Indicative Forestry Statement
“The right trees in the right places”

December 2008
FOREWORD

The Indicative Forestry Statement provides high-level, national guidance in relation to the suitability of land for afforestation and facilitates the establishment of high quality forests serving a variety of purposes including timber production, enhancement of the environment, mitigation of climate change, forest industry development, creation of alternative off farm incomes and opportunities for tourism and amenity use.
1. **INTRODUCTION**

In the Republic of Ireland, forest cover at the end of 2007 stood at an estimated 700,000 hectares. This represents approximately 10% of the total land area. Of this 10% around 300,000 hectares is in private ownership and approximately 400,000 hectares in public ownership, primarily Coillte Teoranta (the Irish Forestry Board) and the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and the Local Government. Conifer high forests are the most common forest type found in Ireland. It is estimated that a little over 24% of the forest estate can be classified as broadleaf. The main broadleaf species are ash, beech, oak and birch. Since the 1980s there has been a greater emphasis on the planting of broadleaves (which now account for 30% of all new planting) and the diversification of coniferous species.

The opportunities for developing new forests and enhancing existing forests in Ireland to deliver multiple benefits are wide-ranging. Forestry provides important employment opportunities, particularly in rural areas, through, for example, forest establishment and management, timber harvesting, haulage and processing. In addition, forests offer opportunities for recreation and tourism, along with shelter and a range of habitats for flora and fauna. They also contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gases by absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. This statement aims to maximise the multiple benefits offered by forestry and woodland development and ensure that future development of the forest sector can continue to support the local economy, conserve and enhance biodiversity and the environment and improve the quality of life of the people of Ireland.

County level approaches were first explored in the 1990s. An Indicative Forest Strategy was published in co-operation with Wicklow County Council with strategies for other counties completed to a draft stage, notably for Co. Mayo. Since then, the importance of the environmental and social dimension of forestry has grown, mainly as a result of international initiatives such as the Kyoto Protocol, the support for the principles of Sustainable Forest Management and changing societal views on the forests and the practice of forestry. In Ireland there has also been considerable progress in terms of new forest and woodland support schemes, improved environmental and landscape design standards, the adoption of sustainable forest management and the emergence of forest certification. This new national approach builds on the County level strategies produced in the 1990s and incorporates the principles adopted in the Forest Service environmental guidelines, the Code of Best Forest Practice and the National Forest Standard.

This Statement identifies opportunities for further forest planting in Ireland, along with areas where new forest planting would be inappropriate, for a variety of reasons. The Statement aims to guide and promote sustainable forestry in line with the Government’s strategy for the development of the sector and provides a positive vision for the location and type of woodlands and forests we wish to develop in Ireland. As with the previous County level IFS, it is a map-based approach which involved the integration of many different spatial datasets which take account of a wide range of environmental interests and other constraints. It is envisaged that the Statement will be revised and updated as new information becomes available. The Statement complements the programme for investment in the forestry sector under the National Development Plan from 2007 to 2013, ensuring the continuing sustainable development of the forestry sector.
2. BACKGROUND

2.1 National Forest Policy – Context for an Indicative Forestry Statement

The Indicative Forestry Statement has been developed in the context of national forest policy. National policy in relation to forestry is set out in Growing for the Future: A Strategic Plan for the Development of the Forestry Sector in Ireland, published in 1996. The overall aim of the Strategic Plan is:

To develop forestry to a scale and in a manner which maximises its contribution to national economic and social well-being on a sustainable basis and which is compatible with protection of the environment.

In terms of afforestation, the overall objective of the 1996 Plan was to achieve forest-cover of 17% of land-area by 2030, which required an ambitious annual planting rate of between 20-25,000 hectares a year. The annual rate of afforestation fluctuates from year to year, but the average rate over the last 10 years or so has been about 13,000 hectares. In recent years the annual rate has fallen as low as 7,000 hectares.

It is clear, therefore, that this Indicative Forestry Statement has been developed within a challenging planting environment and it seeks to respond to that challenge. First and foremost, it seeks to bring together in a coherent fashion the full range of opportunities and constraints that govern afforestation in Ireland and to present these in a form that can be used by both policy-makers and stakeholders alike.

