

Kildare County Council

Draft Collinstown Strategic Employment Lands Masterplan 2024

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening of the draft Collinstown Strategic Employment Lands Masterplan 2024

Reference:

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1. Introduction

Kildare County Council (KCC) has prepared the draft Collinstown Strategic Employment Lands Masterplan 2024 (referred to hereinafter as the 'draft Masterplan').

The draft Masterplan is intended to serve as an overarching strategy to effectively guide and manage the proper planning and sustainable development of the Collinstown strategic employment lands. KCC will have full regard to the provisions of the draft Masterplan when assessing development proposals for the subject and adjoining lands, through the development management process.

Arup has been commissioned by KCC to carry out Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening of the draft Masterplan.

This report provides an analysis of the draft Masterplan and considers whether a SEA is required.

2. Draft Masterplan

2.1 Overview

The draft Masterplan has been prepared to guide the development of a high-quality, attractive and sustainable business campus environment at Collinstown, Leixlip in North Kildare, which shall be characterised by comprehensive pedestrian/cycle friendly infrastructure. The draft Masterplan will also facilitate the efficient functioning of business and enterprise activities within this zone. The preparation of the draft Masterplan for the subject lands is a specific objective of the Leixlip Local Area Plan (LAP) 2020-2023, as extended, and also an action of the Kildare County Development Plan (KCDP) 2023-2029.

Objective COL 1.1 of Leixlip LAP is detailed as follows:

'To require the preparation of a masterplan (to be developed in conjunction with relevant traffic/transport assessments) for Collinstown giving full consideration to the type and intensity of development relative to future transport options and in particular public transport provision (the potential for a rail station at Collinstown, park and ride facilities, bus network revisions and the principles and priorities set out in Section 12.6.3) and to work with the NTA in this regard. Individual applications for smaller sections of these lands will not be considered until such time as a single masterplan has been prepared and agreed in writing with the Planning Department of Kildare County Council'.

The draft Masterplan has also been prepared in the context of the National Planning Framework (NPF), the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region and the Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2022-2042.

The primary purpose of the draft Masterplan is to provide a comprehensive design response which expands on the Vision for the Collinstown Strategic Employment Lands, as outlined in the Leixlip LAP, in order to advance the physical development of these strategic lands. The draft Masterplan will ensure that development will be carried out in a plan-led, sequential and integrated manner, linked to the delivery of key infrastructural requirements and service supports, including public transport provision along with road network and water services improvements. The draft Masterplan will therefore provide for the phasing of development to ensure that development is realised in a sustainable manner. This will protect against piecemeal or haphazard development within the landbank, which could undermine its potential to contribute to the long-term economic development of both northeast Kildare and the Dublin Metropolitan Area as a whole.

Critically, the role of the draft Masterplan is to provide a level of certainty and clarity for local residents, developers and investors, as well as assisting KCC in its assessment of planning applications for development on the lands.

In preparing the draft Masterplan, KCC also seeks to achieve a number of important aims, listed as follows:

- Deliver high quality planning and design outcomes on the Collinstown lands in the creation of a well-connected, attractive and sustainable business campus that is of high architectural quality design, construction and finish, featuring a fully integrated, responsive and well-defined series of open spaces
- Contribute to the successful implementation of the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (Chapter 5, RSES for the Eastern and Midlands Region), in supporting the role and function of Dublin as a city of international scale
- Assist in the implementation of the KCDP 2023-2029 and the Leixlip LAP with regard to their respective economic development objectives
- Establish sustainable transport patterns within the site by maximising opportunities in terms of access
 and usage of high frequency and high-capacity public transportation investment projects such as DART+
 West, the proposed new railway station at Collinstown, the rail- based Park and Ride facility and
 BusConnects
- Maximise active travel opportunities by ensuring the development of a comprehensive and high-quality
 pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure within the Collinstown lands and provide for enhanced access to the
 Royal Canal Greenway
- Seek to protect and enhance the overall green infrastructure network within the lands and provide for a
 comprehensive surface water management scheme which prioritises best practice nature-based drainage
 (NBS) solutions; and
- Ensure that any development within the lands protects the integrity and carrying capacity of the nearby Junction 6 of the M4 Motorway, in keeping with the provisions of the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoECLG, 2012).

