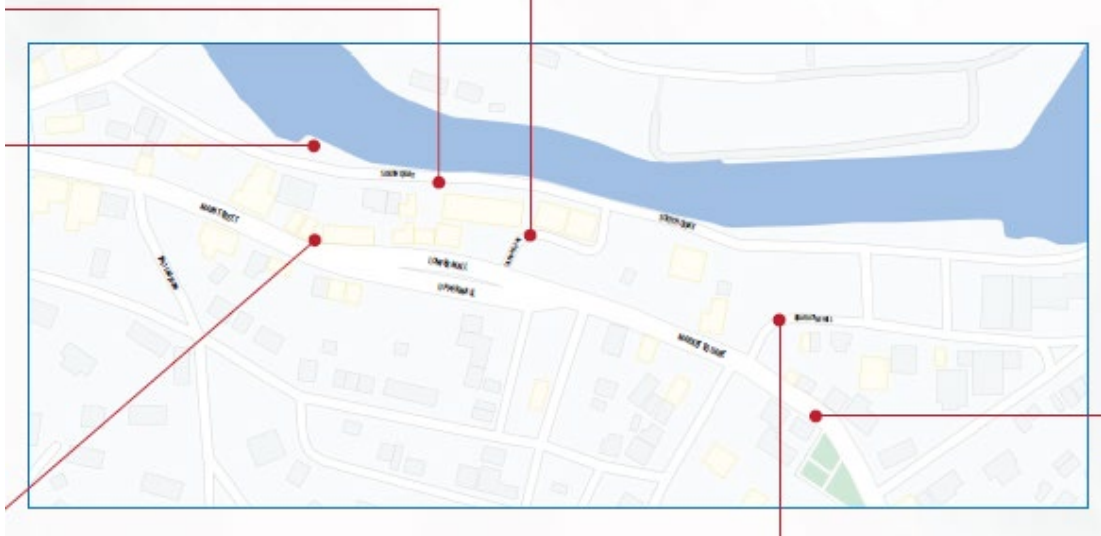


Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report

Reconnect the Quay – Wicklow Town



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1. Introduction

This report has been prepared for Wicklow County Council (*the client*). It contains information required for the competent authority to undertake a Screening for Environmental Impact Assessment in respect of the proposed “Reconnect Wicklow” project, a proposal to reconnect Wicklow town centre to the port through its network of laneways. This project seeks to reanimate and revitalise these important linkage laneways.

The screening assesses the proposed scheme with reference to the relevant EIA legislation; including the EIA Directive and Planning and Development legislation. It also has regard to relevant parts of *EIA Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding sub-threshold development, 2003, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government* and *Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment, 2018, Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government*, and relevant EU Guidance including *Interpretation of definitions of project categories of annex I and II of the EIA Directive, 2015, EU and Guidance on EIA Screening, 2001, EC*. The consideration of potential impacts covers all significant direct, indirect and secondary impacts as may be relevant, with reference to the guidance and in compliance with the legislation, including the specified criteria for determining whether certain development types should be subject to EIA:

- (i) Characteristics of the proposal
- (ii) Location of the proposal
- (iii) Characteristics of potential impacts,

Descriptions of impacts follow the statutory EPA (draft) *Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (2017)*.

Information on the scheme has been obtained from documents supplied by Wicklow County Council including: scheme drawings and a written description.

This report covers:

- Description of the proposed scheme
- The legislative basis for EIA
- Screening considerations
- Conclusion

This report was prepared by Alan Lauder of *Alan Lauder Consulting* on Behalf of their Client, Wicklow County Council. An overview of the author’s competency is provided in Appendix 1.

2. Proposed Development

2.1 Overview of the scheme

Reconnect Wicklow – reconnect Wicklow centre to the port through its network of laneways. This project seeks to reanimate and revitalise the important links between the harbour, main street and the market square while at the same time highlighting Wicklow’s heritage. It sits in the urban setting of Wicklow Town and connects the main streets and market square with the quayside. To achieve this it includes several elements:

- A diversity bench with a fabric canopy will be placed by the Scouts Hall, at striking vantage point along the Vartry River, lit from behind by colour changing LED’s providing a ‘Rainbow’ coloured display.
- Parklet planting which will frame the “Red Door” will include sea kale herbs as well as pollinator plants.