2.2 Sustainable Forest Management

Following on from the Third Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) in Lisbon in 1998, Ireland is committed, in perpetuity, to ensuring that all forestry development complies with the principles of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM). Sustainable Forest Management was defined at the Lisbon MCPFE as:

“the stewardship and use of forest lands in a way, and at a rate, that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfil, now and in the future, relevant ecological, economic and social functions at local, national and global levels, and that does not cause damage to other ecosystems”.

These principles are reflected in the Irish National Forest Standard published in 2000 by the Forest Service. The Standard outlines six internationally agreed criteria for Sustainable Forest Management and outlines indicators and measurements that demonstrate trends towards or away from Sustainable Forest Management.

The Code of Best Forest Practice, also published in 2000 by the Forest Service, provides direction for forest managers by describing how best to carry out forestry operations on the ground. It defines how this management can be achieved on a sustainable basis and in a manner which is compatible with the protection of the environment. The Code of Best Forest Practice is supplemented by guidelines on water quality, archaeology, the landscape, harvesting, biodiversity, aerial fertilisation, recreation and forest protection as well as legislation to regulate afforestation and aerial fertilisation. These guidelines apply to all new forestry projects and to all activities associated with a Felling Licence and aerial fertilisation. Any breach of the guidelines may result in the forfeiture of grant aid.
and premium payments, where applicable, or other penalties, or the withdrawal of a Felling Licence or aerial fertilisation approval.

2.3 Environmental Protection and Consultation Controls Process for Forestry

In 2001 new procedures for afforestation projects, including a statutory based consent system for initial afforestation of agricultural land administered by the Forest Service, were introduced. At the same time all afforestation, whether grant-aided or not, was made subject to prior approval by the Forest Service. These procedures are aimed at ensuring that the principles of Sustainable Forest Management are observed.

Environmental protection and control in relation to the Forest Service grant and premium schemes are achieved by the following:

- Planning and design of each project in accordance with the Code of Best Forest Practice and associated guidelines.
- The consultation process with prescribed bodies.
- The public consultation process.
- Forest Service inspections.
- The appeals procedure.

The approval process for afforestation includes statutory consultation with certain prescribed bodies including Local Authorities; Regional Fisheries Boards; the Environment Protection Agency (EPA); Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government; Fáilte Ireland and An Taisce, along with public consultation in certain circumstances.

The approval process also provides for mandatory Environmental Impact Assessments to be carried out on proposals for new forest development exceeding 50 hectares and on areas under 50 hectares where the proposed development is adjudged to have the potential to have a significant environmental impact. In 2006, a new EIA screening procedure was introduced by the Forest Service. Under this procedure, all applications are now explicitly screened in terms of their potential environmental impact and a decision taken in relation to the requirement for an EIA in advance of any approval. This has increased the number of sub-threshold applications (i.e. below 50 ha) that are being referred for EIA.

The European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations, 2001 (S.I. No. 538 of 2001) \(^1\) as amended by the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Forest Consent System) (Amendment) Regulations, 2006 (S.I. No. 168, of 2006) provides the legal basis for the Environmental Protection and Consultation Controls Process, while the Habitats Regulations, 1997 lay down additional procedures to be followed.

The table at Appendix I outlines the environmental considerations and the appropriate consultation mechanism.

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\(^1\) This regulation coincides with initial afforestation being taken out of the planning control system by virtue of the local Government (Planning and Development) (Amendment) Regulations, 2001 (S.I. No. 539 of 2001).
3. AIM OF THE INDICATIVE FORESTRY STATEMENT

The overall aim of the Indicative Forestry Statement (IFS) is to provide high-level, national guidance in relation to the suitability of land for afforestation. One of the key aspects of delivering a balanced programme is to ensure, as far as possible, that new forests integrate, enhance and reflect the diversity and local distinctiveness of the landscape in which they are set. It is also fundamentally important to provide the public and the forest industry with the earliest indication of the areas where potentially sensitive issues may arise in relation to, for example, landscape, water quality, archaeology and biodiversity. Because of the large number and density of recorded archaeological monuments they are not represented on the IFS national map. Instead all forestry applications that may affect an archaeological monument or site are forwarded to the Forest Service archaeologist who consults with the National Monuments Service (NMS). It is planned that maps of all ‘archaeological areas’, ‘zones of archaeological potential’, ‘zones of archaeological amenity’ and World Heritage Sites will be included on the IFS map when finalised by the NMS.

