



Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report

1. Introduction

The EIA Directive 85/337/EEC, as amended aims to determine the likely significant effects of a project on the environment. EIA Screening determines whether an EIA is required for a specified project. Projects requiring mandatory EIA are listed in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended. In the case of development which is under these thresholds, planning authorities are required under Article 103 of the 2001 Regulations, (as amended) to request an EIS where it considers that the proposed development is likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

Screening involves appraisal of impacts from the proposed development according to three main criteria:-

1. Characteristics of the project
2. Location of proposed project
3. Characteristics of potential impacts.

Schedule 6 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended), outlines the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by a proposed development. These are: human beings, flora and fauna, soil and geology, water, air & climate, landscape, material assets, cultural heritage and the inter-relationships between the range of environmental criteria.

The proposed project comprises trail development from Portally Cove to Ballymacaw Cove along an existing earthen surface path. The proposed works primarily involve fencing/stiles and trail access works including bridge crossings at cove points such as Ballymacaw and Rathmoylan.

2. Screening Assessment

Table 1. Characteristics of proposed development

Is the size and design of the proposed works significant ?	The trail route is approximately 5km long and 2m wide.
Potential for impacts from project in cumulation with other existing and/or approved projects	The trail is a continuation of an existing trail from Dunmore East to Portally Cove. The extended trail will involve increased usage by walkers along this section of the coastline.
Use of natural resources in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity ?	Areas of encroaching gorse will be trimmed back, sections of trail will require removal of topsoil and topping with 200mm of capping stone along walkway.
Will the works produce waste ?	Materials used in the construction of the trail such as fencing posts, wire, and building materials may produce a small amount of waste which will be removed from site on completion of works.
Will the works create a significant amount of pollution or nuisance ?	Best construction practice as guided by an Environmental Method Statement will ensure avoidance of any risk of pollution. The scale of the work is such that no nuisance will be created.
Risk of major accidents and/or disasters relevant to the project including those caused by Climate Change in accordance with scientific knowledge?	The scale of the work is such that there is negligible risk of a major accident and /or disaster including those caused by climate change.
Risks to human health (water contamination , air pollution)	Best construction practice as guided by an Environmental Method Statement will ensure avoidance of any risk of pollution or to human health.
Potential for cumulative impacts with other existing and/or approved projects?	The extended trail will involve increased usage by walkers along this section of the coastline but is considered numbers using new trail will be within sustainable levels.

Table 2. Location of Proposed Development

Environmental Sensitivity of project in relation to existing and approved land use.	The trail route runs through an area classed as visually vulnerable but not designated as a site for protection of nature conservation. The site will not impact on Archaeological sites or monuments.
Relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground	The coastal route will be monitored for erosion and trampling pressure and mitigation measures will be applied to ensure regeneration of path surface where subject to excessive erosion pressures.
Absorption capacity of the natural environment including wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths, coastal zones and the marine environment, mountain and forest area.	The route will not affect any sites designated for nature conservation in the Waterford County Development Plan 2011-2017.
Potential of works to impact directly or indirectly on sites designated for nature conservation (NHA/SAC/SPA)	The route is located 5km south of Waterford Estuary SAC. An AA Screening was carried out and concluded no potential for significant effects on the conservation objectives of the SAC.
Potential for impacts directly or indirectly on Habitats or Species listed on Annex I, II and IV of the Habitats Directive	Otter may traverse the route of proposed trail but impacts are not considered significant for attainment of conservation objectives for this species.
Potential for impacts on breeding places of any species protected under the Wildlife Act ?	No disturbance anticipated to breeding places of any wildlife species.
Potential to impact directly or indirectly on any listed ACA in the County Development Plan ?	N/A
Potential to impact directly or indirectly on any protected structure or recorded monuments and places of Archaeological Interest	The route has been designed to avoid encroachment on any recorded monuments and places of Archaeological Interest. No protected structures occur along the trail route.
Potential to impact directly or indirectly on Listed or scenic views or protected landscape in the County Development Plan ?	This area of the coastal landscape is designated visually vulnerable in the Waterford Scenic Landscape Evaluation but the proposed walking trail is deemed compatible and will not adversely affect the landscape character of the area.
Potential to impact on areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure.	None arising
Potential to impact on densely populated areas.	The trail will provide a new amenity resource to residents of Tramore (>10,000),

	Waterford City (50,000) and Dunmore East (2,000) with benefits for public health and well being.
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Table 3. Characteristics of Potential Impacts

Human Beings	The proposed trail will confer positive benefits on human beings extending the existing very popular Dunmore East-Portally Cove trail providing benefits for recreation and quality of life for residents and visitors.
Flora and Fauna	Some disturbance will be carried out to vegetation along the route involving cutting back of gorse vegetation and and culverting. These are localised impacts.
Soils and Geology	No sites of geological heritage will be impacted.
Water	The proposed trail route will cross over floodrisk areas at Rathmoylan and Ballymcaw.
Air & Climate	This is a recreational development in a rural area. No anticipated impacts on air and climate. The proposed trail will cross flood risk areas. The trail surface will be monitored for erosion and remediation measures applied where required.
Noise & Vibration	Temporary minor disturbance during trail construction works.
Landscape	This area of the coastal landscape is designated visually vulnerable in the Waterford Scenic Landscape Evaluation but the proposed walking trail is deemed compatible and will not adversely affect the landscape character of the area.
Material Assets	The proposed trail extension will confer positive benefits to the county's trail infrastructure providing an accessible route for all ages and abilities complementing existing recreational assets such as the Dunmore-Portally Walk, Tramore Dunes walk and Waterford Greenway.
Cultural Heritage	No impacts on Archaeological or Architectural Heritage.
Interaction of Foregoing	The proposed trail will confer positive benefits on human beings and benign effects on flora and fauna soils, geology and water.

Table 4. Discussion of Potential Impacts

Will a large geographical area be impacted as a result of the proposed works ?	The proposed route link is approximately 5km long and 2m wide.
Will a large population be impacted as a result of the proposed works ?	The trail will provide a new amenity resource to residents of Tramore (>10,000), Waterford City (50,000) and Dunmore East (2,000) with benefits for public health and well being.
Are any trans-frontier impacts likely to arise from proposed works?	No
Is the intensity and complexity of impacts associated with the proposed works considered significant ?	No
Is there a high probability that the impacts will occur ?	No significant impacts anticipated.
What is the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact ?	Construction of trail will be completed in 2-3 months.
Cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved projects ?	The extended trail will involve increased usage by walkers along this section of the coastline but is considered numbers using new trail will be within sustainable levels.
Will it be difficult to avoid, or reduce or repair or compensate for the effects ?	No significant impacts anticipated.

3..Conclusion

The DoEHLG Guidance Document “Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-Threshold Development” notes that *“The greater the number of different aspects of the environment which are likely to be affected and the greater the links between the effects, the more likely it is that an EIS should be carried out. Where complexity of impacts is deemed to apply in the case of a specific sub-threshold development proposal, there should be a predisposition towards the preparation of an EIS”*.

In consideration of the above involving appraisal of characteristics and location of proposed development and characteristics of potential impacts it is concluded that an EIAR is not required for the proposed development.