

5 HUMAN BEINGS

5.1 Introduction

This section discusses the key issues affecting human beings, and the potential impacts of the acceptance of up to 75,000m³ of peat within the existing activity boundary of the Srahmore Peat Deposition site. The issues discussed include population, language and culture, employment and economic climate, tourism and health and safety. A community and socio-economic impact assessment in respect of the onshore pipeline development, and which contains overlapping demographic and other analysis, as contained in this Section, is included in Chapter 6 of Volume 1 of the EIS.

5.2 Study Methodology

A desk study was carried out in order to examine all relevant information pertaining to Human Beings in the area. The Mayo County Development Plan 2008-2014 was examined, along with relevant census data from the Central Statistics Office (CSO).

Fáilte Ireland tourist literature for Mayo, and websites of relevant tourism sites and amenities in the area, were examined. In addition, Ordnance Survey maps were used to identify landuse and possible amenity and tourist sites located in proximity to the existing Peat Deposition site. Site visits were undertaken in August 2008 and in March 2010.

5.3 Receiving Environment

5.3.1 Population

The population of the state grew from 3,917,203 persons to 4,239,828 persons between 2002 and 2006, representing an increase of 8.2% in four years. The 2006 population is the highest recorded population in Ireland since 1861, with 16.9% growth over the ten year period (CSO, 2006). The population of I gContae Maigh Eo(County Mayo) experienced an increase of 11.1% between 1996 and 2006.

As shown in Table 5.1, the population of the Béal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet) Rural District has continually decreased, with the decline becoming more marked in recent years. At the local level, the site is located within the District Electoral Division of Guala Mhór (Goolamore). However, given that the Srahmore peat land is immediately adjacent to the boundary of the Baingear (Bangor) DED, the analysis of population in relation to the local community includes both the Guala Mhór (Goolamore) and Baingear (Bangor) DEDs (hereafter referred to as the An Srath Mór ‘Srahmore area’). The An Srath Mór Srahmore area experienced a population decrease between 1996 and 2006, followed by a slight population growth in the 2002-2006 period.

In 2006, the local population of the An Srath Mór (Srahmore) area represented almost 8% of the population of the greater Béal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet) rural district, and 0.5% of the population of I gContae Maigh Eo (County Mayo).

The village of Baingear-Iorras (Bangor Erris) (population 295 no. persons in 2006 Census) is situated approximately 1.5km east of the existing peat deposition area.

There are approximately 40 residences located immediately north of the Srahmore Peat Deposition site, distributed linearly along the R313 and the county road heading north along the eastern shores of the Carrowmore lake. South of the existing site, there are approximately 30 dwellings located along a county road, along with a number of agricultural buildings and several derelict houses. The majority of these dwellings are located to the south of the Owenmore River. There are no dwellings located immediately west of the site, between the bog complex and the Munhin River.

This population density would be typical for rural areas in the Iorras (Erris) region outside the main settlements. As a consequence of existing and likely proposed planning policies restricting rural housing, it is not expected that this number will increase significantly in the medium to long term.

Table 5.1: Population Change 1996 – 2006 (CSO)

Year ► Area ▼	Population			% Population Change		
	1996	2002	2006	1996-2002	2002-2006	1996-2006
Ireland	3,626,087	3,917,203	4,239,848	8.0%	8.2%	16.9%
County Mayo	111,524	117,446	123,839	8.0%	5.4%	11.1%
Béal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet) Rural District	8,339	7,927	7,923	-4.9	-0.1	-5.0
Guala Mhór (Goolamore) & Bangor (i.e. including the Srahmore Peat Deposition site)	658	631	633	-4.1	0.3%	-3.8

(Source: Census of Population, 1996-2006)

5.3.2 Household Numbers & Size

Census of Population trends indicates that the average household size in Ireland is gradually declining over time. Between 1996 and 2006, the national average household size fell from 3.14 to 2.81 persons per household. The average household size for I gContae Maigh Eo (County Mayo) is slightly lower, with a figure of 2.75 persons per household.

