

27th October 2017

National Planning Framework - Submission

The Irish Mining & Quarrying Society (IMQS), founded in 1958, is the representative organisation for all those involved in extractive industries in Ireland. IMQS welcomes the introduction of a National Planning Framework (NPF) and the opportunity to contribute to its evolution.

The responsible extraction and processing of minerals is a fundamental necessity for the development and maintenance of infrastructure, and for the broader needs of society. To ensure the effective planning for these needs, IMQS recommends that the NPF adopts the following guidelines;

- That the NPF recognise the importance of mining and quarrying. The recently published Report by Indecon on the Economic Impact of Geoscience contains information on the contribution of extractive industries to the national and regional economies. See An Economic Review of the Irish Geoscience Sector
- That NPF recognises the importance of reliable data sets on geology, hydrogeology and geotechnical engineering for good planning practice in general and for the extractive industries in particular. In this context, IMQS recommends that Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) is adequately funded to continue its work in generating comprehensive data sets via its various programmes, including TELLUS, Groundwater Vulnerability, Geohazards, Geotechnical and subsurface data and marine Surveying (the INFOMAR programme). These data sets are of value to both the mineral exploration, mining, sand & gravel and rock aggregates sectors.
- The GSI Directory of Mines and Quarries is in need of constant updating; this database is a valuable resource for planners and planning authorities.
- Ensure that County Development Plans continue to include policies supportive of environmentally responsible mining and quarrying.
- Ensure that State and Local Authorities use only authorised quarries and related facilities for construction materials, especially in relation to national and regional road projects.
- Ensure that An Bord Pleanála (ABP) has adequate resources to clear the significant backlog of applications in relation to substitute consents for quarries; the legislation relating quarries is cumbersome and poorly drafted, resulting in delays at ABP level.
- Support the adequate certification of aggregates and other building products from quarries.

Yours sincerely,

Brendan Morris
Hon. President

Serving the Mining and Quarrying Industries in Ireland since 1958

