Given the wide scope of input data assumptions used for modelling in the draft NDP, and the considerable uncertainty in the trajectory of both gas and electricity demand over the draft NDP horizon, three scenarios have been developed and are examined as part of the draft NDP. The three gas demand scenarios have been listed as follows.

1. Low;
2. Best Estimate; and
3. High gas demand scenarios.

These scenarios aim to capture the potential impact on both annual and peak day gas demand with a view to ensuring adequate capacity on the gas network to meet customer demand. The sectors relating to these scenarios have been detailed further in the following paragraphs.

National energy policy is recognised as a key input in the formation of the draft NDP modelling assumptions. There has been a significant increase in ambition in the decarbonisation trajectory and national targets since the revision of the most recent Climate Action Plan (CAP)<sup>1</sup>.

The key purpose of the draft NDP is to undertake the ten-year gas network adequacy assessment, however, it is also necessary to look beyond the ten-year adequacy assessment timeline to consider the role the gas network will play in decarbonising Ireland’s energy system. Ireland has committed to and legislated for net-zero emissions by 2050 and utilisation of the national gas network is vital to achieving this. By replacing natural gas with renewable gases, such as biomethane and green hydrogen, GNI will deliver a net-zero carbon gas network and reduce emissions across key sectors, including those that are traditionally difficult to decarbonise, such as transport, agriculture, industrial processes, and power generation.

---

<sup>1</sup> At the time of writing the draft NDP the CAP 2023 was the most recent CAP available and so, any mention of the CAP in this report refers to the CAP 2023, unless otherwise specified.

## 2.2 Positioning of the draft NDP in the GNI Plan Framework

The draft NDP is an annual rolling document prepared by GNI each year, which provides a view of how the gas network may develop over a ten-year period. The draft NDP also describes planned capital investment and future investment proposals. The draft NDP is a strategic plan which is high-level in nature.

GNI has also prepared the Network Implementation Plan (NIP) which covers the period of 2020-2023.

The NIP is a short-term Plan that aims to set out more detail on the manner in which capital investment proposals identified in the draft NDP may be developed in the Plan area over the three-year plan period. This includes greater detail on capital investment projects, including their locations, nature, extent etc.

Any descriptions included in the draft NDP on planned capital investment and future investment proposals have been reviewed. The draft NDP is a strategic Plan which is high-level in nature, and it is considered that any projects included in the draft NDP have been further described and assessed as part of the associated NIP. For example, reference to capital investment projects includes the upgrades to Above Ground Installations (AGIs) and reinforcement of the distribution network.

The NIP applied to one or more of the sectors in the SEA Directive and was considered to set a framework for development consent for projects listed in the EIA Directive. Therefore, the NIP was subject to full SEA in compliance with S.I. No. 435/2004 – European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004, as amended (“SEA Regulations”) and S.I. No. 477/2011 - European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, as amended (“AA Regulations”).

Refer to Figure 1 for the relationship between the draft NDP and NIP.