As shown in Table 5.2, the average household size in the Srahmore Area has steadily decreased from 3.50 to 2.92 between 1996 and 2006. This is in accordance with trends at national and county level.

Table 5.2: Household Numbers & Size

Households	1996		2002		2006	
	No.	Avg. Size (persons)	No.	Avg. Size (persons)	No.	Avg. Size (persons)
Guala Mhór (Goolamore)	55	3.53	54	3.09	51	2.94
Bangor	134	3.46	141	3.24	160	2.91
Srahmore Area Total	189	3.50	195	3.16	211	2.92

(Source: Small Area Population Statistics, 1996-2002)

The number of households in the Srahmore area remained steady at 189 in 1996, rising by 3.2% in 2002 and by a further 8.2% in 2006 (See Table 5.2). The vast majority of these households are situated in the Baingear (Bangor) DED i.e. the rural area surrounding the village of Baingear-Iorras (Bangor Erris).

5.3.3 Employment

Poor employment growth is a feature of lagging economic development and there is a correlation between this measure and the state of the region's infrastructure, low labour force participation rates and higher rates of outward migration.

The level and growth in employment in the Western Counties (i.e. those west of the Shannon) is shown in Table 5.3 and gives a context within which to view the employment performance of I gContae Maigh Eo (County Mayo). Between 1996 and 2002, while the region experienced employment growth of 22.8%, the level of growth in I gContae Maigh Eo (County Mayo), was below the national average of 28.1%.

In the 2002 to 2006 period, employment growth across the country has continued to increase, with the national average growth being 17.6%. The corresponding figures for the West region and I gContae Maigh Eo (County Mayo) are 19.0% and 16.8% respectively. This rate of employment growth in Maigh Eo (Mayo), while slightly below the regional average, is higher than the rates of growth in Counties Clare and Sligo.

Table 5.3: Employment Growth in the West – Persons aged 15 and over at Work

County/Region	1996	2002	2006	% Change 1996-2002	% Change 2002-2006
Mayo	36,583	44,764	52,277	22.4	16.8
Galway	67,497	85,210	104,495	26.2	22.6
Donegal	39,811	48,379	56,670	21.5	17.1
Sligo	20,204	23,927	27,328	18.4	14.2
Leitrim	8,518	9,990	12,669	17.3	26.8
Roscommon	18,559	21,270	25,829	14.6	21.4
Clare	34,572	43,679	50,607	26.3	15.9
Total 'West'	225,744	277,219	329,875	22.8	19.0
Ireland	1,307,236	1,641,587	1,930,042	25.6	17.6
Leinster	715,137	916,027	1,077,710	28.1	17.6

(Source: Central Statistics Office, 2006)

The figures above relate to census data only and since the last census in 2006 there have been significant changes in employment figures in Ireland.

An examination has been carried out of the recent Live Register figures for the Béal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet) area, which is representative of the population in the vicinity of the Srahmore Area. These figures show an overall decrease in the number of persons claiming unemployment benefit over a seven-year period 2000 to 2007 (See Table 5.4), however numbers on the live register have increased in subsequent years of 2008-2010.

Table 5.4: Average Number of Persons on Live Register in Béal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet)

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Average No. Of Persons	935	822	778	811	599	554	515	474	563	851	1,016*

(Source: Central Statistics Office, 2010) *Based on Jan & Feb 2010 figures only

5.3.4 Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing

Low intensity sheep and livestock farming typify agricultural activity in the area immediately surrounding the existing Peat Deposition Site. There is also a limited amount of silage production, dairy farming and organic farming. Forestry in the area is primarily controlled by Coillte however there are pockets of private plantations. The majority of the plantations are coniferous.