The IFS is a map-based approach which integrates many different spatial datasets which take account of a wide range of environmental factors and other opportunities and constraints. The IFS identifies areas most suitable for planting primarily on the basis of environmental considerations and soil-productivity. The map-based environmental considerations have been captured from a variety of state organisations, such as the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Fisheries Boards, the EPA and the Local Authorities. The forest productivity map was compiled in co-operation with Teagasc and is based on soil type and elevation, displaying the potential rate of growth of forests throughout the country.

Component map layers of the IFS and presented in Appendix II and include:

- NPWS spatial data (Special Areas of Conservation, Natural Heritage Areas, Special Protection Areas, Reserves, National Parks)
- Water bodies (streams, lakes, reservoirs)
- Urban Areas
- Fisheries sensitive areas (data compiled in consultation with the Fisheries Boards)
- Acid sensitive areas
- Forest productivity map (compiled by Forest Service/Teagasc)
- Landscape Sensitivity (compiled by the Forest Service with data supplied by the local authorities)
- Existing agricultural land use (from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food database)
- Existing forest cover

The end-product, the IFS Category map, produced by compiling, reclassifying and overlaying the map layers in a Geographic Information System (GIS), is a comprehensive overview of all the opportunities and constraints which exist for forestry in Ireland, at a national level.

Four broad IFS Categories have been drawn up to identify opportunity and constraint areas for forest development. The Categories are primarily related to the consultation system (Appendix I). They are described as

- **Category 1** - “Suitable for a range of forest types”,
- **Category 2** - “Suitable for certain types of forest development”,
- **Category 3** - “Suitable, where appropriate, for nature conservation and/or amenity forests” and,
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- **Category 4** “Unsuitable, unproductive or unplantable areas”.

The IFS Map (Appendix II) identifies the location of areas making up each of the Categories. Each Category has been identified on the basis of the presence (or absence) of specific landscape and environmental characteristics and each Category may result in consultation with one or more prescribed bodies. Table 1 (see over) describes these Categories and the relevant consultation process where applicable.
Table 1. Description of Categories, Environmental Designations and the Process associated with each Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Environmental Designations</th>
<th>Applications Process$^{1}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category 1</strong></td>
<td>“Suitable for a range of forest types”</td>
<td>Areas identified as being the most suitable for future forest development, where no environmental designations exist and where soil types indicate that trees will grow satisfactorily.</td>
<td>- Area with no environmental constraints$^{2}$.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|  |  |  | • Forest Service Inspection Procedure  
• Adherence to the Code of Best Forest Practice, Forestry Schemes Manual and Forest Service Environmental Guidelines.  
• Consult with DoEHLG if archaeological records of monuments and places are recorded or discovered.  
• Consult with Local Authority in areas of 25 ha or more.  
• Full EIA screening procedure (EIA at discretion of Forest Service - mandatory on areas of 50 ha or more). |
| **Category 2** | “Suitable for certain types of forest development” | Areas where at least one environmental designation (such as a fisheries sensitive areas) exist. For more details on the consultation system associated with specific environmental designations see Appendix 1. | - Acid sensitive areas.  
• Areas sensitive for fisheries.  
• Catchment areas of local authority water schemes.  
• REPs areas.  
• Areas of moderate landscape sensitivity.  
• Process as for “Suitable for a range of forest types” and, in addition:  
- consultation with relevant authority (such as Regional Fisheries Boards, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Local Authority). |
|  |  |  | - consultation with the relevant authority (such as Regional Fisheries Boards, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Local Authority);  
and  
- formal public consultation by way of newspaper advertisement |
| **Category 3** | “Suitable, where appropriate, for nature conservation and/or amenity forests” | Areas where environmental designations (such as Special Areas of Conservation) exist. For more details on the consultation system associated with specific environmental designations see Appendix 1. | - pNHAs, SACs, SPAs and National Parks.  
• Archaeological sites or monuments with intensive public use.  
• Areas of high landscape sensitivity identified in county development plans or listed in the Inventory of Outstanding Landscapes.  
• Process as for “Suitable for a range of forest types” and, in addition: |
|  |  |  | - consultation with the relevant authority (such as Regional Fisheries Boards, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Local Authority);  
and  
- formal public consultation by way of newspaper advertisement |
| **Category 4** | “Unsuitable, unproductive or unplantable” | Areas where it is considered that trees are unlikely to grow satisfactorily including soil fertility, exposure etc. These areas also include unplantable areas i.e. waterbodies, urban areas and areas of existing forest. Applications for new forest development may be submitted to the Forest Service for consideration where an approved Forester certifies that the site is suitable for growing trees. | N/A |

$^{1}$ All applications for grant assistance towards new afforestation must be completed by a qualified forester whose name appears on The Register of Foresters maintained by the Forest Service. All planting approvals can be appealed through a formal appeals process.

