

IEMA Webinar:

Government Consultation on 'Planning for the Future'

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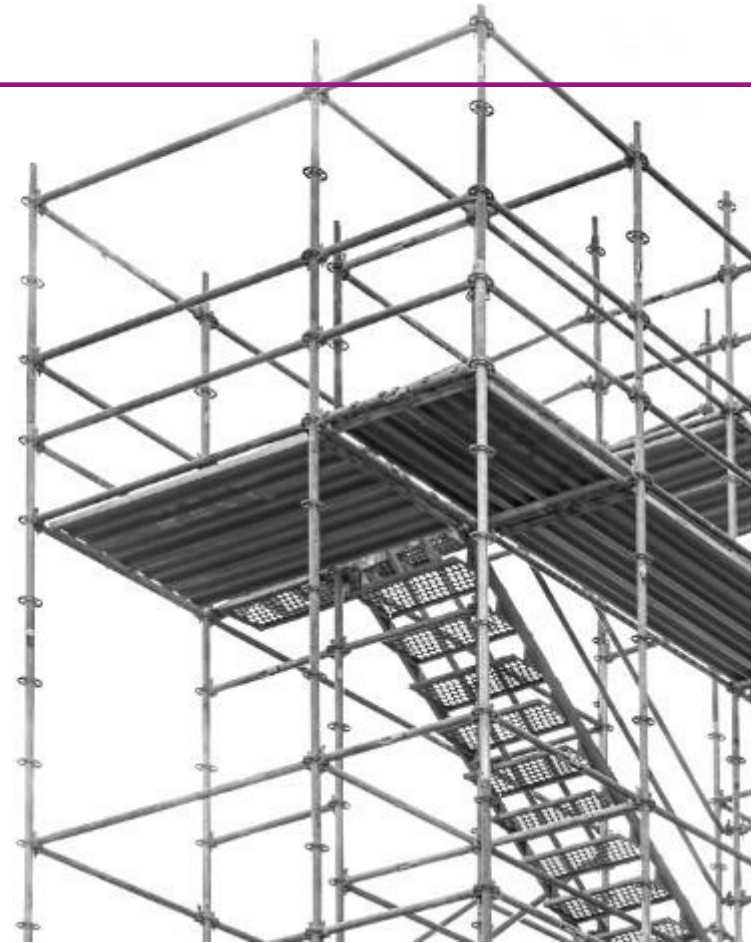
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Webinar Overview

- Summary of White Paper – Simon
- Implications and Reflections – Josh
- Impact Assessment Reform – Rufus
- Q&A – All



Webinar slides and recording

This webinar is being recorded. The recording and presentations will be made available for IEMA members on iema.net within 48 hours of the webinar.

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Q&A

Send in your questions as we go through the session – we'll have plenty of time after the presentation.

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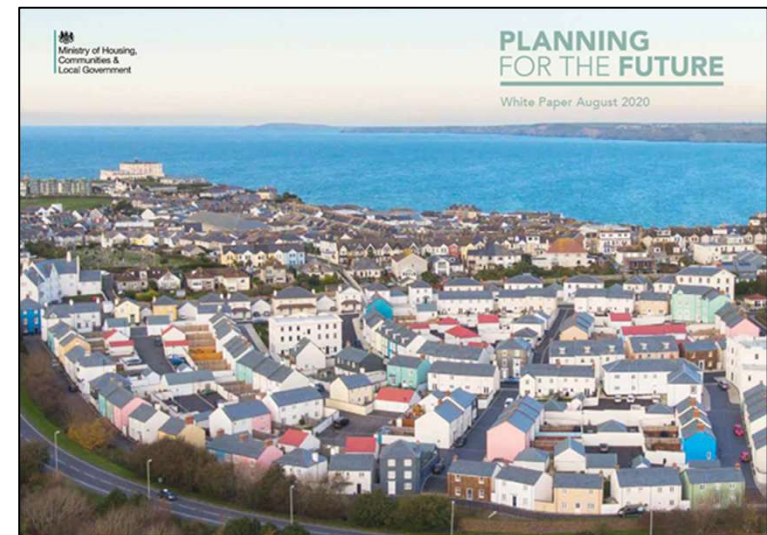


