



An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage

Strategic Environmental Assessment

Guidelines for Regional Assemblies and Planning Authorities

Paul Scott

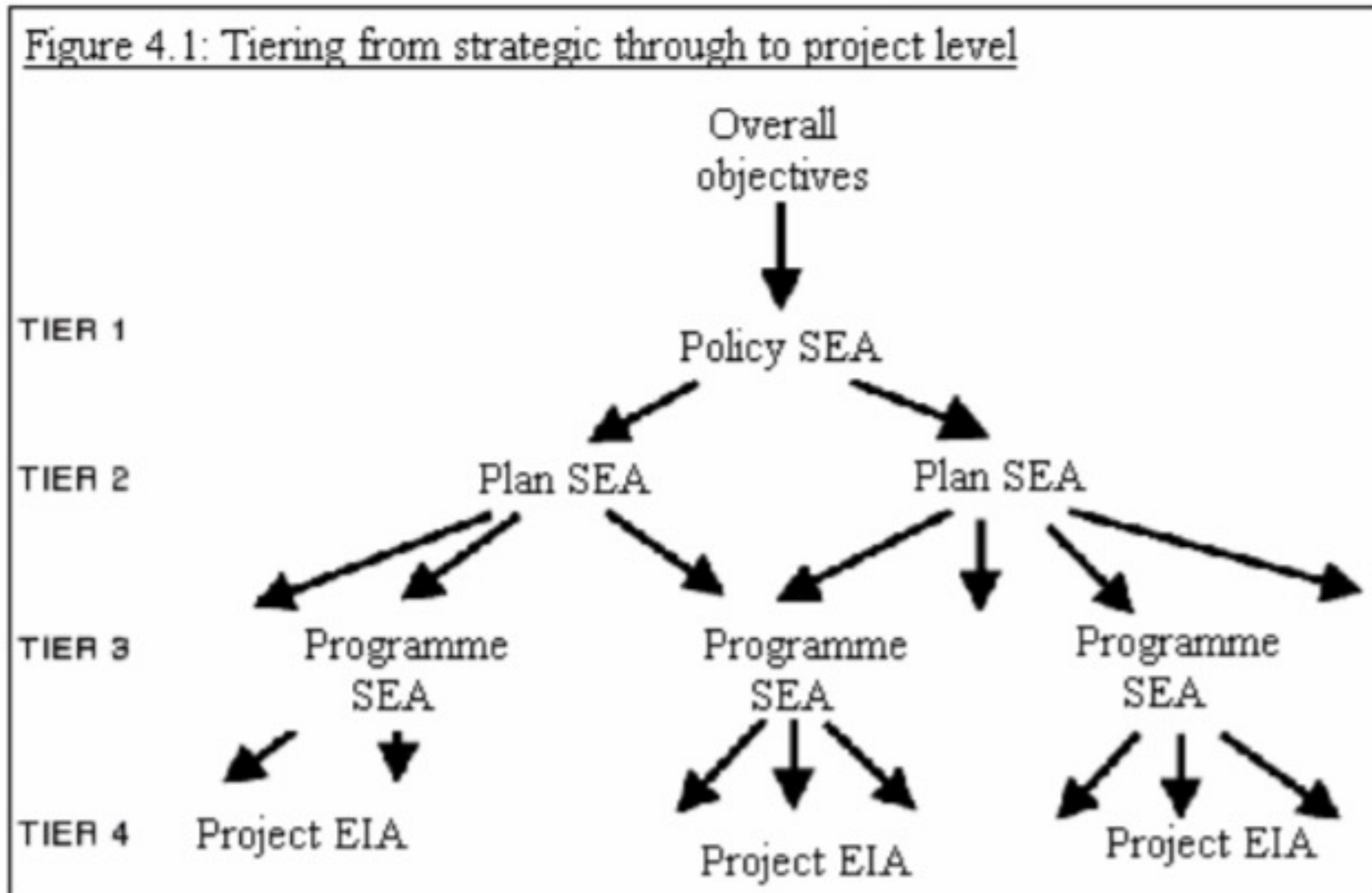
January 2022

What exactly is SEA?