- The revitalisation of the Doctors Steps with dynamic colourful murals and an LED lit stainless steel handrail thereby providing a safe and attractive enhancement of this derelict under used link to the South Quay.
- At Salthouse Lane, a quote from Seamus Heaney’s poem ‘The Shipping Forecast’ inspires the mural which honours the sailors and fishermen, also, mounted on this mural will be a back lit fabricated plate of a ship. The maritime theme is continued as you walk up the lane with another mural remembering the tradition and work of local fishermen. At the top of the lane as you join the Main Street, a mural will show the Vikings crashing into Wicklow creating a strong visual link to our ancient history.
- Quarantine man is to be a nod to the past and the present, an enduring beacon of light shining towards the Town, the Quay and out to sea. This fabrication, similar but larger to the back lit ship, will instead emit light outwards through various designed slots.
- At Market Street, a fun mural is proposed to welcome all visitors. Discussions with the Wicklow Town Team led to a proposed ‘Wicklow Town History/Timeline’ themed mural.

The concept drawings indicating the extent, layout and approach of the project are shown in Figure 1.

Town and Village - Reconnect the Quay

Concept Drawing - Part 8 (Wicklow County Council and Wicklow Town Team)

PROJECT DETAILS

Reconnecting Wicklow Town Centre and the South Quay through its network of laneways. The project seeks to reanimate and revitalise these important central links between South Quay, harbour and port, Main Street and the Market Square. The works will focus on the following: Public benches, canopy (at Scout Hall), decorative pedestrian street lighting along the three links, a parklet design garden and colourful marine themed murals.

