

TOBIN

Derryhinch, Drumman, Derryarkin, Ballybeg and Toar Bogs –Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report



BUILT ON KNOWLEDGE

Document Control Sheet

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1. INTRODUCTION

TOBIN have been appointed by Bord na Móna Energy Ltd (hereafter referred to as 'the Applicant') to apply to An Coimisiún Pleanála (ACP) for Substitute Consent under the provisions of Section 177E of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) (hereafter referred to as the '2000 Act'). The proposed Substitute Consent application relates to peat extraction and ancillary activities at Derryhinch, Drumman, Derryarkin, Ballybeg and Toar Bogs (hereafter referred to as 'the Application Site'), located within Counties Offaly, Westmeath and Meath.

The bog units which comprise the Application Site form part of the Derrygreenagh Bog Group, which is licenced by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under Integrated Pollution Control (IPC) Licence No. P0501-01.

This Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Report has been prepared to provide a description of the Application Site, the relevant legislative and policy context, a description of the development, and the proposed scope and methodology of the remedial Environmental Impact Assessment Report (remedial EIAR).

Scoping is the process of identifying the likely significant issues which should be addressed in the remedial EIAR. Scoping is also intended to identify the potential environmental effects of the Project, sensitive receptors, and the appropriate level of information to be provided in the remedial EIAR.

The purpose of this Scoping Report is to invite prescribed bodies and technical consultees to provide any opinions, comments or guidance they may have regarding the proposed scope and content of the remedial EIAR, which will assess the likely significant effects on the environment arising from the peat extraction and ancillary activities at the Application Site.

This request is made having regard to the provisions of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended), and Article 5 of the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU, (as amended) by Directive 2014/52/EU, in the context of a planning application for Substitute Consent under section 177E of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended).

A full list of prescribed bodies and technical consultees who have been issued with this EIA Scoping report is provided in Appendix 2.



2. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

2.1 BACKGROUND TO THE APPLICATION

Prior to 20 September 2012, certain large-scale industrial activities, including peat extraction, were generally regarded as exempted development under the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), dependent on thresholds and where planning permission had previously been obtained in relation to these activities. The Environment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2011 was then passed in 2011, subsequently amending the 2000 Act by inserting section 4(4), which provided that development which would otherwise be exempt is not exempt if it requires an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or Appropriate Assessment (AA).

As a result of this legislative change, peat extraction activities that had historically been treated as exempt could no longer lawfully continue where EIA and/or AA was required. However, the planning status of historic industrial peat extraction operations remained uncertain in practice for a considerable period following the commencement of Section 4(4).

2.2 SUBSTITUTE CONSENT CONTEXT

Section 57 of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 amended section 177 of the 2000 Act by inserting Part XA, which introduced a statutory framework for Substitute Consent. The procedural aspects of this framework were subsequently set out in the Planning and Development (Amendment) (No.3) Regulations 2011.

Substitute Consent is the statutory mechanism by which development may be regularized, including circumstances where an environmental impact assessment, a determination as to whether an environmental impact assessment is required, or an appropriate assessment, was or is required and has not been carried out.

2.3 PREVIOUS LEAVE TO APPLY APPLICATION

In December 2022, Bord na Móna submitted an application to An Bord Pleanála (now An Coimisiún Pleanála) seeking leave to apply for substitute consent under section 177E of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The application, submitted under reference LS19.315436, related to peat extraction and associated activities at Derryhinch, Drumman, Derryarkin and Ballybeg Bog.

Subsequently, the Planning and Development, Maritime and Valuation (Amendment) Act 2022 introduced changes to the Substitute Consent regime, removing the requirement for a separate “leave to apply” stage. These provisions were commenced by S.I. No. 645 of 2023, with effect from 16 December 2023.

As the Leave to Apply application (reference. LS19.315436) had not been determined prior to this commencement date, the application was deemed withdrawn on 15 January 2024.



2.4 PROPOSED APPLICATION

Bord na Móna now proposes to submit a direct application for Substitute Consent under Section 177E of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), in respect of historic peat extraction and ancillary activities at the Application Site.

Following on from the above, this planning application for Substitute Consent will be made to An Coimisiún Pleanála under section 177E of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

The application will be accompanied by a remedial Environmental Impact Assessment Report (remedial EIAR) and remedial Natura Impact Statement (rNIS), which will assess the likely significant effects on the environment arising from the peat extraction and ancillary activities at the Application Site.

2.5 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS 2001 (AS AMENDED) – EIA CONTEXT

In determining whether an EIA is required, the EIA Directive, as transposed into Irish law, distinguishes between classes of development for which an EIA is mandatory in all cases and those for which an EIA may be required, depending on scale, thresholds, or the likelihood of significant environmental effects.

This distinction is reflected in Schedule 5, Parts 1 and 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended), which give effect to the EIA Directive in Irish law.

Projects listed in Schedule 5, Part 1 automatically require an EIAR. Projects in Part 2 require an EIAR only if they exceed specified thresholds or are likely to have significant effects.

In the context of peat extraction activities and all ancillary works undertaken at the Application Site for which this remedial EIAR is prepared, there is no relevant class of activity listed in Schedule 5, Part 1 of the Planning Regulations, therefore an EIA is not mandatory in respect of Part 1 projects.

Schedule 5, Part 2 of the Planning Regulations, includes:

“Class 2(a) – peat extraction which would involve new or extended areas of 30 hectares or more”.

This is considered to be the most relevant class of development applicable to the historic peat extraction and ancillary works at the Application Site. Accordingly, the application for Substitute Consent will be accompanied by a remedial EIAR, addressing the likely significant environmental effects of the development already carried out.

3. SITE LOCATION

The Application Site forms part of the Derrygreenagh Bog Group and comprises five bog units located south of the M6 motorway, across the Counties Offaly, Westmeath and Meath.

The five bog units include (from west to east):

- Toar Bog
- Derryarkin Bog
- Ballybeg Bog
- Drumman Bog
- Derryhinch Bog.

Overall, the Application Site comprises a total of 2,637 hectares and includes areas historically subject to peat extraction, ancillary infrastructure and access roads.

The Application Site extends across the townlands listed in Table 1. A description of each bog is provided below.

Table 1: Counties and townlands relevant to the Application Site

County	Townlands
Westmeath	Cornaher, Killavally, Pallasboy, Monrath, Rathgarrett, Rahincuill, Kiltotan and Collinstown, Farthingstown, Drumman, Milltown, Pass of Kilbride, Rattin
Meath	Derryhinch, Baltigeer
Offaly	Bunsallagh, Derryarkin, Derrygreenagh, Knockdrin, Garr, Corbetstown, Carrick, Ballybeg, Croghanhill, Barrysbrook, Togher, Toberdaly, Clonin, Coolcor, Derryiron

3.1 APPLICATION SITE BOUNDARY

The Application Site is defined by the perimeter of Toar, Derryarkin, Ballybeg, Drumman and Derryhinch bogs. Within these bogs are a number of developments not related to peat extraction and ancillary activities which have been subject to their own planning consent as applicable (Table 2 below).

Accordingly, Substitute Consent is not being sought in respect of these developments and as such they are excluded from the Application Site boundary. These developments will be fully considered in the remedial EIAR, remedial Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (rAASR) and remedial Natura Impact Statement (rNIS) as part of a cumulative assessment which will accompany the application for Substitute Consent.

