

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 General

The following Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) has been prepared by Roughan & O'Donovan Consulting Engineers (ROD) and a team of specialists, on behalf of Cork County Council (CCC), to assess the proposed Dursey Island Cable Car and Visitor Centre development, hereafter referred to as the 'proposed development'.

The EIAR comprises: *“a statement of the effects, if any, which [the] proposed development, if carried out, would have on the environment”* (Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), 2017).

This EIAR is presented in three volumes: Volume 1 presents a standalone Non-technical Summary; Volume 2 (this volume) contains the main text; and Volume 3 contains the corresponding figures. A separate Natura Impact Statement (NIS), which has assessed the effects of the proposed development on designed European (i.e. Natura 2000) sites, has also been prepared and is available as a separate document. This EIAR forms part of the planning application package for the proposed development, which will be submitted to the competent authority (An Bord Pleanála), who will carry out the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

The contents of this EIAR are set out as follows:

Volume 1: Non–technical Summary

Volume 2: Main Text

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Need for the Proposed Development
- Chapter 3: Alternatives Considered
- Chapter 4: Description of the Proposed Development
- Chapter 5: Traffic and Transport
- Chapter 6: Population and Human Health
- Chapter 7: Biodiversity
- Chapter 8: Soils and Geology
- Chapter 9: Hydrogeology
- Chapter 10: Hydrology
- Chapter 11: Landscape and Visual
- Chapter 12: Noise and Vibration
- Chapter 13: Air Quality and Climate
- Chapter 14: Archaeological and Cultural Heritage
- Chapter 15: Architectural Heritage
- Chapter 16: Material Assets and Land
- Chapter 17: Interrelationships, Major Accidents and Cumulative Effects
- Chapter 18: Mitigation Measures

Volume 3: Figures

1.2 Overview

The Dursey Island CableCar is located at the western tip of the Beara Peninsula in west County Cork. It spans the Dursey Sound, linking the eastern coast of Dursey Island with the mainland at Ballaghboy, Lambs Head. Originally constructed in 1969 to transport islanders, farmers and livestock to-and-from the mainland, the cableway is now predominantly used by tourists, particularly during the summer months. In recent years, limited passenger capacity and turnaround of the cableway have resulted in a supply deficit, with queuing times of up to 2 hours commonplace during the peak months of July and August.

In 2018, CCC, working in partnership with Fáilte Ireland, commissioned ROD to provide multidisciplinary consultancy services for the proposed development, including engineering, architectural, landscaping, quantity surveying, cultural heritage, planning, environmental and tourism consultancy services. The proposed development entails the replacement of the existing cableway, the construction of two new cableway stations, an expanded mainland-side visitor car park, a mainland-side Visitor Centre and a café. It is also proposed to upgrade elements of the associated infrastructure/utilities including telecommunications, drinking water supply and wastewater treatment systems. Localised road improvement works will also be carried out on the primary approach road to the site (the R572), on the 8km stretch between its junction with the R575 (at Bealbarnish Gap) and the cable car site, in order to ease existing congestion and support the increase in traffic anticipated as a result of the proposed development.

The proposed development will allow a greater number of visitors (an annual maximum of 80,000) to make the cable car journey to and from Dursey Island, with up to 100,000 persons expected to visit the mainland side of the site.

Client and Design Team

The multidisciplinary design team, led by ROD, included the following external consultants:

- Scott Tallon Walker Architects – Architecture;
- POMA – Mechanical and Electrical Engineering (Cableway);
- JV Tierney – Mechanical and Electrical Engineering (Buildings);
- Cunnane Stratton Reynolds (CSR) – Landscape Architecture;
- JANVS–VIDAR – Interpretative Design; and
- Tourism Development International – Tourism Development Design.