There are five main fishing ports on the coastline close to the proposed development at Portulin, Ballyglass, Rinnroe, French Port and tidally at Béal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet). These ports are used as bases for fishing trawlers and smaller fishing boats. There is also a

crab factory at Portulin and there is currently one licensed oyster culturing facility within Sruwaddacon Bay. There is also a natural oyster fishery in Blacksod Bay.

5.3.5 Tourism

County Mayo

County Mayo is a largely rural area with rich scenic resources and a distinctive culture. The economy is heavily dependent on the declining sectors of agricultural and fishing. Large proportions of I gContae Maigh Eo (County Mayo) are designated as proposed National Heritage Areas (NHAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). In addition, the area is also rich in cultural resources through language, history, literature, archaeology and vernacular building traditions. Visitors are attracted to the region for its tranquillity, landscape and traditional community structure.

I gContae Maigh Eo (County Mayo) is also well known for its museums and visitor attractions and has an abundance of festivals throughout the year, mostly during the summer months. Summer schools to learn or improve Irish language skills and schools to study English are hosted throughout the County. In this regard, a major element of the tourism industry in the Gaeltacht areas relates to Irish language schools for school children, students and others.

Tourism has increasingly become an engine for growth in the County. In parallel, the expansion and marketing of tourism resources in the County has been facilitated by improvements in access infrastructure to, from and within the area and wider region, particularly by road and air.

There is still considerable potential to develop the tourism resource of I gContae Maigh Eo (County Mayo) further, particularly in the more remote and sparsely populated areas. The Mayo County Development Plan 2008-2014 states that the,

‘Promotion and development of tourism in the County must be underpinned by protection of the natural environment, including appropriate and sensitive development, the provision of infrastructure developments in general, and tourist-related infrastructure and facilities in particular’ (Ref; Section 1.2.7).

The Barony of Erris

The site of the existing Peat Deposition Site is located in the Barony of Iorras (Erris), with Broadhaven Bay to the north and the Atlantic to the west. Parts of Iorras (Erris) are classified as Gaeltacht, where Irish survives as a community language. The Barony of Iorras (Erris) stretches from the village of Belderrig and the Céide Fields in the North East to the villages of Baile Chruaich (Ballycroy) and Caorthannán (Castlehill) in the South, and includes Blacksod Bay, The Mullet Peninsula and Broadhaven Bay.

The Céide Fields, situated on the R314 coastal road from Ballina, 8km west of Baile an Chaisil (Ballycastle), is the site of a 5,000-year-old Neolithic farm site discovered beneath the blanket bog. These fields are the oldest known field systems in the world. The Céide Fields visitor centre explains the stone-age landscape of the North Mayo coast.

Another feature of the landscape is the North Mayo Sculpture Trail (Tir Saile), which begins in Ballina, and follows the coastal route through Cill Ala (Killala), Baile an Chaisil (Ballycastle), Béal Deirg (Belderg), Béal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet) and down to An Fód Dubh (Blacksod). This unique trail of 15 site-specific sculptures encompasses miles of rugged coastline. Seven of these sculptures are to be found in the Barony of Iorras (Erris).

Carrowmore Lake is the largest lake in Iorras (Erris), covering an area of approximately 2000 acres. It is home to a variety of birdlife, especially during winter months when Teal, Mallard, Chelduck, Widgeon and Brent goose are among the species to be spotted.

Tourism in the Area Local to the Existing Peat Deposition Area

The area immediately adjacent to the Peat Deposition Site has a limited amount of tourist attractions. The R313 is a route used by tourists travelling from Baingear (Bangor) to the Mullet Peninsula. Tourist traffic in this area mainly focuses on hill walking, fishing, horse riding and the North Mayo Sculpture Trail. The main centres for tourism nearest the site are Baingear-Iorras (Bangor Erris), Gleann na Muaidhe (Glenamoy), Poll an tSómais (Pollatomish), Ros Dumhach (Rosspport), Béal Deirg (Belderg), Béal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet), Gleann an Ghad (Glencad) and An tInbhear (Inbher).

