



Mr. Eoghan Murphy, TD
Minister for Housing Planning and Local Government
Custom House
Dublin 1

18 April 2019

Our Ref: CHG-MO-00855-2019

**Sligo County Council Registry Reference PL 18/210 – Proposed Upgrading of Lough
Talt Water Treatment Plant (IROPI)**

Dear Eoghan,

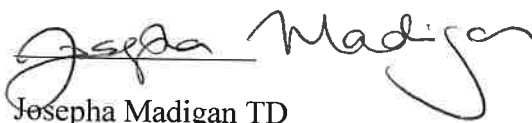
I refer to previous correspondence in the above matter including my Department's letter of 2 April 2019 and your subsequent letter of 9 April 2019 to me seeking an opinion under Section 177 AB (2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000. I hereby convey my opinion that the compensatory measures proposed in the Statement of Case submitted by Sligo County Council are sufficient to ensure that the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 network is protected on the basis that:

1. Compensatory measures including timelines to be set out in one document and agreed in writing between Irish Water and Sligo County Council prior to commencement of development.
2. The use of a semi-permeable membrane barrier to be trialled and, if successful, used as part of the compensatory measures to ensure the maintenance of a water supply to the fen on the north-east shore of the lake.
3. The project methodology to include the following measures to increase the certainty of success in relation to the translocation of the snail *Vertigo geyeri*:
 - a. A detailed assessment of the donor site to establish the habitat management requirements, including grazing requirements, of *Vertigo geyeri*

- b. Consultation with relevant experts to assess the potential impacts of the collection of snails on the snail population at the donor site.
4. The assessments referred to at paragraph 3 above to inform habitat management at Lough Talt and the extent of *Vertigo geyeri* translocation to be undertaken.
 5. If considered necessary based on the assessments referred to in paragraph 3 above and with a view to ensuring sufficient numbers of *Vertigo geyeri* are available for release and to protecting the donor site, the project methodology to include captive breeding of the snail.
 6. The proposed monitoring regime to be in place for as long as necessary to demonstrate success.
 7. To facilitate effective adaptive management, an annual review to be undertaken by the project proponents and a report based thereon to be submitted to the planning authority and the National Parks and Wildlife Service of my Department. This report should set out the results of the mitigation and compensation measures implemented and recommend any necessary changes to achieve success. The system in place for wetting the fen in times of low water to be reviewed and adapted, if and when considered necessary, by the appropriate experts as part of this process.
 8. Following submission of the report referred to at paragraph 7 above the planning authority to convene a meeting within one month with my Department, the project proponents, and others as required, to review progress and recommend any necessary changes to compensation measures which would then be implemented by the project proponents.
 9. The necessary management mechanisms to be in place to enable the site to be effectively controlled and managed. In this regard any management mechanism for the site must ensure that an appropriate grazing regime is in place.

Officials of my Department are available to discuss and clarify for the planning authority any issue arising in this Opinion.

Yours Sincerely,



Josepha Madigan TD

Minister for Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht