

APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT

For the Proposed use of an Existing Integrated
Constructed Wetland (ICW) at the Miltown
Composting Licensed Site (Ref. W0270-01) for the
Discharge of Surface Water from Site Shed Roofs
and from Yard Surface Areas not related to the
Composting Process

ISSUE/REVISION INDEX

Revision				Pages Revised	Remarks
#	Prep.	Rev.	Date		
PA	BS	01	25/08/2016	All	Issue Draft for Internal Review
PB	JR	01	29/08/2016	All	Internal Review Complete
PC	JR	01	31/08/2016	All	Issue Final Document

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Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	1
1.1.	Aim of this Report	1
1.2.	Background	1
2.	Appropriate Assessment	1
2.1.	Requirement for an Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.	1
2.2.	Appropriate Assessment Guidance.....	2
2.3.	Stages in the Process.....	2
3.	Assessment Criteria	3
3.1.	Description of the Proposed Development	3
3.3.	Natura 2000 Sites in and within 15km of the ICW at Miltown Composting.....	4
3.3.1.	Powers Wood PNHA 000969.....	4
3.3.2.	Money Park PNHA 000966.....	4
3.3.3.	Grove Wood PNHA 00954.....	4
3.3.4.	The Lower River Suir SAC 002137	4
3.3.5.	Rockwell College Lake PNHA000970.....	5
3.3.6.	Quarryford Bridge PNHA 001526.....	5
3.3.8.	Slievenamoon Bog NHA 02388	6
3.4.	Assessment Criteria	6
3.4.1.	Individual elements likely to impact Natura 2000 sites.....	6
3.4.2.	Direct, indirect or secondary impacts on any Natura 2000 site:	6
3.4.3.	Likely changes to a Natura 2000 site;	7
3.4.4.	Likely impacts on the Natura 2000 site as a whole:.....	7
3.4.5.	Indicators of significance	8
3.4.6.	Overall impacts on the Natura 2000 sites.....	8
5.	Finding of No Significant Effects Matrix.....	9
5.1.	Assessment of Significance of Effects	9
6.	Conclusion.....	9

Attachment 1

Drawing 3201-001 – Natura 2000 Site Location Map

Attachment 2

Integrated Constructed Wetlands Area Drawing

1. Introduction

1.1. Aim of this Report

This report is the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (AA) or NIS for a proposal to use an existing Integrated Constructed Wetland (ICW) that exists on the Miltown Composting Licensed site (Ref. W0270-01) located in Miltownmore, Fethard, Co. Tipperary. The screening assessment was completed in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) and the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000 – 2010 (the Act).

1.2. Background

This AA is being completed as part of a proposal to allow the use of an existing Integrated Constructed Wetland (ICW) at the Miltown Composting Licensed site. The proposal is to re-direct surface water runoff from the facility shed roofs and yard surfaces not associated with the facility process that currently exits the site through a surface drainage ditch at SW-1 to the ICW for polishing and surface water quality improvement. A site specific assessment for the ICW completed for Miltown in 2016 indicated that the capacity of the ICW would be sufficient to result in zero discharge based on an input from approximately 2,500 m² of roof and yard surfaces. The area of the ICW is approximately 4,417m² which is in excess of the recommended sizing requirement. This larger area will provide increased capacity by reducing and eliminating discharge flows from the ICW due to evaporation and evapotranspiration. This would effectively result in a zero discharge from the site for surface water run-off from the facility sheds and non-process related yard surfaces.

2. Appropriate Assessment

2.1. Requirement for an Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

The requirement for an Appropriate Assessment is set out in the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). The aim of the European Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora) is to create a network of protected wildlife sites in Europe, maintained at a good conservation status. The network of sites is referred to as Natura 2000 sites. In Ireland, the Natura 2000 network of European sites comprises Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's, including candidate SACs), and Special Protection Areas (SPA's, including proposed SPA'S). SACs are selected for the conservation of vulnerable and threatened habitat types and species (other than birds). SPA's are selected for the conservation of vulnerable and threatened species of birds and other regularly occurring migratory birds, and their habitats.