$^{2}$ Sites of archaeological interest occur in each category and advice is sought from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, whenever a site listed on the Records of Monuments and Places (RMP) is situated within an area proposed for planting.
4. IMPLEMENTING THE IFS

4.1 The IFS Map

Up to the early 1980s, most afforestation in Ireland was undertaken by the State. For historic reasons there were restrictions in the quality of land that the Government could purchase and hence afforest. Consequently, much of the planting at that time was confined to the poorer soils of the west, south-west and upland areas of the country. Changes in Government policy over the last 15 years have brought about significant changes in the quality of land available for forestry and hence the diversity of tree species that can be planted. The emphasis is now directed toward forest development on more fertile land, with greater incentives for planting on more productive mineral soils supporting a more diverse range of tree species.

The IFS map (Appendix II) provides information for the first time on just how much land is potentially available for afforestation, where it is, how productive it is, how it is currently being used and what type of forestry might be suitable there. Figure 1 below summarises the areas of land in each of the IFS Categories.

Figure 1. IFS Categories

Note: National area (6976120 ha) excludes the Shannon Estuary and lake areas.

At a national level the IFS answers the question whether there is sufficient land without environmental constraints to support the Government’s Forest Strategy of achieving 17% forest-cover for Ireland. At a regional level the IFS provides a tool for long-term planning on a large scale, and represents a translation of National Forest Policy to the productive capacity, environmental qualities and landscape characteristics of the region in question. At a local level the IFS identifies opportunities for forest expansion compatible with other interests including the environment, heritage and the landscape, and facilitates the evaluation of new developments under the Afforestation Grants and Premium Scheme and the other forestry related schemes administered by the Forest Service.

At national and regional levels there is clearly sufficient land to meet the Government’s Forest Strategy of 17% forest cover for Ireland, but the areas available for forest expansion will require further examination at a local level including site inspections by the Forest Service Inspectorate to identify whether the status of environmental, heritage and landscape features at the site are such that the area is amenable to forest establishment.

The IFS map is a significant support tool for the implementation of national Strategy and provides a framework for the on-going sustainable afforestation in Ireland. The generation of the IFS map is primarily related to the consultation system (Appendix I). All areas are categorised by reference to the level of consultation required, their varying
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silvicultural suitability or whether or not the areas are plantable or there is existing forest cover. A description of the IFS Categories follows.

**Category 1 - Areas suitable for a range of forest types**

Category 1 areas are both suitable for afforestation from a silvicultural viewpoint and have no designated environmental considerations at an indicative level. The map (Appendix II) shows that the Category 1 areas are generally away from the western seaboard and include the midlands and the north east. Category 1 areas coincide with better soils and the least exposed parts of the country. Expansion and consolidation of existing farm forests with a mix of species suited to local site conditions is encouraged in these areas. It is important to remember that this is a high-level approach, and that other considerations may occur at site level e.g. the presence of archaeological sites or monuments, unproductive areas, REPS areas or catchment areas of Local Authority water schemes. Individual afforestation applications will be assessed for these considerations and their cumulative effect as they are received by the Forest Service. In addition, the potential for woodland expansion will also be affected by other local factors including existing land use, farm size, land values and the demographic characteristics of the area concerned.

The Afforestation Grant and Premium Scheme administered by the Forest Service provides the primary incentive for forest development in Category 1 areas. The Forest Environment Protection Scheme (FEPS), introduced in 2007, has been designed to complement the existing Afforestation Grant and Premium Scheme and is also encouraged in areas Category 1 areas.