Table 2: Application Site Planning History

Consenting Authority	Planning Reference	Description of Development	Final Grant Date	Address
ACP	319023	Combined Cycle Gas Turbine and Open Cycle Gas Turbine Thermal Power Plant, Electricity Grid Connection including 2 no. substations, and associated buildings, plant, site works, service and ancillary development.	28/04/2026	Lands within the townlands Knockdrin, Derrygreenagh, Derryarkin, Derryiron, Ballybeg, Coolcor, Barrysbrook, Clonin, Togher and Coole, Co. Offaly
Offaly County Council	22446	Continued use of an existing guyed wind monitoring mast, with instruments, 100m in height for a further period of three years. the purpose of the mast is to assess the suitability of the company's adjacent lands for wind farm development. previous planning application reference numbers: pl13/242, pl19/315 (Offaly County council) and pl19.243080 (An Bord Pleanála)	05/12/2025	Ballybeg bog, Derryiron, County Offaly
ACP	309112	Retention and continuation of development. Works for an existing biomass facility on a site of 14.34 ha. This site will be operational until 2030.	11/05/2021	Toar, Rathgarrett, Tyrellspass, County Westmeath
Offaly County Council	20/329	Drumman biomass facility. The development is for the storage and seasoning of biomass logs followed by chipping of the seasoned logs on a site area of 29.17ha. The proposed retention development consists of 1) a weighbridge (120 sq.M) and a weighbridge control station (7.75 sq.M). 2) a biomass storage area (6km of linear log storage space equating to 31,320 tonnes of wet logs), 3) a steel post and wire mesh fence with gates at the entrance 4) unpaved access tracks (6km in length) and 5) all ancillary works. The log storage area or log pile is linear with a diameter of c. 4m and up to a height of 4.1m. There is no storage of chipped biomass on site. Planning permission is sought for alterations to improve the existing access off the R400 including 1) surface the site access road approach to the R400 with an appropriate bound material and 2) provide a stop line and stop	10/06/2021	Drumman biomass facility, located within the townlands of Derrygreenagh & Knockdrin, Co. Offaly

Consenting Authority	Planning Reference	Description of Development	Final Grant Date	Address
		sign at the site entrance. Planning permission is sought for the continued operation of this development until 2030		
Offaly County Council	19176	Erection of a guyed wind monitoring mast, with instruments, 100m in height, for a period of six years. The purpose of the proposed mast is to assess the suitability of the company's adjacent lands for wind farm development.	17/07/2019	Derrygreenagh, Rhode, Co. Offaly
Offaly County Council	1925	An 87.6-hectare extension to the south-west, south and south-east of its existing sand and gravel put (within an application site of 146.1 hectares)	29/04/2019	Derrygreenagh, Knockdrin, Garr and Carrick townlands, Rhode, Co. Offaly
Offaly County Council	18209	Derryarkin Sand and Gravel DAC for the construction of a weighbridge (90m ²) and 2 no. control rooms subject to 5 conditions.	09/08/2018	Derryarkin sand pit, Derrygreenagh, Rhode, Co. Offaly
Offaly County Council	15330	An existing 30m high telecommunications support structure.	02/03/2016	Derrygreenagh, Rhode, Co. Offaly
Westmeath County Council	124018	Permission for site access works to allow for the out loading of peat. These works consist of; access works at junction with L-1113 Tyrrellspass to Rathgarrett Road and construction of a new access road to facilitate peat out loading.	11/06/2012	Rathgarrett, Tyrrellspass, Co. Westmeath
Westmeath County Council	104078	Temporary planning permission (duration 10 years) for construction of moto cross circuit and associated infrastructure.	02/08/2011	Derryarkin, Rochfortbridge, Co. Westmeath
Offaly County Council	10391	Temporary planning permission (duration 10 years) – application running concurrently with Westmeath County Council planning application 10/4078. Planning permission is	21/04/2011	Derrygreenagh, Rochfortbridge, Co. Offaly



Consenting Authority	Planning Reference	Description of Development	Final Grant Date	Address
		sought for permission to upgrade the existing site access, construction of a moto-cross circuit and ancillary infrastructure.		
Offaly County Council	051113	Installation of a fixed processing plant for the production of blacktop on a site of 0.875 ha at existing sand and gravel quarry.	26/04/2006	Derrygreenagh, Rhode Co. Westmeath
Offaly County Council	04988	Retention of telecommunications mast	23/09/2004	Derrygreenagh, Co. Westmeath
Offaly County Council	02/172	Construction of an entrance to a sand and gravel extraction facility.	10/06/2002	Derrygreenagh, Co. Offaly
Offaly County Council	011163	Concrete batching plant, block yard, block storage area, site office building, effluent treatment system, ESB substation & bunded fuel storage tanks	16/10/2002	Derrygreenagh, Rhode



4. INDIVIDUAL BOG UNITS

4.1 TOAR BOG

Toar Bog is located entirely within County Westmeath. At its nearest point, the bog lies approximately 2 km south of the village of Tyrrellspass. Toar Bog is situated within the townlands of Rathgarrett, Montrath, Pallasboy, Killavally and Cornaher.

The total area of Toar Bog within the Application Site is approximately 400 hectares.

4.2 DERRYARKIN BOG

Derryarkin Bog is located approximately 5 km east of Tyrrellspass, County Westmeath, and approximately 3 km south-southeast of Rochfortbridge, County Westmeath. The bog straddles the administrative boundary of County Westmeath and Offaly and is located within the townlands of Derryarkin, Derrygreenagh, Farthingstown, Kiltotan, Collinstown, Rathincuill, Rathgarrett and Bunsallagh.

The total area of Derryarkin Bog within the Application Site is approximately 400 hectares.

4.3 BALLYBEG BOG

Ballybeg Bog is located approximately 5 km south-east of Rochfortbridge and 2 km west of Rhode in County Offaly. Ballybeg Bog adjoins the southeastern boundary of Derryarkin Bog and is located entirely within County Offaly. The bog is situated within the townlands of Derryarkin, Ballybeg, Derrygreenagh, Derryiron, Coolcor, Clonin, Barrysbrook, Toberdaly and Togher.

The total area of Ballybeg Bog within the Application Site is approximately 673 hectares.

4.4 DRUMMAN BOG

Drumman Bog is located to the east of the R400 and Derryarkin Bog, approximately 2 km east of Rochfortbridge and 5 km north of Rhode (at its closest point). Drumman Bog is located on either side of the Mongagh River, located in both County Westmeath and Offaly. The bog unit is situated within the townlands of Farthingstown, Drumman, Derrygreenagh, Knockdrin, Garr, Carrick and Corbetstown.

The total area of Drumman Bog within the Application Site is approximately 830 hectares.

4.5 DERRYHINCH BOG

The total area of Derryhinch Bog within the Application Site is approximately 334 hectares and is located approximately 6 km northeast of Rochfortbridge, County Westmeath, and approximately 5 km southwest of Kinnegad, County Westmeath. The bog unit is located within the townlands of Pass of Kilbride, Rattin, Derryhinch and Baltigeer.

Figure 1 shows the Substitute Consent application boundary.

5. Development Description

Drainage works and vegetation clearance at the Application Site began in 1950 to facilitate industrial peat extraction. Industrial scale peat extraction was carried out across the five bogs units from 1958 until their respective cessation dates, which occurred at different times across the bogs. Ballybeg Bog was the final bog to be subject to industrial peat extraction within the Application Site, which ceased in 2020. Table 3 provides an overview of the operational history of the Application Site.