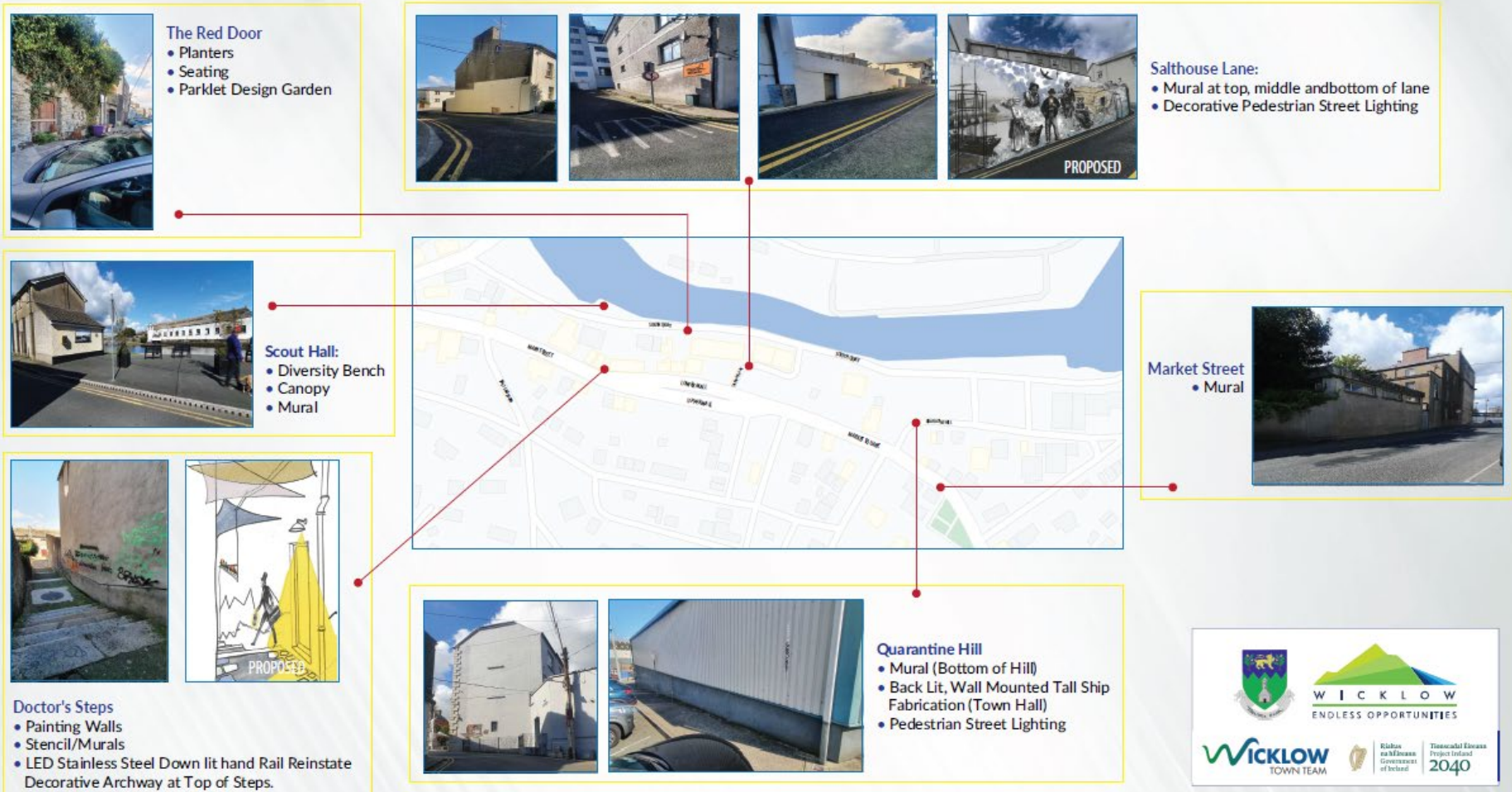


Figure 1: Site Layout of Proposed Project

3. The EIA Screening Process

3.1 Introduction

This section of the report sets out the legislative basis for ‘Screening’ so as to decide whether or not the proposed development requires the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).

3.2 Legislative Requirements

EIA requirements derive from Council Directive 85/337/EEC (as amended by Directives 97/11/EC, 2003/35/EC and 2009/31/EC) and as codified and replaced by Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and the Council on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (and as amended in turn by Directive 2014/52/EU). Directive 2014/52/EU is transposed into Irish law under the European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018.

Projects can be placed into one of the following categories:

- those that exceed the thresholds laid down and therefore have a mandatory requirement to prepare an EIS; and
- those projects that are sub-threshold and must be assessed on a case-by-case basis to determine whether or not they are likely to have significant effects on the environment;
- projects that fall under Annex II (13) (a) of the Directive for Any change or extension of projects listed in Annex I or Annex II, already authorised, executed in the process of being executed.

3.3 Methodology

Screening is the process of deciding whether a development requires an EIAR. The particulars of the assessment procedure are adopted through European Directives and correlate to the provisions set out in the Planning and Development Act 2001 (as amended). An EIA is required to be carried out as part of an application whereby the proposed development exceeds the limitations of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended). The methodology for screening generally considers the following documents:

- Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports;
- Interpretation of definitions of project categories of annex I and II of the EIA Directive (European Commission 2015);
- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-threshold Development (Environmental Protection Agency, 2003);
- Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Statements; and
- Guidelines on EIA Screening (The European Commission, June 2017).

The ‘Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports’ (Environmental Protection Agency, May 2022) provide a flow diagram of the screening process which is provided in Figure 2 below.

