

Noise Action Plan for Dublin Airport

Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment

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Contents

1	Introduction and Background.....	1
2	Methodology.....	1
2.1	Baseline data collection.....	1
3	Screening for Appropriate Assessment	2
3.1	Background.....	2
3.2	Potential zone of influence	3
3.3	Study area and surrounding environment.....	3
3.3.1	Dublin Airport and European sites	3
3.4	The Draft Noise Action Plan	4
3.5	Links to European sites, including cumulative effects.....	5
3.5.1	European sites and habitats with links to European sites	5
3.5.2	Other European sites.....	9
3.6	Potential impacts of the Draft Noise Action Plan	9
3.7	Final Revisions to the Draft Noise Action Plan.....	12
4	Mitigation specific to European sites	15
5	In-combination effects.....	15
6	Screening conclusion	15
	Appendix I: Background.....	16
	Stages in the assessment	16
	Conservation Objectives of European sites	17
	Appendix II: Noise Exposure Maps.....	19



1 Introduction and Background

This document constitutes an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report. The purpose of the report is to provide the information required for Fingal County Council, the competent authority, to undertake a screening exercise for Appropriate Assessment (AA). This will determine the effects, if any, on European sites, (part of the Natura 2000 Network (Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA), designated for nature conservation), of the Draft Noise Action Plan for Dublin Airport.

Brady Shipman Martin was commissioned to undertake the study, which was carried out by Senior Ecologist Matthew Hague CEnv MCIEEM.

A desk study review was undertaken and the potential impacts on European sites, as a result of the Draft Noise Action Plan and in-combination with other relevant plans and projects, are appraised in this report.

Following the public consultation period undertaken in September and October 2018, Fingal County Council revised the Draft Noise Action Plan, and this updated AA Screening Report also considers the revised Actions proposed to take place over the duration of the Noise Action Plan.

This report does not seek to appraise the current approach to managing aircraft noise at Dublin Airport, as set out in the 'Dublin Airport – Noise Management Plan' (NMP)¹, which specifies operational procedures that aim to ensure aircraft are operated in a manner which is safe, and which reduces as far as practicable the noise in areas surrounding the airport.

The requirements for an Appropriate Assessment are set out under Article 6 of the *EU Habitats Directive* (92/34/EEC), transposed into Irish law through the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations* 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011) and the *Planning and Development Act, 2000* (as amended).

2 Methodology

2.1 Baseline data collection

A desk-based assessment of the Draft Noise action Plan was undertaken, focussing on its potential links to habitats and species that are listed as Qualifying Interests (QI) (in the case of SACs) and Special Conservation Interests (SCI) (in the case of SPAs) in the designations for the European sites.

This report takes the following guidance documents into account:

- *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities* (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010 revision);
- *Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities*. Circular NPWS 1/10 & PSSP 2/10;
- *Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting European sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC* (European Commission Environment Directorate-General, 2001);
- *Managing Natura 2000 sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*. Draft Guidance issued by the European Commission (April 2015).

Information was collated from the organisations and websites listed below:

¹ <https://www.dublinairport.com/docs/default-source/noise/dublin-airport-noise-management-plan.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

Noise Action Plan for Dublin Airport

Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment

- Data on European sites and rare and protected plant and animal species contained in the following databases:
 - The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (www.NPWS.ie);
 - The National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) (www.biodiversityireland.ie);
 - BirdWatch Ireland (www.birdwatchireland.ie);
 - Bat Conservation Ireland (www.batconservationireland.org).
- Information on land-use zoning from the online mapping of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (<http://www.myplan.ie/en/index.html>);
- Recent and historical OSi mapping and aerial photography, including www.geohive.ie;
- Photographs taken at the site;
- Information on local watercourses from www.catchments.ie;
- Information on water quality in the area (www.epa.ie);
- Information on soils, geology and hydrogeology in the area (www.gsi.ie);
- Information on the status of EU protected habitats in Ireland (NPWS, 2013);
- Third National Biodiversity Plan 2017 – 2021 (Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2017);
- Fingal County Development Plan 2017 – 2023, including the accompanying Natura Impact Report.

The report has regard to the following legislative instruments:

- Planning and Development, Act 2000, as amended;
- European Commission (EC) Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC;
- European Commission (EC) Birds Directive 2009/147/EC;
- European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-2015.