The European Habitats Directive (EHD) (Council of the European Communities 1992) was transposed into Irish legislation by the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997. The Directive specifies the scientific criteria on the basis of which Natura 2000 sites must be selected and sets out various procedures and obligations in relation to the nature conservation management which must be undertaken for the purpose of ensuring the protection of the Natura 2000 sites.

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive states: *Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the*

competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.

Furthermore, Article 6(4) states: *If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted. Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest.*

2.2. Appropriate Assessment Guidance

The preparation of this AA has been informed by reference to the following guidance documents:

- EU Guidance Document on Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission 2007)
- MANAGING NATURA 2000 SITES. The provisions of Article 6, of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, (European Commission 2000).
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG 2009)
- Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites. Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission 2002)

2.3. Stages in the Process

Article 6 of the Habitats Directive provides a strict assessment procedure for any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but which has the potential to have implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. The Variation to the South Tipperary County Development Plan 2009-2015, therefore, falls under the remit of Article 6.

According to the European Commission's guidance document, it has become generally accepted that the assessment requirements of Article 6 establish a stage by stage approach. The stages proposed by the guidance document are:

Stage One: Screening. The process which identifies the likely impacts upon a Natura 2000 site of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant.

Stage Two: Appropriate Assessment. The consideration of the impact on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site of the project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site's structure and function and its conservation objectives. Additionally, where there are adverse impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of those impacts.

Stage Three: Assessment of Alternative Solutions. The process which examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site.

Stage Four: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain. An assessment of compensatory measures where, in the light of an assessment of imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI), it is deemed that the project or plan should proceed.

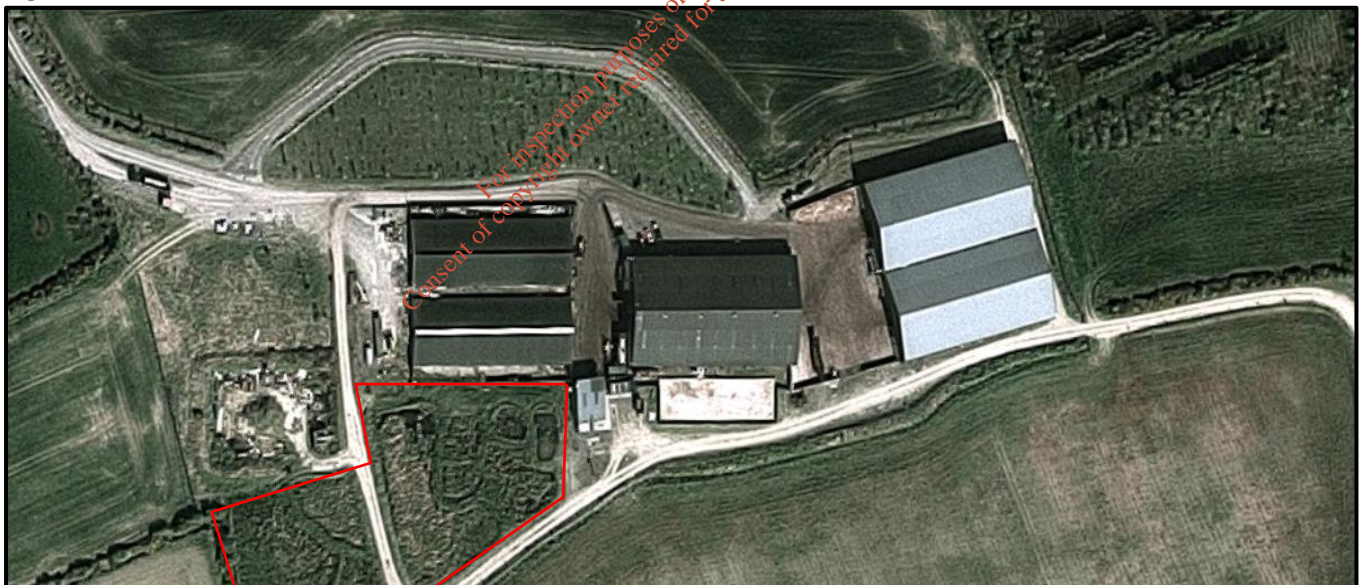
3. Assessment Criteria

Assessment Criteria/Screening Matrix

3.1. Description of the Proposed Development

This AA is being conducted as part of a proposal to re-direct surface water run-off from shed roofs and non-process related yard surfaces from an open drainage ditch to an Integrated Constructed Wetland (ICW) that already exists on the Miltown Composting site. The surface water currently discharges from the site via the current drain located at the south west corner of the site. It is considered that the use of the ICW would provide additional polishing of surface water quality prior to discharge from the site. The ICW is located to the south of the existing cattle sheds at the site, and have an area of approximately 4,417m² as seen in Figure 1 and Attachment 2.

