

## Options for future support to Areas of Natural Constraint

### Statement on Environmental Assessment

#### Background

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a systematic process for evaluating the environmental consequences of proposed plans or programmes. The process of SEA was introduced under EC Directive 2001/42/EC<sup>12</sup> on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (SEA Directive) and came into force in 2001. The requirements of the SEA Directive are transposed through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004 (SR/280/2004).

#### Rural Development Programme SEA

An evaluation<sup>1</sup> of the likely environmental effects of implementation of the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020 was undertaken. This included an assessment of the realistic alternative approaches and options, as well as the suggestion of mitigation and enhancement measures to prevent, reduce and offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the Programme. The environmental effects of support to areas of natural constraint were considered in that report. The Environmental Report and SEA Statement as it relates to the RDP 2014-2020 includes Option 1 from the *Consultation on options for future support to Areas of Natural Constraint*. The report did not identify any significant adverse effects on the environment if no further support was available after the 2016 claim year.

There will be an opportunity to revise these assessments, if necessary, should options be considered for implementation.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dardni.gov.uk/publications/2014-2020-rural-development-programme-strategic-environmental-assessment-sea-reports>