EIAR Team

A number of specialist contributors have been consulted by ROD and CCC to contribute to the preparation of this EIAR. Relevant qualifications and experience of all contributors are set out in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 EIAR Contributors – Qualifications and Experience

Topic	Specialist Contributors	Company	Qualifications	Experience (Years)
Introductory Chapters 1-4	Tony Dempsey	ROD	BA, BAI (Civil), PhD CEng MIEI	25
	Joe Kelly	ROD	BA, MSc Civil Eng, CEng	24
	Peter King	ROD	BA, CEng, PgDip, RConsEI, MIOSH	14
	Barry Corrigan	ROD	BSc (Hons), Dip EIA & SEA, MIEMA, CEnv	19
	Christine Murphy	ROD	BSc (Hons), MSc Env Sci, PIEMA	7
	Lorraine Guerin	ROD	BSc (Hons) Ecology, MSc Env Mgmt. & Policy	1
	Yana Bersunukayeva	ROD	BA Env Sci, MSc Global Change, Ecosys Sci & Policy	1
Chapter 5 Traffic and Transport	John Bell	ROD	BEng, CEng	17
	Barry Corrigan	ROD	BSc (Hons), Dip EIA & SEA, MIEMA, CEnv	19
	Joe Kelly	ROD	BA, MSc Civil Eng, CEng	24
	Frances O'Kelly	ROD	BSc, MSc, MIPI	12
Chapter 6 Population and Human Health	Frances O'Kelly	ROD	BSc, MSc, MIPI	12
	Lorraine Guerin	ROD	BSc (Hons) Ecology, MSc Env Mgmt. & Policy	1
	Barry Corrigan	ROD	BSc (Hons), Dip EIA & SEA, MIEMA, CEnv	19
	Joe Kelly	ROD	BA, MSc Civil Eng, CEng	24
Chapter 7 Biodiversity	Lorraine Guerin	ROD	BSc (Hons) Ecology, MSc Env Mgmt & Policy	1
	Owen O'Keefe	ROD	BSc, ACIEEM	3
	Paul Murphy	EirEco Environmental Consultants	BSc, MSc Env Sci, PgDip Aquatic Biology, PgDip Horticulture, CIEEM	25
	Mike Trewby	Woodrow Environmental Consultants	BSc Zoology and Botany; PGDip Env. Studies	>20
	Barry Corrigan	ROD	BSc (Hons), Dip EIA & SEA, MIEMA, CEnv	19

Topic	Specialist Contributors	Company	Qualifications	Experience (Years)
	Joe Kelly	ROD	BA, MSc Civil Eng, CEng	24
	Yana Bersunukayeva	ROD	BA Env Sci, MSc Global Change, Ecosys Sci & Policy	1
Chapter 8 Land and Soils	Fintan Buggy	ROD	BSc, MSc Soil Mechanics, CEng, MICE, PE MIEI	36
	Karlo Martinović	ROD	BEng, MSc Eng, PhD Eng. MIEI	8
	Barry Corrigan	ROD	BSc (Hons), Dip EIA & SEA, MIEMA, CEnv	19
	Joe Kelly	ROD	BA, MSc Civil Eng, CEng	24
Chapters 9 Hydrology	Warren Vokes	ROD	BA, MSc	3
	Patrick Morrissey	ROD	BA, BAI, MSc, PhD, PGDip Stats, MIEI	10
	Barry Corrigan	ROD	BSc (Hons), Dip EIA & SEA, MIEMA, CEnv	19
	Joe Kelly	ROD	BA, MSc Civil Eng, CEng	24
Chapter 10 Hydrogeology	Patrick Morrissey	ROD	BA, BAI, MSc, PhD, PGDip Stats, MIEI	10
	Barry Corrigan	ROD	BSc (Hons), Dip EIA & SEA, MIEMA, CEnv	19
	Joe Kelly	ROD	BA, MSc Civil Eng, CEng	24
Chapter 11 Landscape and Visual	Jim Kelly	CSR	B Agr Sc (Landscape Architecture), Post Grad Dip Landscape Architecture	20
	Evelyn Sikora	CSR	BA, MPlan	12
	Jesper Pederson	Pederson Focus Ltd.	BEng	20
	Lorraine Guerin	ROD	BSc (Hons) Ecology, MSc Env Mgmt & Policy	1
	Barry Corrigan	ROD	BSc (Hons), Dip EIA & SEA, MIEMA, CEnv	19
	Joe Kelly	ROD	BA, MSc Civil Eng, CEng	24
Chapter 12 Noise and Vibration	Stephen Smyth	AWN Consulting Ltd.	BA, BAI, MIEI, MIOA	14
	Lorraine Guerin	ROD	BSc (Hons) Ecology, MSc Env Mgmt & Policy	1
	Barry Corrigan	ROD	BSc (Hons), Dip EIA & SEA, MIEMA, CEnv	19