The Collinstown Strategic Employment Lands are illustrated as follows (Figure 2.1).



Figure 2.1 Collinstown Strategic Employment Lands Source: (Google Earth, 2022)

2.2 Positioning of the draft Masterplan with reference to the Irish Planning Hierarchy

The preparation of the draft Masterplan for the subject lands is a specific objective of the Leixlip LAP 2020-2023 and also an action of the KCDP 2023-2029. The draft Masterplan has also been prepared in the context of the NPF, the RSES for the Eastern and Midlands Region and the Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2022-2042. The positioning of the draft Masterplan in relation to the Irish Planning Hierarchy has been illustrated in Figure 2.2. While Masterplans are not formal statutory Development Plans under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), they may be prepared in order to set out further technical detail in respect of zoned amenity and/or development lands, to inform future planning applications and/or 'Part 8' Local Authority consent processes.

The draft Masterplan is intended to serve as an overarching strategy to effectively guide and manage the proper planning and sustainable development of the Collinstown Strategic Employment lands.

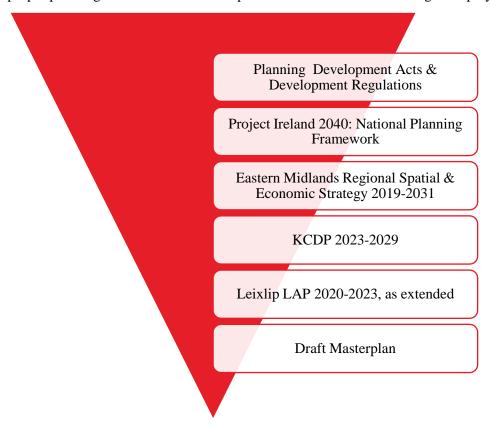


Figure 2.2 Positioning of the draft Masterplan in relation to the Planning Hierarchy in Ireland

3. SEA

3.1 Overview

SEA is defined as 'the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt that plan or programme.' (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2004).

The SEA process is comprised of the following steps:

• Screening: Decision on whether or not SEA of a Plan or Programme is required. This is the current stage of the SEA process to which this report relates. If it is determined that the SEA Directive applies to the Plan or Programme, then an SEA Screening assessment is carried out.

If SEA is considered to be required following Screening, the following steps are required:

- Scoping: Consultation with the defined statutory bodies on the scope and level of detail to be considered in the assessment
- Environmental Assessment: An assessment of the likely significant impacts on the environment as a result of the Plan or Programme
- Preparation of an Environmental Report
- Consultation on the Plan or Programme and associated Environmental Report

- Evaluation of the submissions and observations made on the Plan or Programme and Environmental Report; and
- Issuance of a SEA Statement identifying how environmental considerations and consultation have been integrated into the Final Plan or Programme.

This process is outlined in Figure 3.1.



Figure 3.1 Screening in the overall SEA process.

SEA is intended to provide the framework for influencing decision-making at an earlier stage when plans and programmes - which give rise to individual projects - are being developed. SEA should result in more sustainable development through the systematic appraisal of policy options.

4. Guidance and Legislation

4.1 Legislative Overview

The SEA Directive - Directive 2001/42/EC on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment - requires that an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

The objective of the SEA 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...with a view to promoting sustainable development' (Article 1 SEA Directive 2001).

Ireland made the decision to transpose the SEA Directive into Irish law in 2004 through two separate statutory instruments or regulations, one specifically concerning specific listed town and country/land use plans (S.I. 436/2004) and one concerning all other sectors (S.I. 435/2004). The transposing regulations are as follows:

- European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations (S.I. 435/2004); and
- Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations (S.I. 436/2004).