3 Screening for Appropriate Assessment

3.1 Background

The first part of the Appropriate Assessment process is the Screening phase (refer to Appendix 1). Screening identifies the likely effects of a proposed plan or project on European sites that could arise, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, and considers whether these impacts are likely to have a significant effect on the European site in view of the site's conservation objectives.

Following Screening, if there is a possibility of there being a significant effect on a European site, this will generate the need for an Appropriate Assessment for the purposes of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. This means that if the conclusions at the end of the screening exercise are that significant effects on any European sites, as a result of the proposed plan or project, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, are likely, uncertain or unknown, then an Appropriate Assessment must be carried out. This is in accordance with established precedent and case law.

3.2 Potential zone of influence

For the risk of an adverse effect to occur there must be a 'source', such as a construction site; a 'receptor', such as a designated site for nature conservation; and a pathway between the source and the receptor, such as a watercourse that links the construction site to the designated site. Although there may be a risk of an impact it may not necessarily occur, and if it does occur, it may not be significant.

Identification of a risk means that there is a possibility of ecological or environmental damage occurring, with the level and significance of the impact depending upon the nature and exposure to the risk and the characteristics of the receptor.

There are no set recommended distances for projects to consider European sites as being relevant for assessment. Rather, NPWS (2010²) recommends that *'the distance should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with reference to the nature, size and location of the project, and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, and the potential for in combination effects'*. However, it is considered appropriate to include all European sites within 15km.

In some instances where there are hydrological connections a whole river catchment or a groundwater aquifer may need to be included. Similarly where bird flight paths are involved the impact may be on an SPA more than 15 km away. In the specific case of Dublin Airport and the Noise Action Plan, this includes the potential impacts of noise (primarily noise from aircraft approaching and departing the airport, but including ground noise generated in the airport itself) on European sites at a remove from the airport itself. Taking this into account, as a starting point a search was carried out for all European sites within 15km of Dublin Airport. This search was then extended in order to ensure that all European sites with any potential to be affected by the Draft Noise Action Plan were accounted for in the study.

3.3 Study area and surrounding environment

3.3.1 Dublin Airport and European sites

The lands at Dublin Airport are not under any wildlife or conservation designation. Furthermore, no rare, threatened or legally protected plant species, as listed in the *Irish Red Data Book 1 – Vascular Plants (Curtis & McGough, 1988)*, the *Flora Protection Order, 2015* or the *EU Habitats Directive*, are known to occur within the lands. The airport itself contains no features of ecological significance in a European context.

The landholding is managed in a manner that prioritises the safe and efficient operation of the airfield. There are no habitats present that are utilised by, or are ever likely to be utilised by, significant numbers of protected species. In particular this includes species of birds that are listed as Special Conservation Interests for any European sites, such as the light-bellied Brent goose.

Fifteen European sites are located within a 15km radius of the approximate centre of the airport landholding (see Figure 1). These are:

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC):

- Malahide Estuary SAC (site code 000205), c.5.4km to the north east;
- Baldoye Bay SAC (site code 000199), c.7.4km to the east;
- North Dublin Bay SAC (site code 000206), c.8.3km to the south east;
- Rogerstown Estuary SAC (site code 000208), c.8.9km to the north east;
- South Dublin Bay SAC (site code 000210), c.10.4km to the south east;

² https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/NPWS_2009_AA_Guidance.pdf

Noise Action Plan for Dublin Airport

Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment

- Howth Head SAC (site code 000202), c.12km to the south east;
- Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC (site code 003000), c.12km to the east;
- Ireland's Eye SAC (site code 002193), c.12.4km to the east;

Special Protection Areas (SPA):

- Broadmeadow/Swords Estuary (Malahide Estuary) SPA (site code 004025), c.5.4km to the north east;
- Baldoyle Bay SPA (site code 004016), c.7.4km to the east;
- South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (site code 004024), c.7.4km to the south east;
- North Bull Island SPA (site code 004006), c.8.3km to the south east;
- Rogerstown Estuary SPA (site code 004015), c.9.4km to the north east;
- Ireland's Eye SPA (site code 004015), c.12.1km to the east;
- Howth Head Coast SPA (site code 004113), c.13.7km to the south east.



Figure 1: Location of Dublin Airport showing European sites within 15km

3.4 The Draft Noise Action Plan

As stated in the Draft Noise Action Plan, the long-term strategy of Fingal County Council, including proposed policies and objectives, is set out in the Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023. The Development Plan includes aims to safeguard the current and future operation of Dublin Airport, and its ongoing development.