The Forest Service also administers a number of additional measures in support of afforestation that are appropriate in areas “Suitable for a range of forest types” including the woodland improvement, a reconstitution scheme, forest road development and harvesting schemes and a recreational forestry scheme (NeighbourWood Scheme). A brief overview of Forest Service schemes is provided in the box below. The Forest Service Forestry Schemes Manual provides more detailed information pertaining to each of these schemes. Scheme documents are also available on the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food website. As with the Afforestation Grants and Premium Scheme and FEPS, compliance with the Forest Service Code of Best Forest Practice and associated environmental guidelines for harvesting, biodiversity, water quality, landscape and archaeology is a condition of Forest Service approval and all related grant aid.

**Category 2 - Areas suitable for certain types of forest development**

Category 2 areas include areas which are designated as fisheries sensitive, acid sensitive or may be of moderate landscape sensitivity. Fisheries and acid sensitive areas can also occur in areas categorised as Category 3 areas. Again, at site level, other considerations may occur, i.e. the presence of archaeological sites or monuments, REPS areas or catchment areas of Local Authority water schemes.

The Forest Service supports and provides incentives for the development of forestry in Category 2 areas using the same Schemes applicable to Category 1 areas. In all instances, afforestation developments in Category 2 areas will require referral to the relevant State Agencies and Local Authorities in relation to areas of moderate landscape sensitivity or amenity, sensitive fisheries areas or acid sensitive areas. Applicants wishing to carry out afforestation may also be required to carry out a chemical test related to the acid sensitivity of surface waters. Only in instances where the surface waters have an appropriate buffering capacity related to their ability to withstand potential acidification, will the applicant be permitted to proceed with the forestry development. Strict adherence
to the Forest Service Code of Best Forest Practice and associated environmental guidelines is also a condition of grant aid and approval.

**Category 3 - Suitable, where appropriate, for nature conservation and/or amenity forests**

Category 3 areas occur mainly along the western seaboard and exposed uplands of the north west and south east. They comprise areas designated by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (National Parks and Wildlife Service) as National Heritage Areas (NHAs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Nature Reserves or National Parks along with areas of high landscape sensitivity. They are deemed to be highly sensitive to further afforestation at an indicative level. At site level other considerations may occur i.e. the presence of archaeological sites or monuments, REPS areas or catchment areas of Local Authority water schemes.

While fragments of forest and semi-natural woodland occurring within this policy category do not tend to have significant wood production potential, they can be of particularly high biodiversity and wildlife value. Types of woodland within these areas include broadleaf scrub and undeveloped/unstocked woodland, and privately owned woodlands not regularly managed. In addition to a high biodiversity and wildlife value these woodland types can have also have a high recreation and amenity value. Any forest management activities in these designated areas must be undertaken in agreement with the NPWS. Likewise, where new forestry development is proposed within a designated conservation area such as an NHA, the Forest Service consults with the NPWS and An Taisce. Conservation and the protection of biodiversity and habitat are the primary objectives of management in forests located within designated areas. This type of forest management is supported and incentivised by the Forest Service mainly through the Native Woodland Scheme and also the FEPS and Afforestation scheme (see over for a description of the Forest Service Schemes).

**Category 4 - Unsuitable, unproductive or unplantable areas**

As part of the Irish Forest Soils Project, carried out by Teagasc on behalf of the Forest Service, a yield class was assigned to each soil type (Appendix II). Yield class is a measurement of forest productivity and can be defined as the maximum average number of cubic metres of timber a hectare of land can produce annually during the lifetime of the forest. Areas that will not support a crop of at least Yield Class 14 Sitka spruce are considered unproductive by the Forest Service and are not eligible for the Afforestation Grants and Premium Scheme. Other tree species are also unlikely to grow satisfactorily in these areas for various reasons including soil fertility, shallow soil, low base status soils or exposure.

Applications for afforestation in these indicative unproductive areas may be submitted to the Forest Service for consideration and approval only where a Registered Forester certifies that the site is suitable for growing trees.

Unplantable areas include waterbodies (lakes, reservoirs, ponds and rivers) and urban areas as well as areas of existing forest and woodland. In areas of existing woodland, the main management operation ongoing within the forest during the life of the crop is either thinning or felling. The Forest Service controls and regulates thinning and felling activities in both private and state owned forests by means of Felling Licence approvals.
Overview of Main Afforestation Schemes

The Afforestation Grant and Premium Scheme – This Scheme has been designed to encourage alternative use of agricultural land through grant aid and premium payments for afforestation. The grant favours the afforestation of diverse species and broadleaves in particular on better quality land and the highest premium levels are payable to farmers. Premium payments are payable to farmers for 20 years and for non-farmers for 15 years. Biodiversity within grant aided plantations is ensured by a requirement that 15% of the area of new plantations must be managed for biodiversity enhancement.