Both pieces of legislation were amended in 2011 through the following amendment regulations:

• European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Amendment Regulations (S.I. 200/2011); and

• Planning and Development (SEA) Amendment Regulations (S.I. 201/2011).

The SEA Directive has also been given effect through other Irish legislation. An example being, the Planning and Development Act [PDA] 2000, as amended.

4.2 Guidance Documents

A number of national guidance documents on SEA were reviewed in the preparation of this SEA Screening Report, including:

- SEA Guidelines for Regional Assemblies and Planning Authorities (DHLGH, SEA Guidelines for Regional Assemblies and Planning Authorities, 2022)
- Good Practice Guidance on Screening (EPA, Good Practice Guidance on Screening, 2021)
- Synthesis Report on Developing a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland (EPA, 2019)
- Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland (EPA, Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland, 2013)
- Implementation of SEA Directive (2001/42/EC): Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment- Guidelines for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2004)
- Implementation of Directive 2001/42 on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment (European Commission, ND)
- SEA Resource Manual for Local and Regional Planning Authorities (EPA, 2015)
- Integrating Climatic Factors into Strategic Environmental Assessment in Ireland A Guidance Note (EPA, 2019).

5. Mandatory Requirements

Under S.I. No. 435 of 2004, plans and programmes (P/P) are defined as:

"plans and programmes" means P/P, as well as any modifications to them

(a) which are subject to preparation and/or adoption by an authority at national, regional or local level or which are prepared by an authority for adoption, through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government, and

(b) which are required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions.

Should the plan fall under the definition of 'plans and programmes', then the requirement to carry out environmental assessment is dependent on the following:

- which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism and town and country planning or land use, and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, or
- which are not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site but, either individually or in combination with other plans, are likely to have a significant effect on any such site.

If these triggers are met, then an assessment of potential significant effects on the environment is required to determine the need for SEA.

Under S.I. No. 436 of 2004, plans and programmes (P/P) are defined as:

"'plan' for the purposes of Schedules 2A and 2B, means, where the context requires, a development plan, a variation of a development plan, a local area plan (or an amendment thereto), regional planning guidelines or a planning scheme".

It is considered that S.I. No. 435 of 2004 applies to the draft Masterplan.

As previously discussed, the preparation of the draft Masterplan for the subject lands is a specific objective of the Leixlip LAP and also an action of the KCDP. The draft Masterplan has also been prepared in the context of the NPF, the RSES and the Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2022-2042.

6. Assessment of applicability of SEA process

This section provides an assessment of the applicability of the SEA process based on the decision tree provided by the EPA in Guidance "Good Practice Guidance on SEA Screening" (EPA, 2021). With this analysis it can be identified whether the plan is included in the SEA Directive or whether it does not require an SEA.

This assessment (Table 6.1) takes into account the information presented in Sections 2 - Section 5 of this report in determining the SEA requirement of the draft Masterplan.

Table 6.1 SEA Applicability

APPLICABILITY				
Section 1: General Details and Key Information about the Plan or Programme				
Name of P/P Maker:	KCC			
Title of P/P:	Draft Collinstown Strategic Employment Lands Masterplan 2024			
Type of Plan:	Masterplan			
Date:	2024			