Recreation and Sport

Recreation and sporting activities are varied and well served in the wider area surrounding the existing Peat Deposition Site. There are GAA Clubs in Baingear-Iorras (Bangor Erris), Gleann na Muaidhe (Glenamoy), Ros Dumhach (Rosspport), Béal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet) and An Droim (Drum). Baingear-Iorras (Bangor Erris) also has a soccer club. Other past time and sports which are actively pursued in the area include:

- Swimming,
- Watersports,
- Golf,
- Cycling,
- Hill Walking,
- Fishing,
- Snooker,
- Darts,
- Tug-o-war,
- Bingo, and
- Drama and musical groups.

5.3.6 Language and Culture

The existing Peat Deposition Site and surrounding area is located near a Gaeltacht area. The term "Gaeltacht" describes those areas where the Irish language is the community language. Údarás Na Gaeltachta is the Regional Development Agency in Ireland with responsibility for the economic, social and cultural development of the Gaeltacht regions, ensuring the continuation of the Irish language as the spoken language of the community in these regions.

The Irish language is one of the oldest written languages in Europe and has a strong and rich literary tradition. The oral tradition has played a major role in the survival of Irish as a living language.

The Gaeltacht areas were established to encourage an unbroken link with a past that saw Irish as the main language in Ireland. They are seen as a vital lynch-pin for the transmission of Irish as a community language to the next generation.

5.4 Description of the Proposed Development

5.4.1 Introduction

This Volume 3 of the EIS is prepared for a development comprising the transport to and the deposition of up to 75,000m³ of peat at the Srahmore Peat Deposition site. Up to 75,000m³ of peat will be generated during the construction of the onshore pipeline development. The Srahmore Peat Deposition site has previously been successfully utilised for the deposition of approximately 448,000m³ of peat from the Bellanaboy Bridge Gas Terminal site. The Srahmore Peat Deposition site is located to the west of the village of Baingear-Iorras (Bangor Erris), immediately south of the R313 route.

5.4.2 Environmental Emissions

The environmental emissions from the continuation of this development may have the potential to negatively impact on humans include air, noise, water and traffic. The nature and extent of the environmental emissions during its continued operation, together with appropriate mitigation measures, are discussed in detail in the relevant sections of this Volume of the EIS.

5.5 Impacts of the Proposed Development

5.5.1 Operational Impacts

Owing to the existing infrastructure within the site, there is no requirement for significant construction within the site. Some minor maintenance is proposed to upgrade certain aspects of the site.

While the peat is being transferred, a traffic management plan will be implemented in the area, including a temporary signalling/advance warning signage arrangement at the junction of the L1204 county road to the R313 route. Further details of this are provided in Chapter 16 of this Volume of the EIS.

Population, Employment and Economic Impacts

The effects on population and the economy from the development will not be significant in the longer term. However, it is estimated that the manning requirement for the peat deposition activity would be up to 35 people for the duration of the activities. .

Architectural Heritage

With reference to the Mayo County Development Plan, there are no protected structures that will be affected by the continued deposition of peat on the site. The site area has experienced a significant level of disturbance through being worked as an industrial peatland over the past forty years and as a Peat Deposition Site in the last number of years. There will be no further effect on the architectural heritage of the area as a result of the continued development of the site.

Agriculture Forestry and Fishing

It is not expected that there would be any negative impact on agriculture, forestry or fishing during peat deposition with implementation and maintenance of the mitigation measures outlined elsewhere in this Volume 3 of the EIS.

Tourism

A number of tourism centres have been identified in the county. However, most major attractions are sufficiently remote from the existing Peat Deposition Site for their associated visitors to be unaffected by the peat deposition activity. During the deposition period, visitors to the local area who have to pass by the Srahmore Peat Deposition site will notice site activity.