Figure 1. Site Area



3.3. Natura 2000 Sites in and within 15km of the ICW at Miltown Composting

The zone of examination in respect to Natura 2000 Sites has been taken as a 15Km radius from the site, Table 1 and Drawing 3201-001 in Attachment 1.

Table 1; Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the ICW at Miltown Composting

Distance	Site	Ref. No.
5km	Powers Wood PNHA	000969
5.16km	Money Park PNHA	000966
5.3km	Grove Wood PNHA	00954
6km	The Lower River Suir SAC	002137
9.15km	Rockwell College Lake PNHA	000970
10.3km	Quarryford Bridge PNHA	001526
10.9km	Slievenamoon Bog NHA	002388

As can be seen from Table 1 there are a number of sites within the 15km zone, however there are no sites located within 5 km of the site.

The following provides a brief description of all the Natura 2000 sites found within 15km of the Integrated Constructed Wetlands at the Miltown Composting site. Full site descriptions and conservation objectives of each of the sites can be found at <http://www.npws.ie>.

3.3.1. Powers Wood PNHA 000969

The Natura 2000 site in closest proximity to the Integrated Constructed Wetland, Powers Wood is approximately 5km North West of site. Powers Wood and the surrounding area are frequently used for fox hunting.

3.3.2. Money Park PNHA 000966

Money Park is a townland bordering with Fethard in Co Tipperary. It is located approximately 5.16 km west of the Milltown Composting site. It covers an area of 0.15 km². The water treatment plant for the town of Fethard is located in Moneypark.

3.3.3. Grove Wood PNHA 00954

Grove Wood is a forest located approximately 5.3 km east of the Milltown Composting site. The forest is adjacent to the Clashawley River which is a tributary of the river Anner and the river falls under the Lower River Suir SAC.

3.3.4. The Lower River Suir SAC 002137

Lower River Suir SAC at its closest point is approximately 6km from the Miltown Composting site. The SAC consists of the freshwater stretches of the River Suir immediately south of Thurles, the tidal influence stretches as far as the confluence with the Barrow/Nore immediately east of Cheekpoint in Co. Waterford, and many tributaries including the Clodiagh in Co. Waterford, the Lingaun, Anner, Nier, Tar, Aherlow, Multeen and Clodiagh in Co. Tipperary. The Suir and its tributaries flow through the counties of Tipperary, Kilkenny and Waterford. The river Clashawley is a tributary of the river Anner and is located approximately 6km South East of the site.

The site is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) selected for the following habitats and/or species listed on Annex I / II of the E.U. Habitats Directive (* = priority; numbers in brackets are Natura 2000 codes):

- [1330] Atlantic Salt Meadows
- [1410] Mediterranean Salt Meadows
- [3260] Floating River Vegetation
- [6430] Hygrophilous Tall Herb Communities
- [91A0] Old Oak Woodlands
- [91E0] Alluvial Forests*
- [91J0] Yew Woodlands*
- [1029] Freshwater Pearl Mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera*)
- [1092] White-clawed Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*)
- [1095] Sea Lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*)
- [1096] Brook Lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*)
- [1099] River Lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*)
- [1103] Twaite Shad (*Alosa fallax*)
- [1106] Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo salar*)
- [1355] Otter (*Lutra lutra*)

The site is of particular conservation interest for the presence of a number of Annex II animal species, including Freshwater Pearl Mussel (both *Margaritifera* and *M. margaritifera* subsp. *durrovensis* occur), White-clawed Crayfish, Salmon, Twaite Shad (*Alosa fallax fallax*), three species of Lampreys - Sea Lamprey, Brook Lamprey and River Lamprey, and Otter. This is one of only three known spawning grounds in the country for Twaite Shad. The site also supports populations of several other animal species. Those which are listed in the Irish Red Data Book include Daubenton's Bat, Natterer's Bat, Pipistrelle Bat, Pine Marten, Badger, Irish Hare, Smelt and Common Frog. Breeding stocks of Carp are found in Kilsheelan Lake. This is one of only two lakes in the country which is known to have supported breeding Carp. Carp require unusually high summer water temperatures to breed in Ireland. As the site is therefore unusual in this regard, it may also support interesting invertebrate populations.