Background and Context of the P/P

The draft Masterplan has been prepared to guide the development of a high-quality, attractive and sustainable business campus environment at Collinstown, Leixlip in North Kildare, which shall be characterised by comprehensive pedestrian/cycle friendly infrastructure and shall also facilitate the efficient functioning of business and enterprise activities within this zone. The preparation of the draft Masterplan for the subject lands is a specific objective of the Leixlip LAP 2020-2023, as extended, and also an action of the KCDP 2023-2029. The draft Masterplan has also been prepared in the context of the NPF, the RSES for the Eastern and Midlands Region and the Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2022-2042. KCC is committed to facilitating the creation of employment in North Kildare, and the broader Dublin Metropolitan Area (DMA) and the zoning of the strategically located lands at Collinstown for enterprise, employment and light industrial uses, in the immediate vicinity of existing and proposed national strategic transport infrastructure, represents an opportunity to develop a cluster of complementary enterprises and more generally a larger and robust economic basis for the town, County and the entire region. The draft Masterplan is intended to serve as an overarching strategy to effectively guide and manage the proper planning and sustainable development of the Collinstown Strategic Employment lands. KCC will have full regard to the provisions of the draft Masterplan when assessing development proposals for the subject and adjoining lands, through the development management process.

¹ EPA (2021) Good Practice Guidance on Screening. Available at: <u>Strategic Environmental Assessment | Environmental Protection Agency (epa.ie)</u>

APPLICABILITY

Purpose of the P/P

The primary purpose of the draft Masterplan is to provide a comprehensive design response which expands on the Vision for the Collinstown Strategic Employment Lands, as outlined in the Leixlip LAP 2020-2023, as extended, in order to advance the physical development of these strategic lands. The draft Masterplan shall ensure that development will be carried out in a planled, sequential and integrated manner, linked to the delivery of key infrastructural requirements and service supports, including public transport provision along with road network and water services improvements. The draft Masterplan will therefore provide for the phasing of development to ensure that the scheme is realised in a sustainable manner that protects against piecemeal or haphazard development within the landbank which could undermine its potential to contribute to the long-term economic development of both northeast Kildare and the Dublin Metropolitan Area as a whole. Critically, the role of the draft Masterplan is to provide a level of certainty and clarity for local residents, developers and investors, as well as assisting the Planning Authority in its assessment of planning applications for development on the lands.

Geographical Area Covered by the P/P

Collinstown Strategic Employment Lands, as outlined in the Leixlip LAP, located in Collinstown, Leixlip in North Kildare.

Content of the P/P

The draft Masterplan outlines an introductory overview and policy context section, a site analysis and development constraints section relating to the Collinstown Strategic Employment Lands. These sections are followed by a description of the draft Masterplan vision and design principles and the bulk of the draft Masterplan itself, including details of land use and density, movement and transport, public realm, details of the four precinct strategies that have been established for the draft Masterplan area and lastly, infrastructure and phasing relevant to the draft Masterplan.

Section 2: Status of the P/P Maker

- Is the P/P prepared and/or adopted by an authority at national, regional or local level or prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government?
 - Clarify who will prepare the P/P, if they are affiliated to any authority and if the P/P will be adopted through any legislative provision.
- Is the P/P required by legislative, regulatory, or administrative provisions?
 - Provide information on any legislative, regulatory, or administrative requirements.
 This criterion also includes P/P required to deliver administrative functions of an authority e.g. Dublin Port Company Masterplan.

Yes. A competent authority for the purpose of SEA is defined under S.I. No. 435 of 2004 as 'the authority which is, or the authorities which are jointly, responsible for the preparation of a plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme'.

KCC is the local authority for the area of County Kildare. Local authorities provide a range of services within their boundaries, County Councils are local authorities in their counties and townlands. Thus, the draft Masterplan is considered to be a P/P prepared by an authority at a local level.

The preparation of the draft Masterplan for the subject lands is a specific objective of the Leixlip LAP 2020-2023, as extended, and also an action of the KCDP 2023-2029. The draft Masterplan has also been prepared in the context of the NPF, the RSES for the Eastern and Midlands Region and the Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2022-2042.

Masterplans are not formal statutory Development Plans under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), they may be prepared in order to set out further technical detail in respect of zoned amenity and/or development lands, to inform future planning applications and/or 'Part 8' Local authority consent processes.