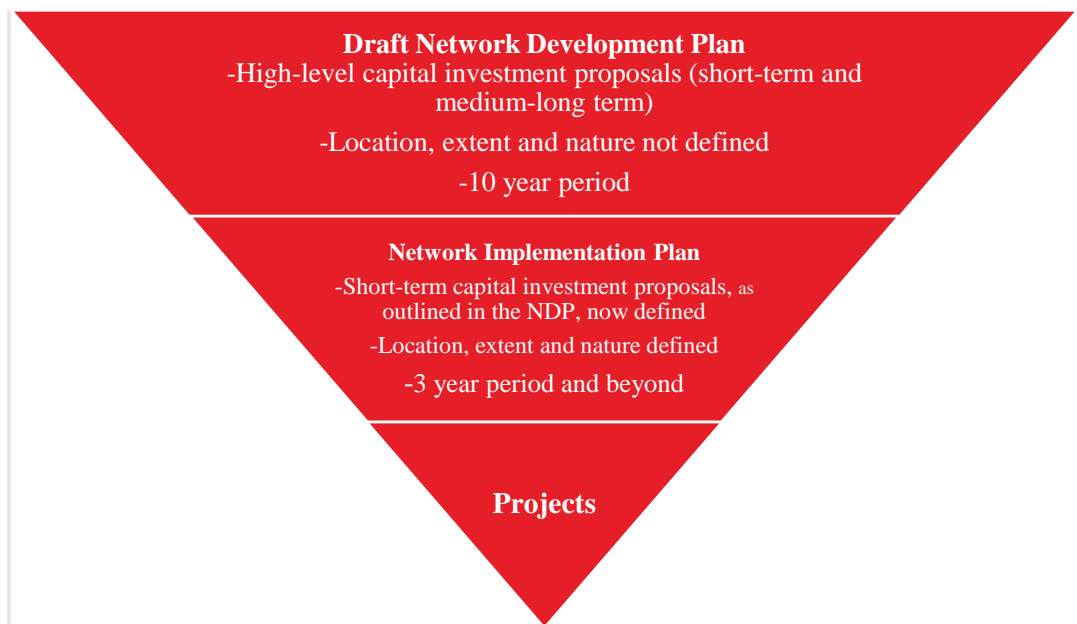


Figure 1 Plan Hierarchy (relationship between the draft NDP and NIP)

## 2.3 Legislative Background

A wide number of European and National policies and regulations allow Ireland to evolve at pace and aid the achievement of reaching net-zero emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) by 2050 at the latest. Some relevant European policies, plans and regulations include:

- European Green Deal, European Commission, 2020;
- EU Hydrogen Strategy, European Commission, 2020;
- EU Energy System Integration Strategy, European Commission, 2020;
- Fit for 55 Package, European Commission, 2021;

- Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation (AFIR), European Commission, 2022; and
- REPowerEU, European Commission, 2022.

Some relevant national policies, plans and regulations for the draft NDP include:

- CAP 2024, Government of Ireland, 2024;
- Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Bill 2021, Government of Ireland, 2021;
- Programme for Government: Our Shared Future, Government of Ireland, 2020;
- Carbon Budgets and Sectoral Emissions Ceilings, Government of Ireland, 2022;
- National Hydrogen Strategy, Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC), 2023;
- Energy Security in Ireland to 2030, DECC, 2023;
- Draft National Biomethane Strategy, Government of Ireland, 2024; and
- Draft National Energy and Climate Plan Update, DECC, 2023).

As Ireland's gas Transmission System Operator (TSO), GNI is required to submit a ten-year Network Development Plan to the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) in accordance with Article 22 of EU Directive 2009/73/EC and Article 11 of the EC (Internal Market in Natural Gas and Electricity) (Amendment) Regulations 2015. As previously discussed, the draft NDP is based on current gas supply and demand, projections for growth in gas consumption and development of gas supply and transportation infrastructure.

Amendments to the EU Directive 2009/73/EC (enacted under EU 2022/869 in May 2022) and proposed revisions to the Regulation revises the requirement for a Ten-Year Network Development Plans (TYNDP) from yearly to every two years. In interim years when a TYNDP is not requested by the CRU, a Gas Forecast Statement (GFS) will be developed, providing a view of how the gas network may develop over a ten-year period.

GNI is also obliged to submit a long-term development statement to the CRU in accordance with condition 11 of its TSO and Distribution System Operator (DSO) licences. The publication of the NDP also satisfies the requirements of Section 19 of the Gas (Interim) (Regulations) Act 2002, as amended by the European Communities (Security of Natural Gas Supply) Regulations 2007 (S.I. No. 697 of 2007). This requires the CRU to monitor and publish a report outlining gas supply and demand in Ireland over seven years.