Parts of the site have also been identified as of ornithological importance for a number of Annex I (E.U. Birds Directive) bird species, including Greenland White fronted Goose (10), Golden Plover (1,490), Whooper Swan (7) and Kingfisher

3.3.5. Rockwell College Lake PNHA000970

The lake at Rockwell College is approximately 9.15 km West of the Miltown Composting site. The lake is man-made and covers roughly 23 acres.

3.3.6. Quarryford Bridge PNHA 001526

Quarryford Bridge is in the lower river Suir catchment area and is approximately 10.3km from the Miltown Composting site.

3.3.8. Slievenamoon Bog NHA 02388

Slievenamoon Bog NHA consists primarily of upland blanket bog and is located approximately 10.9 km southeast of the Milltown Composting site. The site is situated within fifteen different townland areas, including Ballyknockane, Ballypatrick, Brenormore, Tober, Killusty North, Killavally, and Killurney. The mountain ranges in altitude from 300 m to 721 m and it stands as an isolated feature, surrounded by the low-lying landscape of South Tipperary. Granites and sandstones form the underlying geology.

Slievenamoon Bog NHA is a site of considerable conservation significance. It contains a good example of upland blanket bog. The site is reasonably diverse in terms of species and communities due to local variation. Blanket bog habitat is a globally scarce resource. It is largely confined to coastal regions at temperate latitudes with cool, wet, oceanic climates. North-west Europe contains some of the best-developed areas of blanket bog in the world. The most extensive areas are found in Ireland and Britain. Upland blanket bogs, due to their exposure to severe climatic conditions at high elevations, are particularly vulnerable to erosion by human activities and extensive areas are currently undergoing active erosion due mainly to overgrazing. The current area of intact upland blanket bog in Ireland represents only a fraction of the original resource, due to the combined impacts of afforestation and overgrazing, and intact examples are therefore extremely valuable for nature conservation. Their long-term survival requires sensitive management.

3.4. Assessment Criteria

Appropriate Assessments identify and outline the impacts that might, either alone or in combination with another plan or project, adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000 site.

3.4.1. Individual elements likely to impact Natura 2000 sites

Considering the positive and contained nature of the use of the Integrated Constructed Wetland at the Milltown Composting site, it is envisaged that there will be no individual elements that are likely to impact on any Natura 2000 sites in the immediate vicinity of the site or within a 15km radius.

3.4.2. Direct, indirect or secondary impacts on any Natura 2000 site:

a) size and scale, area and land-take

The size, scale, area and land take of the use of the Integrated Constructed Wetland will be nil as the proposal is to make use of an existing integrated constructed wetland on the Milltown site for additional natural treatment of site surface water prior to discharge from site.

b) Distance from the Natura 2000 site or key feature of the site

There are eight Natura 2000 sites located within 15km of the integrated constructed wetlands at the Milltown site ranging from 5km North West (Powers Wood PNHA) and 11.5 km south of the Site (Marfield Lake PNHA). Considering the positive nature of the use of the Integrated Constructed Wetland at Milltown it is envisaged that there will be no adverse impact on any Natura 2000 sites in the direct vicinity or within a 15km radius.

c) Resource requirements (water abstraction etc.)

There are no water abstraction requirements for the use of the Integrated Constructed Wetland.

d) Emissions and Waste (disposal to land, water or air).