Topic	Specialist Contributors	Company	Qualifications	Experience (Years)
	Joe Kelly	ROD	BA, MSc Civil Eng, CEng	24
Chapter 13 Air Quality and Climate	Claire Flynn	AWN Consulting Ltd.	BSc, MSc, MIAQM	10
	Lorraine Guerin	ROD	BSc (Hons) Ecology, MSc Env Mgmt & Policy	1
	Barry Corrigan	ROD	BSc (Hons), Dip EIA & SEA, MIEMA, CEnv	19
	Joe Kelly	ROD	BA, MSc Civil Eng, CEng	24
Chapter 14 Archaeological and Cultural Heritage	Grace Corbett	Irish Archaeological Consultancy	BA Archaeology, MA Osteoarchaeology, MIAI	13
	Lorraine Guerin	ROD	BSc (Hons) Ecology, MSc Env Mgmt & Policy	1
	Barry Corrigan	ROD	BSc (Hons), Dip EIA & SEA, MIEMA, CEnv	19
	Joe Kelly	ROD	BA, MSc Civil Eng, CEng	24
Chapter 15 Architectural Heritage	Rob Goodbody	Historic Building Consultants	BA Historical Geography, PgDip Env Planning, MA Urban and Bldg Cons, PgDip App Bldg Repair and Cons MIPI	43
	Lorraine Guerin	ROD	BSc (Hons) Ecology, MSc Env Mgmt & Policy	1
	Barry Corrigan	ROD	BSc (Hons), Dip EIA & SEA, MIEMA, CEnv	19
	Joe Kelly	ROD	BA, MSc Civil Eng, CEng	24
Chapter 16 Material Assets and Land	John Bligh	John Bligh and Associates	BAgrSc, MSc Environmental Systems	21
	Christine Murphy	ROD	BSc (Hons), MSc Env Sci, PIEMA	7
	Barry Corrigan	ROD	BSc (Hons), Dip EIA & SEA, MIEMA, CEnv	19
	Joe Kelly	ROD	BA, MSc Civil Eng, CEng	24
Chapter 17 Interrelationships, Major Accidents and Cumulative Effects	Christine Murphy	ROD	BSc (Hons), MSc Env Sci, PIEMA	7
	Lorraine Guerin	ROD	BSc (Hons) Ecology, MSc Env Mgmt. & Policy	1
	Yana Bersunukayeva	ROD	BA Env Sci, MSc Global Change, Ecosys Sci & Policy	1
	Barry Corrigan	ROD	BSc (Hons), Dip EIA & SEA, MIEMA, CEnv	19
	Joe Kelly	ROD	BA, MSc Civil Eng, CEng	24

Topic	Specialist Contributors	Company	Qualifications	Experience (Years)
Chapter 18 Mitigation Measures	Christine Murphy	ROD	BSc (Hons), MSc Env Sci, PIEMA	7
	Lorraine Guerin	ROD	BSc (Hons) Ecology, MSc Env Mgmt. & Policy	1
	Barry Corrigan	ROD	BSc (Hons), Dip EIA & SEA, MIEMA, CEnv	19
	Joe Kelly	ROD	BA, MSc Civil Eng, CEng	24

1.3 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Legislation

1.3.1 Definition

EIA is defined by Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU, as follows:

“Environmental Impact Assessment” means a process consisting of:

- (i) the preparation of an environmental impact assessment report by the developer, as referred to in Article 5(1) and (2);*
- (ii) the carrying out of consultations as referred to in Article 6 and, where relevant, Article 7;*
- (iii) the examination by the competent authority of the information presented in the environmental impact assessment report and any supplementary information provided, where necessary, by the developer in accordance with Article 5(3), and any relevant information received through the consultations under Articles 6 and 7;*
- (iv) the reasoned conclusion by the competent authority on the significant effects of the project on the environment, taking into account the results of the examination referred to in point (iii) and, where appropriate, its own supplementary examination; and*
- (v) the integration of the competent authority's reasoned conclusion into any of the decisions referred to in Article 8a.”*

1.3.2 EIA in European and National Law

EIA requirements derive from Council Directive 85/337/EEC (as amended by Directives 97/11/EC, 2003/35/EC and 2009/31/EC) and as codified and replaced by Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and the Council on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment. Directive 2011/92/EU has since been amended by Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament.