Table 3: Operational history of the Application Site (Source: Bord na Móna Annual Reports)

Bog Unit	Commencement of Site Preparation Works (vegetation clearance and drainage insertion)	Extraction Commenced	Extraction Ceased
Derryhinch Bog	1950	1958	2017
Drumman Bog	1950	1958	2018
Derryarkin Bog	1950	1958	Between 1988 and 1991
Toar Bog	1950	1958	2018
Ballybeg Bog	1950	1958	2020

Substitute Consent is intended to be sought in respect of peat extraction and ancillary activities undertaken at the Application Site from July 1988 onwards, the date by which the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive (Directive 85/337/EEC) was required to be transposed into Irish law.

The development for which Substitute Consent is intended to be sought comprises the following activities carried out at the Application Site:

- Industrial scale peat extraction (milled peat);
- The use and maintenance of pre-existing ancillary supporting infrastructure and services to facilitate peat extraction activities (e.g., railway infrastructure, drainage infrastructure (i.e. drains, silt ponds, pumps)), from 1988 to present day;
- The implementation of operational control measures associated with the above, including those required under the IPC Licence measures (Ref. P0501-01) which commenced from 2000 onwards to the present day; and
- All associated site development and ancillary works to facilitate peat extraction and related activities.

A number of ancillary structures and features were historically associated with peat extraction and ancillary activities at the Application Site. These include:

- Workshops;
- Works offices;
- Welfare Facilities;
- Mobile fuel tanks;
- Fixed fuel tanks;
- Local holding areas; and
- Railway infrastructure.

With the exception of railway infrastructure and local holding areas, the remaining ancillary infrastructure, having been subject to its own planning consent as applicable, or by virtue of pre-dating the commencement of the formal Irish planning system (i.e., were constructed out prior to the establishment of the Planning & Development Act 1963 (which was enacted on 1 October 1964)) is located outside of the Application Site boundary and as such Substitute Consent is not being sought in respect of this ancillary infrastructure.

5.1 LICENSING CONTEXT

Since 2001, Bord na Móna has been licenced to extract peat on lands within the Derrygreenagh Bog Group in accordance with IPC Licence (Ref. No. P05010-01).

Peat extraction falls into the category of industrial activity referred to the First Schedule of the Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992, as amended. The relevant Class of activity is defined in the First Schedule as:

‘The extraction of peat in the course of business which involves an area exceeding 50 hectares’.

Industrial scale peat extraction permanently ceased at the Application Site in June 2020. Activities are ongoing at the Application Site to ensure compliance with the statutory duties and conditions set out in the IPC Licence. The ongoing activities are required to ensure compliance with the extant IPC Licence and to facilitate the environmental stabilisation at the Application Site.

In accordance with the IPC Licence conditions, Bord na Móna is required to submit an Annual Environmental Report (AER) to the EPA each year, which sets out the results of monitoring and environmental performance of the licences activity. AER from 2018 onwards is available for public viewing on the EPA’s website¹.

¹ [Authorisation Profile | LEAP Online](#)



6. CONTENT OF THE REMEDIAL EIAR – STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

The remedial EIAR will detail findings of retrospective assessment on the likely significant effects on the environment that may have occurred as a result of Bord na Móna's historic peat extraction and ancillary activities at the Application Site.

Section 177(F)(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, which relates to applications for Substitute Consent states that a remedial EIAR shall contain the following;

- a) "a statement of the significant effects, if any, on the environment, which have occurred or which are occurring or which can reasonably be expected to occur because the development the subject of the application for substitute consent was carried out;
- b) details of;
 - i. any appropriate remedial measures undertaken or proposed to be undertaken by the applicant for substitute consent to remedy any significant adverse effects on the environment;
 - ii. the period of time within which any proposed remedial measures shall be carried out by or on behalf of the applicant".

In addition, the remedial EIAR will have full regard to Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (the 'EIA Directive'), as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU, which was adopted into EU law on 16 April 2014.

The remedial EIAR will provide an assessment of the significant effects on the environment which may have occurred, or could reasonably be expected to occur, as a result of peat extraction and ancillary activities.

The EIAR will also identify and describe any remedial measures that have been undertaken or are proposed to be undertaken to remedy adverse environmental effects, together with the timeframes for implementation of those measures.

In accordance with EPA guidance (2022) *Guidelines on the information to be contained in EIA Reports*², the main purpose of an EIAR is to identify, describe and present an assessment of the likely significant impacts of a Project on the environment. This will include:

- a) A description of the project comprising information on the site, size and other relevant features of the project;
- b) A description of the likely significant effects of the activities at the Application Site on the environment;
- c) A description of the features of the project and/or (existing) measures envisaged in order to avoid, prevent or reduce and, if possible, offset likely significant adverse effects on the environment;
- d) A non-technical summary of the information referred to in points (a) to (d); and
Any additional information relevant to the specific characteristics of a particular project or type of project and to the environmental features likely to be affected.

²

https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring--assessment/assessment/EIAR_Guidelines_2022_Web.pdf



The EIA Directive does not have retrospective effect and does not impose a legal obligation to carry out environmental impact assessment in respect of projects which commenced or were completed prior to its transition into national law. The latest date for transposition of the original EIA Directive was 3 July 1988.

Accordingly, the baseline against which the environmental effects of the development are required to be assessed in the remedial EIAR will be confined to development that took place after 3 July 1988. Notwithstanding this, as the post-1988 development formed part of a wider project that commenced prior to that date, a high-level description of the overall development since its commencement will be included in the remedial EIAR. This is intended to facilitate the most complete and transparent assessment possible of the environmental effects of development undertaken since July 1988.

The remedial EIAR will report the findings of a retrospective assessment on the likely significant effects on the environment that may have occurred as a result of Bord na Móna's peat extraction activities at the Application Site during each of the identified phases of the Project, which are as follows:

- **Peat extraction Phase:** peat extraction and all ancillary works at the Application Site from July 1988 to the cessation of peat extraction in June 2020;
- **Current Phase:** the management of the Application Site since June 2020 to present day, which includes decommissioning works.
- **Remedial Phase:** the activities intended to be carried out at the Application Site into the future in accordance with the latest Cutaway Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plans (2018) prepared under IPC Licence P0501-01.

6.1 SCOPE OF THE REMEDIAL EIAR

The information to be contained in an remedial EIAR is specified in Schedule 6 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended and in the updated EIA Directive 2014/52/EU. The remedial EIAR for the development will use the grouped structure method to describe the existing environment, the likely significant effects of the development thereon and the proposed mitigation measures, under the following headings:

- Population and human health, including residential amenity and vulnerability to accidents and disasters
- Biodiversity
- Land, Soils and Geology
- Hydrology and Hydrogeology
- Air Quality
- Climate
- Noise and Vibration
- Landscape and visual
- Archaeological, Architectural and Cultural Heritage
- Material Assets (including traffic and transportation)
- Interaction of the Foregoing; and
- Schedule of mitigation and monitoring measures.

Background information relating to the development, including details of the EIA Scoping and consultation undertaken, will be presented in the remedial EIAR. A description of the development will also be provided.

A review of all reasonable alternatives considered will be undertaken and incorporated into the remedial EIAR to demonstrate that the peat extraction processes undertaken represented the best technology to suit the requirements of such an industry.

The remedial EIAR will also include a Non-Technical Summary, which will be a concise statement of the significant findings and recommended actions presented in the remedial EIAR.

6.2 REMEDIAL EIAR METHODOLOGY

Article 5 of the EIA Directive provides where an EIA is required, the developer shall prepare and submit an EIAR previously referred to as an Environmental Impact Statement ('EIS'). Accordingly, the remedial EIAR will comply with the EIA Directive as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU.