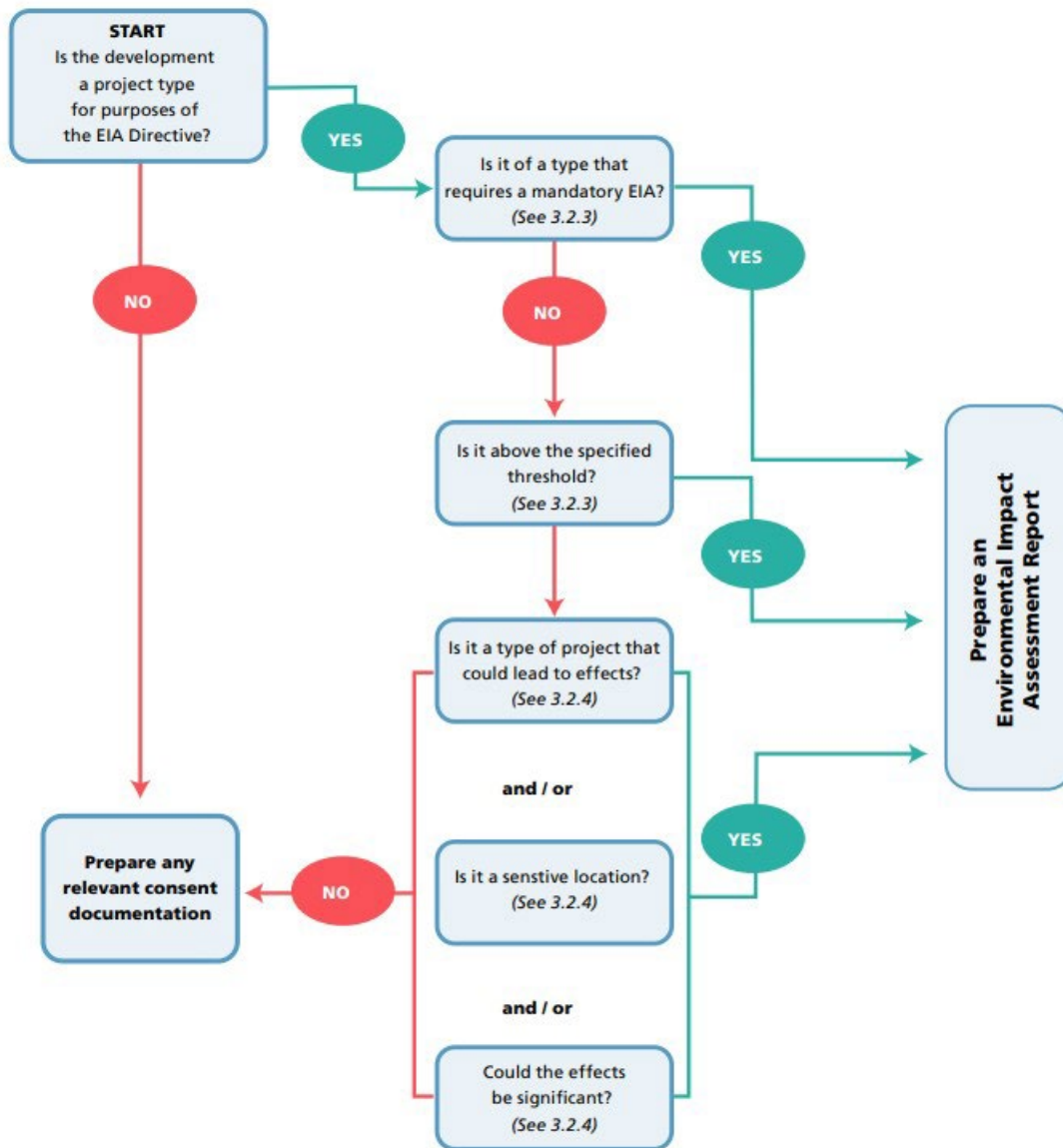


Figure 2 Diagram showing EIA Screening Process ('Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports') Environmental Protection Agency, May 2022

3.4 Mandatory EIA Review

EIA Directive 2011/92/EU, Annex 1 (transposed into the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) – Schedule 5, Part 1 – Development for the Purposes of Part 10) lists the project types that require a mandatory EIA due to the high likelihood of that project resulting in a significant effect on the environment.

The proposed project outlined in this screening report does not fall into any of these categories.

Those projects not requiring a mandatory EIA should be further considered under the relevant list of activities which warrant discretionary consideration for the requirement of an EIA. Subject to EIA Directive 2011/92/EU, Article 2(4), for the projects listed in Annex II. These project classes are included in Schedule 5, Part 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) and the project types included in Annex II are outlined in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Schedule 5, Part 2 - Class of Development

Schedule 5, Part 2 – Class of Development
1. Agriculture, Silviculture and Aquaculture
2. Extractive Industry
3. Energy Industry
4. Production and processing of metals
5. Mineral Industry
6. Chemical Industry
7. Food Industry
8. Textile, leather, wood and paper industries
9. Rubber Industry
10. Infrastructure projects
11. Other projects
12. Tourism and leisure
13. Changes, extensions, development and testing

In this case, further examination indicates that this development consists of minor changes to lighting and visual infrastructure for the purposes of tourism and leisure and does not constitute a type or extent of development which typically warrants discretionary EIA.

In addition the project has been screened for Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Directive and screens out.

Thus the development falls below the level for mandatory EIA and for discretionary EIA. For clarity further examination is included in section 4 below

4. Project Assessment

The development falls below the level for mandatory EIA and for discretionary EIA. For clarity, assessment of the characteristics, location and potential impacts of the development are included in Table 2-4 below.

Table 2 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

Characteristics of the Proposed Development	Assessment
The size and design of the project in its entirety	The footprint of the proposed project occupies a small disjointed area of < 0.5 ha within a maximum area extent of 1.5ha. It mainly uses existing urban infrastructure with minor additions to lighting, signage and street furniture.
Potential for impact from the project in cumulation with other existing and/or approved projects	The project is contained within an already developed urban area. There are no other relevant projects with cumulative impact potential
Use of natural resources (in particular land, water soil and biodiversity)	<p>The project is contained within an already developed urban area with suitable urban pollution control provision and no significant land, soil, water or biodiversity interest.</p> <p>The urban wildlife and water resources of the harbour area is of interest but this project is negligible in its potential to affect this interest.</p>
Production of waste	Any waste from construction will be managed by a in accordance with industry best practice and as per building and environmental regulations. It is anticipated that the construction and operational phases of the project would not result in the production of waste greater than that associated with comparable developments of this nature or to the extent that would have a significant impact on the environment.
Pollution and nuisances	<p>The construction phase will be carried out in accordance with industry best practice, as per building and environmental regulations. The urban environment of the project is already well served by urban wastewater management provision .</p> <p>It is anticipated that the construction and operational phases of the project would not result in pollution and nuisances greater than that associated with comparable developments or to the extent that would have a significant impact on the environment</p>
Risk of accident or disaster including those caused by climate change in accordance with scientific knowledge and;	The construction phase will be carried out in accordance with industry best practice, as per building and environmental regulations. The project is low risk, there are no major structures or significant landform change which might exacerbate risks of accident or disaster.
The risk to human health (e.g. water contamination or air pollution.	No significant pollution sources are identified. The project is a minor adaptation of existing infrastructure and lighting.

