

# Coillte's Consultation Policy



- As part of our commitment to the stewardship of our forests we seek and welcome comments and suggestions 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 which are close to, or which might be interested in our operations is that we will always include them in our consultation processes. Our forestry plans are available online and we have developed a bespoke wind farm Community Benefit Scheme for communities close to our wind farms to ensure they share the benefits of these projects.

## **1. Background**

Coillte are privileged to be custodians of 7% of the Ireland's land. Our forests and land now extend to over 440,000 hectares. Over the last 30 years, we have cared for and developed our estate and businesses while being firmly focused on maximizing the financial, environmental and social potential of these natural resources in a sustainable way.

We take our responsibility for managing our lands seriously. We are committed to a partnership approach with our customers and stakeholders, to understand their needs and work towards solutions to issues and concerns, which are of benefit to all. We also have a keen awareness of how our decisions can impact on society, people, and nature.

As part of our activities, our staff are meeting people frequently and listening to their views and ideas and incorporating these where possible into local plans and objectives. We aim to provide clear and up-to-date information on our activities to interested parties, groups, and to the public in general.

## **2. About Coillte**

Coillte was established under the Forestry Act 1988 to manage the State's forests on a commercial basis. Today, Coillte run three high potential businesses, Forestry, Land Solutions and Medite Smartply.

Forestry is at the heart of what we do, planting, growing, protecting, managing and harvesting before replanting to begin the forest cycle again. Our vision is to become the leader of a fast growing Irish forestry sector where technology, people and sustainability is at our core.

Land Solutions generates recurring revenue by partnering, developing and adding value in the areas of renewable energy, property sales and acquisition, and infrastructure development.

MEDITE SMARTPLY produces market leading, sustainable, award winning timber construction panels from our sites in Clonmel and Waterford.

For more information on Coillte please click on [www.coillte.ie](http://www.coillte.ie)

### **3. Our consultation standards – what to expect**

- We consult with people while we are developing new plans for our forests.
- We will 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 performance in consultation is audited externally as part of our assessment for forest certification.

### **4. How you can get involved**

Any person or organisation with an interest is welcome to become involved in our consultation process.

There are a number of ways to get involved in providing ideas and commenting on our developing plans and we welcome general comments, suggestions and ideas by email, phone or post.

We update our website with public consultation opportunities as they arise so that interested stakeholders have the opportunity to give us their input.

### **5. Our planning occurs at three levels – National, Business Area Unit (BAU) and Local.**

#### **5.1 Our National Approach**

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 strategic plans we invite public comment on a draft.

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. Similarly other National legislation and EU directives inform the

planning process and directs in many ways the level of management choices open to the company.

## **5.2 Business Area Unit Planning**

Coillte's estate is divided into 321 forests which are combined into eight Business Area Units (BAUs). Each BAU has a strategic plan which is the core document in the planning framework for the management of Coillte's forests. The BAU strategic 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 5 years.

Coillte welcome contact about its BAU strategic 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) or call into one of our local offices.

## **5.3 Local (day to day operations)**

Consultation on routine forest operations takes place frequently with neighbours, stakeholders and interested groups on an ongoing basis. This forms the basis of our partnership approach in how we go about our business.

## **6 Other uses for our land**

Coillte's practice is to acquire, sell, lease or develop 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 greatest number 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. 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. Part of Coillte's substantial land asset, particularly upland sites, are very suitable for the generation of wind energy and the development of telecommunication facilities. Whilst the process of finalising the precise location of such sites will be ongoing for a number of years, any development, sale or lease arrangement arising will be subject to consultation. Coillte's policy on removal of these lands from the area, is outlined in our land excision policy.

For further information on Consultation in Coillte visit the consultation page on our website at this link, [Coillte consultation](#)

**Note: This policy is due for review in December 2017**