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**Appendix 1 – Introduction**

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The proposed Mid-Shannon Wilderness Park Greenway is a 73km segregated greenway facility which will connect Co. Roscommon to the Royal Canal Greenway via an existing Bord na Móna bridge over the River Shannon in Kilnacarrow and existing Bord Na Móna rail lines, located in Co. Longford which are no longer in use. The bridge and rails will be repurposed to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians.

The Roscommon element of this project, to which this Part VIII process relates, consists of the repurposing of an existing disused rail bridge crossing at Cloontuskert in County Roscommon to Kilnacarrow in County Longford (Subject to a separate Part VIII process in Longford County Council). A 89m section of greenway, facilitating pedestrians and cyclists, will be constructed in Cloontuskert along existing disused Bord na Mona industrial rail lines to facilitate future access on the western bank of the River Shannon.

The aim of the project is to expand the greenway provision in County Roscommon and Longford and to add to and link into the growing network of greenways in Ireland in accordance with the policies and objectives set out in Project Ireland 2040, the National Cycle Policy Framework, the Longford and Roscommon County Development Plans and associated planning documents. The provision of the greenway is also central to the creation of the Mid Shannon Wilderness Park which is linked to the vision of Ireland's Hidden Heartlands.

A central tenet of the scheme is to make use of existing rail lines previously used by Bord na Móna as part of their peat harvesting operations, which ceased in 2020. The use of these lines and the associated existing ballast and rail structures will significantly reduce the cost and potential environmental impact of the proposed scheme.

In its entirety, the scheme is approximately 73 km long and consists of:

- 61 km of greenway along decommissioned Bord na Móna rail lines;
- 6 km of greenway along existing local roads;
- 6 km of greenway through existing cutaway bog.

Of the 73 km, 23.4 km of the proposed greenway have been subject to successful Part 8 planning applications in Co. Longford, some of which has already been constructed.