

## Chapter 2:

# SCREENING, SCOPING & CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES

## Table of Contents

<b>List of Tables.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>2 SCREENING, SCOPING &amp; CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES .....</b>	<b>13</b>
2.1 Introduction .....	13
2.2 rEIAR Screening.....	13
2.3 Appropriate Assessment Screening .....	13
2.3 Consultation and Scoping.....	15
2.3.1 Scoping .....	15
2.3.2 Statutory Bodies .....	15
2.3.3 Public Consultation .....	15
2.4 Consideration of Alternatives.....	15
2.6 References .....	16

## List of Tables

Table 2.1: Natura 2000 Sites within Zone of Influence .....	14
---	----

## 2 SCREENING, SCOPING & CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES

### 2.1 Introduction

This Chapter of the rEIAR details the screening and scoping exercise carried out in relation to the proposal and the alternative location, layouts and design considered as part of the process.

### 2.2 rEIAR Screening

The first step of the EIA process is screening, which establishes whether an EIA is required or not. Assessments normally undertaken involve considerations of the size and type of the project. In this instance the site is 3.45 hectares which is well underneath the threshold for mandatory EIA for an aggregate quarry. A remedial EIA Screening Report was submitted to An Bord Pleanála in 2023 with a substitute consent application on foot of grant of leave to apply for substitute consent (15.11.2021). The substitute consent application was not considered as the Board determined that a full rEIAR was required to accompany the substitute consent application. This screening exercise is concluded on receipt of An Bord Pleanála's request for EIA, and a full rEIAR is prepared.

### 2.3 Appropriate Assessment Screening

Appropriate Assessment (AA) is required to be carried out under the Habitats Directive and specifically Article 6(3) therefore for plans or projects likely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites. It is most recently implemented under the European Communities (Birds and Natura Habitats) Regulations 2011. An Appropriate Assessment is required to be carried out for development on or adjacent to sites classified by the Minister pursuant to the regulations as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) or Special Protection Areas (SPA).

Specifically Article 42(1) of the 2011 Regulations requires public authorities to screen for Appropriate Assessment in relation to a plan or project, which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site as a European Site, in view of best scientific knowledge and the conservation objectives of the site and to assess the plan or project not only individually but also in combination with other plans or projects likely to have a significant effect on the European Site.

A remedial Ecological Report which contains a Stage 1 Screening Report for AA has been compiled for the development and accompanies the application as a separate document. The AA Screening examines potential negative effects on the Natura 2000 designated SACs and SPAs within a 15Km radius of the proposed application site.

The following sites were scoped as part of the evaluation as shown in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1: Natura 2000 Sites within Zone of Influence**

Site Name	Site Code	Distance from Subject Site (km)	Avenue of Connectivity to Subject Site	Further Screening Required (Y/N)
<b>Donegal Bay SPA</b>	004151	2.96 km SE	Indirect hydrological link to the SPA in the form of runoff. Hydrological distance from subject site to SPA is 9.17 km	<b>Y</b>
<b>Lough Nillan Bog SPA</b>	004110	8.03 km NW	No direct hydrological link to subject site, no avenue of connectivity	<b>N</b>
<b>Durnesh Lough SPA</b>	004145	8.43 km SE	No direct hydrological link to subject site, no avenue of connectivity	<b>N</b>
<b>St. John's Point SAC</b>	000191	12 km SW	Indirect hydrological link to the SAC in the form of runoff. Hydrological distance from subject site to SAC is 13.67 km	<b>Y</b>
<b>Ballintra SAC</b>	000115	11.65 km SE	No direct hydrological link to subject site, no avenue of connectivity	<b>N</b>
<b>Lough Eske and Ardnamona Wood SAC</b>	000163	7.99 km W	No direct hydrological link to subject site, no avenue of connectivity	<b>N</b>
<b>Meenaguse/Ardbane Bog SAC</b>	000172	6.75 km NE	No direct hydrological link to subject site, no avenue of connectivity	<b>N</b>
<b>Meenaguse Scragh SAC</b>	001880	12.25 km NE	No direct hydrological link to subject site, no avenue of connectivity	<b>N</b>
<b>Donegal Bay (Murvagh) SAC</b>	000133	2.93 km SE	Indirect hydrological link to the SAC in the form of runoff. Hydrological distance from subject site to SAC is 15.43 km	<b>Y</b>
<b>West of Ardara/Maas Road SAC</b>	000197	14.64 km N	No direct hydrological link to subject site, no avenue of connectivity	<b>N</b>
<b>Durnesh Lough SAC</b>	000138	8.2 km S	Indirect hydrological link to the SAC in the form of runoff. Hydrological distance from subject site to SAC is 15.43 km	<b>Y</b>
<b>Lough Nillan Bog (Carrickatlieve) SAC</b>	000165	8.02 km NW	No direct hydrological link to subject site, no avenue of connectivity	<b>N</b>

