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1. Introduction

This document provides supporting information for a Regulation 54 derogation application relating to bat survey activities. The application relates solely to survey works which may give rise to temporary disturbance of bats or their breeding/resting places. No capture, handling, killing, roost destruction or habitat removal is proposed under this application.

2. Objective of the Proposed Activity

The objective of this application is to permit bat surveys that may otherwise constitute disturbance under Regulation 51.

The surveys are required to:

- Establish presence/absence of bats
- Identify roost type and status
- Inform avoidance and mitigation measures
- Ensure protection and conservation of bats and their breeding/resting sites

The purpose of the survey is conservation-led and preventative.

3. Qualifications and Experience of Scientific Staff

Rory Dalton – Principal Ecologist (Supervisor)

- 15 years' professional ecological experience
- BSc Environmental Science
- Extensive bat survey experience (buildings, bridges, trees, infrastructure)
- Responsible for survey design, QA/QC, and NPWS compliance

Tadhg Healy – Ecologist (Supervisor)

- 8 years' experience
- BSc Environmental Science
- Experienced in roost inspections, emergence surveys, activity surveys

Michael O Connor – Ecologist (Trainee under supervision)

- 3–4 years' experience
- BSc Wildlife Biology

James Ambrose – Ecologist (Trainee under supervision)

- 4–5 years' ecology experience

- BSc Environmental Science

All surveys will be directed and supervised by senior ecologists.

4. Background to Proposed Activity

Ecology Research and Solutions Ltd provides ecological consultancy services across public and private sectors.

Projects commonly require bat survey input prior to works affecting:

- Buildings
- Trees
- Bridges
- Infrastructure assets

Survey work is required to ensure compliance with the Wildlife Acts and Habitats Directive.

5. Full Details of Proposed Activity

Survey activities may include:

- Preliminary Roost Assessments (internal and external inspections)
- Dusk emergence surveys
- Dawn re-entry surveys
- Static detector deployment
- Walked transect activity surveys

Survey methods will:

- Follow NPWS Bat Mitigation Guidelines
- Avoid unnecessary lighting
- Avoid physical alteration of roost features
- Avoid handling or removal of bats
- Cease immediately if sensitive maternity roosts are identified

No destruction of breeding or resting places is proposed.

6. Ecological Context

1. All bat species in Ireland are Annex IV species and are strictly protected.
2. Roosts constitute breeding sites and resting places under Regulation 51.
3. Without survey data, roosts cannot be reliably identified or protected.
4. The purpose of survey is therefore preventative and conservation-focused.

7. Evidence to Support the Derogation Tests

TEST 1 – Reason for Derogation

Selected Ground:

In the interests of protecting wild flora and fauna and conserving natural habitats (Reg 54(2)(a))

The limited and temporary disturbance arising from survey work is necessary in order to:

- Identify bat roosts
- Prevent accidental disturbance
- Inform avoidance and mitigation measures

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Supporting Information - Application for Derogation under Regulation 54 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011

Without survey activity, bat roosts could be unknowingly damaged or destroyed. The survey activity therefore directly supports conservation of the species.

TEST 2 – Absence of Alternative Solutions

Alternative	Why Unsatisfactory
Do Nothing	No survey data would be obtained. Roosts could not be identified. Risk of unlawful disturbance would increase.
Undertake works without survey	High risk of damaging breeding/resting sites. Contravenes Regulation 51.
Further restrict survey	Surveys are already minimal and non-invasive. Further restriction would reduce reliability and increase conservation risk.

No satisfactory alternative exists that achieves conservation protection without limited survey disturbance.

TEST 3 – Impact on Conservation Status

The proposed surveys:

- Do not involve killing or capture
- Do not involve roost destruction
- Are temporary and localised
- Are undertaken by competent ecologists

Disturbance will be minimal and proportionate. Given the scale and nature of works, the derogation will not be detrimental to maintaining bat populations at favourable conservation status in their natural range.

8. Monitoring and Reporting

For each project undertaken under this derogation:

- Survey reports will be prepared
- Findings will inform mitigation
- Records will be maintained
- NPWS returns will be submitted as required

Where roosts are confirmed, further site-specific licensing will be sought where necessary.