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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 landowner 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.

2.0 SCOPE

This Charter provides an efficient mechanism for considering the views, opinions and concerns of all interested service users and stakeholders with a clear interest in our business. It is our view that effective consultation should allow the business to partake in deliberative 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 evaluate submissions made to us and we will engage with our service users and stakeholders 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 certification 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 service users and 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 service users and stakeholders to ensure our consultation process is managed effectively.

3.0 OUR COMMITMENT

As part of Coillte's 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 relevant 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 information on engagement with local communities including Community Benefit Scheme for communities close to our wind farms are available on our website www.coillte.ie.

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.

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.

5.0 OUR PLANS

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

5.1 National Approach

Striving to realise our vision, Coillte developed, through public consultation, the Forest Estate Strategic Land Use Plan (FESLUP) 2023 - 2050, which provides the framework that outlines the strategic objectives to balance the delivery of the organisation's ambitions until 2050.The FESLUP outlines a roadmap, focusing on creating a resilient forest estate that delivers environmental, social, and economic benefits. It has been subject to a full Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

The Land Use Strategic Implementation Plan (LUSIP) is the next step within Coillte's strategic planning hierarchy, translating the high-level ambitions and objectives outlined in the FESLUP into implementable and measurable actions over the period of 2026-2035.Public consultation was carried out as a part of SEA and developing final version of LUSIP.

Coillte plans support Ireland's Forest Strategy developed 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 regulates 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 direct 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 Management Plan (FMP) which is the core document in the planning framework for the management of Coillte's forests. The primary purpose of the BAU Forest Management Plans is to bridge the gap between objectives outlined in the LUSIP and their implementation at BAU level while maintaining flexibility to adapt to specific BAU priorities and conditions.The BAU forest plans set out a vision for the forests in each BAU and outline how Coillte policies and objectives will be implemented within each BAU during the period of the plan. BAU plans are reviewed every five years. When we develop new FMPs we invite public comments prior to publication and on draft plans shared on our website at this link: Forest Plans - Coillte. Coillte welcome feedback 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.

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. 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:

- 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 instances we will endeavour to explain the reasons why.
- All comments and suggestions will be acknowledged and our ability to incorporate them into 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 service users and 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 service user and stakeholders can provide their input. If you wish to become a listed stakeholder you can do so by registering via our website, click HERE for more information.

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 HERE.

9.0 GENERAL QUERIES

Coillte is committed to providing clear communication, timely assistance, and a professional standard of service to all who engage with us. If you have general queries related to various Coillte activities, such as recreation activities on our estate, firewood sales, employment opportunities or about a project we may be involved in, you can email your queries to info@coillte.ie, including a brief description of the query, exact location and contact details. Alternatively, use the Get in Contact section of our website which includes a short contact form that can be completed. General queries are typically addressed within 20 working days.

10.0 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 Access to Information on the Environment (AIE) Regulations 2007-2018 (an "AIE Request"). To make an AIE Request, please submit a request to aie@coillte.ie.

Where a stakeholder submits a complaint and/or a query to Coillte and subsequently submits an AIE request relating to the same or substantially the same subject matter, the stakeholder shall be notified that the AIE Request will take precedence and will be processed in accordance with statutory requirements. The complaint and/or query shall be treated as closed, and no further action will be taken in respect of it. Further information on the procedure for submitting an AIE Request is available HERE.

11.0 COMPLAINTS

Coillte has robust procedures in place for dealing with concerns raised and complaints received from service users and stakeholders. Details of our complaints and disputes resolution procedure for stakeholders are set out HERE.

Service users and stakeholders in formal agreement or in a contractual relationship with Coillte should contact their relevant Coillte contact first and if the matter is not resolved, refer to any applicable dispute resolution clause in the relevant contractual agreement.

Stakeholders with rights (or claiming rights) over Coillte property should direct their query together with supporting evidence of their claimed rights to info@coillte.ie in the first instance. If the matter cannot be resolved by operational staff, it may need to be investigated further by Coillte's legal team.

12.0 MANAGING UNREASONABLE BEHAVIOUR AND CONTACTS

This Charter reflects the mutual expectations of Coillte and its service users and stakeholders and seeks to ensure that our organisation conforms to the highest standards of service user and stakeholder management and consultation. The Charter outlines our commitment to proactive engagement with our service users and stakeholders. Equally, it outlines our expectation that service users and stakeholders 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.

13.0 REVISION HISTORY

Revision	Change details	Reason for change	Date
1	New Document	N/a	March 2023
1.1	Minor format change	Re-ordered and standardised format of policy document	February 2024
1.2	Updates to Section 5.1, insertion of new Section 9, renumbering of subsequent sections, insertion of new link to Section 11 and updating the link in Section 12.	Updates to Coillte's strategic forest planning framework, management of general stakeholder queries & complaints procedure.	April 2026