

# WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL



Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 (3) of the Habitats Directive

Appropriate Assessment is a process for assessment of the likely significant effects of every plan or project on the Natura 2000 network.

## What are Natura 2000 sites?

- **Special Areas of Conservation** (SAC) and candidate SAC.
  - Habitats listed in Annex I
  - species listed in Annex II of the Habitats Directive.
- **Special Protection Areas** (SPA) and candidate SPAs.
  - Birds listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive.

All development that require a planning permission process, public developments carried out by Local Authorities, material contravention proposals and Exempted Development applications within a Natura site, or which could potentially have a significant effect on Natura 2000 site, are subject to Appropriate Assessment

The requirements set out below in terms of the format of the submission should be completed in its entirety for all applications for permission. While the non-compliance with this section will not render an application invalid, failure to comply is likely to result in a request for further information to include a request for a 'Statement for Appropriate Assessment'. The giving of false or misleading information will adversely effect the favourable consideration of the application.

Information supplied will become part of the public record, available without restriction to the General Public.

You are advised to consult and consider the relevant provisions and information set out in the following documents prior to commencing the Appropriate Assessment process:

- County Development Plan including the accompanying Strategic Environmental Assessment;

<http://www.westmeathcoco.ie/en/ourservices/planning/countydevelopmentplan/#d.en.7578>

<http://www.westmeathcoco.ie/en/ourservices/planning/countydevelopmentplan/#strategicEnvironmentalAssessment>

- You will find details in respect to Natura 2000 sites at the following website:

- The National Parks and Wildlife website;  
<http://www.npws.ie/en/MapsData/>
  - here you can download maps and site synopsis of selected Natura 2000 sites

You will find guidance on the Appropriate Assessment process at the following website:

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland Guidance for Planning Authorities, (Dec 2009) issued by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government,  
<http://www.npws.ie/en/media/NPWS/Publications/CodesofPractice/>

You will find maps and reports on the quality of waters on the River Basin District website.

<http://www.wfdireland.ie/maps.html>

You will find details relating to the Habitats Directive Assessment of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Midland Region 2010-2022 on the following website:

<http://www.midlands.ie/Files/Doc%203%20-%20HDA.pdf>

- 2) The applicant must provide a 'Statement for Screening' prepared by an appropriately qualified specialist (ecologist etc) in accordance with the Appropriate Assessment Guidance document referred to above. The 'Statement for Screening' must follow the following format;
  - a) A description of the plan or project, and local site or plan area characteristics.
  - b) Identification of all Natura 2000 sites located within 15Km of the applicant site (or > 15Km where appropriate) to include Natura sites within the County and adjoining Counties. This should be accompanied by a compilation of information on the Natura site 'qualifying interests' and 'conservation objectives'. This should be in the form of maps to suitable scales and the map should be cross reference to a schedule indicating; the 'site code' and 'site name', the 'qualifying interests' and the 'conservation objectives'.
  - c) Assessment of likely effects – direct, indirect and cumulative – undertaken on the basis of available information as a desk study or field survey or primary research as necessary.
  - d) Screening statement with conclusions.
- 3) Where the 'Statement for Screening' concludes that the potential for significant effects on Natura 2000 site(s), arising from the project cannot be ruled out, a full 'Statement for Appropriate Assessment' must be prepared in accordance with the Appropriate Assessment Guidelines mentioned above and lodged with the application.
- 4) The names, addresses and qualifications of the persons who prepared the 'Statement for Screening'/ 'Statement for Appropriate Assessment' must be provided.
- 5) The submission of the Appropriate Assessment must be signed by the applicant and any co-applicant.