

16.07.2025

Mr Neil Foulkes

By email only: neilfoulkes62@gmail.com

Our Ref: AIE Request 20250143

Your Ref: Audit itinerary

Dear Mr Foulkes,

I refer to your Request dated 16.06.2025 made under the European Communities (Access to Information on the Environment) Regulations 2007 to 2014 (the “**AIE Regulations**”), for access to Environmental information held by Coillte for information as follows:

All information relating to logistical, practical and social arrangements made between Coillte and Soil Association regarding the 2025 annual audit which took place in May.

To include all correspondence (all media).

Please interpret this request broadly.

Please provide a schedule of records with your decision.

Decision

I have decided to grant **partial** access to the information sought as set out below.

In relation to the logistical arrangements made between the Coillte and Soil Association regarding the 2025 annual audit, I am granting access to a document which sets out the details of operational sites within BAU 4 that was made available to the Soil Association during the course of the 2025 audit.

In relation to ‘practical’ and ‘social’ arrangements, I have decided to **refuse** you access to the information sought on the basis that such information is not “environmental information” as defined in Article 3 of the AIE Regulations.

In considering this Request, I have had regard to the definition of “environmental information” set out in Article 3(1) of the Regulations, the Guidelines document provided by the Minister of the Environment, Community and Local Government on the implementation of the Regulations (the “AIE Guidelines”); Directive 2003/4/EC, upon which the Regulations are based, the 1998 United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (the Aarhus Convention), the Aarhus Convention: An

Implementation Guide (Second edition, June 2014), and to decisions of the Commissioner for Environmental Information.

The information sought by the Request does not include or comprise information on any of sub-paragraphs (a) to (f) of the definition of environmental information. In particular, the information sought is not information on measures or activities affecting or likely to affect or measures or activities designed to protect:

“(a) the state of the elements of the environment, such as air and atmosphere, water, soil, land, landscape and natural sites including wetlands, coastal and marine areas, biological diversity and its components, including genetically modified organisms and the interaction among these elements,

(b) factors, such as substances, energy, noise, radiation or waste, including radioactive waste, emissions, discharges and other releases into the environment, affecting or likely to affect the elements of the environment”

I have interpreted these elements of the Request to mean the travel and accommodation arrangements of the Soil Association during the annual audit that was held from 19th to 23rd May 2025. It is my view that such information is not environmental information within the meaning of Article 3 of the AIE Regulations.

Right of Review

Under Article 11 of the AIE Regulations you have a right to request an internal review of this decision, including the decision to charge a fee. An internal review involves a complete reconsideration of the matter by a member of the staff of Coillte, unconnected with the original decision, and of the same or higher rank than the original decision-maker, who may affirm, vary or annul the original decision.

If you wish to request an internal review, you can do so by writing to the following, referring to this decision and quoting the AIE reference number. This request must be made within one month of the date of receipt of this decision. The decision of an internal review will be communicated to you within one month of receipt of your request for an internal review.

The Information and Data Protection Officer

Coillte CGA.

aie@coillte.ie

If you choose to make a request for an internal review, this must be made within one month of the date of receipt of this decision. The decision of an internal review will be communicated to you within one month of receipt of your request for an internal review.

Yours sincerely,

Sent by email, no signature

AIE Officer

Coillte CGA.

Email: aie@coillte.ie