Summary of White Paper 'Planning for the Future'

Simon White MIEMA CEnv

Summary of White Paper 'Planning for the Future'

- Overview
- 3 Pillars of Objectives
- Proposals
- Sample of consultation response questions



Summary of White Paper 'Planning for the Future'

Overview:

- Launched 6 August 2020
- Consultation period ends 29 October
- The consultation document and response questionnaire can be found:
[Planning for the future - GOV.UK](#)
- England only
- Would involve major changes to the current planning system
- Proposals based around 3 pillars

Three Pillars of Objectives

- Pillar One – Planning for development
Reform of the planning system and Local Plans – certainty, speed and digitisation
- Pillar Two – Planning for beautiful and sustainable places
“beautiful places that will stand the test of time”
“planning should be a powerful tool for creating visions”
“building a real sense of community”
“It should generate net gains for the quality of our built and natural environments - not just ‘no net harm’”

Three Pillars of Objectives

- Pillar Three – Planning for infrastructure and connected places

“New development brings with it new demand for public services and infrastructure. ...

Mitigating these impacts – by securing contributions from developers and capturing more land value uplift generated by planning decisions to deliver new infrastructure provision – is key for both new and existing communities”

Pillar 1: Planning for development

Proposal 1: The role of land use plans should be simplified. We propose that Local Plans should identify three types of land – **Growth** areas suitable for substantial development, **Renewal** areas suitable for development, and areas that are **Protected**.

Proposal 2: Development management policies established at national scale and an altered role for Local Plans.

Proposal 3: Local Plans should be subject to a single statutory “**sustainable development**” test, replacing the existing tests of soundness.

Pillar 1: Planning for development

Proposal 4: A standard method for establishing housing requirement figures which ensures enough land is released in the areas where affordability is worst, to stop land supply being a barrier to enough homes being built. The housing requirement would factor in land constraints and opportunities to more effectively use land, including through densification where appropriate, to ensure that the land is identified in the most appropriate areas and housing targets are met.

Proposal 5: Areas identified as *Growth* areas (suitable for substantial development) would **automatically be granted outline planning permission** for the principle of development, while automatic approvals would also be available for pre-established development types in other areas suitable for building.

Pillar 1: Planning for development

Proposal 6: Decision-making should be faster and more certain, with firm deadlines, and make greater use of digital technology

Proposal 7: Local Plans should be **visual and map-based**, standardised, based on the latest digital technology, and supported by a new template.

Proposal 8: Local authorities and the Planning Inspectorate will be required through legislation to meet a **statutory timetable** for key stages of the process, and we will consider what sanctions there would be for those who fail to do so.

Proposal 9: Neighbourhood Plans should be retained as an important means of community input, and we will support communities to make better use of digital tools

Pillar 1: Planning for development

Proposal 10: A stronger emphasis on build out through planning

Pillar 2: Planning for beautiful and sustainable places

Proposal 11: To make design expectations more visual and predictable, we will expect design guidance and codes to be prepared locally with community involvement, and ensure that **codes are more binding** on decisions about development.

Proposal 12: To support the transition to a planning system which is more visual and rooted in local preferences and character, we will set up a body to support the delivery of provably locally-popular design codes, and propose that each authority should have a chief officer for design and place-making.

Proposal 13: To further embed national leadership on delivering better places, we will consider how Homes England's strategic objectives can give greater emphasis to delivering beautiful places.

Pillar 2: Planning for beautiful and sustainable places

Proposal 14: We intend to introduce a **fast-track** for beauty through changes to national policy and legislation, to incentivise and accelerate high quality development which reflects local character and preferences.

Proposal 15: We intend to amend the National Planning Policy Framework to ensure that it **targets** those areas where a reformed planning system can most effectively play a role in **mitigating and adapting to climate change and maximising environmental benefits**.