The classification and description of effects in the remedial EIAR will follow the terms provided in Table 3.4 of the EPA (2022) Guidelines and are replicated in **Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference.** below for reference. This will provide a consistent description of specific effects, but all categories of terms do not need to be used for every effect.

TABLE 4: CLASSIFICATION AND DESCRIPTION OF EFFECTS IN THE REMEDIAL EIAR (SOURCE: EPA (2022) GUIDELINES ON THE INFORMATION TO BE CONTAINED IN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORTS)

Text	Text
Quality of Effects It is important to inform the non-specialist reader whether an effect is positive, negative or neutral.	Positive Effects A change which improves the quality of the environment (for example, by increasing species diversity; or the improving reproductive capacity of an ecosystem, or by removing nuisances or improving amenities).
	Neutral Effects No effects or effects that are imperceptible, within normal bounds of variation or within the margin of forecasting error.
	Negative/adverse Effects A change which reduces the quality of the environment (for example, lessening species diversity or diminishing the reproductive capacity of an ecosystem; or damaging health or property or by causing nuisance).
Describing the Significance of Effects 'Significance' is a concept that can have different meanings for different topics – in the absence of specific definitions for	Imperceptible An effect capable of measurement but without significant consequences.
	Not Significant

different topics the following definitions may be useful (also see <i>Determining Significance</i>).	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities.
	Slight Effects An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities.
	Moderate Effects An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends.
	Significant Effects An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the environment.
	Very Significant An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity significantly alters most of a sensitive aspect of the environment.
	Profound Effects An effect which obliterates sensitive characteristics.
Describing the Extent and Context of Effects Context can affect the perception of significance. It is important to establish if the effect is unique or, perhaps, commonly or increasingly experienced.	Extent Describe the size of the area, the number of sites, and the proportion of a population affected by an effect.
	Context Describe whether the extent, duration, or frequency will conform or contrast with established (baseline) conditions (is it the biggest, longest effect ever?)
	Extent Describe the size of the area, the number of sites, and the proportion of a population affected by an effect.
Describing the Probability of Effects Descriptions of effects should establish how likely it is that the	Likely Effects The effects that can reasonably be expected to occur because of the planned project if all mitigation measures are properly implemented.

predicted effects will occur – so that the CA can take a view of the balance of risk over advantage when making a decision. Describing the Duration and Frequency of Effects 'Durations' is a concept that can have different meanings for different topics – in the absence of specific definitions for different topics the following definitions may be useful.	
	Unlikely Effects The effects that can reasonably be expected not to occur because of the planned project if all mitigation measures are properly implemented.
	Monetary Effects Effects lasting from seconds to minutes.
	Brief Effects Effects lasting less than a day.
	Temporary Effects Effects lasting less than a year.
	Short-term Effects Effects lasting one to seven years.
	Medium-term Effects Effects lasting seven to fifteen years.
	Long-term Effects Effects lasting fifteen to sixty years.
	Permanent Effects Effects lasting over sixty years.
	Reversible Effects Effects that can be undone, for example through remediation or restoration.
	Frequency of Effects Describe how often the effect will occur (once, rarely, occasionally, frequently, constantly – or hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, annually.
Describing the Types of Effects	Indirect Effects (Secondary or Off-site Effects)

	Impacts on the environment, which are not a direct result of the project, often produced away from the project site or because of a complex pathway.
	Cumulative Effects The addition of many minor or significant effects, including effects of other projects, to create larger, more significant effects.
	'Do-Nothing Effects' The environment as it would be in the future should the subject project not be carried out.
	'Worst-case Effects' The effects arising from a project in the case where mitigation measures substantially fail.
	Indeterminable Effects When the full consequences of a change in the environment cannot be described.
	Irreversible Effects When the character, distinctiveness, diversity or reproductive capacity of an environment is permanently lost.
	Residual Effects The degree of environmental change that will occur after the proposed mitigation measures have taken effect.
	Synergistic Effects Where the resultant effect is of greater significance than the sum of its constituents, (e.g. combination of SOx and NOx to produce smog).

Impacts will be described in terms of quality, significance, duration and type, where possible. A 'Do Nothing' approach will also be discussed in the remedial EIAR. Residual impacts will be presented following any impact for which control/mitigation measures are described. The remaining impact types will be presented as required or applicable throughout the remedial EIAR.

6.3 REMEDIAL EIAR CHAPTERS

Details of the extent and scope of the assessments to be undertaken in the remedial EIAR are outlined below:

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: remedial EIAR Methodology
- Chapter 3: Consideration of Alternatives
- Chapter 4: Description of the Development
- Chapter 5: Planning Policy
- Chapter 6: Population and Human Health
- Chapter 7: Biodiversity
- Chapter 8: Land, Soils and Geology
- Chapter 9: Hydrology and Hydrogeology
- Chapter 10: Air Quality
- Chapter 11: Noise and Vibration
- Chapter 12: Landscape and Visual Impacts
- Chapter 13: Archaeology and Cultural Heritage
- Chapter 14: Material Assets (including Traffic and Transport)
- Chapter 15: Climate
- Chapter 16: Interaction of the Foregoing
- Chapter 17: Schedule of Mitigation

A summary of the Chapter 2 Methodology and Chapter 3 Consideration of Reasonable Alternatives is provided below.

6.4 REMEDIAL EIAR METHODOLOGY

Chapter 2 of the remedial EIAR will describe the methodology proposed for the remedial EIAR and the cumulative assessment of the Project. The EIA Directive states that an EIAR should contain an assessment of cumulative effects, which are defined as:

'A description of the likely significant effects of the project on the environment resulting from...the cumulation of effects with other existing and/or approved projects, taking into account any existing environmental problems relating to areas of particular environmental importance likely to be affected or the use of natural resources.'

The EIA Directive and associated guidance documents state that, in addition to considering indirect, secondary, transboundary, short-, medium- and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects of the project (all of which are addressed within the various chapters of the remedial EIAR), the description of likely significant effects should include an assessment of cumulative effects that may arise, or, in the case of a retrospective EIA, may have arisen.

The environmental factors to be considered in relation to cumulative effects include population and human health, biodiversity, land, soil and geology, hydrology, air, climate, noise and vibration, material assets, traffic and transport, landscape, and cultural heritage, as well as the interactions between these factors.

To provide a comprehensive assessment of cumulative effects on the above environmental considerations, and to inform the remedial EIA process being undertaken by the consenting authority (An Coimisiún Pleanála), each relevant chapter of the remedial EIAR will address the potential for cumulative effects to arise or, where appropriate, to have arisen.

A cumulative assessment of peat extraction and ancillary activities at the Application Site will be undertaken. This assessment will identify the influence that peat extraction has had, or may have had, on the surrounding environment when considered cumulatively and in combination with relevant permitted, proposed, and constructed projects, as well as other land uses in the vicinity of the site.

Cumulative impacts are defined as *“impacts that result from incremental changes caused by other past, present or reasonably foreseeable actions together with the project”*³. The cumulative impact assessment (CIA) will have the following four principal aims:

- To establish the range and nature of existing projects within the cumulative impact study area of the Application Site.
- To identify and summarise relevant projects that have the potential to give rise to cumulative impacts.
- To establish anticipated cumulative impact findings, drawing on expert opinion within each relevant environmental discipline. Detailed cumulative impact assessments will be presented within each relevant section of the remedial EIAR.
- To identify projects that have the potential for cumulative interaction in the context of the development and to exclude projects that would neither directly nor indirectly contribute to cumulative impacts.

