



22nd July 2025
Neil Foulkes
neilfoulkes62@gmail.com

Re: AIE Request 25 233

Dear Mr. Foulkes,

I refer to the request you made on 24th June 2025, under the European Communities (Access to Information on the Environment) Regulations 2007 to 2018 (S.I. No. 133 of 2007, S.I. No. 662 of 2011, S.I. 615 of 2014 and S.I. No. 309 of 2018) (hereafter referred to as the AIE Regulations), for access to information held by this the Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine (DAFM).

Your AIE Request

I wish to receive

A copy of the funding application for the following projects awarded under the Open Call for Proposals for Forestry Promotion Projects;

I am not seeking any personal information.

Mná Na Coille (Women of the Woods)

What Forestry is - Communicating at Peer-to-Peer Level

Biodiversity in Action: Forestry days and learning resources

Forest Learning 2025/2026 - Good Sitka

Irish Forestry and Forest Products - Debunking the Myths

Bio Thin, Using whole-tree Biomass chipping to thin Broadleaf Forests

ITGA Information Projects (multi-part proposal) to increase participation in DAFM Afforestation Schemes, the wider Forestry Programme, and to raise the profile of forestry as a public good and a commercially viable enterprise, including engagement with EU Institutions

Summary of Decision

I have decided on your AIE request on 22nd July 2025. My decision is to part grant your request.

The basis for my decision is that I have identified nineteen (19) records held by the Department in relation to your request, fourteen (14) of which are part granted, with redactions.



Where information has been refused or partially refused, the following article(s) of SI 133/2007 apply:

A public authority shall not make available environmental information in accordance with article 7 where disclosure of the information would adversely affect the confidentiality of personal information relating to a natural person who has not consented to the disclosure of the information, and where that confidentiality is otherwise protected by law.

It is my decision that the confidentiality of the records in question is otherwise protected by law under Section 37(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2014. This provides that:

37(1) Subject to this section, a head shall refuse to grant an FOI request if, in the opinion of the head, access to the record concerned would involve the disclosure of personal information (including personal information relating to a deceased individual).

And/Or:

9(1)(c) A public authority may refuse to make available environmental information where disclosure of the information requested would adversely affect commercial or industrial confidentiality, where such confidentiality is provided for in national or Community law to protect a legitimate economic interest.

Searches Conducted

Following the assignment of this AIE request to me, the following searches were undertaken:

(i) Searching emails

A searching email was sent to an Assistant Principal in the Forestry Policy and Training Section with a copy of your AIE request. The AP then contacted a Higher Executive Officer and a second AP in the Forestry Promotions and Communications Section.

The HEO responded with a link to an eDocs folder containing nineteen (19) records relating to your request.

When individually examined, fourteen (14) of the records identified required redaction of personal information.

Public Interest Test

In accordance with article 10(3) and 10(4), I have weighed the public interest served by disclosure against the interest served by part refusal of your request. I have determined that the public interest would not be served by disclosing the redacted information you request. The factors in favour of release of this information are the making available to the public, where practical and allowed under the law, in a transparent manner, information affecting the environment.



The factors in favour of withholding are the fact that the disclosure of personal information to a third party adversely affects the confidentiality of that information. Releasing an individual's personal information violates their right to privacy and confidentiality, as protected by law.

The factors in favour of withholding information that is commercially sensitive and release of this information to the public domain may prejudice the competitiveness of the position of the company to which the request has been made as defined in section 36 (1)(b) of the Freedom of Information Act 2014. Furthermore, release of the information may also impact contracts and negotiations of contracts the company may have with landowners and investors which is protected under section 36(1)(c) of the Freedom of Information Act 2014 and which may ultimately lead to financial loss protected by section 36 (1)(b) of the Freedom of Information Act 2014.

36. (1) Subject to subsection (2), a head shall refuse to grant an FOI request if the record concerned contains—

(b) financial, commercial, scientific or technical or other information whose disclosure could reasonably be expected to result in a material financial loss or gain to the person to whom the information relates, or could prejudice the competitive position of that person in the conduct of his or her profession or business or otherwise in his or her occupation.

(c) information whose disclosure could prejudice the conduct or outcome of contractual or other negotiations of the person to whom the information relates.

Article 10(5)

Please note that in making my decision, I have considered article 10(5), which states that,

Nothing in articles 8 or 9 shall authorise a public authority not to make available environmental information which, although held with information to which article 8 or 9 relates, may be separated from such information.

Schedule of Records

Please see schedule of records for information on records released. This lists the records that I consider relevant to your request. It provides a brief description of each record and the decision I have made on each record. Where I have decided to refuse or partially refuse access to a record, it specifies the article of the AIE Regulations under which this refusal has been made.

Fees

In this instance the Department will not be applying a fee for this AIE because the time required for search and retrieval was less than the minimum chargeable amount.



Right of Review

Under article 11 of the AIE Regulations, you have a right to request an internal review of this decision. An internal review involves a complete reconsideration of the matter by a member of the staff of this Department, unconnected with the original decision, 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 emailing FOI Unit at freedomofinformation@agriculture.gov.ie referring to this decision, 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.

Yours sincerely,

AIE Unit

Forestry Division

Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine

Johnstown Castle Estate

County Wexford