

<b>EMS Policy</b>		Version: 1.0
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# Service User & Stakeholder Charter

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Established in 1989, Coillte, Ireland’s publicly owned forestry company, is responsible for managing 440,000 hectares of primarily forested lands. It is the nation’s largest forester and producer of certified wood, a natural, renewable and sustainable resource. Coillte is also the largest provider of outdoor recreation in Ireland, it enables wind-energy on the estate, manufactures panel-board wood products and undertakes nature rehabilitation projects of scale. Coillte is committed to balancing and delivering the multiple benefits of forestry, including forests for climate, nature, wood and people.

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## 2.0 SCOPE

This Charter provides an efficient mechanism for considering the views, opinions and concerns of all interested stakeholders with a clear interest in our business. It is our view that effective consultation should allow the business to partake in deliberative and decision-making processes which ensure we make informed decisions, improve the delivery of our services and ensure accountability at all times. We are committed to objectively evaluating submissions made to us and will engage at all times in a proactive and positive manner. It should be acknowledged that, at times, it is beyond the scope of our consultation process to mediate between third parties to resolve potential and ongoing issues.

Coillte adheres to all relevant regulatory and certification requirements. All necessary information and/or supporting documentation is provided to these bodies to support their respective interrogative and decision-making processes. It is outside the scope of our consultation process to provide additional information to stakeholders, during these deliberative processes other than what is required by these parties as part of regulatory and certification procedures. We therefore ask that stakeholders engage directly with the relevant body when provisions are made by them to do so. We are always available to provide clarification and guidance to stakeholders to ensure our consultation process is managed effectively.

## 3.0 OUR COMMITMENT

As part of our commitment to the stewardship of our forests, we seek and welcome feedback from people about how we manage our forests in the most responsible way for the benefit of society and future generations.

We are committed to ensuring that people are aware of our plans and policies and that we present all of our information in a clear and understandable way.

We are committed to providing convenient ways for people to raise matters of interest and concern and pass on their views to us for consideration.

As part of our role as stewards of our forests, our plans and programmes comply with legislative frameworks, codes of practice, standards in forest stewardship, as well as the need to maintain a viable forest sector in Ireland.

Our commitment to communities in which we operate and/or are close to, or which might be interested in our operations is that we will include them in our consultation processes. Our forestry plans and Community Benefit Scheme for communities close to our wind farms are available on our website [www.coillte.ie](http://www.coillte.ie).

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#### 4.0 COILLTE'S FORESTRY STRATEGIC VISION

In April 2022, Coillte announced a new forestry strategic vision which is designed to optimise its contribution to Ireland's climate targets. Among other things, the aim of this strategic vision is to create new forests and optimise Coillte's existing forests for greater carbon capture, producing sustainable wood products, enhancing biodiversity, creating more incredible recreational spaces for the enjoyment of our citizens and tourists. For further information visit [www.coillte.ie](http://www.coillte.ie).

##### *OUR VISION, MISSION AND PURPOSE*

- Our **vision** is to create a sustainable future for all.
- Our **mission** is to balance and deliver the multiple benefits of our forests to society.
- Our **purpose** is to manage the state forests on behalf of the people of Ireland.

We have set out a series of ambitions, across four strategic pillars including: -

##### **FORESTS FOR CLIMATE ->**

We aim to increase the amount of carbon stored in our forests.

##### **FORESTS FOR NATURE ->**

We aim to diversify our forests and increase biodiversity.

##### **FORESTS FOR WOOD ->**

We aim to produce a sustainable supply of timber and promote innovative wood products.

##### **FORESTS FOR PEOPLE ->**

We aim to create world class visitor destinations and rural jobs.

To learn more about what we do, why we're doing it and how to work with us please click on [www.coillte.ie](http://www.coillte.ie)

#### 5.0 OUR PLANS

Our planning occurs at three levels – (1) National, (2) Business Area Unit (BAU) and (3) Local.

##### *5.1 Our National Approach*

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Much of our work in local forests comes about as a result of policies set at national level. This includes the amount of wood we produce each year, our policies on the environment, and how and where we provide social benefits, for example, through our recreation sites. When we develop new forest management and business area unit forest plans we invite public comment on a draft shared on our website at this link: [Forest Plans - Coillte](#)

National forestry policy is set by the Government via the Forest Service, which is part of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. National forestry policy and legislation set the context for many of the decisions made at regional, Business Area Unit or forest level. For example, the Forest Service controls the annual harvest, through the felling licence system. This statutory process specifically provides for stakeholder consultation and as Coillte is not the ultimate decision maker, we recommend the Forest Service consultation process is availed of. Similarly, other National legislation and EU Directives inform the planning process and directs in many ways the level of management choices available to our foresters.