Assessment material for the cumulative impact assessment will be compiled with reference to relevant developments within the vicinity of the Application Site, in accordance with guidance contained in Section 3.7 of the EPA Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (2022) and the Guidelines for the Assessment of Indirect and Cumulative Impacts and Impact Interactions (EC, 1999).

Information will be gathered through a review of relevant online Planning Registers, including:

- Offaly County Council planning register
- Westmeath County Council planning register
- Meath County Council planning register
- An Coimisiún Pleanála case search (which includes former An Bord Pleanála planning applications)

A review of relevant EIAR and remedial EIAR documents, technical assessments, planning application details and planning drawings will also be undertaken to identify past projects, their activities, environmental effects and potential impact on this Substitute Consent planning application.

The cumulative impact assessment study area will be informed by the study areas defined for each individual environmental discipline.

³ Guidelines for the Assessment of Indirect and Cumulative Impacts as well as Impact Interactions, European Commission, 1999



6.5 CONSIDERATION OF REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES

Chapter 3 of the remedial EIAR will set out the consideration of reasonable alternatives to the historic peat extraction and associated activities at the Application Site, including alternatives relevant to the Peat Extraction Phase, Current Phase and Remedial Phase.

Article 5(1)(d) of Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU (the EIA Directive), requires that an EIAR prepared by the developer includes:

“a description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the developer, which are relevant to the project and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for the option chosen, taking into account the effects of the project on the environment.”

Article 5(1)(f) of the EIA Directive requires that the EIAR contains:

“any additional information specified in Annex IV relevant to the specific characteristics of a particular project or type of project and to the environmental features likely to be affected.”

Annex IV of the EIA Directive states that the information provided in an EIAR should include:

“a description of the reasonable alternatives (for example in terms of project design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the developer, which are relevant to the proposed project and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects.”

In this context, Chapter 3 will set out the need for the Project and describe the background and evolution of the development programmes that led to the peat extraction activities at the Application Site. The chapter will examine the reasonable alternatives that were available during the different phases of site development and management, where feasible, and will provide an explanation of the main reasons for the adoption of the approaches implemented, having regard to environmental considerations and constraints.

As set out in the Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (Environmental Protection Agency, 2022), the presentation and consideration of reasonable alternatives investigated is an essential component of the overall EIA process, and this requirement will be addressed accordingly within the remedial EIAR.

A summary of the environmental technical chapters proposed to be scoped into the remedial EIAR is provided below.

6.6 POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH

Chapter 6 will examine the receiving environment and investigate the likely significant effects on the population and human health resulting from Bord na Móna's activities during the Peat Extraction, Current and Remedial phases.

The population and human health topics will be assessed under separate headings throughout the chapter. The assessment on population will focus on the available data on historic and current land use of the Application Site, the demographic and population trends, sensitive receptors and property values, employment and the economy.

The assessment on human health will investigate measures that were historically implemented and/or are currently in place to mitigate any effects arising from peat extraction and ancillary activities.

A baseline condition of the population, socio-economic and local community health in 1988 will be established during a desktop study which will review national guidance documents, publicly available datasets, and resources to assess the past and likely significant effects of the project (across all Project phases defined above), and to provide mitigation and monitoring measures where required.

6.7 BIODIVERSITY

Chapter 7 of the remedial EIAR will assess the effects on biodiversity, both in isolation and cumulatively, resulting from peat extraction and ancillary activities during the Peat Extraction Phase, the Current Phase and the Remedial Phase. The chapter will also consider the current management actions and proposed rehabilitation activities at the Application Site.

The chapter will include the assessment of the terrestrial and freshwater aquatic habitats and species, including those of conservation concern. It will be informed by desk studies drawing upon ecological databases from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) will be consulted, together with Bord na Móna datasets pertaining to monitoring carried out under IPC licence conditions will also be assessed. The assessment will also be informed by directed field surveys, including habitat surveys and, where required, protected species surveys (e.g. for birds, mammals, and aquatic species). In addition, relevant documentation and environmental information prepared for nearby consent applications will also be reviewed and considered as part of this assessment.

Habitats likely present within the Application Site shall be appraised and evaluated according to their occurrence as protected habitats under Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), as well as their potential to support Annex II species under the Habitats Directive and species listed under Annex I of the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC). The assessment will be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the EIA Directive (2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU) in respect of biodiversity, including species and habitats, and their capacity to support rare, threatened and endangered species.

The methodology used to assess potential effects on habitats and species will be based on NRA guidelines (2009), CIEEM guidelines and EPA guidelines, ensuring consistency with both Habitats Directive and EIA Directive assessment requirements.

The remedial EIAR will also have regard to the findings of the Appropriate Assessment (AA) process, including the identification and assessment of potential effects on European sites and the effectiveness of any mitigation measures. The conclusions of the AA will be incorporated into Chapter 7, ensuring that the biodiversity assessment fully reflects the outcomes of the AA process and demonstrates consistency between the EIA and Habitats Directive requirements.

6.8 LAND, SOILS AND GEOLOGY

Chapter 8 of the remedial EIAR will assess the effects of land, soils and geology at the Application Site during the Peat Extraction Phase, the Current Phase and the Remedial Phase.

The assessment will identify and evaluate effects that have occurred historically, those that exist at the time of the application, and any potential effects associated with ongoing or remedial activities. Particular regard will be given to the nature of peat as a soil resource, the long-term influence of drainage and extraction on peat stability and thickness, and the interaction between peat deposits, underlying geological strata and groundwater.

The methodology for the soils and geology assessment will be in accordance with the guidelines published by the Institute of Geologists of Ireland in 2013, *Guidelines for the Preparation of Soils, Geology and Hydrogeology Chapters of Environmental Impact Statements*. The assessment will address, inter alia:

- Peat soils and underlying mineral soils, including peat thickness, disturbance and loss;
- Bedrock and subsoil geology;
- Hydrogeological regime, including groundwater levels, flow directions and connectivity; and
- Drainage and hydrological modification associated with historic peat extraction.

The assessment will draw on historic Bord na Móna water-level and drainage data, published geological and hydrogeological datasets from the Geological Survey Ireland (GSI), and relevant information available through the EPA, to inform an understanding of baseline conditions and historic change.

In accordance with substitute consent requirements, the chapter will distinguish between:

- Historic (legacy) effects arising from peat extraction and drainage works, and
- Current or future effects associated with ongoing management or remedial activities.

The assessment will be carried out in accordance with the following guidance and best practice, as relevant:

- Institute of Geologists of Ireland (IGI) (2013): *Guidelines for Preparation of Soils, Geology and Hydrogeology Chapters in Environmental Impact Statements*;
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (2022): *Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports*;
- Environmental Protection Agency (2003): *Advice Notes on Current Practice in the Preparation of Environmental Impact Statements*;
- National Roads Authority (NRA) (2008): *Guidelines on Procedures for Assessment and Treatment of Geology, Hydrology and Hydrogeology for National Road Schemes*;
- CIRIA C532 (2006): *Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites*; and
- Environmental Protection Agency (2006): *Environmental Management in the Extractive Industry (Non-Scheduled Minerals)*.

The significance of effects will be assessed with reference to the magnitude of change, the sensitivity of the receiving environment, and the duration and reversibility of effects, with mitigation measures identified where relevant to the remedial phase.

6.9 HYDROLOGY AND HYDROGEOLOGY

Chapter 9 of the remedial EIAR will assess the effects on hydrology and hydrogeology arising from peat extraction and ancillary activities at the Application Site. The assessment will address the Peat Extraction Phase, the Current Phase and the Remedial Phase.