Forest Environment Protection Scheme – The Forest Environment Protection Scheme (FEPS) has been designed to complement the existing Afforestation Grant and Premium Scheme and provides incentives for landowners to combine the establishment of high nature-value woodland with their participation in the Rural Environment Protection Scheme (REPS). The Scheme is focused towards creating woodlands that can contribute more to landscape character, biodiversity enhancement, the retention of local habitats, promotion of native species, protection of water quality, and further protection of our archaeological resource though a variety of measures. For example, 15% of the area of new plantations afforested under FEPS must be planted with broadleaf species or a mixture of broadleaf and native evergreens, with an additional requirement that up to 20% of the plantation be managed for biodiversity enhancement. A suite of mandatory and optional environmental measures also apply.

NeighbourWood Scheme – The NeighbourWood Scheme provides funding for local authorities and community groups to develop local woodland amenities – or “NeighbourWoods” – in and around villages, towns and cities, specifically for public access and enjoyment.

Native Woodland Scheme – The Native Woodland Scheme, introduced by the Forest Service in 2001, provides financial support for landowners under 2 separate elements (i) Native Woodland Conservation, which aims to protect and enhance existing native woodlands and (ii) Native Woodland Establishment, which aims to encourage the establishment of new native woodland. Native Woodland Establishment is aimed at developing new woodland on open sites. Sites of particular relevance under this element are those located beside existing native woodlands or in areas along streams and rivers. The sensitive development of native woodland cover on these sites will link up existing habitats and help create a network of native woodland across the landscape.
4.2 Providing the IFS maps to the Public, Forest Service and the Forest Industry

The IFS map provided in this document (Appendix II) distils all of the disparate map and environmental information in different formats currently used by the Forest Service into one map and into a format readily understandable by the public. Along with this document, the map provides direction and guiding principles related to the IFS Categories and highlights suitable areas for new forest development, along with areas where forestry would be inappropriate, for a variety of reasons.

The IFS map will operate as an important tool for Forest Service Inspectors and the industry in assessing afforestation applications in terms of their environmental impact and forestry potential, making available in one package a series of map-based information that currently exists in several different formats. The IFS map will be provided for use in the Forest Service and Forest Industry administration and mapping tools iFORIS and FIMS.

**iFORIS** is the online integrated FORest Information System used by the Forest Service to administer the Afforestation Grant and Premium Scheme, FEPS and other Forestry related schemes. The iFORIS work-flow includes the application for planting pre-approval, the grant and premium approval and payment process for grant assisted forestry. iFORIS makes use of, and works with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food’s spatial database and includes all relevant environmental and spatial data relevant to decisions regarding afforestation as well as client data (customers, foresters and other external agents interacting with the business). The information stored within iFORIS allows the Forest Service control and regulate afforestation in Ireland.

**FIMS** is the Forest Industry Mapping System provided by the Forest Service for use by the Forest Industry. FIMS provides a facility for Approved Foresters to create and submit maps online for afforestation applications. The Approved Foresters can view Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food’s and Forest Service’s spatial datasets, and overlay the boundaries of their plantation using a range of tools for drawing and manipulating spatial data. The plantation boundaries can then be submitted electronically to support their planting approval or grant application.

The IFS Category map is currently being made available to the Forest Service and the Forest Industry, in the same way that other map-based information has been provided through the iFORIS and FIMS portals. Access to this type and quality of information will allow the companies who are promoting forestry on the ground to identify the optimum areas for intervention or areas with minimal constraints. For areas where constraints do apply, the companies will know this in advance and will be guided as to the type of afforestation which would be most appropriate in such cases.

