



Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
Agriculture House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2.

06 May 2015

RE: DCENR notification for Scoping for SEA of the Agri-Food Strategy 2025

GSI Ref: 15/77

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to acknowledge receipt of your correspondence of 13 April 2015 concerning the SEA of the Agri-Food Strategy 2025, sent to the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources of which the Geological Survey of Ireland is a division.

The Geological Survey of Ireland would like to provide the following information that might be of assistance for the "Soils and Geology" section of the SEA.

The Geological Survey of Ireland should be routinely consulted (as a prescribed body under the aegis of Dept Communications, Energy & Natural Resources) at the planning stage and in the preparation of an SEA or EIA/EIS for any proposed development. Likewise, it should be taken cognisance of any Guidelines produced by the Geological Survey of Ireland or any other relevant body in the planning of any development.

As the national earth science agency, GSI has maps/datasets to assist with development decision making and environmental reports. These comprise maps, reports and extensive databases that include Bedrock Geology, Quaternary Geology, Mineral deposits, Groundwater Resources, Geological Heritage, Landslides and the Irish Seabed. The information is available on the GSI website under "Online Mapping" - direct link: <http://www.gsi.ie/Mapping.htm>.

SOILS AND GEOLOGY

This section of the SEA should provide information about the Soils and Geology of the existing environment. Description of the bedrock and lithologies (types of strata), quaternary geology, landslide hazard and geological heritage should be included and potential impacts recognised. Use of maps is recommended where appropriate. Maps and datasets are available on the GSI website at:

http://spatial.dcenr.gov.ie/imf/imf.jsp?site=GSI_Simple



Irish Geological Heritage

The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) is in partnership with NPWS (the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht), to identify and select important geological and geomorphological sites throughout the country for designation as geological NHAs (Natural Heritage Areas). This is addressed by the IGH Programme (Irish Geological Heritage & Planning) of GSI, under 16 different geological themes, in which the minimum number of scientifically significant sites that best represent the theme are rigorously selected (by a panel of theme experts).

County Geological Sites (CGS), as adopted under the National Heritage Plan, include additional sites that may also be of national importance but which were not selected as the very best examples for NHA designation. All geological heritage sites identified by GSI are categorised as CGS pending any further NHA designation by NPWS. CGS are now routinely being included in County Development Plans and in the GIS of planning departments, to ensure the recognition and appropriate protection of geological heritage within the planning system.

Please note that Irish Geological Heritage data can be viewed online on the GSI Public Data Viewer at: http://spatial.dcenr.gov.ie/imf/imf.jsp?site=GSI_Simple

There are two map layers under ‘Geological Heritage’:

1. **‘Geological Heritage Sites Boundaries’**: a national dataset (one shapefile with boundary polygons) showing the County Geological Sites that have been audited to date. County Geological Sites audit data are also available for download (as individual county shapefiles and site report pdfs; with direct links to individual reports) at: <http://www.gsi.ie/Programmes/Heritage+and+Planning/County+Geological+Sites+Audits/>
2. **‘Geological Heritage Sites No Boundaries’**: a national dataset (one shapefile with buffer polygons) covering all the other counties not yet audited or a few new sites discovered in the audited counties, indicating the provisional location/extent of sites. These sites have buffers appropriate to their type (or theme), ranging between 200m, 500m and 1000m (for the largest landscape/glacial features). These are not ‘mitigation’ buffers, but an attempt to encompass the extent of the particular type of site.

All the above sites are of, at least, County Geological Site (CGS) status and are included in the relevant County Development Plan with associated protection policies.

County Geological Sites have been surveyed by an ongoing national programme of County Geological Heritage Audits. These have been carried out since 2004, and to date over half of the country has been completed. The programme of CGS documentation is a dynamic process as additional sites may be added through new exposures such as quarries and road cuttings, and notifications from local community knowledge.

Should you require further information and advice on mitigation measures please contact Sarah Gatley, Head of the Geological Heritage and Planning Programme at sarah.gatley@gsi.ie.

Land Mapping

Bedrock geological mapping at various scales is available at www.gsi.ie/mapping, including packaged downloadable map data in ArcGIS format and a set of map viewers in which users can query, customise and download their own maps. The 1:100,000 seamless bedrock map for Ireland is currently being updated and will be maintained as a ‘live’ edited version. Data packages of detailed mapping of Dublin, Cork and Galway cities and surrounding areas will be available soon.



The national Quaternary map data, comprising sediment (subsoils) and geomorphology layers are also available to download at www.gsi.ie/mapping.

High resolution georeferenced tiff images of the 19th century 6" field sheets are available from GSI. Index sheets for each county are online.

A range of paper maps, reports and guide books are available at www.gsi.ie/shop, including the 1:100,000 series and the island of Ireland 1:500,000 map. A CD of the 500k map, including full data sets, is distributed free. (e-mail: gsisales@gsi.ie T: (01) 678 2826).

For general enquiries, contact john.butler@gsi.ie

Landslides

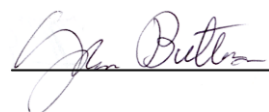
Landslide and slope stability risk assessment should be considered and a map showing the distribution of recorded landslides and landslide susceptibility could be included – see the GSI public viewer <http://www.gsi.ie/Mapping.htm> or landslide viewer (2012) <http://spatial.dcenr.gov.ie/GeologicalSurvey/LandslidesViewer/index.html>

The Geological Survey of Ireland is in the process of producing a national landslide susceptibility map. This data is currently available for east Leinster and the greater Cork region. Further information and updates on this mapping can be found at <http://www.gsi.ie/Programmes/Quaternary+Geotechnical/Landslides/National+Landslide+Susceptibility+Mapping.htm>

For further information on the landslide database, please contact Charise McKeon, at charise.mckeon@gsi.ie, or 01-678 2752.

I hope that these comments are of assistance, and if the GSI can be of any further help, please do not hesitate to contact me, or one of my colleagues in the Geological Heritage & Planning Programme (Sarah Gatley at sarah.gatley@gsi.ie or Maite Zabaltza at maite.zabaltza@gsi.ie).

Yours sincerely,



John Butler, Clerical Officer