The following sites were included at the scoping stage:

- **Donegal Bay SPA**
- **St. Johns Point SAC**
- **Donegal bay (Murvagh) SAC**
- **Durnesh Lough SAC**

Consequently, likely significant effects on the qualifying interests of these Natura 2000 sites were evaluated further. The remedial Ecological Report concluded that in light of the conservation objectives and rationale for designation of the Natura 2000 sites *‘the possibility that the existing quarry development had, or will have, a significant effect on Natura 2000 sites may be excluded. Therefore Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is/was not required. This conclusion was reached based on objective information and in view of best scientific knowledge.’*

## **2.3 Consultation and Scoping**

### **2.3.1 Scoping**

This rEIAR was commissioned by the applicant to accompany the substitute consent application for the quarry site in Drumbeagh. This rEIAR addresses all relevant environmental issues. The principal potential environmental consideration was considered to be water quality, with other potential significant impacts to air quality, noise and biodiversity.

### **2.3.2 Statutory Bodies**

As this was a remedial EIAR, the consultation process with various statutory bodies was not deemed appropriate as the development had already occurred.

### **2.3.3 Public Consultation**

As this was a remedial EIAR, the consultation process with various statutory bodies was not deemed appropriate as the development had already occurred.

## **2.4 Consideration of Alternatives**

EIA guidance and legislation requires that consideration should be given to alternatives which should include, where relevant; sites, routes, alignments/layouts, processes and strategies. Alternatives are defined in the EPA’s (May 2022) publication ‘Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports’ as: *“description of other options that may have been considered during the conception of a project; these include alternative locations, alternative designs and alternative processes”*.

This remedial EIAR has been prepared to accompany an application to An Bord Pleanála for substitute consent, that refers specifically to works already carried out at Murray Stone over a long period of time and not to future proposed development at the quarry. As the subject site detailed within this application for substitute consent relates to quarry development already carried out, no alternatives have been considered.

## 2.6 References

- European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations, 1989 to 1999, (S.I. No.349 of 1989)
- Local Government (Planning & Development) Regulations, 2001 (S.I. No. 600 of 2001)
- European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations, 1989 to 1999, Second Schedule, (S.I. No.93 of 1999)
- European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations, 1989 to 1999, Third Schedule, (S.I. No.93 of 1999)
- Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Statements, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA 2002)
- Advice Notes on current practice in the preparation of Environmental Impact Statements (EPA 2003)
- Environmental Management Guidelines – Environmental Management in the Extractive Industry (Non-Scheduled Minerals) prepared by the Environmental Protection Agency (2006)
- Guidance for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (DECLG, 2013)
- Directive 2014/52/EU European Parliament and of the Council EIA Directive (April 2014)
- Draft Revised Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Statements, (EPA September 2015)
- Draft Advice Notes for Preparing Environmental Impact Statements (EPA September 2015)
- Draft Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIAR) (EPA, August 2017)