Under the Trans-European Energy Infrastructure Regulation (TEN-E), GNI is obliged to confer with regional groups on relevant regional and national infrastructure plans. TEN-E provides the legislative basis for 'Projects of Common Interest' (PCI) designation, which refers to cross border energy infrastructure projects that link the energy systems of EU countries. Benefits associated with PCI status include accelerated planning, preferential regulatory treatment, and in most instances, the ability to apply for European Union (EU) grant funding via the Connecting Europe Facility.

In June 2022, the revised TEN-E regulation (EU 2022/869) was published, aiming to re-focus TEN-E away from traditional gas infrastructure projects towards low carbon solutions such as biomethane, hydrogen and smart gas grid solutions. In October 2021, the 5<sup>th</sup> PCI list was published by the European Commission. This included 20 gas projects, all of which were previously listed in the 4<sup>th</sup> PCI list. As the TEN-E was under revision at the time, no new gas infrastructure projects were supported for the 5<sup>th</sup> PCI list. GNI currently have no projects on the 5<sup>th</sup> PCI list.

# 3. Strategic Environmental Assessment

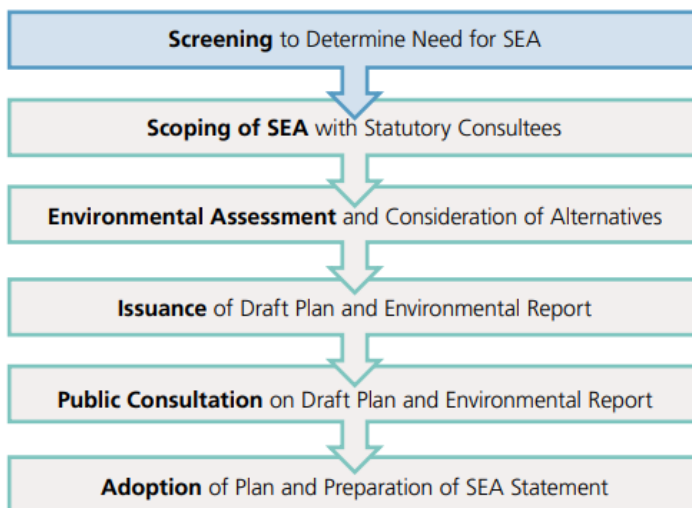
## 3.1 Overview

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is defined as ‘the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt that plan or programme.’ (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2004).

The SEA process is comprised of the following steps:

- Screening: Decision on whether or not SEA of a Plan or Programme is required. This is the current stage of the SEA process to which this report relates. If it is determined that the SEA Directive applies to the Plan or Programme, then an SEA Screening assessment is carried out.
- If SEA is considered to be required following Screening, the following steps are required:
- Scoping: Consultation with the defined statutory bodies on the scope and level of detail to be considered in the assessment;
- Environmental Assessment: An assessment of the likely significant impacts on the environment as a result of the Plan or Programme;
- Preparation of an Environmental Report;
- Consultation on the Plan or Programme and associated Environmental Report;
- Evaluation of the submissions and observations made on the Plan or Programme and Environmental Report; and
- Issuance of a SEA Statement identifying how environmental considerations and consultation have been integrated into the Final Plan or Programme.

This process is outlined in Figure 2.



**Figure 2 Screening in the overall SEA process**

SEA is intended to provide the framework for influencing decision-making at an earlier stage when plans and programmes - which give rise to individual projects - are being developed. SEA should result in more sustainable development through the systematic appraisal of policy options.

## 4. Guidance and Legislation

### 4.1 Legislative Overview

The SEA Directive - Directive 2001/42/EC on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment - requires that an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

The objective of the SEA Directive is ‘to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans...with a view to promoting sustainable development’ (Article 1 SEA Directive 2001).

Ireland made the decision to transpose the SEA Directive into Irish law in 2004 through two separate statutory instruments or regulations, one specifically concerning specific listed town and country/land use plans (S.I. 436/2004) and one concerning all other sectors (S.I. 435/2004). The transposing regulations are as follows:

- European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations (S.I. 435/2004); and
- Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations (S.I. 436/2004).
- Both pieces of legislation were amended in 2011 through the following amendment regulations:
- European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Amendment Regulations (S.I. 200/2011); and
- Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Amendment Regulations (S.I. 201/2011).