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a *process* which evaluates the likely significant environmental consequences of a plan or programme (P/P) made by a public authority (e.g. Local Authority, Govt Department or Agency).

SEA can help us decide what we can do and where we can do it without significantly harming the environment.

How SEA can protect the environment:



E.g. SEA of National Plans

↓
SEA of Regional Plans

↓
SEA of County Plans

↓
SEA of Local Plans

↓
EIA of projects

Purpose of SEA

“The objective of this Directive is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development.....”
(Article 1).

Steps in SEA

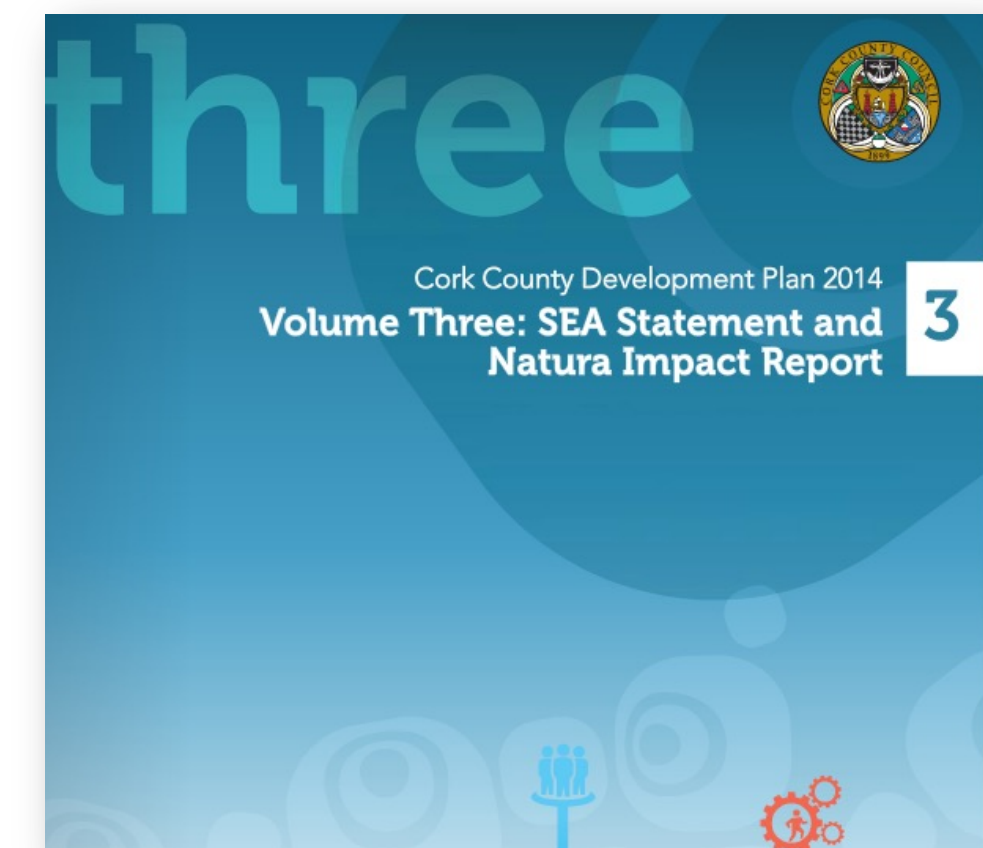
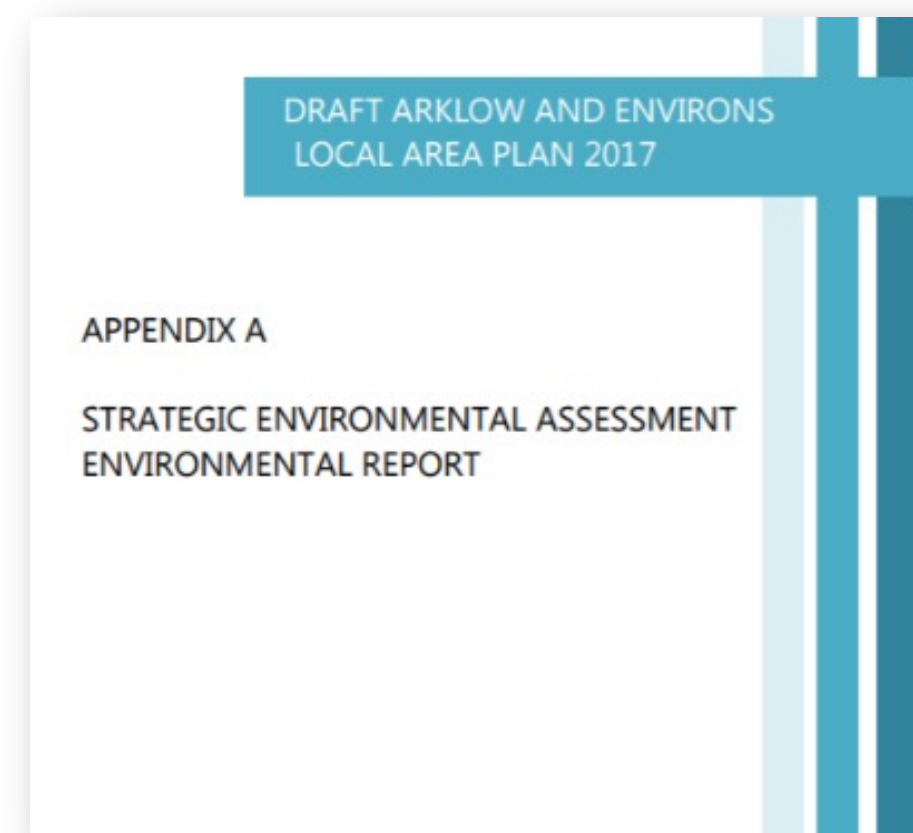
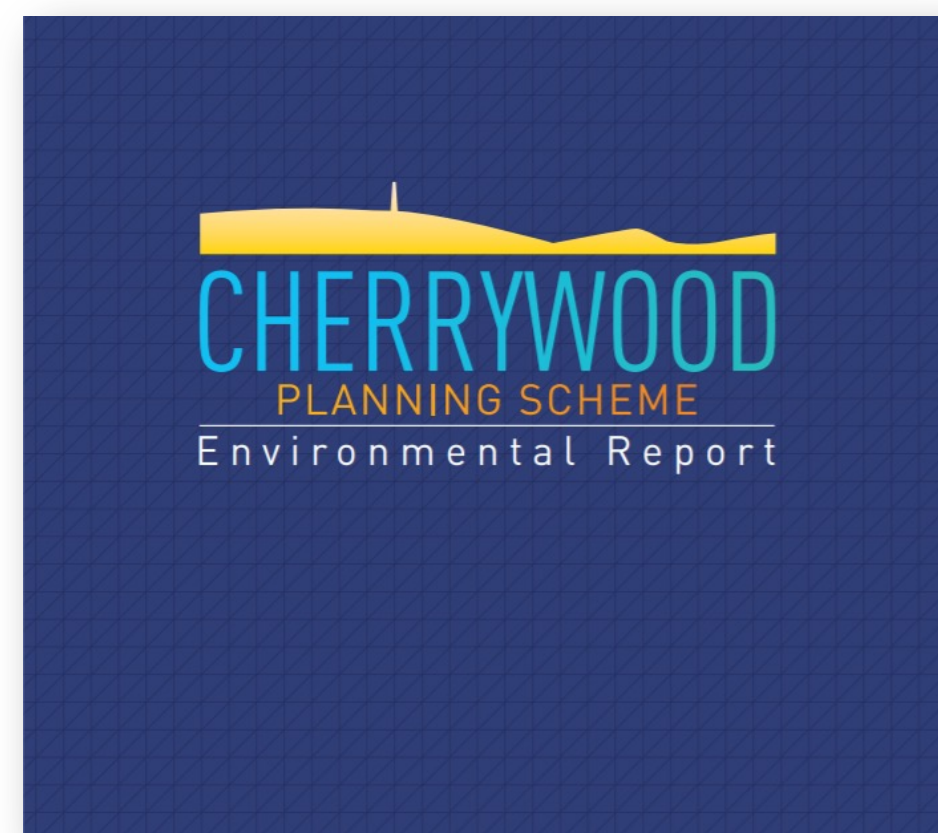
1. Screening- does it have likely significant effects on the environment (and therefore require a full SEA)?
2. Scoping – what will be assessed and how will it be assessed?
3. Impact Assessment - consideration of alternatives; identification and evaluation of impacts; mitigation measures; reporting (Environmental Report); consultation and public participation.
4. Information on the decision: SEA statement
5. Monitoring of environmental effects.