The chapter will assess effects on surface water and groundwater regimes, including drainage modification associated with peat extraction, changes to water levels, and implications for water quality, Water Framework Directive (WFD) status, and flood risk. The assessment will be informed by a review of publicly available datasets, including EPA water quality and WFD data, historical biological (Q-value) information, and monitoring data undertaken in accordance with IPC/IPPC licence conditions, where applicable.

In recognition of the historic nature of peat extraction on the site, the assessment will distinguish between:

- Legacy hydrological and hydrogeological effects arising from historic drainage and extraction works; and
- Existing or potential effects associated with current activities and any remedial measures.

A retrospective flood risk assessment will be undertaken in accordance with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government's *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning* (DEHLG, 2009). Information on historical flooding will be compiled from the Office of Public Works (OPW) National Flood Information Portal (www.floodinfo.ie) and reviewed in conjunction with available flood mapping, historic Ordnance Survey mapping, and aerial photography. Information from current and former Bord na Móna staff and site managers, together with any previous flood risk assessments undertaken for the bog, will also be considered to inform understanding of historic flood behaviour.

The assessment will be undertaken having regard to the relevant legislative and policy framework, including:

- The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and associated Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations giving effect to Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU;
- Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and associated Surface Water and Groundwater Environmental Objectives Regulations;
- Relevant provisions relating to water quality, groundwater protection, drinking water and sensitive water bodies, where applicable.

The chapter will be prepared in accordance with the following guidance, as appropriate:

- Environmental Protection Agency (2022): *Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports*;
- Environmental Protection Agency (2006): *Environmental Management in the Extractive Industry (Non-Scheduled Minerals)*;
- Institute of Geologists of Ireland (2013): *Guidelines for Preparation of Soils, Geology and Hydrogeology Chapters in Environmental Impact Statements*; and
- National Roads Authority (2008): *Guidelines on Procedures for Assessment and Treatment of Geology, Hydrology and Hydrogeology for National Road Schemes*.

The Hydrology and Hydrogeology chapter will adopt the following methodology:

- Review available hydrological, hydrogeological and water quality data from EPA, OPW, GSI and Bord na Móna records;
- Characterise the surface water and groundwater baseline, including historic and current drainage conditions;

- Assess potential effects on water quality and WFD status, having regard to historic peat extraction activities and existing conditions;
- Undertake a retrospective flood risk assessment informed by mapping, datasets and anecdotal evidence; and
- Evaluate the magnitude and significance of effects, distinguishing between historic legacy impacts and any effects associated with current or remedial activities, and identify mitigation measures where relevant.

6.10 AIR QUALITY

Chapter 10 of the remedial EIAR will assess the air quality effects associated with Bord na Móna's peat extraction and ancillary activities at the Application Site, having regard to the requirements of substitute consent. The assessment will address the Peat Extraction Phase (historic operations), the Current Phase, and the Remedial Phase, where relevant.

The air quality impact assessment will focus on the principal air quality issues associated with peat extraction, namely the generation of atmospheric dust arising from peat extraction, handling and vehicle movements, together with vehicle exhaust emissions associated with on-site plant and traffic.

The baseline air quality environment will be characterised with reference to published ambient air quality monitoring data from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Air quality monitoring data for the baseline year of 1988 are not available; however, EPA air quality data are available online from 2006 onwards. Accordingly, EPA monitoring data for the period 2006–2023 have been utilised to characterise and estimate background air quality conditions in the vicinity of the Application Site. In the absence of earlier site-specific data, this dataset is considered representative of regional background conditions and provides a robust basis for the assessment.

Although peat extraction activities commenced in approximately 1988 and continued until 2019, the assessment of air quality effects will be undertaken with reference to the most recently published ambient air quality standards, which are more stringent than those applying historically. This approach represents a precautionary, worst-case assessment framework, ensuring that potential air quality effects associated with historic peat extraction are assessed conservatively and transparently.

Historical air quality effects associated with the Peat Extraction Phase will be assessed primarily on a qualitative and semi-quantitative basis, taking account of the nature and duration of historic activities, the scale of dust-generating works, distances to sensitive receptors, and prevailing climatic conditions. The significance of effects arising from peat extraction and ancillary activities will be described in accordance with the EPA (2022) Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, with the rating of potential effects based on the criteria set out in Table 3.4 of the EPA 2022 Guidance.

The Air Quality chapter will assess the following potential impacts for each relevant phase of activity:

- Generation of atmospheric dust arising from peat extraction, handling and vehicle movements during the Peat Extraction Phase, the Current Phase and the Remedial Phase; and

- Vehicle exhaust emissions associated with plant and traffic movements during the Peat Extraction Phase, the Current Phase and the Remedial Phase.

Where relevant to current or remedial activities, appropriate mitigation measures will be identified, and the significance of any residual air quality effects will be evaluated.

6.11 NOISE AND VIBRATION

Chapter 11 of the remedial EIAR will assess the noise and vibration effects associated with Bord na Móna's historic peat extraction and ancillary activities during the Peat Extraction Phase, the Current Phase and the Remedial Phase.

The assessment will consider the likely noise and vibration levels experienced at identified Noise Sensitive Locations (NSLs) as a result of historic peat extraction activities. Given the historic nature of part of the assessment, noise and vibration levels will be estimated using established source data for peat extraction plant and activities, derived from measurements at comparable sites and from relevant published guidance. Predictive calculations will be undertaken with reference to BS 5228: Code of Practice for Noise and Vibration Control on Construction and Open Sites, Parts 1 and 2, and, where appropriate, ISO 9613-2: Acoustics – Attenuation of Sound During Propagation Outdoors.

Best-practice guidance will be reviewed to identify appropriate and proportionate assessment criteria applicable to the historic periods under consideration, recognising differences in regulatory context, background conditions and operational practices over time. Predicted noise and vibration levels will be assessed against these criteria to determine the magnitude and significance of effects.

The chapter will also characterise the existing baseline noise environment, based on attended baseline noise surveys undertaken at representative NSLs surrounding the Application Site. This baseline will inform assessment of:

- Current activities, and
- Any potential noise and vibration effects associated with the Remedial Phase, including the identification of practicable mitigation measures where relevant.

The noise and vibration assessment will be undertaken in accordance with the following guidance, as appropriate:

- BS 5228-1:2009+A1:2014 – Code of practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites – Noise;
- BS 5228-2:2009+A1:2014 – Code of practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites – Vibration;
- BS 7385-2:1993 – Evaluation and measurement for vibration in buildings – Guide to damage levels from ground-borne vibration;
- Guidelines for the Treatment of Noise and Vibration in National Road Schemes (NRA / TII).

The noise and vibration remedial EIAR chapter will adopt the following methodology:

- Review relevant national and international guidance to identify appropriate noise and vibration assessment criteria for the historic peat extraction phase, Current Phase and Remedial Phase;

- Characterise the receiving environment through baseline noise surveys undertaken at representative NSLs;
- Undertake predictive noise and vibration calculations, as necessary, to assess the likely effects of historic peat extraction activities at NSLs;
- Evaluate the magnitude, duration and significance of identified noise and vibration effects, taking account of contextual and temporal factors; and
- Describe the significance of residual noise and vibration effects associated with peat extraction and related activities at the Application Site, with mitigation measures identified where relevant to the remedial phase.

6.12 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

Chapter 12 will assess the Landscape and Visual impact of the peat extraction and ancillary activities at the Application Site during the Peat Extraction Phase, the Current Phase and the Remedial Phase, as defined above. Although closely linked, landscape and visual impacts are assessed separately.