There will be increased traffic movements on the haul routes during the deposition period with the movement of heavy commercial vehicles to and from the site. Details of this are provided in Chapter 16 of this Volume of the EIS. These increased traffic levels should not impact significantly on local tourism.

During the deposition phase there will be some disturbance in terms of noise, visual impact, and increased levels of heavy commercial vehicles traffic upon the local population.

It is not envisaged that the local fishing industry and angling attractions will be disturbed by the peat deposition operation at the Srahmore Peat Deposition site, with implementation and maintenance of the necessary mitigation measures outlined in this Volume of the EIS.

The operation of this facility will not affect any known recreational routes. The site is

visible from local roads and tracks used in the area. However this activity will be restricted to a relatively short timeframe and the rehabilitated site will ultimately blend with the surrounding landscape. Maintaining infrastructure long term and the buildings short term (during the stabilisation process) will not be a significant visual impact within the wider rehabilitated peatland context.

Recreation and Sport

The site is currently not used for any form of recreational activity. In this regard, it is not expected that there will be any significant negative impact on local recreation or sporting facilities, as a result of the proposed peat transfer and deposition activities.

Health and Safety

Peat transfer and deposition activities at the Srahmore Peat Deposition site will be subject to Bord na Móna health and safety procedures, carried out according to best practice guidelines.

Environmental Emissions

The impact of the environmental emissions from the peat deposition site is discussed individually in each of the relevant chapters of this EIS. Each individual section discusses the likely impacts during the operational phase of emissions on humans, flora and fauna and the environment, where relevant.

5.5.2 Long Term Impact of the Proposed Development

Population, Language and Culture

The long term effects of the peat transfer and deposition activities on population, language and culture are negligible.

Employment and Economic Impacts

The transfer and deposition of peat to the Srahmore Peat Deposition site will, in the short term, create and sustain an estimated 35 jobs. However, there will be no significant long-term impact on employment due to the peat deposition activity.

Agriculture Forestry and Fishing

It is not expected that there would be any long-term negative impact on agriculture, forestry or fishing so long as the mitigation measures outlined elsewhere in this Volume of the EIS are implemented.

Tourism

In the long term this development will not negatively impact on the visual amenity in the Srahmore area, as the cutover peatland will revegetate naturally as has been the case previously. This will have an overall positive impact on visual amenity and therefore on

tourism. Other than minor traffic delays due to operational traffic, which may occur during the tourist season, there will be no significant impact. There are no significant tourist attractions that will be visually impacted upon directly.

With the appropriate mitigation measures employed as detailed in the other sections of this Volume of the EIS, there will be no impact on fisheries or the natural resources of the area as a result of emissions. In this regard, the important local tourist resources of fishing, hill walking and horse riding will not be negatively impacted.

It is therefore anticipated that the long term impacts on tourism and recreation as a result of the development will be slight in terms of their magnitude.

Recreation and Sport

Given the nature of the development, it is not expected that there will be any significant negative impact on local recreation or sporting activities or facilities as a result of the peat transfer and deposition activities.

5.5.3 Environmental Emissions

The impact of the environmental emissions from the continued deposition of peat is discussed in each of the relevant sections of this Volume of the EIS. Each individual section discusses the likely impacts during the operation phase of emissions on humans, flora and fauna and the environment, where relevant.

5.6 Mitigation Measures

There are no mitigation measures required in relation to the transfer and deposition of peat at the subject site, except for the implementation of a Traffic Management Plan, as part of the traffic impact mitigation measures. Bord na Móna safety procedures will be implemented during the deposition of peat.

5.7 Monitoring

There will be no need for monitoring over and above that identified elsewhere in this Volume of the EIS. Environmental Monitoring will continue on site in line with the requirements of the Waste Licence Review.

5.8 Do Nothing Scenario

If the continued deposition of peat does not occur the site will remain as is, with remaining void space.

5.9 Reinstatement and Residual Impacts

No reinstatement having regard to human beings is required as a result of this development.