The SEA Directive has also been given effect through other Irish legislation. An example being, the Planning and Development Act [PDA] 2000, as amended, which includes a specific requirement to carry out and facilitate SEA alongside the preparation of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies; and the Water Services Act 2007, as amended, requires that: “*The purpose for which this Act is enacted includes giving effect to so much of the following as relates to water services*” - listing specifically Directive 2001/42/EC (EPA, Good Practice Guidance on Screening, 2021).

### 4.2 Guidance Documents

A number of national guidance documents on SEA were reviewed in the preparation of this SEA Screening Report, including:

- Good Practice Guidance on Screening (EPA, Good Practice Guidance on Screening, 2021).
- Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland (EPA, Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland , 2013).
- Implementation of SEA Directive (2001/42/EC): Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment- Guidelines for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2004).
- Implementation of Directive 2001/42 on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment (European Commission, ND)
- SEA Resource Manual for Local and Regional Planning Authorities (EPA, 2015).
- Integrating Climatic Factors into Strategic Environmental Assessment in Ireland - A Guidance Note (EPA, 2019).

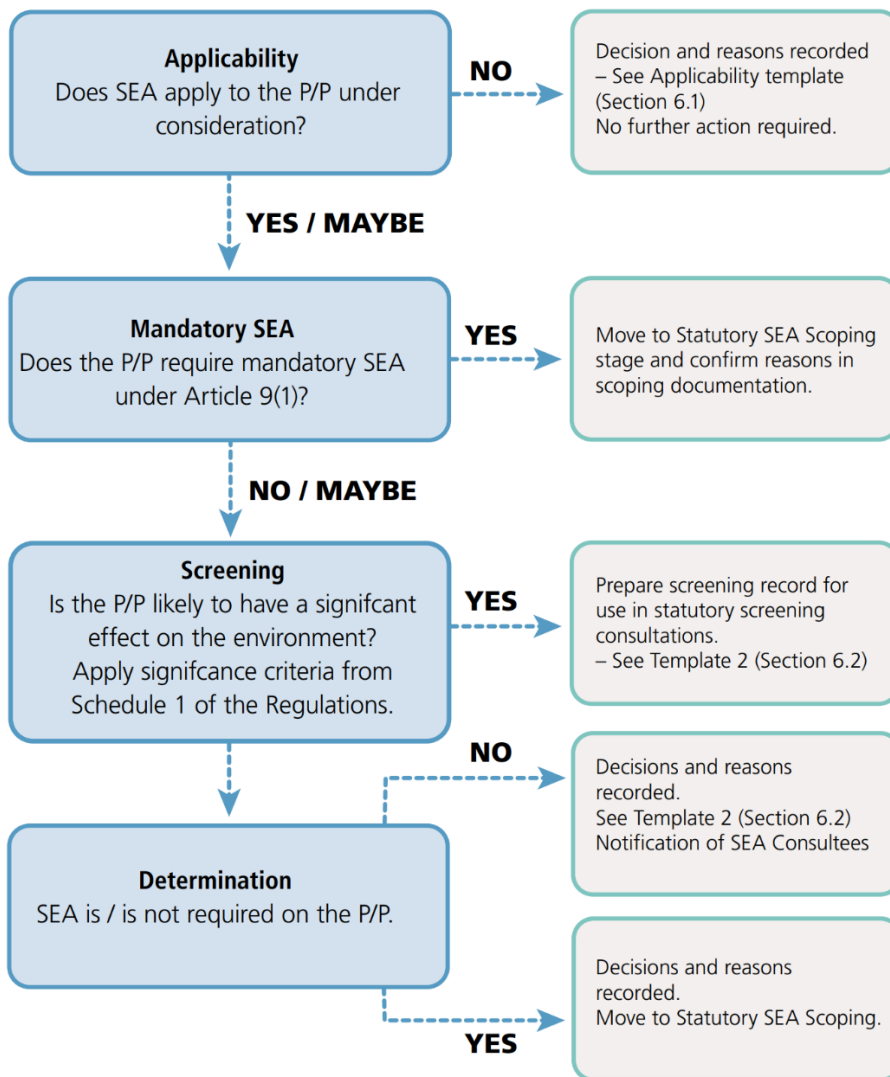


- Synthesis Report on Developing a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes In Ireland (EPA, 2019).

## 5. Overview of the Screening Process

The screening process as outlined in the EPA’s Good Practice Guidance on SEA Screening (EPA, 2021).

As detailed in this Good Practice Guidance, the Screening Process comprises three principal stages – applicability, screening and determination. These stages are discussed further in this section and have been outlined in Figure 3 (as taken from Figure 5-1 of the EPA Good Practice Guidance on SEA Screening).



**Figure 3 SEA screening process under S.I. 435/2004, as amended.**

The three principal stages – applicability, screening and determination of screening have been detailed as follows.

**Stage 1: Applicability (including mandatory requirement)** - To determine the applicability of SEA to the Plan/Programme (P/P) maker and P/P and/or where relevant to confirm if mandatory SEA is required. The first step of SEA Screening is to determine the mandatory requirements if SEA is required under the SEA Directive. Refer to Section 6 of this report for further details on whether or not the draft NDP is considered

to constitute a P/P under the SEA Directive, and Section 7 for whether SEA is or is not determined to be required under the SEA Directive.