The only discharge to water from the facility is from surface water runoff from the facility roof and yard area that is not associated with the composting process. The surface water currently discharges from the site at point SW-1 at the southwest corner of the site via an open drainage ditch. The open drainage ditch is ultimately linked to the River Moyle, however the confluence with the River Moyle is approximately 1.8 km from the site with agricultural lands located along the extent of the drainage ditch. With the proposed use of the ICW, the surface water runoff from the facility roof and yard area will be diverted to the ICW instead of directly to the open surface water drainage ditch. In the ICW, surface water will be further polished by natural treatment within the ICW before final discharge from Pond 8 back to the surface water drainage ditch at the northwest corner of the ICW. The intent would be that by the time the surface water reaches the eighth pond in the ICW network that the concentrations of all contaminants of concern would meet the regulatory limit set down in European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Water) Regulations, 2009.

e) Transportation Requirements

There will be no additional transportation requirements related to the ICW.

f) Duration of Construction, operation, decommissioning

The proposed use of the ICW is for polishing and improving the quality of surface water from the Miltown Composting site. The ICW is already in place so there is no proposed disturbance from site construction. The only works that may take place in relation to the ICW would be diversion of surface water from the existing surface water drainage ditch to the inlet to Pond 1 of the ICW. The ICW is a natural process that is considered a system that would continue to provide environmental benefit and it is not anticipated that it would be decommissioned.

3.4.3. Likely changes to a Natura 2000 site;

The following, a) to f), describe potential impacts that use of the Integrated Constructed Wetland within or in close to a Natura 2000 site could have;

- a) Reduction of habitat area
- b) Disturbance to key species
- c) Habitat or species fragmentation
- d) Reduction in Species Density
- e) Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.)
- f) Climate change

It is considered that the use of the Integrated Constructed Wetland will not give rise to any significant changes or pose any adverse impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site.

3.4.4. Likely impacts on the Natura 2000 site as a whole:

In terms of;

- a) Interference with the key relationship that define the structure of the site

The proposed use of the ICW at the Miltown Composting site will not impact on the relationships that define the structure of Natura 2000 sites in the area.

- b) Interference with key relationships that define the function of the site

The proposed use of the ICW at the Miltown Composting site will not impact on the relationships that define the function of Natura 2000 sites in the area.

3.4.5. Indicators of significance

As a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of;

- a) Loss
- b) Fragmentation
- c) Disruption
- d) Disturbance
- e) Change to key elements of the site (e.g. water quality etc.).

The proposed use of the ICW at the Miltown Composting site is of such a character, scale and distance from the closest Natura 200 site that it will not give rise to any significant adverse impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site.

3.4.6. Overall impacts on the Natura 2000 sites.

The proposed use of the ICW at the Miltown Composting site will not give rise to any significant adverse impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site.

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5. Finding of No Significant Effects Matrix

Proposed Development	Use of an Integrated Constructed Wetland (ICW)
Name & Location of Natura 2000 sites	Powers Wood PNHA (5km) Money Park PNHA (5.16km) Grove Wood PNHA (5.3km) The Lower River Suir SAC (6km) Rockwell College Lake PNHA (9.15km) Quarryford Bridge PNHA (10.3km) Slievenamoon Bog NHA(10.9km)
Description of the project	To divert surface water discharge from the site building roofs, and yard areas not directly associated with the composting process, to an existing ICW to provide natural polishing of surface water quality prior to discharge from site.
Is the project directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site	It is directly connected with the management of the site as it relates to the surface water discharges from the site
Are there other projects or plans that together with the project plan being assessed could affect the site	No

5.1. Assessment of Significance of Effects

Describe how the project or plan (alone or in combination) is likely to affect the Natura 2000 sites	It is considered that the use of the ICW for surface water treatment and polishing prior to discharge from the site will improve surface water quality discharged from the site and have no significant adverse impact on the Natura 2000 network.
Explain why these effects are not considered significant	The Integrated Constructed Wetland is contained within a currently operational site. The closest Natura 2000 site is located approximately 5km North West of site. There will be no construction work involved with the development and the use of the ICW is for the improvement of surface water quality discharged from the site and should provide an environmental benefit rather than impact. Given the site location in relation to the closest Natura 2000 site and the proposed positive benefit of the use of the ICW it is not considered that the proposal will have a significant effect on any Natura 200 site.
Information Sources	National Parks & Wildlife Services Biodiversity Ireland National Biodiversity Data Centre