Pillar 2: Planning for beautiful and sustainable places

Proposal 16: We intend to design a quicker, simpler framework for assessing environmental impacts and enhancement opportunities, that speeds up the process while protecting and enhancing the most valuable and important habitats and species in England.

Proposal 17: Conserving and enhancing our historic buildings and areas in the 21st century.

Proposal 18: To complement our planning reforms, we will facilitate ambitious improvements in the energy efficiency standards for buildings to help deliver our world-leading commitment to net-zero by 2050.

Pillar 3: Planning for infrastructure and connected places

Proposal 19: The Community Infrastructure Levy should be reformed to be charged as a fixed proportion of the development value above a threshold, with a mandatory nationally-set rate or rates and the current system of planning obligations abolished.

Proposal 20: The scope of the Infrastructure Levy could be extended to capture changes of use through permitted development rights

Proposal 21: The reformed Infrastructure Levy should deliver affordable housing provision

Proposal 22: More freedom could be given to local authorities over how they spend the Infrastructure Levy

Pillar 3: Planning for infrastructure and connected places

Proposal 23: As we develop our final proposals for this new planning system, we will develop a comprehensive **resources and skills strategy for the planning sector** to support the implementation of our reforms.

Proposal 24: We will seek to strengthen **enforcement powers** and sanctions

Sample consultation response questions

5. Do you agree that Local Plans should be simplified in line with our proposals?

6. Do you agree with our proposals for streamlining the development management content of Local Plans, and setting out general development management policies nationally?

7(a). Do you agree with our proposals to replace existing legal and policy tests for Local Plans with a consolidated test of “sustainable development”, which would include consideration of environmental impact?

Sample consultation response questions

9(a). Do you agree that there should be automatic outline permission for areas for substantial development (Growth areas) with faster routes for detailed consent?

9(c). Do you think there is a case for allowing new settlements to be brought forward under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime?

20. Do you agree with our proposals for implementing a fast-track for beauty?



PWP implications for Env and Sust considerations in English Plan-making

Josh Fothergill FIEMA CEnv

Environment and Sustainability considerations in English Plan-making [Proposals 1, 3, 16, 23]

Planning White Paper proposes to:

- “abolish the Sustainability Appraisal system”
- “develop a simplified process for assessing the environmental impact of plans... to satisfy the requirements of UK and international law and treaties”

But also make:

- “Local Plans... subject to a single statutory ‘*sustainable development*’ test”
(replacing the existing *tests of soundness*).

But first... The Government makes a key assertion on sustainable development in its PWP

“The achievement of sustainable development is an existing and well-understood basis for the planning system.”

Do you agree with this assertion?

Let's take have a Poll!

PWP Proposal: Abolish Sustainability Appraisal (1)

- SA not a widely adopted approach outside PCP Act requirement
 - Not adopted in many non-spatial planning process in E&W, or in Northern Ireland and actively avoided in Scottish approaches, where SEA was more broadly adopted.
- Research has found SA (& SEA) positively influence majority of plans:
 - Substantively, SA/SEA leads fine-tuning of policy wording and more robust choice of development sites (Therivel, 2019)
 - Generally speaking, SEA [SA/IIA] is observed to play an important role for the consideration of health in strategic plan making (Fischer et al, 2020)

PWP Proposal: Abolish Sustainability Appraisal (2)

- However... Research has also found that SA can risk the efficacy of SEA
 - Therivel et al. (2009) showed integration of SA with SEA was leading to a subordination of environmental values, a position supported by Tajim and Fischer (2013)
 - SA budget often same as SEA, meaning ‘broader’ scope covered for same funds.
- Development of SA approaches static, after much activity in the 3-4 years after its launch in 2004

PWP Proposal: Simplified process to assess environmental impacts of Plans (1)

PWP lacks further detail of what this simplified process will look like...