If the P/P is determined to constitute a P/P under the SEA Directive, an Applicability Table is completed (as included in Section 7 of this report) and with this analysis it can be identified whether the P/P constitutes a P/P under the SEA Directive and whether the P/P does or does not require SEA under the SEA Directive.

Where there is uncertainty about the nature of the P/P and whether it may give rise to significant effects on the environment, the P/P should move to Stage 2 Screening as the Plan cannot be screened out for SEA or AA and requires a more detailed screening assessment. Refer to Stage 2 Screening below and Section 7 of this report for further details (Table 1 - Section 5: Conclusions).

**Stage 2: Screening** - To examine whether a P/P which relates to use of a small area at local level, or a minor modification to a plan or programme listed under the SEA Directive, or a P/P other than those listed under the SEA Directive, but which sets the framework for development consent, is likely to have significant effects on the environment.

**Stage 3: Determination** - Where screening of non-mandatory P/P is required, a formal determination on the outcome is required.

Where it is considered that the P/P does require SEA, the plan maker should advise that they will move forward to SEA scoping.

## 6. Mandatory Requirements

Under the SEA Directive (S.I. No. 435 of 2004), plans and programmes (P/P) are defined as:

*“plans and programmes” means P/P, as well as any modifications to them*

*(a) which are subject to preparation and/or adoption by an authority at national, regional or local level or which are prepared by an authority for adoption, through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government, and*

*(b) which are required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions.*

Should the plan fall under the definition of ‘plans and programmes’, then the requirement to carry out environmental assessment is dependent on the following:

*which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism and town and country planning or land use, and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, or*

*which are not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site but, either individually or in combination with other plans, are likely to have a significant effect on any such site.*

If these triggers are met, then an assessment of potential significant effects on the environment is required to determine the need for SEA.

## 7. Assessment of applicability of SEA process

This section provides an assessment of the applicability of the SEA process based on the methodology outlined in Section 5 which broadly follows the decision tree provided by the EPA in Guidance “Good Practice Guidance on SEA Screening”<sup>2</sup> (EPA, 2021). With this analysis it can be identified whether the plan constitutes a P/P under the SEA Directive and if SEA is required under the SEA Directive.

This assessment takes into account the information presented in Sections 2-5 in determining the SEA requirement of the draft NDP.