Landscape assessment relates to changes in the physical environment, brought about by a proposed development, which may alter its character. This requires a detailed analysis of the individual elements and characteristics of a landscape that go together to make up the overall character of that area. By understanding the aspects that contribute to this character it is possible to make judgements in relation to its quality (integrity) and to identify key sensitivities. This, in turn, provides a measure of how the landscape in question accommodated the type and scale of change associated with the project and to consider whether the project caused significant impacts to its character.

Visual impact assessment relates to changes in the composition of views as a result of changes to the landscape, how these are perceived and the effects on visual amenity. Such impacts are population-based, rather than resource-based, as is the case of landscape impacts.

The landscape and visual assessment of the bog will appraise the historic landscape character of the area and its wider setting in order to assess the landscape, visual and residential amenity of the bog and the wider landscape. The chapter will consider land-use change.

The Landscape and Visual assessment will be undertaken in accordance with the following guidance and policy documents, as relevant:

- Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) and landscape Institute (UK) 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' Third Edition (GLVIA3) (2013); and
- EPA Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIA Reports) (2022) and draft revised Guidelines on information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements; and Advice Notes for preparing EIS (2015).
- Historic and Current County Development Plans.

The significance of effects for landscape will be determined with reference to the following;

- Landscape character, value and sensitivity;
- Magnitude of likely impacts; and
- Significance of landscape effects.

As with the landscape effect, the visual effect of the project will be assessed as a function of sensitivity versus magnitude. In this instance the sensitivity of the visual receptor, weighed against the magnitude of the visual impact.

6.13 ARCHAEOLOGY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Chapter 13 of the remedial EIAR will assess the archaeological and cultural heritage effects arising from peat extraction and associated activities at the Application Site. The assessment will consider effects on archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage assets during the Peat Extraction Phase, the Current Phase and the Remedial Phase.

The purpose of the study will be to assess the significance and sensitivity of the receiving cultural heritage environment and to identify and evaluate cultural heritage features, as well as the broader historic character of the landscape, that may have been subject to impact as a result of peat extraction and ancillary activities. Consideration will also be given to the potential for legacy impacts associated with historic peat extraction works.

The assessment methodology includes the following elements:

- Desk-based study, including a review of cartographic sources, including historic mapping, aerial photography, baseline cultural heritage records and published and unpublished sources;
- Identification of archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage features within and surrounding the Application Site, and an appraisal of the historic development of the bog landscape;
- Evaluation of likely significant effects, with regard to the nature, magnitude, duration and reversibility of impacts arising from historic, current and remedial activities; and
- Identification of control, avoidance and mitigation measures, where relevant to current or remedial works, to prevent or reduce adverse effects on cultural heritage assets.

The methodology will be informed by and undertaken in accordance with:

- Environmental Protection Agency (2022): *Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, with specific reference to cultural heritage (including archaeology, architectural heritage, monuments and features, and folklore/tradition where relevant);* and
- Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland (IAI) (2006): *Good Practice Guidelines*.

The significance of effects will be assessed in accordance with EPA guidance, taking account of the importance of the cultural heritage resource, the magnitude of change, and the context of historic peat extraction activity at the Application Site.

6.14 MATERIAL ASSETS (INCLUDING TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION)

Chapter 14 of the remedial EIAR will assess the effects of peat extraction and ancillary activities at the Application Site on Material Assets. The assessment will consider effects occurring during the Peat Extraction Phase, the Current Phase and the Remedial Phase.

The EPA *Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Report* (2022) define material assets as built services and infrastructure, noting that traffic is included as it consumes transport infrastructure. The EPA Guidelines identify the following as material assets:

- Built Services;
- Roads and Traffic; and
- Waste Management infrastructure.

The EPA Advice Notes for Preparing Environmental Impact Statements further describe material assets as resources of human origin that are valued and intrinsic to specific places.

This EIA Scoping report defines, the following material assets as scoped in for assessment within the remedial EIAR:

- Traffic and transportation;
- Electricity supply infrastructure;
- Water supply infrastructure;
- Wastewater services and infrastructure;
- Waste management facilities; and
- Telecommunications and aviation.

The assessment will identify and evaluate likely significant effects on material assets that may have arisen as a result of peat extraction and associated activities during the Peat Extraction Phase, those relevant to current site conditions, and any effects associated with future remedial or restoration measures at the Application Site.

As part of the Material Assets chapter, a focused assessment of traffic and transportation effects associated with peat extraction and ancillary activities, with specific regard to both rail and road transport infrastructure. The assessment will consider historic transport movements during the Peat Extraction Phase, as well as any traffic associated with the Current Phase and Remedial Phase, where relevant.

Historically, extracted peat was transported from the Application Site primarily by rail, utilising dedicated rail infrastructure connected to the Bord na Móna network. Towards the latter stages of peat extraction at the Application Site, peat was also transported by road. In addition, limited road-based traffic movements associated with ancillary activities, workforce access, maintenance and servicing will be considered as part of the assessment.

The assessment will distinguish between legacy effects arising from historic rail and road use, current baseline conditions, and any potential effects associated with site restoration or remedial works.

The significance of effects on transport-related material assets will be evaluated in accordance with the EPA (2022) EIAR Guidelines, having regard to the scale, duration and intensity of historic operations, the sensitivity of the receiving transport environment, and the extent to which any residual effects persist

6.15 CLIMATE

Chapter 15 of the remedial EIAR will assess residual direct and indirect climate effects of peat extraction and ancillary activities at the Application Site. The climate chapter will assess the impacts of the Peat Extraction Phase, Current and Remedial Phase of the Project.

The baseline climate environment will be characterised with reference to published climate data from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other relevant national datasets. In recognition of the long operational history of the Application Site, the assessment of climate effects will be undertaken with reference to the most recently published climate guidance,

policy and scientific understanding, which are generally more stringent than those applicable historically. This represents a precautionary and conservative assessment approach. Accordingly, where impacts are assessed as not significant when considered against current policy and guidance, it is unlikely that significant effects would have arisen under earlier, less stringent policy frameworks.

The primary climate-related consideration for the Project is the loss of carbon storage and carbon sink function associated with peat extraction, drainage and land-use change at the Application Site.

The significance of climate effects arising from peat extraction and ancillary activities will be described in accordance with the EPA (2022) Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, having regard to the nature, magnitude, duration and reversibility of effects.

Furthermore, the chapter will include a retrospective assessment of greenhouse gas emissions, with particular regard to emissions resulting from peatland drainage, oxidation of peat, and extraction activities during the Peat Extraction Phase. Where relevant, the assessment will also consider the influence of current site conditions and remedial or restoration measures on greenhouse gas emissions and climate effects.

6.16 INTERACTION OF THE FOREGOING

Chapter 16 of the remedial EIAR will identify and outline the potential for significant environmental effects that may have occurred and those that may arise in the future, having regard to the environmental topics proposed to be scoped into the remedial EIAR.

The chapter will assess the potential for interaction between environmental effects as part of the overall Impact Assessment process.

For developments with the potential to result in significant environmental effects, there is also the potential for interactions to occur between those effects. Such interactions may exacerbate the magnitude of effects, reduce or improve their significance, or result in neutral outcome.

An interaction matrix will be presented within the chapter to identify potential interactions whether beneficial or adverse, may occur during the Peat Extraction Phase, Current Phase, and Remedial Phase.

6.17 SCHEDULE OF MITIGATION

All control, mitigation and monitoring measures implemented at the Application Site from the commencement of site preparation works in 1950 up to July 1988, those implemented from July 1988 to the cessation of peat extraction in June 2020, the measures applied during the ongoing management of the Application Site since June 2020, and the mitigation measures proposed in respect of activities intended to be carried out at the Application Site into the future, will be identified and described within the relevant chapters of the remedial EIAR.