### *5.2 Business Area Unit Planning Approach*

Coillte's estate is divided into 321 forests which are combined into six Business Area Units (BAUs). Each BAU has a forest plan which is the core document in the planning framework for the management of Coillte's forests. The BAU forest plans set out a vision for the forests in each BAU and also how Coillte policies and objectives will be implemented within each BAU during the period of the plan. BAU plans are reviewed every five years. Coillte welcome contact about its BAU forest plans and are happy to arrange a consultation if additional information is required on any of our plans. Simply contact us by email at [info@coillte.ie](mailto:info@coillte.ie).

### *5.3 Local Planning Approach*

Consultation on routine (day to day) forest operations takes place frequently with neighbours, stakeholders and interested groups on an ongoing basis, including inter alia, direct consultation ahead of and during operations and information notes to local houses where appropriate. This forms the basis of our partnership approach in how we go about our business.

## **6.0 OUR CONSULTATION STANDARDS**

We consult with people while we are developing new forest management plans for our forests and details on how to get involved in this process are outlined below. Our performance in consultation is audited externally as part of our assessment for forest certification. We are committed to ensuring that:

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- We consider submissions and make changes where possible to our plans. In some cases we will not be able to change our plans and in these cases we will endeavour to explain the reasons why.
- All comments and suggestions will be acknowledged and our ability to incorporate them in to our plans will be communicated to those who submitted comments.
- Every effort will be made to choose suitable and appropriate venues for all forest related consultation meetings.
- Our relationship with our stakeholders is characterised by courtesy, efficiency and effectiveness. Equally, we expect that people engaging with Coillte will be courteous and respectful to our staff.

## **7.0 HOW TO GET INVOLVED**

Any person or organisation with an interest is welcome to become involved in our consultation process. There are several ways to get involved in providing ideas and commenting on our forest management plans and we welcome general comments, suggestions and ideas via email. We update our website with public consultation opportunities as they arise so that interested stakeholders have the opportunity to give us their input. Also, if you wish to become a listed stakeholder you can do so by registering via our website, click [HERE](#)

## **8.0 ALTERNATIVE PURPOSES FOR OUR LANDS**

Coillte acquires, sells, leases or develops a limited amount of land for purposes other than forestry. These activities represent a key part of Coillte’s business, and deliver benefit to individuals and communities at local and national levels. The majority of land sales are made in response to local demand and typically comprise house sites, isolated dwelling houses, sections of recently acquired farms, small outlying forest properties and gravel pits. Local consultation is carried out on these sales, leases or developments. Coillte also seeks to add value to its estate by undertaking property development projects. Development projects that may be considered range from community developments, tourism development, industrial development, and residential development.

Consultation on each of these projects is defined on a case-by-case basis. Further information is outlined in our land excision policy which is available on [www.coillte.ie](http://www.coillte.ie)

## **9.0 ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON THE ENVIRONMENT**

We are fully committed to the right of public access to environmental information held by us in accordance with the AIE Directive and Access to Information on the Environment Regulations. An AIE request can be submitted by email to [info@coillte.ie](mailto:info@coillte.ie). Further information on how to make a request under the AIE Regulations is set out on our website.

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## 10.0 COMPLAINTS

Coillte has robust procedures in place for dealing with concerns raised and complaints received. If you are not satisfied with our engagement with you in relation to any matter, please contact us via [info@coillte.ie](mailto:info@coillte.ie). Upon receipt of your correspondence staff will issue you with a Stakeholder Complaint Form which should be completed and returned to us along with all supporting information (copies of correspondence (emails etc), any relevant documentation). Upon receipt of a completed Stakeholder Complaint Form and all supporting information your complaint will be assigned to relevant staff who will issue an acknowledgement to you and confirm a date by which you will receive a response. Please note that complaints will only be assigned to the relevant area of business when a completed form and all supporting information is received by Coillte.

## 11.0 MANAGING UNREASONABLE BEHAVIOUR AND CONTACTS

This Charter reflects the mutual expectations of Coillte and its stakeholders and seeks to ensure that our organisation conforms to the highest principles of stakeholder management and consultation. The Charter outlines our commitment to proactive engagement with our stakeholders. Equally, it outlines our expectation that people engaging with us in return will be courteous, forthcoming, and respectful of our staff.

Coillte has an Unreasonable Service User / Stakeholder Policy in place which can be viewed [HERE](#)

## 12.0 REVISION HISTORY

<b>Revision #</b>	<b>Change details</b>	<b>Reason for change</b>	<b>Date</b>
1	New Document	N/a	March 2023
1.1	Minor format change	Re-ordered and standardised format of policy document	February 2024