**Table 1 SEA Applicability**

APPLICABILITY	
<b>Section 1: General Details and Key Information about the Plan or Programme</b>	
Name of P/P Maker:	GNI
Title of P/P:	Draft NDP
Type of Plan:	National Gas Network Development Plan
Date:	2023
<p><b>Background and Context of the P/P</b></p> <p>The draft NDP was produced to provide a view of how Ireland’s gas network may develop over the coming ten-year period. It is based on current supply and demand for gas, as well as projected changes in gas consumption and development of infrastructure.</p> <p><b>Purpose of the P/P</b></p> <p>The purpose of the NDP is to assess the gas network’s capacity based on existing and forecast supply and demand in order to guarantee the adequacy of the gas transportation system and security of supply. The supply and demand assumptions which define the scenarios presented in this NDP are based on a prudent assessment of current energy policy in Ireland.</p> <p>While the key purpose of the NDP is to undertake the ten-year gas network adequacy assessment, it is necessary to look beyond the ten-year adequacy assessment timeline to consider the role the gas network will play in decarbonising Ireland’s energy system. Ireland has committed to and legislated for net-zero emissions by 2050 and utilisation of the national gas network is vital to achieving this. By replacing natural gas with renewable gases, such as biomethane and green hydrogen, GNI will deliver a net-zero carbon gas network and reduce emissions across key sectors, including those that are traditionally difficult to decarbonise, such as transport, agriculture, industrial processes and power generation. Within the time horizon of the NDP, there is a strong drive towards displacing natural gas in the network with renewable gases such as biomethane and green hydrogen.</p> <p>While the NDP outlines a number of capital projects, and new technologies, which will be delivered over the coming years, these projects are subject to the appropriate consenting and planning regimes as set out under the Gas Acts 1976 to 2009, the Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2011 and other relevant National and European law.</p> <p><b>Geographical Area Covered by the P/P</b></p> <p>The draft NDP is a national plan and therefore covers the geographical area of ROI.</p> <p><b>Content of the P/P</b></p> <p>The contents of the draft NDP includes the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductory sections that highlight the license/ regulatory obligations, environmental and planning considerations, overview of the current GNI system, and policy background to the draft GNP;</li> <li>• GNI’s review of the historic profiles for supply and demand of gas in Ireland. Historic annual gas demand and peak day gas demands are analysed as well as historic gas supplies;</li> <li>• Gas demand forecasts including an overview of the gas demand outlook for the period 2022/2023 to 2031/2032. The NDP forecasts future gas demands by examining the development of individual Power Generation, Industrial &amp; Commercial, Residential and Transport sector gas demands;</li> <li>• Demand forecast assumptions for Irelands gas network, including an overview of the assumptions made for the gas demand outlook for the period 2022/23 to 2031/2032;</li> <li>• An overview of the gas demand outlook for the period 2022/23 to 2031/2032;</li> </ul>	

<sup>2</sup> EPA (2021) Good Practice Guidance on Screening. Available at: [Strategic Environmental Assessment | Environmental Protection Agency \(epa.ie\)](https://www.epa.ie/publications-and-reports/strategic_environmental_assessment_environmental_protection_agency)

