

Geological Guidelines for Quarrying.

Guidelines will assist geological experts and will encourage best practice in quarrying and land development

Dublin, 23rd October 2008

Minister of State for Natural Resources Sean Power TD, today announced the publication of geological guidelines for the quarrying industry.

A joint venture between the Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) and the Irish Concrete Federation (ICF), the guidelines seek to provide quarry operators with clear information as to the geological heritage of a proposed quarry or development, and to ensure that any rock extraction projects proceed in line with best practice. They will also allow the GSI to gather extensive knowledge of geological issues throughout the country, which will assist in research and landscape studies.

Speaking at the launch, Minister Power said, *"Quarries act like a vast store of information on the processes that shaped our landscape through the ages. Essentially, they are an archive for environmental and geological researchers alike and provide an insight into how global warming began thousands of years ago. In the effort to tackle climate change, they are vital and we must therefore guarantee their protection while quarrying works take place.*

The economic contribution of the extractive industry is undoubtedly significant. However, it is critical that we strike a balance, and any rock extraction or construction works which occur must not have an adverse effect on our landscape.

Open dialogue and cooperation between the sector and the GSI, will achieve the best results for all. It will allow operators to be aware of environmental issues related to their quarries, and will ensure that best practice in operations is followed. It will also assist the GSI and its researchers in awareness of the key scientific features of Ireland's rock formations. I must commend the ICF, and the GSI for their foresight in publishing these guidelines. I have no doubt that they will be a helpful authority for developers and researchers alike and that they will promote environmental awareness and encourage best practice in extraction works."

Quarrying in Ireland

Ireland enjoys a very active quarrying industry, producing about 170 million tonnes of aggregate (crushed stone) per annum, which is around 40 tonnes per capita, to maintain the recent rate of infrastructural development. This is produced from around 500 quarries located throughout Ireland. There are approximately 15,000 people employed in the quarrying and concrete products industry in this country, with an aggregate economic value approaching €3 billion.

Natural aggregate includes sand and gravel, and is further derived from the crushing of rocks such as limestone and basalt. Rock is also quarried as dimension stone for architectural and decorative stonework, cladding and paving. This includes limestone, such as the decorative *'Kilkenny Black Marble'* and granite, which similarly takes a fine polish.

Irish Concrete Federation (ICF)

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The Irish Concrete Federation (ICF) is a proactive representative organisation for the Irish Aggregates and concrete industry, which plays a pivotal role in the development of Ireland's built environment. In association with the Department of the Environment and the Environmental Protection Agency, ICF have developed Planning and Environmental Guidelines to minimise the environmental impacts on society, whilst securing adequate raw materials to supply the infrastructure envisioned under the National Development Plan.

ICF was also the first private sector organisation to agree a Code of Practice for archaeological heritage, and is leading the way in protecting our natural heritage, including geology as well as biodiversity, through guidelines to its members.

ICF in partnership with the Geological Survey of Ireland and local authorities, is trying to ensure that Ireland's great natural resource of aggregate, stone and minerals is identified, preserved and developed where appropriate for the benefit of society in a sustainable manner. Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI)
[www.gsi.ie]

The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) is the National Earth Science Agency responsible for providing geological advice and information, and for the acquisition of data for this purpose. GSI produces a range of products including maps, reports and databases and acts as a knowledge centre and project partner in all aspects of Irish geology. GSI is a division of the Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources (DCENR).

GSI has historically enjoyed good relations with the quarrying industry and quarry operators through many of its initiatives, notably in the Minerals (for example, Aggregate Potential Mapping project) and the Irish Geological Heritage programmes.

GSI promotes the appreciation of geological heritage within Irish society through its various programmes and outreach activities. The most important piece of work undertaken in this area is the Irish Geological Heritage (IGH) programme which involves the identification and protection of Ireland's great wealth of geological heritage.

Irish Geological Heritage Programme (IGH)

[www.gsi.ie]

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some links / Reading Material

A Guide to Habitats in Ireland

<http://www.heritagecouncil.ie/publications/habitats/9.html>

Aggregates, Granular and Stonefill

<http://www.roadstone.ie/products/Stone/Aggregates.htm>

Aggregate Potential Mapping

<http://www.gsi.ie/Newsletters/Aggregate+Potential+Mapping.htm>

Code of Practice between the Irish Concrete Federation & the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands.

<http://www.environ.ie/en/Publications/Heritage/NationalMonuments/FileDownload,2251,en.pdf>

Draft Planning Guidelines on quarrying

<http://www.environ.ie/en/Publications/DevelopmentandHousing/Planning/FileDownload,1606,en.pdf>

Environmental Code

http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/NR/rdonlyres/94E7EC0F-4E73-4640-A59F-3EC9271BC2FA/0/ICF_environmental_code.pdf

Environmental Management in the Extractive Industry (Non-scheduled minerals)

<http://erc.epa.ie/safer/iso19115/displayISO19115.jsp?isoID=50>

Irish Land Purchase—Stone Quarries and Gravel Pits.

<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1906/dec/18/irish-land-purchase-stone-quarries-and>

Land of Mineral Opportunities

http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/NR/rdonlyres/A99AD796-5407-4D52-A043-501BD995C921/0/LandofMineral06_150dpi.pdf

Life Needs Quarries

<http://www.qpa.org/index.htm>

List of Quarries in Ireland

<http://www.localpages.ie/category.aspx?category=Quarries>

Mineral Engineering

<http://www.ait.ie/faculties/engineering/mineral.shtml>

Minerals from Waste

http://www.thebgs.co.uk/mineralsuk/downloads/minerals_from_waste.pdf

Quarries - Irish Trucker Magazine Online

<http://www.irishtrucker.com/topics/quarries/default.asp>

Sand, Gravel And Other Aggregates, Republic of Ireland

http://www.build.ie/sand-gravel-and-other-aggregates/republic-of-ireland/138_14.htm

Virtual Quarry (uk)

<http://www.virtualquarry.co.uk/>