The Draft Noise Action Plan is designed to manage noise issues and effects associated with Dublin Airport, and where necessary, to present measures to reduce the adverse effects of aviation noise where practical.



3.5 Links to European sites, including cumulative effects

3.5.1 European sites and habitats with links to European sites

The Draft Noise Action Plan for Dublin Airport is limited in its scope to actions related to environmental noise arising from airport activities, including aircraft noise.

As such there will be no impacts such as a loss of any habitat or any species listed as a Qualifying Interest or Special Conservation Interest of any designated site as a consequence of the implementation of the Draft Noise Action Plan. There is, additionally, no potential for the cumulative effects of habitat loss (including loss of 'reservoir' type habitats) or fragmentation to occur. Furthermore, there will be no significant effects on the European sites as a result of:

- Impacts to habitat structure;
- Mortality to species (such as roadkill);
- Impacts to water quality;
- Air pollution.

However, a potential pathway (via noise) exists between the area covered by the Draft Noise Action Plan and five of the European designated sites.

As shown in Figure 9 of the Draft Noise Action Plan (reproduced in **Appendix II** of this report), the 2016 L_{den} Noise Exposure Contours, for the western approach to the main 10/28 Runway, parts of five European sites lie within the 55-59dB(A) noise exposure contour:

- Baldoyle Bay SAC (site code 000199);
- Baldoyle Bay SPA (site code 004016);
- Ireland's Eye SAC (site code 002193);
- Ireland's Eye SPA (site code 004015); and
- Rockabill to Dalkey Island SPA).

Parts of Baldoyle Bay SAC and SPA also lie within the 60-64dB(A) contour.

In addition, as shown in Figure 10 of the Draft Noise Action Plan (reproduced in **Appendix II** of this report), the 2016 L_{night} Noise Exposure Contours for the main 10/28 Runway indicate that parts of the Baldoyle Bay SAC and Baldoyle Bay SPA also lie within the 55-59dB(A) noise exposure contour.

Again as shown in Figures 9 and 10 of the Draft Noise Action Plan no European sites fall within either the L_{den} or L_{night} noise exposure contours for the crosswind runway at Dublin Airport (runway16/34).

Based on the noise exposure maps, which are produced in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Noise Directive (Directive 2002/49/EC), only these five European sites (the nearest of which, Baldoyle Bay SAC/ Baldoyle Bay SPA is located c.7.4km to the east) are potentially linked to the Draft Noise Action Plan for Dublin Airport. **Table 1** lists these European sites and outlines their reasons for designation.

Noise Action Plan for Dublin Airport

Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment

Table 1 lists relevant European sites and outlines their reasons for designation

European Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of 18th August 2018) (*denotes a priority habitat)
Baldoyle Bay SAC Site Code 000199	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] ■ Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] ■ Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) [1330] ■ Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimae</i>) [1410] <p>According to the SAC's Natura 2000 information the site comprises a relatively small estuarine and bay system in north County Dublin. It receives the flows of the Mayne and Sluice rivers, both of which drain an agricultural / suburban catchment. The inner part of the site is sheltered from the sea by a large sand dune peninsula, though most of the dunes are now used as a golf course. Sediments in the inner sheltered areas are mostly muds or muddy sands, often with a high organic content. Part of the tidal section of the Mayne River and adjoining brackish marshes are included in the site. The outer part of the site is exposed to the open sea and the sediments here are predominantly well-aerated sands. In addition to the intertidal and salt marsh habitats, small areas of sand dunes and sandy beaches are included.</p> <p>It is a typical eastern estuarine system with fairly extensive intertidal sand and mud flats. There is good diversity in sediment types. <i>Zostera</i> spp is present. Quality variable but generally good. Salt marshes are well represented and are at least of moderate quality. Two Red Data Book plant species are present. These plants, Borrer's saltmarsh grass (<i>Puccinellia fasciculata</i>) and meadow barley (<i>Hordeum secalinum</i>) are legally protected under the Flora Protection Order, 2015 It is of importance for wintering waterfowl, with an internationally important population of light-bellied Brent geese (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) and nationally important populations of a further 6 species including golden plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) and bar-tailed godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>). Little tern (<i>Sterna albifrons</i>) formerly bred.</p>
Baldoyle Bay SPA Site Code: 004016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] ■ Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] ■ Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137] ■ Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] ■ Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] ■ Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] ■ Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] <p>According to the SPA's Natura 2000 information the SPA comprises a relatively small estuarine system in north County Dublin (it overlaps with Baldoyle Bay SAC). It receives the flows of the Mayne and Sluice rivers, both of which drain an agricultural / suburban catchment. Much of the estuary is sheltered from the sea by a large sand dune peninsula (now mostly a golf course). Sediments in the inner sheltered areas are mostly muds or muddy sands, often with a high organic content. Towards Portmarnock Point, the sediments are predominantly well-aerated sands. In addition to the intertidal flats and salt marsh habitats, a small area of sand hills and sandy beach at Portmarnock Point is included in the site.</p> <p>Baldoyle Bay is a typical eastern estuarine system with fairly extensive intertidal sand and mud flats which have <i>Zostera</i> spp. It also has good salt marsh fringes where birds roost. The quality of habitats present is variable but generally good. The site supports a good diversity of wintering waterfowl and notably an internationally important population of light-bellied Brent geese (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>). It has nationally important populations of shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>), pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>), ringed plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>), golden plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>), grey plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) and bar-tailed godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>). At high tide the shallow waters regularly attract species such as great crested grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) and red-breasted merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>). Little tern (<i>Sterna albifrons</i>) formerly bred at the site, but not since the early 1990s.</p>

