



# SIFP

Strategic Integrated Framework Plan  
for the Shannon Estuary

Submission to the  
National Planning Framework

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15th March 2017

## **Submission by SIFP Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary, Steering Group to the National Planning Framework**

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The Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary aims to facilitate the long-term sustainable development of the Shannon Estuary. It aims to encourage, facilitate and promote a balanced approach to harnessing the Estuary's growth potential whilst also ensuring careful protection, management and enhancement of the area's natural resources. This will be achieved through the continued proactive involvement of key stakeholders.

Following the publication and adoption of the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary both a marketing and an environmental group was established, comprising officials of the Local Authorities of Clare, Limerick City and Council and Kerry County Council and other agencies to further advance the objectives of the SIFP and, in particular, the marketing and promotion of the SIFP and Shannon Estuary.

It is on behalf of the Steering Group of the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary that I wish to make the following submission to the National Planning Framework.

The Shannon Estuary features 500km<sup>2</sup> of navigable water running from Kerry Head and Loop Head as far as Limerick City, a distance of 100km.

The Estuary is Ireland's premier deep water port routinely catering for ships up to 200,000 dead weight tonnage (dwt) with key ports at Moneypoint, Limerick and Foynes and direct connectivity to all major international shipping lanes.

It is home to a number of large industries and employers, including ESB Moneypoint, Aughinish Alumina, Tarbert Power Station, Shannon International Airport and NORA Fuel Reserve.

You will be aware that the SIFP involved the identification of nine Strategic Development Locations for Marine-Related Industry. In addition four Areas of Opportunity for Renewable Energy and seven Areas of Opportunity for Aquaculture and Commercial Fisheries have been identified within the Plan.

The Plan also contains a number of strategic aims, together with further sector specific aims such as those relating to Marine Tourism and Leisure and Recreation which will guide future development within the Estuary in a sustainable manner.

The Shannon Estuary is multi-functional as the waters adjoining the lands support a range of functions, uses, communities, activities and environmental resources/assets. The need for the integrated approach has arisen due to a number of changes occurring nationally and internationally over the past decade or more, together with the importance of the Shannon Estuary, not only nationally but also internationally. In this regard the SIFP Steering Group welcome that fact that Marine Spatial Planning will be



integrated with land-use planning in the final NPF. In this regard, the group request that the SIFP would be referenced a best practice approach to an inter-jurisdictional collaborative approach to marine and land-use planning.

The key aim of the SIFP was to positively identify both the nature and location of the development, economic growth and employment that can be sustainably accommodated within the Shannon Estuary whilst also balancing the environmental requirements of the estuary's designated sites. All sites were subject to a high level of scrutiny under a number of key core headings which included social, technical, planning and environmental.

A total of 1,220 hectares of land at 9 sites have been identified in the SIFP for the Shannon Estuary for marine-related industry and from which 6 are now being brought forward as part of the implementation phase of the SIFP. These sites include Moneypoint, Innismurry/Cahericon in Co. Clare; Askeaton, Foynes Island and Foynes Port in Co. Limerick and Tarbert/Ballylongford Landbank in Co. Kerry.

A number of key factors led to the identification of these sites as being suitable including depth of water or access to deep water, road accessibility, infrastructure, distance from shipping lane and the site potential amongst others. All environmental aspects were also considered and assessed as part of the process of identification thereby providing certainty to investors and all stakeholders.

Moreover the SIFP has been incorporated into land-use planning and Development Plans in the adjoining local authority development plans and the sites zoned for marine related industry. This process was further subject to detailed SEA and HDA, resulting in a robust plan-led approach to the development of the Shannon Estuary.

Accordingly, having regard to the collaborative multi-agency approach to the preparation of the SIFP; its subsequent incorporation into the Development Plans of adjoining local authorities; the focused environmental data collection which has occurred since its preparation and – significantly for planning framework - that the SIFP has been subject to rigorous sub-regional and local plan level SEA and HDA, the Steering Group request that the NPF make specific reference to the sites identified in the SIFP in the final NPF. Moreover significant potential and capacity of the Shannon Estuary and capacity to act as a game changer for both marine and land-based development on the Western seaboard of Ireland, through new investment opportunities and growth in marine related industry, renewable energy and recreational use as identified in the SIFP should be promoted in the final NPF.

I trust the above will be considered in the preparation and making of the Draft NPF.



**Pat Dowling**  
**Chief Executive Clare County Council**  
**Chairman of the SIFP Steering Group**