



# Environmental Impact Assessment

## Types of land covered by EIA

The regulations apply to uncultivated land and semi-natural areas, including the following:

### 1. Unimproved grassland, such as:

- Historic sites
- Meadows
- Old orchards
- Ancient earthworks
- Permanent grassland
- Coastal or floodplain grazing
- Open hillsides
- Wood pasture
- Parkland

### 2. Heath and moorland

Lowland and coastal heath including dry and wet heath. Moorland (including bogs) and upland rough grazing.

### 3. Scrubland

This applies where scrub is cleared or managed in order to convert the land to arable or stock farming.

### 4. Wetlands, including:

- Marsh
- Watercourse
- Ponds
- Fen
- Saltmarshes
- Open water
- Ditches

Land will be considered under this category if the water table normally lies at or near the surface for part of the year.

## Projects covered by EIA

Proposals to increase the agricultural productivity of uncultivated land or semi-natural areas will require consent from DARD if the area concerned is 2ha or more in area or if a screening notice has been issued by DARD.

Land is considered to be uncultivated land if it has not been subject to physical or chemical cultivation in the last 15 years.

Typically, projects likely to fall into this category might include:

- Physically cultivating soil (for example, by ploughing, digging, sub-surface harrowing, discing or rotavating);
- Land reclamation;
- Increased levels of organic or inorganic fertiliser or soil improvers;
- Sowing seed;
- Draining land or modifications to watercourses / standing water;
- Clearing existing vegetation either physically or using herbicides;
- Spreading soil or other material in excess of existing routine application rates;
- Field boundary removal.

Cultivation would not include practices which do not directly affect the soil. Mowing grass, chain harrowing or clearing scrub or other vegetation would not in themselves be considered as cultivation of land.

### Exceptions to EIA

These regulations will not apply to any:

- projects that require planning permission;
- forestry projects;
- other projects covered under separate EIA Regulations.



The aim of these regulations is to protect uncultivated land/semi-natural areas and the physical structure of the farm where they are likely to be of particular environmental importance.

### What is EIA?

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a way of helping farmers, landowners and others to consider the environmental effects of changing the way they farm.

The diagram on the following pages will help you decide if the work you plan to carry out might need DARD's consent before you begin.

If you are in any doubt you should contact DARD Countryside Management Branch for advice.

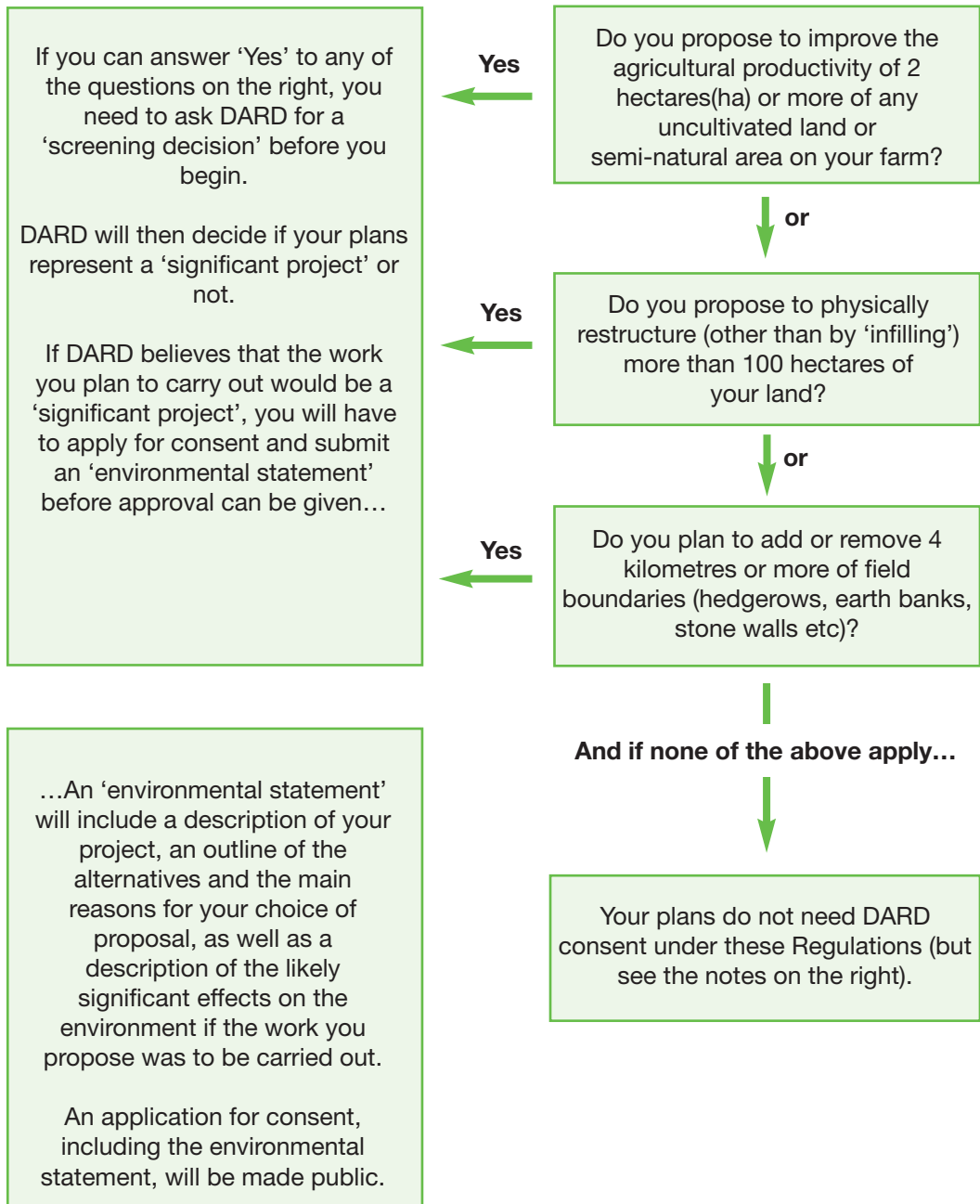
### Contact details:

Countryside Management Branch  
 Department of Agriculture and Rural Development  
 Loughry Campus  
 Cookstown BT80 9AA

Tel: 028 8676 8310

## What work do you propose to do?

### What do you need to do?



### Other Information

- Note:** DARD can issue a screening notice on a project below the 2ha threshold if it is likely to have a significant effect on the environment.
- Note:** If your land is considered to be 'environmentally valuable' (an ASSI, AONB or a European site, for example) the 'threshold' is 50 hectares for restructuring projects or 2 kilometres of field boundary removal.
- Note:** If you plan to carry out work in an ASSI or a European site, DOE NIEA consent will be needed.
- Note:** The removal of any field boundary, the infilling of any open sheugh or ditch, or the improvement of any semi-natural habitat, shelterbelt or historic monument without prior written permission from DARD is a breach of the Cross-Compliance conditions attached to your Single Farm Payment and other support schemes.