But from other PWP details we can surmise:

- The simplified process will “satisfy the requirements of UK and international law and treaties”, these include:
 - SEA, HRA and WFD Regulations
 - Kiev Protocol under the Espoo Convention and Aarhus Convention

Do you feel satisfying the above requirements will be easy in a significantly simpler compared to the current SA system?

PWP Proposal: Simplified process to assess environmental impacts of Plans (2)

- The PWP also indicates that the amended plan-making process will be:
 - The responsibility of the LPA / a Group of LPAs
 - Need to be developed in ~12 months [after 6 months engagement to seek pre-input on allocation of proposed Zones]
 - Need to pass a single statutory ‘sustainable development’ test

From this we can hope that the Govt will ensure:

- LPA are provided with support on future Env Ast process (resources & skills)
- The Env Ast findings have a key bearing on whether the Plan passes ‘SD test’

My Perspective: Strategic Assessment of Plans

- As a signal of future planning culture – the loss of SA is unfortunate, given the growth in the challenge and awareness of sustainability issues since 2004.
- However, SA practice has become rather stalled – arguably as a result of original ODPM SEA ± SA Guidance constraining practice to an Objective Led SA.
- There has been progress on integrating *Ecosystem Services approaches*, but lend itself equally (or more so) to SEA.
- Concerns lobbying has led to a Government view that EIA is simply a repetition of SA / SEA
 - **RISK.** This inaccurate assertion could be to seek to justify the future *simplified plan-level* Env Ast removing / reducing project level Env Asts.

Do you agree with these conclusions?
Let's take my last Poll!

Conclusion: Strategic Assessment of Plans

Accept Sustainability Appraisal likely to be abolished in England [What about Wales?]

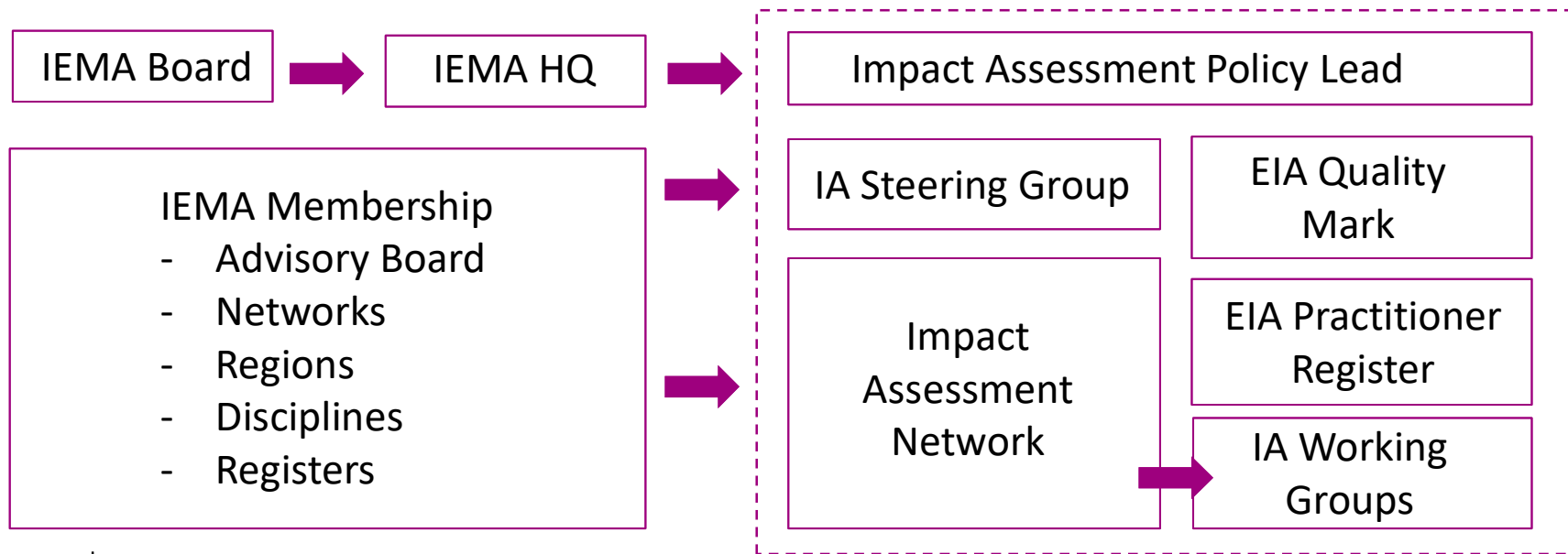
- IEMA (IA Professionals) need to:
 - be involved and help shape the proposals that come forward to around simplified plan-level environmental assessment and statutory SD test
 - help Govt ensure the new approach aligns to UK & international requirements
 - We need to help ensure:
 - Future plan-level Env Ast delivers value, not just UK & Int. legal compliance
 - LPA have sufficient resources (/ access to) to deliver timely & effective Env Ast
 - New plan Env Ast links to detail of Defra Env Bill (Act) and 25 Year Plan
- iema.net • Future plan-level Env Ast has non-tick box role in LPA passing statutory '*SD test*'