Scope of application of SEA Directive

SEA Directive implemented via S.I. 435 and S.I. 436 of 2004.

S.I. 435 of 2004 (all plans and programmes), as amended by S.I. 200 of 2011

S.I. 436 of 2004 (specific land-use plans only), as amended by S.I. 201 of 2011



SEA guidelines (2004)

Published to coincide with the implementing legislation (S.I. 435 & 436)

Published under Section 28 of 'Planning Acts'.



SEA since 2004

SEA fully embedded in development plan preparation.

Applied across wide range of sectors (energy, transport, waste, agriculture.....)

Supported by wide range of evidence-supported guidance from EPA and European Commission.



SEA Guidance (European Commission)

- Implementation of Directive 2001/42 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (2003)
- Environmental Assessments of Plans, Programmes and Projects - Rulings of the Court of Justice of the European Union (2020)
- Evaluation of the Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (REFIT) (2019)

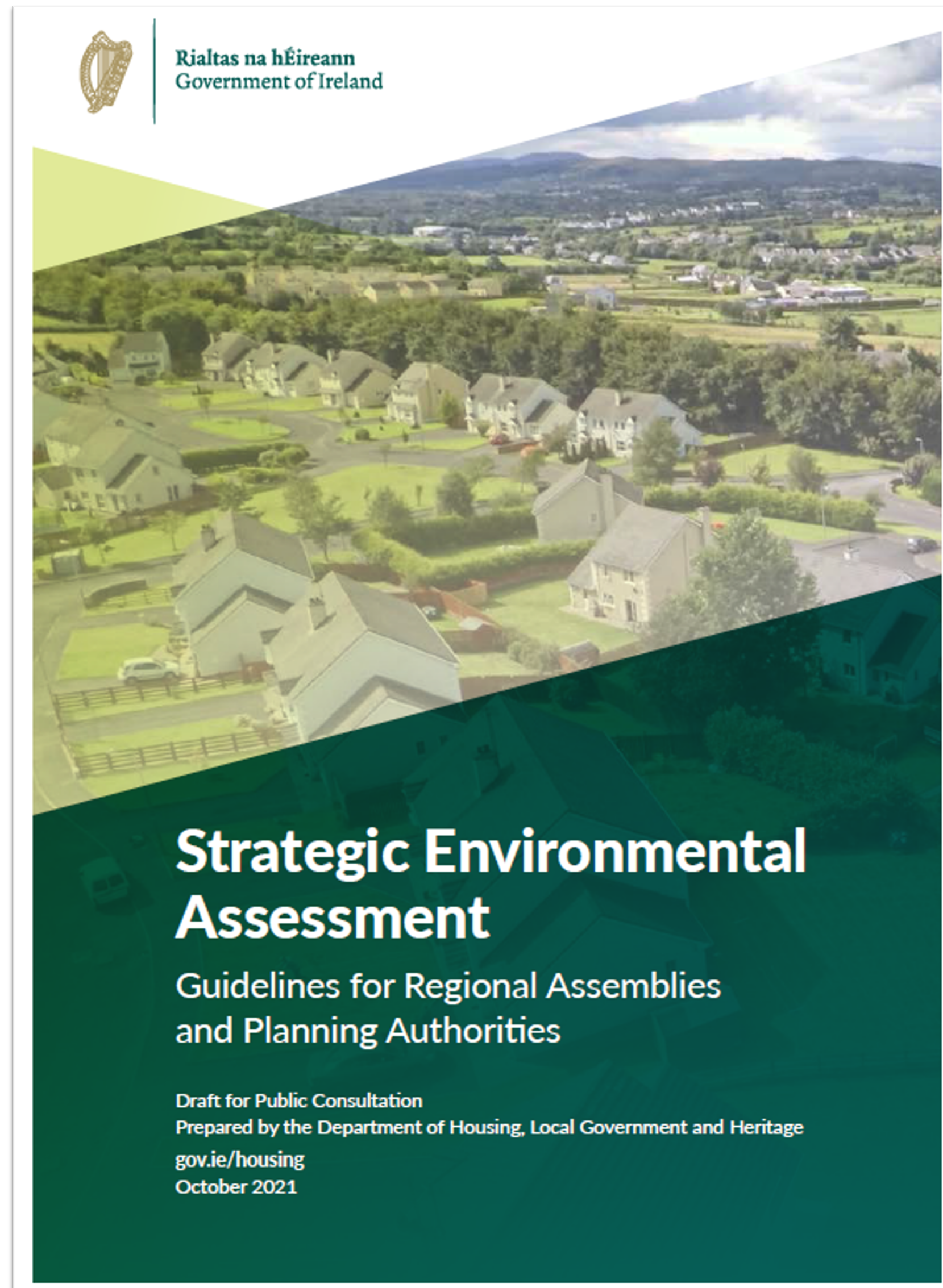


SEA Guidance

- SEA Screening Guidance (2021)
- Sectoral Guidance (Energy- 2021)
- Spatial Information Sources Inventory (2021)
- SEA Pack (2020)
- Guidance on Alternatives (2015)
- Monitoring, SEA Statements (2020)
- SEA Effectiveness Studies (2012, 2020)
- SEA Action Plan 2021-2025



Proposed revised SEA Guidelines – what's new?



Public Consultation period 15 October - 19 November 2021

Draft SEA Guidelines

1. Introduction
2. Integrating SEA into the Plan-Making Process
3. Screening
4. Scoping
5. The Environmental Report
6. Consultations on Plan and Environmental Report
7. Amendments to the Draft Plan, Adoption of Plan and Preparation of the SEA Statement
8. Monitoring the Significant Environmental Effects of the Implementation of Plans