The draft Masterplan is however, intended to serve as an overarching strategy to effectively guide and manage the proper planning and sustainable development of the Collinstown Strategic Employment lands. Thus, as the draft Masterplan has been prepared as a result of a specific objective of the Leixlip LAP 2020-2023, as extended, and also an action of the KCDP 2023-2029, it is considered that the draft Masterplan is required by legislative, regulatory, or administrative requirements.

Section 3: Nature of the P/P

- Is the P/P prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use?
 - Clarify if the P/P falls under any of these categories. This should be considered broadly such that. Energy may be interpreted to include grid, petroleum industry, electricity, renewables.

Yes. The draft Masterplan is a land-use plan.

APPLICABILITY

- Does the P/P provide a framework for the development consent for projects listed in the EIA Directive?
 - This is a fundamental question in the applicability stage. The interpretation of this statement should include any P/P which includes full or partial rules, limits or other criteria that would be used in development management; P/P that set legal requirements or are binding rules; P/P that have goals or targets; P/P that commence the process of optioneering for locations or technology or modes etc.
 - If there is any doubt regarding the applicability of this statement, the P/P should move forward to Stage 2 and consideration of screening criteria.

The determinant of providing a 'framework for development consent' is described in Annex II of the SEA Directive as the degree to which a Plan 'sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources [...]

Projects arising from the draft Masterplan have the potential to fall within the scope of Annex II of the EIA Directive and Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, as amended. Particularly, where the draft Masterplan proposes larger scaled industrial manufacturing uses to be located on large, open sites that can accommodate large building footprints and have good access to the M4 motorway. Proposed uses of the lands located north and south of the canal and rail line are detailed to potentially include a range of office typologies comprising knowledge-based economy focusing on high tech/biotechnology, research and development, ICT and manufacturing. Furthermore, the transport vision for the draft Masterplan is to prioritise sustainable transport through both the provision of new infrastructure within the site, and improved integration with existing and planned external transport infrastructure. Lastly, the draft Masterplan details it shall deliver the following proposed access and movement objectives within the site:

- The provision of two new access roads on the eastern boundary; one from the roundabout on the R449 and the second located between the subject roundabout and the existing bridge to the north;
- The provision of a new pedestrian/cycle bridge across the Royal Canal and rail line to link with the Royal Canal Greenway; and
- The provision of a network of paths and cycleways throughout the site linking with adjoining residential and employment areas outside the Masterplan lands

Thus, it is considered that projects arising from the draft Masterplan have the potential to provide a framework for the development consent for projects listed in the EIA Directive.

 Is the P/P likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site which leads to a requirement for Article 6 or 7 assessments? No. The Screening for AA Report concluded that there is no risk of likely significant effects to any European site as a result of the implementation of the draft Masterplan. It is the professional opinion of the authors of the Screening for AA Report that the draft Masterplan does not require an AA. Refer to the Screening for AA Report for further details.

Section 4: Exemptions

- Is the sole purpose of the P/P to serve national defence or civil emergency or is it a financial/budget P/P or is it co-financed by the current SF/RDF programme?
 - Clarify if the P/P relates to any of the exemptions. If it is of this type, no SEA is required.

No. The draft Masterplan has been developed to provide a comprehensive design response which expands on the Vision for the Collinstown Strategic Employment Lands, as outlined in the Leixlip LAP, in order to advance the physical development of these strategic lands.

Section 5: Conclusions

 Summarise the relevant information informing the assessment and the main reasons the P/P does or does not fall within the scope of the SEA Directive.

Does fall within scope:

 The plan does apply to one or more of the sectors in the SEA Directive and does provide a framework for development consent of projects requiring EIA.

AND/OR

In summary, the draft Masterplan:

- Is being developed by KCC, a local authority for the area of County Kildare and thus is considered to be a P/P prepared by an authority at a local level:
- Is considered to be required by administrative provisions;
- Is a land use plan;
- Has the potential to set a framework for development consent for
 projects listed in Annex II of the EIA Directive, however, there is no
 uncertainty about the nature of the P/P and whether it may give rise to
 significant effects on the environment.