Impact Assessment Reform and Next Steps

Dr Rufus Howard FIEMA CEnv

IEMA and Impact Assessment



IA Vision Statement

“IEMA and its members will work to ensure that IA is widely recognised as supporting better decision-making, positively influencing development outcomes and providing lasting benefits to the environment, communities and the economy”

5 Year Strategy - Objectives

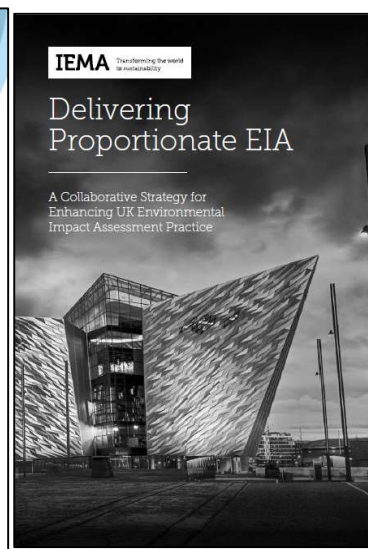
1. Promote professional standards and best practice and showcase the benefits of IA to deliver positive outcomes for the environment and society
2. Develop guidance and training and promote knowledge sharing and collaboration to provide practitioners with the skills and knowledge to deliver effective and proportionate IA
3. Improve the effectiveness of IA through innovation in practice and advocating for effective policy and regulations
4. Encourage and develop the careers of IA professionals so that there is a vibrant supply of qualified practitioners to meet the needs of the future of IA.

Strategic & Policy Guidance

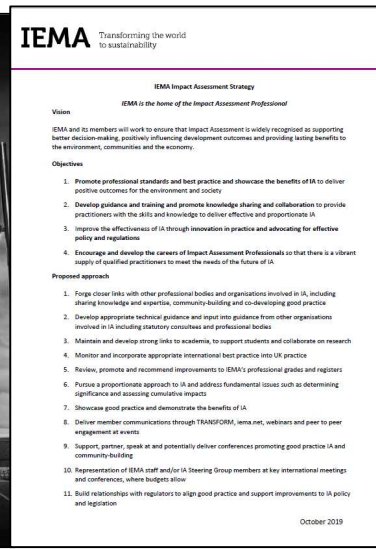


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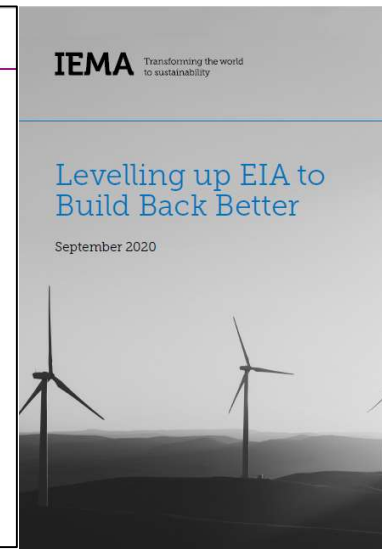
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2017