The requirements of these directives have been transposed into Irish law through the *Planning and Development Acts (2000 – 2018)* and the Regulations made under the *European Communities Act (1972)* including the *European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1989 – 2006*, the *European Union (Environmental Impact Assessment and Habitats) Regulations 2011* and the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011*. Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament has been transposed into Irish law through the *European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 296 of 2018)*.

1.3.3 Requirement for EIA for the Proposed Development

The proposed development does not meet the thresholds for which the preparation of an EIAR is a mandatory requirement under Schedule 5 of the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001 - 2019*. However, the footprint of the proposed development is in direct proximity to the foreshore and the proposed cableway will traverse the foreshore. Therefore, Section 226 of the *Planning and Development Act 2000* is applicable and an EIAR is required. As stated in Section 226:

“Where development is proposed to be carried out wholly or partly on the foreshore—

- (a) by a local authority that is a planning authority, whether in its capacity as a planning authority or otherwise, or*

- (b) *by some other person on behalf of, or jointly or in partnership with, a local authority that is a planning authority, pursuant to an agreement entered into by that local authority whether in its capacity as a planning authority or otherwise [...]*

[...] Section 175 shall apply to proposed development belonging to a class of development, identified for the purposes of Section 176”

Further, Section 175 of the *Planning and Development Act 2000* stipulates that:

“Where development belonging to a class of development, identified for the purposes of Section 176, is proposed to be carried out—

- (a) *by a local authority that is a planning authority, whether in its capacity as a planning authority or in any other capacity, or*
- (b) *by some other person on behalf of, or jointly or in partnership with, such a local authority, pursuant to a contract entered into by that local authority whether in its capacity as a planning authority or in any other capacity, within the functional area of the local authority concerned (hereafter in this section referred to as “proposed development”), the local authority shall prepare, or cause to be prepared, an environmental impact statement [EIAR] in respect thereof.”*

Therefore, preparation of an EIAR for submission as part of the planning application to An Bord Pleanála is a mandatory requirement for the proposed development.

1.4 Scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR)

The preparation of an EIAR for a proposed development is a systematic and iterative process in which the collation and assessment of environmental data and predicted impacts are essentially linked to the development of the design. Chapter 3 of this EIAR summarises the processes that led to the development of the proposal that is described in Chapter 4. Once a design was developed, the process of scoping this EIAR commenced and an informal EIA Scoping Report was prepared and issued to relevant statutory and non-statutory consultees. Further scoping and consultations were undertaken with relevant bodies, specifically with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) in relation to biodiversity and Natura 2000 sites. Any responses received have been addressed in this EIAR and informed the design of the proposed development, where feasible and appropriate.

1.5 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Guidelines

The following EPA guidelines have informed this EIAR:

- *Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements (2002);*
- *Advice Notes on Current Practice (in the preparation of Environmental Impact Statements) (2003);*
- *Draft Advice Notes for Preparing Environmental Impact Statements (2015);* and,
- *Draft Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (2017).*

1.6 Non-Statutory Public Consultation Events

A non-statutory public consultation event for the proposed development was held on the 27th of March 2019 between 6pm and 8pm in the Eccles Hotel in Glengarriff, Co. Cork. The design of the proposed development was exhibited to the public. Representatives of CCC and the design team were present to explain the information presented. The consultation event was advertised in the Southern Star on the 23rd of March and on local radio (C103) throughout the week preceding the event. Additionally, over 150 stakeholders were informed directly of the event via email and/or phone call. Information leaflets were presented to the attendees at the event. The design drawings which were presented at the event were also made available on the CCC website at <https://www.corkcoco.ie/>, and hard copies were available for viewing in CCC Head Offices at County Hall until the 24th of April 2019.