All control and mitigation measures for the Project will be collated and presented in Chapter 17, Schedule of Mitigation. The measures will be grouped according to the relevant phase of the Project.

Accordingly, control and mitigation measures will be presented under the following headings:

- Peat extraction, control and monitoring measures (July 1988–June 2020)
- Post-extraction site management and control measures (June 2020–present)
- Proposed mitigation measures for future activities at the Application Site.

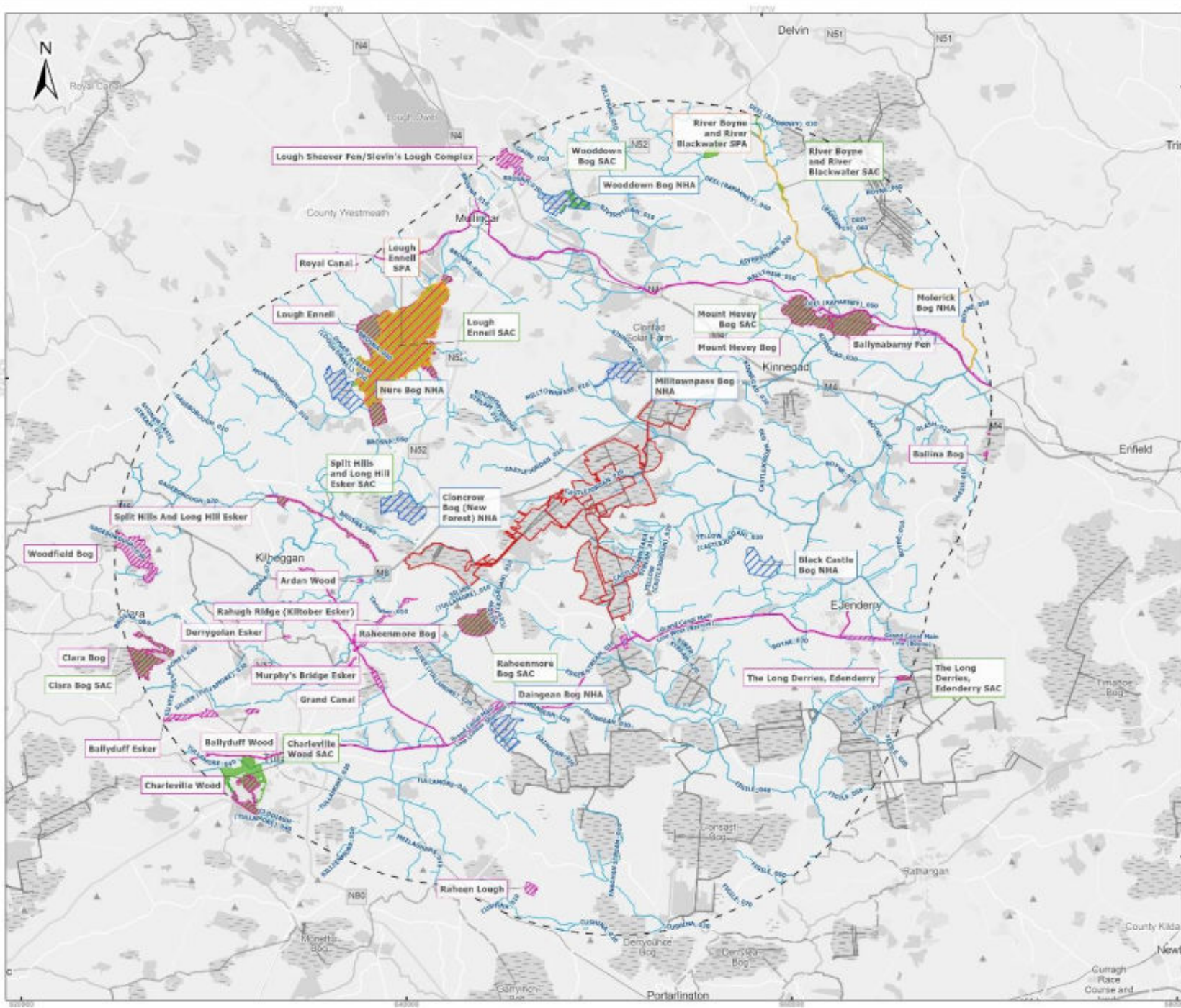
7. CONCLUSION

This EIA Scoping Report has been prepared to establish and agree the proposed scope and methodology for the remedial Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) to accompany the forthcoming Substitute Consent application to An Coimisiún Pleanála.

The report outlines the environmental topics proposed for assessment and the methodologies that will be applied in the preparation of the remedial EIAR. It is intended to facilitate early engagement with An Coimisiún Pleanála and prescribed consultees, ensuring that all relevant environmental issues are appropriately considered and assessed.

Comments and observations on the Project are welcomed and will be taken into account, where appropriate, in the preparation of the remedial EIAR and the associated planning application documentation.

APPENDIX 1: DESIGNATED SITES



Legend

- Site Boundary
- Buffer 15km
- Designated Sites
- WPD - Rivers
- Special Protected Areas (SPAs)
- Protected National Heritage Areas (pNHAs)
- National Heritage Areas (NHAs)
- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)

Scale: 0 5 10 Kilometers

Special Information
 Scale: 1:100,000
 95% 1:100

Copyright:
 Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors, Imagery © Mapbox, Imagery © Mapbox

Revision		Description	
1	01/01/2024	Initial Design	1:100,000
2	02/01/2024	Revised Design	1:100,000
3	03/01/2024	Final Design	1:100,000

Client: **BnM**

Project: **Derrygreenagh Substitute Consent**

Title: **Appendix 1: Designated Sites**

Scale @ A1: 1:100,000

Prepared by: K. Kelleher
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Map Ref: 12334-002-D.S-S.BO-TOB-A

Scale: A

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF PRESCRIBED BODIES

Consultee Name
An Chomhairle Ealaíon (The Arts Council)
An Coimisiún Pleanála
An Taisce
Bat Conservation Ireland
Birdwatch Ireland
Butterfly Conservation Ireland
Coillte
Commission for Regulation of Utilities
Community Wetlands Forum c/o Irish Rurallink
Coras Iompair Éireann (CIE)
Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine
Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment
Department of Defence
Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht
Department of Transport
Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly
Eastern River Basin District
EirGrid
Environmental Protection Agency
Fáilte Ireland
Geological Survey of Ireland
Health & Safety Authority
Health Service Executive

Inland Fisheries Ireland
Inland Waterways Association of Ireland
Irish Peatlands Conservation Council
Irish Raptor Study Group
Irish Red Grouse Association
Irish Wildlife Trust
Meath County Council Heritage Office
Meath County Council Environment Department
Meath County Council Planning Department
Meath County Council Roads and Travel
Met Éireann
National Monuments Service
National Parks and Wildlife Services
National Transport Authority
Natural Capital Ireland
Offaly County Council - Roads and Transport
Offaly County Council Environment
Offaly County Council Heritage Office
Offaly County Council Planning Department
Office of Public Works
Sports Ireland
Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
Tailte Éireann (Ordnance Survey Ireland)
The Heritage Council
Transport Infrastructure Ireland
Uisce Éireann
Waterways Ireland
Westmeath County Council Environmental Department

Westmeath County Council Heritage Office
Westmeath County Council Planning Office
Westmeath County Council Transportation and Active Travel

