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
- 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
- Fen
- Open water

- Watercourse
- Saltmarshes
- Ditches

Coastal or floodplain

grazing

Parkland

Open hillsides

Wood pasture

Ponds

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, subsurface 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.

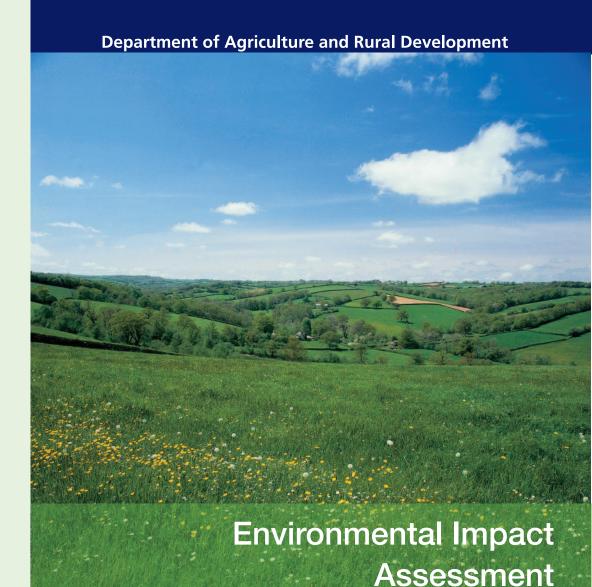
Exceptions to EIA

These regulations will not apply to any:

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

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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?

If you can answer 'Yes' to any of the questions on the right, you need to ask DARD for a 'screening decision' before you begin.

DARD will then decide if your plans represent a 'significant project' or not.

If DARD believes that the work you plan to carry out would be a 'significant project', you will have to apply for consent and submit an 'environmental statement' before approval can be given...

...An 'environmental statement' will include a description of your

project, an outline of the

alternatives and the main reasons for your choice of

proposal, as well as a

description of the likely

significant effects on the

environment if the work you

propose was to be carried out.

An application for consent,

including the environmental statement, will be made public.

yes

agricultural productivity of 2
hectares(ha) or more of any
uncultivated land or
semi-natural area on your farm?

or

Do you propose to physically
restructure (other than by 'infilling')
more than 100 hectares of
your land?

or

Yes

Do you plan to add or remove 4
kilometres or more of field
boundaries (hedgerows, earth banks,
stone walls etc)?

Do you propose to improve the

And if none of the above apply...

Your plans do not need DARD consent under these Regulations (but see the notes on the right).

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.