The P/P will not give rise to any new significant effects on the environment, as the lands zoned and described in this draft Masterplan have already been assessed as part of the SEA for Leixlip LAP.

Collinstown Strategic Employment Lands Masterplan 2024

APPLICABILITY

The plan is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site and, therefore, requires an assessment under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. SEA is therefore required.

 There is uncertainty about the nature of the P/P and whether it may give rise to significant effects on the environment. The plan cannot be screened out for SEA or AA and requires a more detailed screening assessment.

Does NOT fall within scope:

 The plan does not apply to any of the sectors in the SEA Directive and does not provide a framework for development consent of projects requiring EIA,

AND

The plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site and therefore does not require an assessment under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. SEA is therefore not required.

 For outcome 1 the plan maker should advise that they will move forward to SEA scoping.
 For outcome 2 the P/P should move to the next stage of Screening. For outcome 3 the applicability template should be completed and kept on file. These lands were zoned for Enterprise and Employment in the Leixlip LAP and have been included as the same in the draft Masterplan. As a result, it is not considered that there is the potential for additional significant environmental effects on these lands as a result of the draft Masterplan, other than those that have already been assessed and mitigated against within the SEA Environmental Report of the Leixlip LAP. Therefore, there is no uncertainty about the nature of the draft Masterplan or whether it may give rise to significant effects on the environment. It is considered that the draft Masterplan goes beyond SEA Applicability Screening. Thus, no further Screening assessment for the draft Masterplan is considered to be required; and

 The draft Masterplan does not have potential to significantly effect a Natura 2000 site. Refer to the AA Screening for further information.

On this basis, no further Screening of potential significant effects of the draft Masterplan on the environment is required.

7. Conclusion

Considering all areas of the draft Masterplan, this section summaries the conclusions of the applicability of the SEA process based on the decision tree provided by the EPA in Guidance "Good Practice Guidance on SEA Screening" (EPA, 2021):

- The draft Masterplan has been prepared by KCC and provides a comprehensive design response which
 expands on the Vision for the Collinstown Strategic Employment Lands, as outlined in the Leixlip LAP
 2020-2023, as extended, in order to advance the physical development of these strategic lands
- The draft Masterplan is considered to be required by administrative provisions
- The draft Masterplan falls into the sectors covered by the SEA Directive (land use)
- The draft Masterplan has the potential to set a framework for development consent of projects listed in Annex II of the EIA Directive, however, there is no uncertainty about the nature of the P/P and whether it may give rise to significant effects on the environment. It is the professional opinion of the authors of the SEA Screening that the P/P will not give rise to significant effects on the environment, as the lands zoned and described in this draft Masterplan have already been assessed as part of the SEA for Leixlip LAP. These lands were zoned for Enterprise and Employment in the Leixlip LAP and have been included as the same in the draft Masterplan. As a result, it is not considered that any additional effects have potential to occur on these lands as a result of the draft Masterplan, other than those that have already been assessed and mitigated against within the SEA for the Leixlip LAP. Therefore, there is no uncertainty about the nature of the draft Masterplan or whether it may give rise to significant effects on the environment.

It is considered that the draft Masterplan will not give rise to additional significant effects on the environment and the draft Masterplan does not go beyond SEA Applicability Screening. Thus, no further Screening assessment of the draft Masterplan is considered to be required; and

• Furthermore, the draft Masterplan does not have potential to significantly effect a Natura 2000 site and, therefore, does not require an assessment under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. Refer to the Screening for AA Report for further information.

On this basis, no further screening of potential significant effects of the draft Masterplan on the environment is considered to be required. It is considered that the draft Masterplan does not fall within the remit of the SEA Directive.

8. References

EPA. (2003). Synthesis Report on Developing A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes In Ireland. EPA.

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