Noise Action Plan for Dublin Airport

Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment

European Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of 18th August 2018) (*denotes a priority habitat)
Ireland's Eye SAC Site Code: 002193	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] ■ Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] <p>According to the SAC's Natura 2000 information the site is situated c. 1.5 km north of Howth, Ireland's Eye is a small uninhabited island. The underlying geology is Cambrian greywackes and quartzites. These rocks form impressive cliffs along the northern and eastern sides of the island, reaching up to 69 m. Elsewhere the island is covered by glacial drift. A sandy beach, backed by shingle and low sand hills, occurs at Carrigeen Bay on the western shore. An extensive area of bedrock shore is exposed at low tide to the south of the island. The main habitat on the island is a mix of dry grassland and bracken. Owing to its proximity to the mainland, the island is popular with day-trippers and also has educational value.</p> <p>Island has a small, though significant, example of vegetated stony or shingle habitat of the type which fringes sandy beaches. It also contains an example of vegetated sea cliffs and has two Red Data Book species, <i>Crambe maritima</i> and <i>Hyoscyamus niger</i>. Excellent diversity of breeding seabirds (up to 12 species), with four species in numbers of national importance and also a recently established gannet (<i>Sula bassana</i>) colony, the only one on the east coast. Traditional site for <i>Falco peregrinus</i>.</p>
Ireland's Eye SPA Site Code: 004015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] ■ Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184] ■ Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188] ■ Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) [A199] ■ Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>) [A200] <p>According to the SPA's Natura 2000 information the site is situated c.1.5 km north of Howth, Ireland's Eye is a small uninhabited island. The underlying geology is Cambrian greywackes and quartzites. These rocks form impressive cliffs along the northern and eastern sides of the island, reaching up to 69 m. A tall stack, which is completely cut off from the main island at mid and high tide, occurs at the eastern side of the cliffs. Elsewhere the island is covered by glacial drift. A sandy beach, backed by shingle and low sand hills, occurs at Carrigeen Bay on the western shore. A low-lying, sparsely vegetated islet, known as Thulla, occurs a little south of the main island, and an extensive area of bedrock shore is exposed at low tide to the south of the island. The main habitat on the island is a mix of dry grassland and bracken. The seas to the north and east of the island (to a distance of 500 m), where seabirds feed, bathe and socialise, are included in the site. Owing to its proximity to the mainland, the island is popular with day-trippers and also has educational value.</p> <p>Ireland's Eye is an important seabird colony, with 11 species breeding regularly. It has nationally important populations of <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>, <i>Larus argentatus</i>, <i>Larus marinus</i>, <i>Rissa tridactyla</i>, <i>Uria aalge</i> and <i>Alca torda</i>. In addition, the island has a recently established colony of <i>Sula bassana</i>, which is one of only five in the country and the only one on the East coast. It also has regionally important populations of <i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>, <i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>, <i>Cephus grylle</i> and a small colony of <i>Fratercula arctica</i>. It is a traditional site for <i>Falco peregrinus</i>, though this species only breeds in some years. It supports two Red Data Book plant species, <i>Crambe maritima</i> and <i>Hyoscyamus niger</i>. The seabird colony is monitored annually.</p>