The purpose of the public consultation was to:

- Inform public stakeholders of the proposed development (particularly members of the local community);
- Allow public stakeholders an opportunity to engage with the project team at the pre-planning stage of the proposed development;
- Obtain the opinions of public stakeholders in relation to the proposed development and potential environmental, engineering and economic constraints that may influence it;
- Obtain local knowledge that would help in the identification of possible constraints; and,
- Identify any alternative design recommendations suggested by public stakeholders.

The public were invited to submit observations and comments regarding the proposed development. Feedback was invited via feedback forms on the day of the consultation and by email or letter until the 24th of April 2019.

A total of 7 no. submissions were received from the general public during the 4-week consultation period, the majority of which were positive. The main feedback received at the consultation event and in subsequent written submissions was as follows:

- Strong overall support for the project;
- The operation of the online booking system was queried;
- A desire for the preservation of the natural landscape, ecology and community spirit was expressed;
- The provision for the movement of heavy goods to-and-from the island by islanders was queried;
- The requirement for road improvement works along the approach road and on the island was highlighted;
- The provision of an electric bike rental service was suggested;
- The need for toilet facilities on the island was expressed;
- The requirements for wheelchair access, maintenance access and emergency access were highlighted;
- The potential for a shuttle bus service from Castletownbere and nearby towns was suggested;

- The potential adverse impact on existing catering facilities was highlighted; and,
- Concern was expressed that pre-planning ecological surveys may not be extensive enough to capture the baseline ecological scenario.

On 23rd of April 2019, CCC held an informal, non-statutory public consultation event at the Lehanmore Community Centre, Beara, Co. Cork. The purpose of the event was to present the proposed development to members of the local community (particularly those who may not have been able to make it to the Glengarriff event) and obtain their feedback on the proposal. The same materials presented at the Glengarriff event were also presented on this occasion.

A total of 6 no. submissions were received from attendees of the Lehanmore consultation event. The main feedback received at the event and in subsequent written submissions was as follows:

- Potential economic benefits for the local community as a result of the proposed development were regarded positively by several attendees;
- Existing and future traffic problems (with respect to congestion, safety and informal parking) on the R572 were key concerns and the need for appropriate road improvement works was emphasised;
- Concerns were raised regarding the condition of the existing public road on Dursey Island;
- The pricing of the proposed ticketing system (particularly rates for islanders) was queried;
- A desire to see improved broadband connectivity, waste collection and mobile phone coverage for the local community was expressed;
- A desire to see the needs of islanders (i.e. in terms of parking, domestic waste collection and use of the cableway) accommodated was expressed
- A desire to see the local flora and fauna conserved was expressed; and,
- Queries were raised regarding the proposed CPO of private lands for the completion of road improvement works (with respect to compensation, locations of proposed works, and restoration of land prior to works).

The responses received during the public consultation informed the design of the development and the environmental assessments. The concerns raised have been addressed, where appropriate, throughout this EIAR.

1.7 Statutory Consultations

A copy of this EIAR is being provided to the prescribed bodies as required by Part 18, Article 213 of the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2019*. Additionally, the EIAR and NIS will be available for inspection by interested parties at the following locations, as detailed in the published newspaper notices:

- CCC Head Offices, County Hall, Carrigrohane Road, Cork (Office Hours 9am - 5pm, Monday to Friday);
- CCC West Cork Area Office, Foildarrig, Castletownbere, Co. Cork, (Office Hours: 9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday, closed 1-2pm each day); and,
- CCC Planning Department, Norton House, Skibbereen, Co. Cork (Office Hours 9am - 5pm, Monday to Friday).

All 3 volumes of this EIAR may also be purchased from the CCC Head Offices at County Hall. Alternatively, the EIAR can be viewed on the CCC website at www.corkcoco.ie.

1.8 Difficulties Encountered

No significant difficulties have been encountered in compiling the required information to complete this EIAR. It should be noted that the surveys, assessments and information that form the basis of this EIAR are based on the current design of the proposed development, which has been developed to a stage that permits a fully informed EIA. While some developments and refinements of the current design may occur during the detailed design stage, any such iterations of the development, if approved, will not include any significant adverse impacts on the environment not addressed within this EIAR.

1.9 References

EPA (2017). *Draft Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports*.