

Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Determination under the EU's Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC Article 6(3) as transposed into Irish law under Regulation 42(1) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477/2011), as amended.

Coillte's proposed Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan

Coillte published a strategic vision for the organisation in 2022 titled *Strategic Vision for Our Future Forest Estate*. This vision underpins Coillte's commitment to deliver the multiple benefits of forests to society and set ambitions to managing the Coillte estate for the benefit of climate, nature, wood, and people.

As part of this strategic vision, Coillte developed the *Forest Estate Strategic Land Use Plan (FESLUP)*, a comprehensive framework that outlines the strategic objectives to balance the delivery of the organisation's ambitions until 2050. The FESLUP has been informed by AA and a Natura Impact Report. Coillte proposes developing a *Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan (LUSIP)*, which will translate the objectives outlined in the FESLUP into implementable and measurable actions over the period of 2026-2035.

Coillte has conducted an Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening for the proposed *Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan*. Following assessment and having regard to the nature of the Plan, it was concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt, on the basis of objective information, that for the purposes of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive¹, the *Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan* individually and/or in combination with other plans and projects, has the potential to have likely, significant effects on European sites within the zone of influence of the Plan, in view of site conservation objectives and best scientific knowledge (in the absence of mitigation measures). Taking account of the above, it is determined that full AA is required to be undertaken for the *Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan*.

The principal reasons the LUSIP requires AA are as follows:

- The Plan supports intensive forestry operations and infrastructural development that may give rise to likely significant effects on European sites.
- The Plan will provide a framework for land use and has the potential to drive significant land use change.
- The Plan is national in scale, covering approximately 7% of land use in Ireland and over 50% of national forestry. Approximately 90,000 ha of the Coillte lands subject to this plan are designated as either Special Protection Areas or Special Areas of Conservation. Given the geographic scope and scale of the Plan, as well as other factors, including the potential land-take, distance from and connectivity to European sites, potential resource requirements, emissions, excavations, transport requirements and duration of construction/operation/decommissioning; the Plan individually and/or in combination

¹ Directive 92/43/EEC.

with other plans and projects, has the potential to have likely, significant effects on European sites within the zone of influence of the Plan, in view of site conservation objectives and best scientific knowledge (in the absence of mitigation measures).

- The Plan has the potential to generate transboundary environmental impacts and result in likely, significant effects on European sites situated in Northern Ireland.

Signed on behalf of Coillte by



Conor Devane
Director of Forest Planning & ICT

Date: 21/3/25

Coillte, Dublin Road, Newtownmountkennedy, Co. Wicklow, A63 DN25, Ireland.
T 0818 367 378 E info@coillte.ie W www.coillte.ie

Stiúirthóirí / Directors: Vivienne Jupp (Cathaoirleach/Chair), Deirdre-Ann Barr, Gerard Gray, Imelda Hurley (Príomhoifigeach Feidhmiúcháin/Chief Executive), Patrick Eamon King, Kevin McCarthy, Gerard Murphy, Eleanor O'Neill.

Cláraithe in Éirinn No. 138108. Oifig Chláraithe: Coillte CGA, Baile an Chinnéidigh, Co. Cill Mhantáin, A63 DN25, Éire.
Registered in Ireland No. 138108. Registered Office: Coillte CGA, Dublin Road, Newtownmountkennedy, Co. Wicklow, A63 DN25, Ireland.