Various State agencies and other bodies have contributed spatial data and other information which facilitated the Forest Service in the production of the IFS. The IFS will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it contains the most up-to-date and relevant information, ensuring a complete, balanced and holistic approach. Any new or updated spatial information held in Geographic Information Systems owned by relevant State and Local Authorities (e.g. updates to designated areas or County Development Plans) will be incorporated into the IFS as it becomes available. The IFS maps will be also made available in digital format on request from the Forest Service.
## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND CONSULTATION CONTROLS PROCESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental Consideration</th>
<th>Afforestation Scheme</th>
<th>Referral for Other Schemes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Note: Public consultation only takes place for the Afforestation scheme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral Body</td>
<td>Maximum Referral Period</td>
<td>Roads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Water Quality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Is the area designated potentially acid sensitive by the Forest Service?</td>
<td>Subject to protocol which specifies consultation with the EPA in specified cases.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Is the area &gt; 5 ha and sensitive for fisheries?</td>
<td>Regional Fisheries Board</td>
<td>4 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Is the area non-sensitive for fisheries and &gt; 40 ha?</td>
<td>Regional Fisheries Board</td>
<td>4 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Is the area &gt;10 ha and within a catchment area of a Local Authority designated water scheme?</td>
<td>Local Authority</td>
<td>4 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Designated Habitats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Is the area within a pNHA, NHA, cSAC, SAC, pSPA, SPA or National Park?</td>
<td>NPWS, An Taisce</td>
<td>2 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Is the area within 3 km upstream of a pNHA, NHA, cSAC, SAC, pSPA, SPA or National Park?</td>
<td>NPWS</td>
<td>2 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Does the area contain a current REPS plan habitat?</td>
<td>Dept. of Agriculture, Fisheries &amp; Food</td>
<td>4 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Archaeology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Does the area contain an archaeological site or feature with intensive public usage?</td>
<td>NPWS, An Taisce</td>
<td>2 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Does the area contain or adjoin a listed archaeological site or monument?</td>
<td>NPWS</td>
<td>2 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Landscape</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Is the area within a prime scenic area in the County Development Plan?</td>
<td>Local Authority, Fáilte Ireland, An Taisce</td>
<td>4 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Are there any other high Amenity Landscape considerations?</td>
<td>Local Authority</td>
<td>4 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Size for Notification to Local Authority</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Is the area greater than 25 ha?</td>
<td>Local Authority</td>
<td>4 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Other Environmental Considerations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Specify</td>
<td>As necessary</td>
<td>4 weeks where necessary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** If present, all environmental considerations listed above may require the Forest Service to consult with prescribed bodies. Environmental considerations in **bold type** may require the Forest Service to undertake public consultation.
Appendix II

**INDICATIVE FORESTRY STATEMENT MAPS**

The IFS map at Appendix II identifies areas in Ireland according the following categories:

- Category 1 - Suitable for a wide range of forest types
- Category 2 - Suitable for certain types of forest development
- Category 3 - Suitable, where appropriate, for nature conservation and/or amenity forests
- Category 4 - Unsuitable, unproductive or unplantable areas

Component maps making up the Indicative Forest Statement are also included i.e.:

- A map of existing forest cover.
- A forest productivity map of Yield Class identifying the potential for forest growth in Ireland. A site must be capable of achieving at least Yield Class 14 to receive approval for afforestation.
- A map displaying landscape sensitivity. This map compiled from spatial data received from Local Authorities with information related to areas of high amenity and landscape sensitivity.
- A map of fisheries sensitive and acid sensitive areas. Fisheries sensitive areas have been compiled in co-operation with the Fisheries Boards and identify areas potential sensitive to afforestation.
- A map of areas proposed for designation and designated by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (National Parks and Wildlife Service) as sensitive habitats and/or protected areas
  - Special Protection Areas (SPAs)
  - Proposed SPAs
  - National Heritage Areas (NHAs)
  - Proposed NHAs
  - Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)
  - Candidate SACs
  - National Parks
  - Nature Reserves
Indicative Forest Statement

Category Map
- Suitable for a wide range of forest types
- Suitable for certain types of forest development
- Suitable, where appropriate, for nature conservation and/or amenity forests
- Unsuitable, unproductive or unplantable areas

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Relevant publications:

**FOREST SERVICE**

- Forest Biodiversity Guidelines (2000)
- Forestry and Water Quality Guidelines (2000)
- Forestry and Archaeology Guidelines (2000)
- Forestry and the Landscape Guidelines (2000)
- Forestry and Aerial Fertilisation Guidelines (2001)
- Forest Recreation in Ireland (2006)