Characteristics of the proposed development - Conclusion:

The proposed development is low-key, small in size and entirely within an existing urban area. As a result there are no identified potential impacts.

Table 3 Location of Proposed Development

Location of the Proposed Development	Assessment
The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the proposed development with particular regard to:	
a) existing and approved land use	The project is intended to occupy an existing, developed, urban area of Wicklow Town
b) the relevant abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area	<p>The project is contained within an already developed urban area of Wicklow Town, with suitable urban pollution control provision and no significant land, soil, water or biodiversity interest.</p> <p>The urban wildlife and water resources of the harbour area is of interest but this project has negligible potential to affect this interest.</p>
<p>c) The absorption capacity of the natural environment with particular regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) wetlands ii) coastal zones iii) mountain and forest areas iv) nature reserves and parks v) areas protected under legislation including Natura 2000 area designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive vi) areas where environmental quality standards laid down by EC legislation have already been exceeded vii) densely populated areas viii) landscapes of historical, cultural or archaeological significance 	The project site lies within the urban area of Wicklow Town. It is a very small and localised project and will have no anticipated impacts on the natural environment. With regard to built or archaeological heritage the project aims include the enhancement of awareness of these aspects of the town.

Location of Proposed Development – Conclusion:

The proposed development is low-key, small in size and entirely within an existing urban area. As a result there are no identified potential impacts.

Table 4 Characteristics of Potential Impacts

Characteristics of Potential	Assessment
Impacts considering potential significant effects of the proposed project in relation to criteria set out in Tables 1 and 2 above and having particular regard to:	
a) the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (e.g. geographical area and the size of the population likely to be affected).	The footprint of the proposed project occupies a small disjointed area of < 0.5 ha within a maximum area extent of 1.5ha. It mainly uses existing urban

	infrastructure with minor additions to lighting, signage and street furniture.
b) the transboundary nature of the impact	N/A
c) the magnitude and complexity of the impact	No impacts of significance are anticipated, any impacts are short term and/or low level
d) the probability of the impact	Impacts are anticipated to be insignificant. Limited noise and traffic from construction activity to immediate neighbours is likely but will be short term and can be managed in such a way as to prevent significant nuisance.
e) the expected duration, frequency and reversibility of the project	The majority of impacts from the development will be associated during the construction stage. These impacts are likely to be highly temporary and will stop upon completion.
f) the cumulation of the impact with any existing developments or those subject to approval	No significant cumulative impacts are likely. The area is a busy urban environment and this development is low-key, relative to activity occurring within the area on a daily basis.
g) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact	Insignificant impacts during construction are temporary, reversible and 'once-off'.

Characteristics of impacts – Conclusion:

Impacts created by the proposed development are insignificant. Short term nuisance and will terminate upon construction completion.

5. Conclusion

The proposed development **screens out for EIAR** on the following basis:

- The proposed development screens out for Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Directive.
- The proposed development falls below the threshold for mandatory EIAR as it is not in a category which warrants this
- The proposed development falls below the thresholds for discretionary EIAR.
- Further consideration of impacts indicates any impacts will be insignificant due to the urban setting and low key nature of the project during construction combined with the aim of the project to enhance the visual quality of the urban setting.

Appendix 1: Relevant experience of the author

This report has been prepared by Alan Lauder (Owner/Principal Consultant) at Alan Lauder Consulting¹.

Alan gained an honours degree in Ecology from The University of Stirling in 1989 and is an experienced ecologist and environmental manager with over 33 years professional post-graduate experience. His relevant professional experience includes extensive planning related casework for state and non-governmental organisations within Scotland and Ireland, input to and preparation of site designations, Environmental Impact Statements & Assessments and a wide range of ecological assessments. Alan currently carries out a wide range of relevant work including EIA screening and reports, AA screening and NIS, management planning for designated sites and ecological assessment and advisory works for a wide range of commercial and state clients. He has attended a range of relevant training courses throughout his career including training in Appropriate Assessment from CIEEM (2016), undergraduate and professional courses in EIA.

¹ More information at www.alanlauderconsulting.com