Noise Action Plan for Dublin Airport

Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment

European Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of 18th August 2018) (*denotes a priority habitat)
Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC Site Code: 003000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reefs [1170] ■ Harbour porpoise (<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>) [1351] <p>According to the SAC's Natura 2000 information The SAC forms a strip of dynamic inshore and coastal waters in the western Irish Sea, extending approximately 40 km in length and encompassing a range of comparatively shallow marine habitats, including diverse seabed structures, reefs, islets and islands. It borders existing designated sites for Annexed species and habitats and is adjacent to a wide array of coastal features, e.g., mudflats, lagoons, estuaries, coastal cliffs, sea caves, several of which are also designated. Extending east from Dublin Bay towards the offshore Kish Bank, the site contains the entire Burford Bank, a sedimentary seabed structure (i.e. fine sand) at the mouth of Dublin Bay, that on its north side is flanked by gravel and coarse sand deposits. The site also contains the northern segment of the Frazer Bank (i.e. fine sand) off Dalkey Island and Killiney Bay. Reef habitats within the site occur at Dalkey Island, Maiden Rock and Muglins in the southern portion, off Howth Head, Ireland's Eye and Lambay Island in the central portion, and Rockabill in North Dublin.</p> <p>The SAC represents a key habitat for the Annex II species - harbour porpoise, within the Irish Sea. Population survey data show that porpoise occurrence within the site boundary meets suitable reference values for other designated sites in Ireland. The species occurs year-round within the site and comparatively high group sizes have been recorded. Porpoises with young (i.e. calves) are observed at favourable, typical reference values for the species. Casual and effort-related sighting rates from coastal observation stations are significant for the east coast of Ireland and the latter appear to be relatively stable across all seasons. The selected site contains a wide array of habitats believed to be important for harbour porpoise including inshore shallow sand and mud-banks and rocky reefs scoured by strong current flow. The site also contains two Annex II seal species – Harbour seal (<i>Phoca vitulina vitulina</i>), Grey seal (<i>Halichoerus grypus</i>) for which terrestrial haul-out sites occur in immediate proximity to the site. Bottlenose dolphin (<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>) has also occasionally been recorded in the area. Along the eastern seaboard the habitat type Reef is uncommon due to prevailing geology and hydrographical conditions. Expansive surveys of the Irish coast have indicated that the greatest resource of this habitat within the Irish Sea is found fringing offshore islands which are concentrated along the Dublin coast. A detailed survey of selected suitable islands has shown areas with typical biodiversity for this habitat both intertidally and subtidally. These Reefs are subject to strong tidal currents with an abundant supply of suspended matter resulting in good representation of filter feeding fauna such as sponges, anemones and echinoderms.</p>



3.5.2 Other European sites

It is considered that no other European sites other than these five have any connection (pathway) with the Draft Dublin Airport Noise Action Plan area, due to their locations, their distance from the airport and its flight paths/noise exposure contours and the features (Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests) for which they are designated. As there is no pathway between the Draft Noise Action Plan area and these European sites they are not considered further in this report.

3.6 Potential impacts of the Draft Noise Action Plan

To date, no evidence has been published to show that airport-related noise is having any effects on the habitats and species for which these European sites have been designated. Specifically, airport-related noise is not raised as a potential threat or pressure in the published Natura 2000 Standard Data Forms or Conservation Objectives documents for these sites. Recent studies, such as the NIS prepared for the Baldoyle to Portmarnock Pedestrian and Cyclist Scheme³ have not referred to any pressures on bird populations as a result of current airport or aircraft noise. The bird count studies included in that NIS conclude that a range of bird species (bar-tailed godwit, ringed plover, shelduck, golden plover and grey plover) are present within the SPA “*in notable numbers*” and internationally and nationally important populations of these species, as well as light-bellied Brent goose and others, are present. Based on these findings it can reasonably be concluded that the airport, including all related activity, is having no noise-related impacts on the Conservation Objectives of any European site.

The long-term strategy of Fingal County Council, including proposed policies and objectives, is set out in the Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023. The Development Plan sets aims to safeguard the current and future operation of Dublin Airport, and its ongoing development. With regard to noise from Dublin Airport, **Objective DA09** of the Development Plan states:

“Ensure that aircraft-related development and operation procedures proposed and existing at the Airport consider all measures necessary to mitigate against the potential negative impact of noise from aircraft operations (such as engine testing, taxiing, taking off and landing), on existing established residential communities, while not placing unreasonable, but allowing reasonable restrictions on airport development to prevent detrimental effects on local communities, taking into account EU Regulation 598/2014 (or any future superseding EU regulation applicable) having regard to the ‘Balanced Approach’ and the involvement of communities in ensuring a collaborative approach to mitigating against noise pollution.”