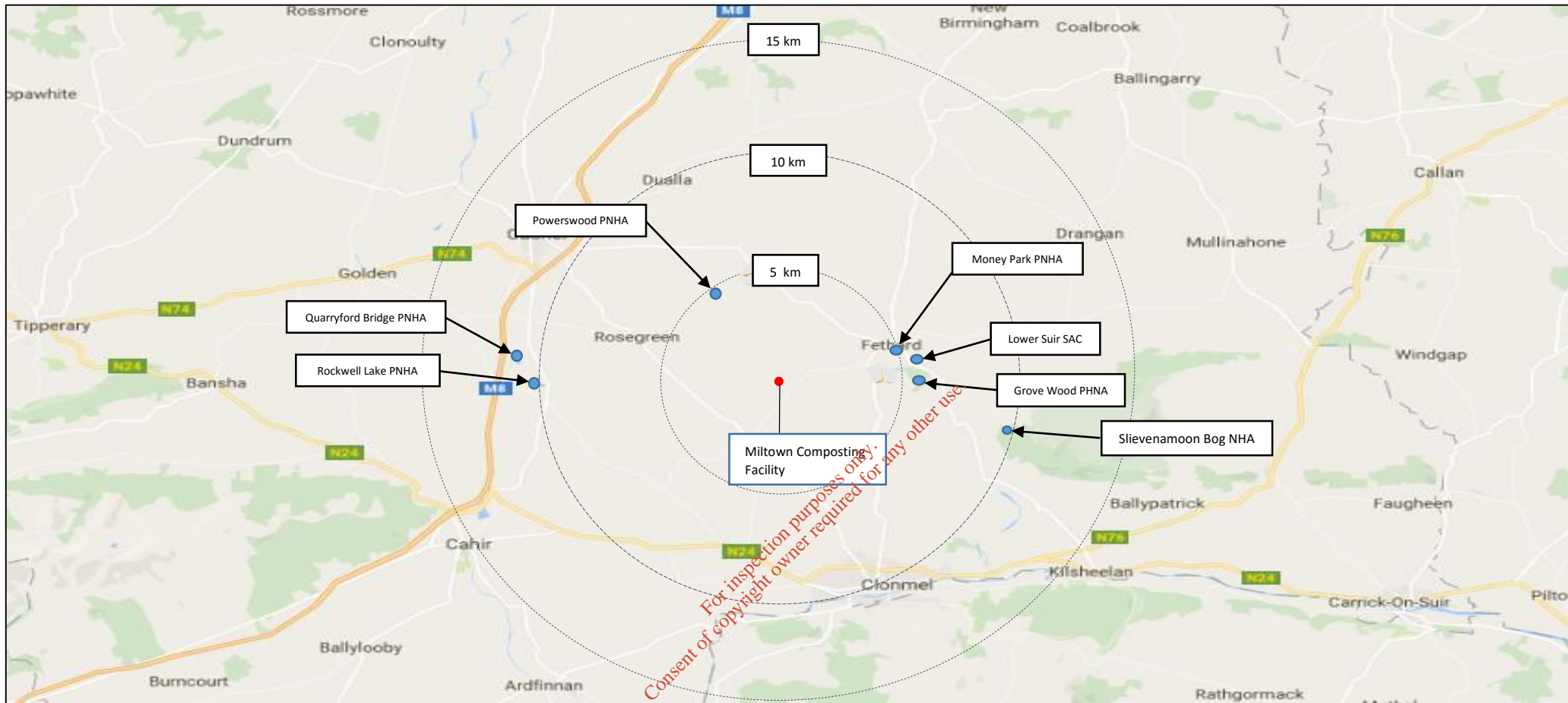
6. Conclusion


It is considered that the proposed use of the Integrated Constructed Wetland (ICW) at the Miltown Composting facility will not give rise to any significant adverse water or atmospheric impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site, alone or in combination with any other plan or project in the area. The ICW is already in existence and will not require any construction inputs. The use of the ICW is considered to be an environmental benefit to the area and there are no known significant emissions to water or atmosphere from the development.