<b>APPLICABILITY</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An overview of the gas supply outlook for the period 2022/2023 to 2031/2032;</li> <li>An overview of gas customer evolutions across Ireland;</li> <li>GNI's commercial market arrangements, both in relation to Ireland and the EU; and</li> <li>A gas network capacity section which describes planned capital investment and future investment proposals.</li> </ul>	
<b>Section 2: Status of the P/P Maker</b>	
<p>Is the P/P prepared and/or adopted by an authority at national, regional or local level or prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government?</p> <p><i>Clarify who will prepare the P/P, if they are affiliated to any authority and if the P/P will be adopted through any legislative provision.</i></p>	<p>Yes. A competent authority for the purpose of SEA is defined under S.I. No. 435 of 2004 as <i>'the authority which is, or the authorities which are jointly, responsible for the preparation of a plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme'</i>.</p> <p>GNI is a subsidiary of Ervia, a commercial semi-state multi-utility company with responsibility for the delivery of gas and water infrastructure and services in Ireland. Ervia reports to the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) who perform their functions on behalf of the DECC.</p> <p>As such, the draft NDP can be considered a document prepared by 'an authority' at a national level.</p>
<p>Is the P/P required by legislative, regulatory, or administrative provisions?</p> <p><i>Provide information on any legislative, regulatory, or administrative requirements. This criterion also includes P/P required to deliver administrative functions of an authority e.g., Dublin Port Company Masterplan.</i></p>	<p>Yes. As GNI is Ireland's gas TSO, GNI is required to submit a TYNDP to the CRU in accordance with Article 22 of EU Directive 2009/73/EC and Article 11 of the EC (Internal Market in Natural Gas and Electricity) (Amendment) Regulations 2015.</p> <p>Thus, it is considered that the draft NDP is a P/P required by legislative provisions.</p>
<b>Section 3: Nature of the P/P</b>	
<p>Is the P/P prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use?</p> <p><i>Clarify if the P/P falls under any of these categories. This should be considered broadly such that. Energy may be interpreted to include grid, petroleum industry, electricity, renewables.</i></p>	<p>Yes. The draft NDP is a plan for the energy sector.</p>
<p>Does the P/P provide a framework for the development consent for projects listed in the EIA Directive?</p> <p><i>This is a fundamental question in the applicability stage. The interpretation of this statement should include any P/P which includes full or partial rules, limits or other criteria that would be used in development management; P/P that set legal requirements or are binding rules; P/P that have goals or targets; P/P that commence the process of optioneering for locations or technology or modes etc.</i></p> <p><i>If there is any doubt regarding the applicability of this statement, the P/P should move forward to Stage 2 and consideration of screening criteria.</i></p>	<p>The draft NDP describes planned capital investment and future investment proposals. The draft NDP is a strategic Plan which is high-level in nature.</p> <p>While it states in Section 10.1 of the draft NDP that <i>'future investment proposals are subject to approval from the Commission for Regulation of Utilities and the relevant consents and permissions'</i>, it must nevertheless be examined as to whether the draft NDP could be considered to constitute a Plan which <i>'provides a framework for development consent of projects listed in the EIA Directive.'</i></p> <p>According to the European Commission <i>'Guidance on the implementation of Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment,'</i> this would <i>"normally mean that the plan or programme contains criteria or conditions which guide the way the consenting authority decides an application for development consent. Such criteria could place limits on the type of activity or development which is to be permitted in a given area; or they could contain conditions which must be met by the applicant if permission is to be granted; or they could be designed to preserve certain characteristics of the area concerned (such as the mixture of land uses which promotes the economic vitality of the area).'</i></p> <p>Any potential for development and or, descriptions included in the draft NDP on planned capital investment and future investment proposals has been reviewed. The draft NDP is a strategic Plan which is high-level in nature, and it is considered that any potential for development included in</p>