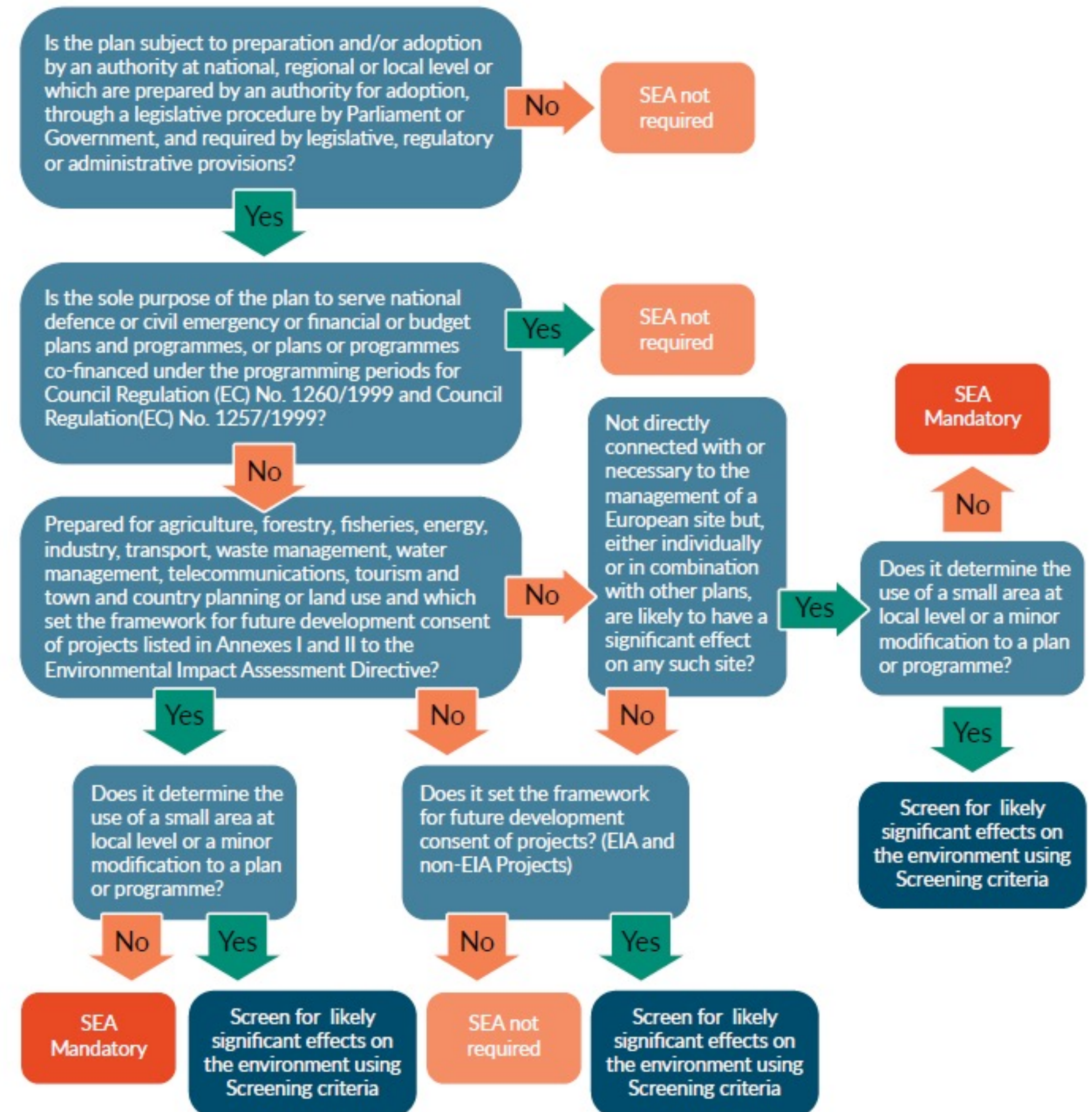
APPENDIX A: Text of the SEA Directive

APPENDIX B: Guidance on applying SEA screening criteria

APPENDIX C: Example of Integration of SEA process with the preparation or review of a Development Plan

Proposed revised SEA Guidelines – what's new?

- Makes reference to other assessments (AA, WFD, SFRA)
- Decision trees to determine if SEA screening/mandatory SEA is required



Proposed revised SEA Guidelines – what's new?

- Updated guidance on scoping reports
- Application of tiering theory
- Links to EPA guidance
- Reference to role of OPR



Proposed revised SEA Guidelines – what's new?

- Transboundary impacts post-Brexit
- Dealing with amendments to the Draft Plan after public consultation
- Expanded guidance on monitoring



Proposed revised SEA Guidelines

Submissions received from public covered wide variety of procedural and practice-related topics, including :

- Monitoring
- Built and Cultural Heritage
- Internal vs External SEA teams
- SEOs and scoping
- Consultation and public participation.



Proposed revised SEA Guidelines

- Scheduled for adoption in early 2022.
- Departmental Circular will also include updated details of environmental authorities to be consulted during SEA.





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Thank you.

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