2019



2020

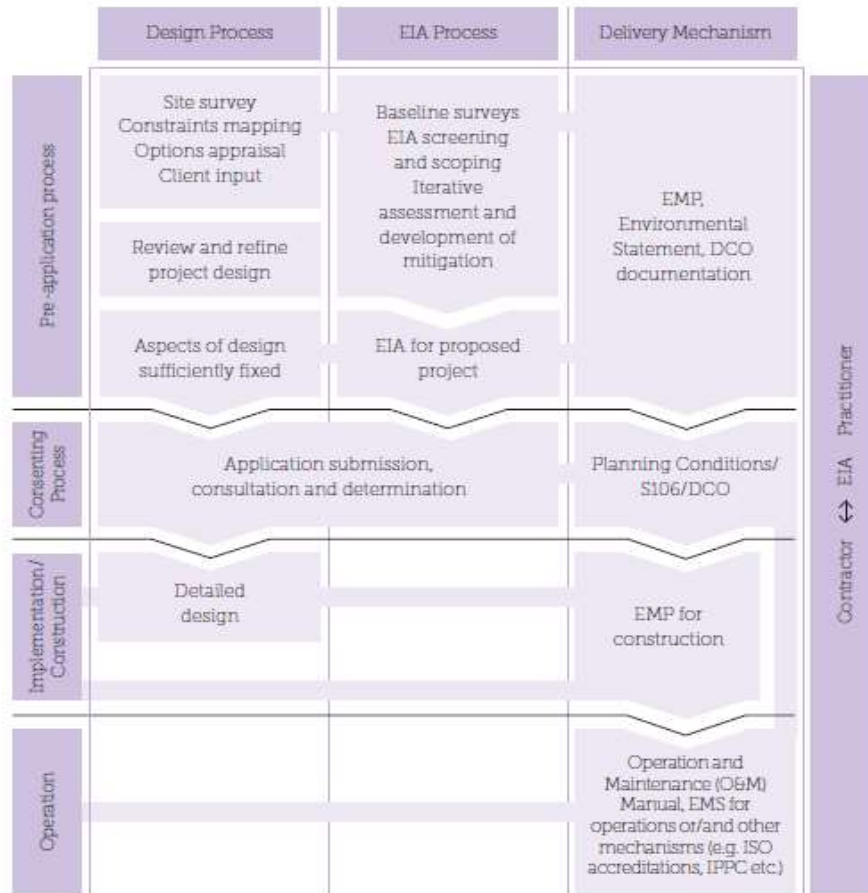
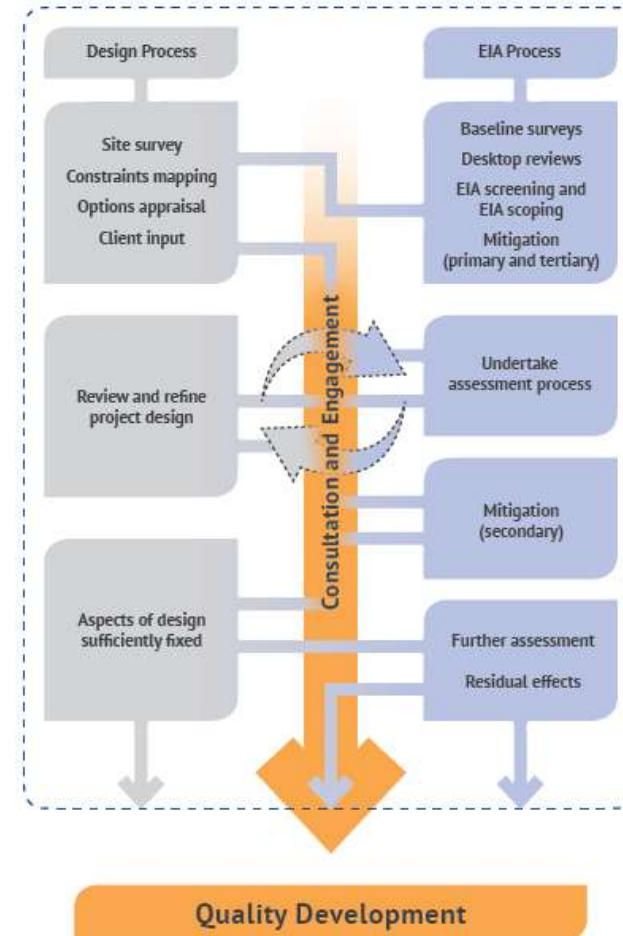