<b>APPLICABILITY</b>	
	<p>the draft NDP has been further described and assessed as part of the associated NIP. The NIP is a short-term Plan that aims to set out more detail on the manner in which capital investment proposals identified in the draft NDP may be developed in the Plan area over the three-year plan period. The NIP has been subject to full SEA and AA.</p> <p>Ultimately, it is determined that the draft NDP is a strategic, high-level Plan and consequently does not define criteria or conditions which would guide the way a consenting authority determines an application for development consent of projects listed in the EIA Directive.</p> <p>Therefore, the draft NDP is not considered to have potential to provide a framework for the development consent for projects listed in the EIA Directive.</p>
Is the P/P likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site which leads to a requirement for Article 6 or 7 assessments?	No. The draft NDP is not considered to have the potential to significantly effect a Natura 2000 site. Refer to the Screening for AA for further information.
<b>Section 4: Exemptions</b>	
<p>Is the sole purpose of the P/P to serve national defence or civil emergency or is it a financial/budget P/P or is it co-financed by the current SF/RDF programme?</p> <p><i>Clarify if the P/P relates to any of the exemptions. If it is of this type, no SEA is required.</i></p>	No. The draft NDP has been developed to provide a view of how Ireland’s gas network may develop over the coming ten-year period, based on current supply and demand for gas, as well as projected changes in gas consumption and development of infrastructure.
<b>Section 5: Conclusions</b>	
<p>Summarise the relevant information informing the assessment and the main reasons the P/P does or does not fall within the scope of the SEA Directive.</p> <p>Does fall within scope:</p> <p>1. The plan does apply to one or more of the sectors in the SEA Directive and does provide a framework for development consent of projects requiring EIA AND/OR</p> <p>The plan is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site and, therefore, requires an assessment under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. SEA is therefore required.</p> <p>2. There is uncertainty about the nature of the P/P and whether it may give rise to significant effects on the environment. The plan cannot be screened out for SEA or AA and requires a more detailed screening assessment.</p> <p><u>Does NOT fall within scope:</u></p> <p>3. The plan does not apply to any of the sectors in the SEA Directive and does not provide a framework for development consent of projects requiring EIA, <u>AND</u></p> <p>The plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site and therefore does not require an assessment under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. SEA is therefore not required.</p> <p>For outcome 1 the plan maker should advise that they will move forward to SEA scoping. For outcome 2 the P/P should move to Stage 2</p>	<p>In summary, the draft NDP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is being developed by GNI, an authority at a national level;</li> <li>• Is considered as having potential to be required by legislative provisions;</li> <li>• Is a plan for the energy sector;</li> <li>• The draft NDP is found to apply to one or more of the sectors in the SEA Directive, however, is not considered to set a framework for development consent for projects listed in the EIA Directive; and</li> <li>• The draft NDP is not considered to have the potential to significantly effect a Natura 2000 site.</li> </ul> <p>On this basis, no further screening assessment of potential significant effects of the draft NDP on the environment is required. The applicability template should be kept on file.</p>

APPLICABILITY	
Screening. For outcome 3 the applicability template should be completed and kept on file.	

## 8. Conclusion

As previously discussed, the draft NDP was developed to outline a view of how the gas network may develop over the coming ten-year period, based on current supply and demand for gas, as well as projected changes in gas consumption and development of infrastructure.

This section summarises the conclusions of the applicability of the SEA process based on the decision tree provided by the EPA in Guidance “Good Practice Guidance on SEA Screening”:

- The draft NDP has been prepared by GNI, an authority at a national level;
- It is considered that the P/P is required by legislative provisions;
- The draft NDP is a P/P for the energy sector;
- The draft NDP applies to one or more of the sectors in the SEA Directive, however, is not considered to set a framework for development consent for projects listed in the EIA Directive; and
- The draft NDP is not considered to have the potential to significantly effect a Natura 2000 site. Refer to the Screening for AA for further information.

On this basis, no further screening assessment of potential significant effects of the draft NDP on the environment is required.

It is considered that the draft NDP does not require SEA. Under Section 9 of S.I. No. 435/2004 as amended, as soon as practicable after making a SEA determination, the competent authority shall make a copy of its decision, including, as appropriate, the reasons for not requiring an environmental assessment, available for public inspection at the offices of the competent authority during office hours, and notify its decision to the EPA.

## 9. References

- EPA. (2003). Synthesis Report on Developing A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes In Ireland. EPA.
- EPA. (2013). Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland. EPA.
- EPA. (2013). SEA Resource Manual for Local and Regional Planning Authorities. EPA.
- EPA. (2021). Good Practice Guidance on Screening. Environmental Protection Agency, Ireland.
- EPA. (2021). Good Practice Guidance on SEA Screening. EPA.

Scott, P. M. (2001). Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland. EPA.