

B1 Criteria for the ecological valuation of sites (NRA, 2009)

Ecological valuation: Examples

International Importance:

- 'European Site' including Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Site of Community Importance (SCI), Special Protection Area (SPA) or proposed Special Area of Conservation.
- Proposed Special Protection Area (pSPA).
- Site that fulfills the criteria for designation as a 'European Site' (see Annex III of the Habitats Directive, as amended).
- Features essential to maintaining the coherence of the Natura 2000 Network.⁴
- Site containing 'best examples' of the habitat types listed in Annex I of the Habitats Directive.
- Resident or regularly occurring populations (assessed to be important at the national level)⁵ of the following:
 - Species of bird, listed in Annex I and/or referred to in Article 4(2) of the Birds Directive; and/or
 - Species of animal and plants listed in Annex II and/or IV of the Habitats Directive.
- Ramsar Site (Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially Waterfowl Habitat 1971).
- World Heritage Site (Convention for the Protection of World Cultural & Natural Heritage, 1972).
- Biosphere Reserve (UNESCO Man & The Biosphere Programme).
- Site hosting significant species populations under the Bonn Convention (Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, 1979).
- Site hosting significant populations under the Berne Convention (Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, 1979).
- Biogenetic Reserve under the Council of Europe.
- European Diploma Site under the Council of Europe.
- Salmonid water designated pursuant to the European Communities (Quality of Salmonid Waters) Regulations, 1988, (S.I. No. 293 of 1988).⁶

National Importance:

- Site designated or proposed as a Natural Heritage Area (NHA).
- Statutory Nature Reserve.
- Refuge for Fauna and Flora protected under the Wildlife Acts.
- National Park.
- Undesignated site fulfilling the criteria for designation as a Natural Heritage Area (NHA); Statutory Nature Reserve; Refuge for Fauna and Flora protected under the Wildlife Act; and/or a National Park.
- Resident or regularly occurring populations (assessed to be important at the national level)⁷ of the following:
 - Species protected under the Wildlife Acts; and/or
 - Species listed on the relevant Red Data list.
- Site containing 'viable areas'⁸ of the habitat types listed in Annex I of the Habitats Directive.

⁴ See Articles 3 and 10 of the Habitats Directive.

⁵ It is suggested that, in general, 1% of the national population of such species qualifies as an internationally important population. However, a smaller population may qualify as internationally important where the population forms a critical part of a wider population or the species is at a critical phase of its life cycle.

⁶ Note that such waters are designated based on these waters' capabilities of supporting salmon (*Salmo salar*), trout (*Salmo trutta*), char (*Salvelinus*) and whitefish (*Coregonus*).

⁷ It is suggested that, in general, 1% of the national population of such species qualifies as a nationally important population. However, a smaller population may qualify as nationally important where the population forms a critical part of a wider population or the species is at a critical phase of its life cycle.

⁸ A 'viable area' is defined as an area of a habitat that, given the particular characteristics of that habitat, was of a sufficient size and shape, such that its integrity (in terms of species composition, and ecological processes and function) would be maintained in the face of stochastic change (for example, as a result of climatic variation).

B2 Criteria for assessing the significance of route corridor impacts on flora and fauna

Site category → Impact level ↓	A sites Internationally important	B sites Nationally or regionally important	C Sites High value, locally important	D sites Low value, locally important
Severe	Any permanent impacts	Permanent impacts on a large part of a site		
Major	Temporary impacts on a large part of a site	Permanent impacts on a small part of a site	Permanent impacts on a large part of a site	
Moderate	Temporary impacts on a small part of a site	Temporary impacts on a large part of a site	Permanent impacts on a small part of a site	Permanent impacts on a large part of a site
Minor		Temporary impacts on a small part of a site	Temporary impacts on a large part of a site	Permanent impacts on a small part of a site
Not significant			Temporary impacts on a small part of a site	Temporary impacts on any part of a site