An Roinn Comhshaoil,
Aeráide agus Cumarsáide
Department of the Environment,
Climate and Communications

Geological Survey
Suirbhéireacht Gheolaíochta
Ireland | Éireann

[redacted]
CAP Rural Development Division,
4C Agriculture House,
Kildare St.
D02 WK12

25 March 2021

Re: Scoping for Environmental Report of the CAP Strategic Plan 2023-2027
Your Ref: n/a
Our [redacted]

Dear [redacted]

Geological Survey Ireland is the national earth science agency and is a division of the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications. We provide independent geological information and advice and gather various data for that purpose. Please see our website for data availability. We recommend using these various data sets, when conducting the EIAR, SEA, planning and scoping processes. Use of our data or maps should be attributed correctly to 'Geological Survey Ireland'.

With reference to your email dated 17 February 2021, concerning the Scoping for Environmental Report of the CAP Strategic Plan 2023-2027, Geological Survey Ireland welcome the opportunity to be included in the draft SEA stage.

We welcome the inclusion of specific references to our datasets within Section 4.3 (Table 4 Datasets for the SEA Environmental Report), within the SEA Scoping Report. We include some specific comments below.

Section 2.5 Relationships to other plans and programmes:

- Under 'International' topic consider inclusion of UNESCO global geoparks, and IUCN Guidelines for geoconservation in protected and conserved areas; This best practice guideline, number 31 in the series, is the first to address a fundamental part of nature - geodiversity and geoheritage and its protection and conservation following the broadening of the IUCN definition of a protected area to embrace all of nature.
- Under 'National' topic consider inclusion of:
  - the 'Policy Statement on Mineral Exploration and Mining' (DECC)
  - the 'Roadmap for a Policy and Regulatory Framework for Geothermal Energy in Ireland' (DECC)
- Under 'Regional' topic consider inclusion of the three UNESCO Global Geopark Programmes (Copper Coast, Burren and Cliffs of Moher, and Marble Arch Caves), and aspiring geopark project (Joyce Country and Western Lakes).

Section 3.1.1 Spatial Scope:

- We note this section identifies that "Currently data on water, biodiversity, soil, geology, cultural heritage are available at catchment scale. However, data gaps remain for landscape, air quality emissions and greenhouse gas emissions." Within the context of geology and landscape we would like to draw your attention to the series of county geological heritage audits now completed for 23 of the 26 counties, an almost national dataset at a catchment level. Geological heritage highlights the importance of geodiversity (which typically underpins the biodiversity of many ecosystems) at local and national level. Our geological Heritage data sets can be viewed online under the Geological Heritage tab on the online Map Viewer.

Section 3.3 Scoping of Environmental Assessment Topics (Table 2 Strategic Environmental Assessment Topics – scoping and potential significant environmental effects):

- Under 'Climatic Factors' consider inclusion of geohazards such as landslides. Geological Survey Ireland has information available on landslides in Ireland via the National Landslide Database and Landslide Susceptibility Map both of which are available for viewing on our dedicated Map Viewer..
- Under 'Water resources' the SEA should consider any potential impact on specific groundwater abstractions and on groundwater resources in general. We recommend using the groundwater maps on our Map viewer which should include: wells; drinking water source protection areas; the national map suite - aquifer, groundwater vulnerability, groundwater recharge and subsoil permeability maps. For areas underlain by limestone, please refer to the karst specific data layers (karst features, tracer test database; turlough water levels (gwlevel.ie). Background information is also provided in the Groundwater Body Descriptions. Please read all disclaimers carefully when using Geological Survey Ireland data.
- Under 'Soils & Geology' consider including potential impacts to geoheritage as it underpins biodiversity, scientific knowledge, and potential educational and tourism values. The potential impacts of landslides could also be considered under this heading as well as already covered under landscape within the same table.
- Consider inclusion of potential impacts to geoheritage and geoparks under the SEA topics of 'landscapes' and 'Cultural Heritage' alongside those areas already highlighted such as loss of landscape features, local landscape enhancement and cultural (geo) tourism.

Section 4.3 Datasets for SEA:

- We are pleased to see our data sets referred to in a general sense under 'soils and geology' as 'Geological Survey of Ireland Online Mapping' and GSI landslides database under 'landscape'. However as noted above, we have several other data sets that may be relevant to the SEA under the headings water, climatic factors, cultural heritage and material assets; we would encourage you to review and use them as appropriate.

I hope that these comments are of assistance, and if we can be of any further help, please do not hesitate to contact me [redacted]

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Geological Survey Ireland