ATTACHMENT 1

Drawing 3201-001 – Natura 2000 Site Location Map

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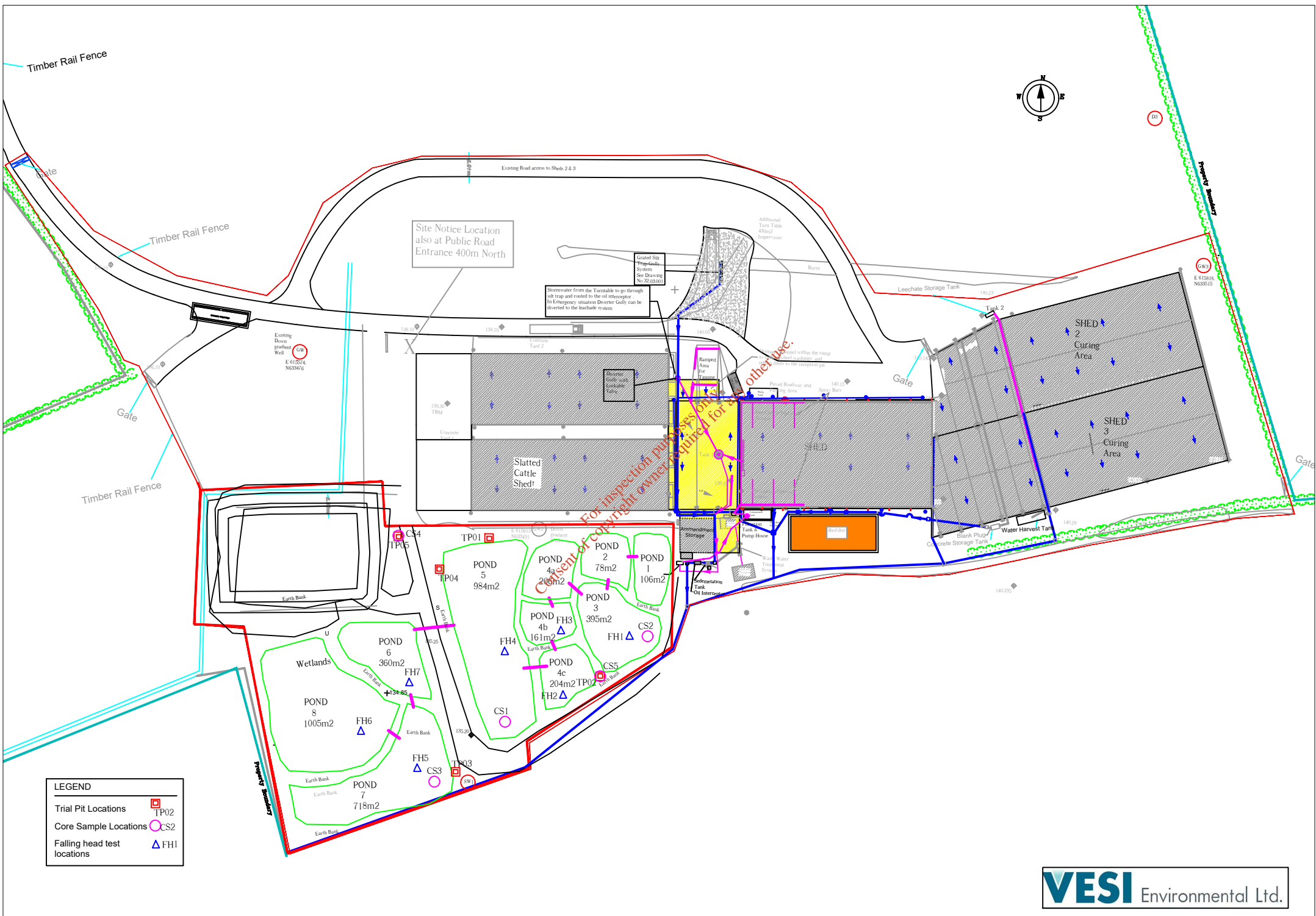


	CLIENT: Miltown Composting Ltd.	LOCATION: Miltown Mór, Fethard, Co. Tipperary	DATE: 31/08/16
	TITLE: Natura 2000 Site Location Map	DRAWING REF: 3201-001	LEGEND

ATTACHMENT 2

Integrated Constructed Wetlands Area Drawing

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LEGEND	
Trial Pit Locations	TP02
Core Sample Locations	CS2
Falling head test locations	FH1