Figure 1: The interaction of design and Environmental Impact Assessment processes



Enhancing People

So that those involved in EIA have the skills, knowledge and confidence to avoid an overly precautionary approach.

Improving Scoping

To generate a more consistently focussed approach to this critical activity throughout the EIA process.

Sharing Responsibility

Recognising that disproportionate EIA is driven by many factors and that enabling proportionate assessment will require collaborative actions that work towards a shared goal.

Embracing Innovation & Digital

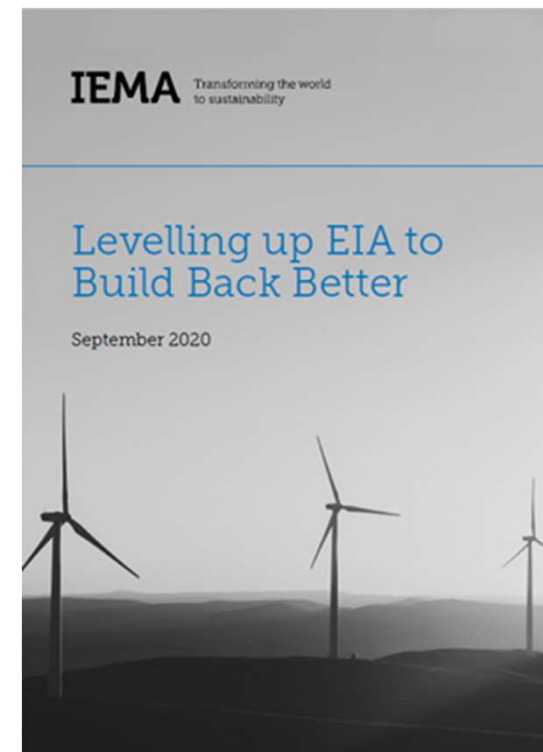
Modernising EIA to deliver effective and efficient assessment and reporting that adds value to projects and their interaction with the environment.

Initial 6 Points

1. Governance on 'scoping' non-EIA development
2. Publish clear requirements and standards for EIA
3. Ensure EMPs are central to the EIA process and provides certainty on implementation
4. Appraise the role of a national EIA unit
5. Embrace innovation and digital EIA
6. Competence in EIA

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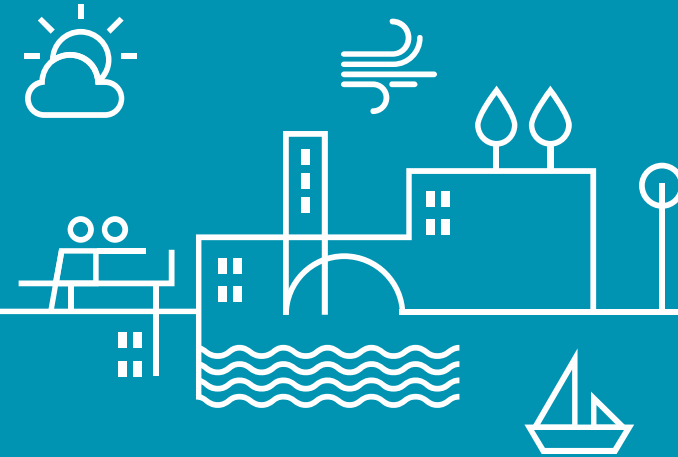
Let's take some quick Polls



Next Steps

- IEMA response to Planning for the Future.
- IEMA response to IA reform white paper.





Q&A Session with panel

Thanks and Closing remarks

