

What do I have to do to apply for screening?

- Complete an **Application for an EIA Screening Decision** form and submit, together with a map identifying the area where the proposed works are to take place, to the address at the bottom of this page.
- There is no cost involved in the application process.
- A Department official may arrange to visit your farm.
- A decision from DAFM will issue to you promptly (generally within 4 weeks)

If permission is not granted and you wish to proceed with the proposed activity, a full Environmental Impact Assessment will be required.

Further information

The **EIA Guidance Document and Application Form** is available from all local DAFM offices (including Johnstown Castle) and is available on the DAFM website www.agriculture.gov.ie - follow the links under Rural Environment / Environmental Impact Assessment. It is also available from local Teagasc/ACA offices.

For further information on **Nature reserves, Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs)** and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs), contact your local Conservation Ranger, National Parks and Wildlife Service or see the NPWS website www.npws.ie.

For further information on **archaeological monuments**, please see www.archaeology.ie and <http://webgis.archaeology.ie/NationalMonuments/FlexViewer/>

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An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

Environmental Impact Assessment(Agriculture) Regulations Information Leaflet forFarmers

For a copy of the full EIA Guidance Document, please see contact details on back page.



What are the Environmental Impact Assessment (Agriculture) Regulations?

The European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Agriculture) Regulations 2011 came into effect on the 8th September 2011 and were amended on 19th September 2017. The Regulations apply to three different types of on-farm activities:

(1) Restructuring of rural land holdings (2) commencing to use uncultivated land or semi-natural areas for intensive agriculture and (3) land drainage works on lands used for agriculture (excluding drainage or reclamation of wetlands).

The Regulations provide for an assessment of the environmental impact of certain projects before they can proceed. Projects not captured by the screening criteria set out overleaf can proceed without Department approval.

What is “screening”?

Screening is the cost-free process whereby the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) examines the proposed activities for environmental impact to determine if the activities can proceed without the need for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). Where the activities are likely to have a significant effect on the environment a full EIA will be required.

What activities are covered by the Regulations?

1. Restructuring of rural land holdings:

(a) **Removal of lengths of field boundaries** such as hedgerows, hedgerows on clay banks, stone walls etc.

(b) **Re-contouring of land covers**, for example, levelling off hills or infilling of hollows (by removing or shifting earth or rock that originates from within the farm-holding).

NOTE: Exempted activities – which do not need DAFM approval:

- Maintenance work on existing stone walls and hedgerows
- Removal of post and wire fencing (barbed wire or electrified wire)

2. Commencing to use uncultivated land or semi-natural areas for intensive agriculture:



Works carried out to enhance or intensify the agricultural productivity of (a) **uncultivated land** or (b) **semi-natural areas**, include:

- Mechanical cultivating e.g ploughing;
- Adding or significantly increasing levels of organic or chemical fertiliser used;
- Sowing seed;
- Clearing existing vegetation.

NOTE: Exempted activity:

- Controlling vegetation such as invading briars does not require DAFM approval

3. Land drainage works on lands used for agriculture including:

- Installing open drains
- Installing field drains (not open)
- Opening of a short distance of watercourse

NOTE: Exempted activity:

- Cleaning of existing open drains does not require DAFM approval

Note: Wetlands (as defined in the EIA Guidance Document) *are not covered by the EIA (Agriculture) Regulations*. Planning permission is required for the drainage or reclamation of wetlands in excess of 0.1 hectares (or below that having a significant effect on the environment).

For more detail see www.environ.ie.

Thresholds for screening applications and mandatory EIA

(Areas (or lengths) of works undertaken in any one year or the sum of such areas over a 5-yr period, beginning 8.9.2011.)

Type of on-farm activity:	Screening by DAFM required:	Mandatory EIA
Restructuring of rural land holdings		
- Length of field boundary to be removed	Above 500 metres	Above 4 kms
OR - Area of lands to be restructured by removal of field boundaries	Above 5 hectares	Above 50 hectares
- Recontouring (within farmholding)	Above 2 hectares	Above 5 hectares
Commencing to use uncultivated land or semi-natural areas for intensive agriculture	Above 5 hectares	Above 50 hectares
Land drainage works on lands used for agriculture	Above 15 hectares	Above 50 hectares

When do I need to apply for screening?

- If the proposed activity exceeds the thresholds outlined above;
- If the proposed activity is within, is near, or may affect a proposed **Natural Heritage Area or nature reserve**;
- If the proposed activity **may have a significant effect on the environment**. (Examples of what constitutes 'significant effect on the environment' are outlined in the EIA Guidance Document).
- If the proposed activity is identified as 'requiring consent' or is a 'notifiable action' in a **European site (e.g. Special Area of Conservation or Special Protected Area), or an NHA**. In such circumstances, the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) may direct you to apply to DAFM for screening in the case of sub-threshold works that have been brought to their attention (via notifiable actions system or otherwise) or
- If the proposed activity **may impact on an archaeological monument**, the National Monuments Service may direct you to apply for screening in the case of sub-threshold works that have been brought to their attention.

If you have doubts that any works that you propose to carry out may be subject to the requirements of the Regulations, you should apply to DAFM for screening. For further information, consult your agricultural adviser or DAFM.