As the focus of this Objective of the Development Plan is on potential impacts of noise on residential communities it follows that the Actions presented at Section 7.2 of the Draft Noise Action Plan are similarly focussed. Regardless, **Table 2** reviews each of the proposed Actions and considers whether or not there are any potential impacts arising on the integrity of the European sites under consideration.

³ <https://consult.fingal.ie/en/system/files/materials/8554/Natura%20Impact%20Statement.pdf>

Noise Action Plan for Dublin Airport

Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment

Action	Description	Potential impact on European sites	Mitigation required	Comment
daa01	daa will work with its airline partners to introduce quieter aircraft, particularly at night	None	None	Should this occur the net impact on overall noise levels will be positive
daa02	daa will undertake a review of the Departure Noise Abatement Procedures and will publish the findings	None	None	Review and report only
daa03	daa will monitor and publicly report key performance with respect to the Airport's existing Noise Abatement Procedures	None	None	Review and report only
daa04	daa will install Fixed Electrical Ground Power (FEGP) on all new contact stands to help reduce ground noise	None	None	Should this occur the net impact on overall noise levels will be positive
daa05	daa will limit the times when engine run-up testing can take place at the Engine Test Site in accordance with the Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP)	None	None	Should this occur the net impact on overall noise levels will be positive
daa06	daa will prioritise the roll out of the Home Insulation Programme which is based on the 2016 63 dB LAeq, 16hr contour	None	None	No specific relevance to environmental receptors
daa07	daa will produce annual noise contours and metrics and will share this information with interested parties	None	None	Review and report only
daa08	daa will enhance its Noise Flight Track System to include where appropriate additional fixed and/or mobile noise monitoring terminals	None	None	Action will result in additional data being collected
daa09	daa will continue to operate its noise complaint management system and respond to all aviation-related noise complaints in a timely manner	None	None	No specific relevance to environmental receptors
daa10	daa will work with its partners to introduce live (or near live) flight reporting software (such as Webtrak)	None	None	Review and report only
daa11	daa will continue to engage proactively with its community through the Dublin Airport Environment Working Group (DAEWG) and the St. Margaret's Community Liaison Group by including noise as a standing agenda item	None	None	No specific relevance to environmental receptors
fcc01	fcc will review land-use policies in relation to aircraft noise through the development of a new Local Area Plan (LAP).	None	None	The new LAP will be subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment



Noise Action Plan for Dublin Airport

Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment

Action	Description	Potential impact on European sites	Mitigation required	Comment
fcc02	fcc will commission / undertake an encroachment analysis working with daa to ensure that airport noise is appropriately addressed through the new LAP.	None	None	The new LAP will be subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment
fcc03	daa should review night-time noise in the context of health impact and to identify the cost-effectiveness of changes to noise abatement procedures and incentives for quieter aircraft	None	None	No specific relevance to environmental receptors
fcc04	fcc will review emerging evidence in relation to aircraft noise and the effects of health and quality of life to assist with the development of policy objectives	None	None	No specific relevance to environmental receptors
fcc05	daa to investigate incentivising quieter aircraft through incentives such as FlyQuiet programmes.	None	None	Should this occur the net impact on noise levels will be positive
fcc06	daa to work collaboratively with FCC to develop a draft noise action plan for the expanded airport to enable readiness for noise management of a three-runway Dublin Airport.	None	None	Any future noise action plan for an expanded airport will be subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment

Table 2 Proposed Actions of the Draft Noise Action Plan



3.7 Final Revisions to the Draft Noise Action Plan

The Actions presented at Section 7.2 of the Revised Noise Action Plan have been amended following the completion of the public consultation process. **Table 3** reviews each of the proposed Actions and considers whether or not there are any potential impacts arising on the integrity of the European sites under consideration. Although there are differences between the Actions presented in the Draft and Revised Plans, the conclusions (that there will be no impacts on any European site as a result of the implementation of the Actions) remain unchanged.

Noise Action Plan for Dublin Airport

Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment

Action	Description	Potential impact on European sites	Mitigation required	Comment
Reduction of noise at source				
1	Encourage daa to work with airline partners to introduce quieter aircraft, particularly at night – including consideration of incentives	None	None	Should this occur the net impact on overall noise levels will be positive
2	Encourage daa to promote quieter aircraft through incentives such as FlyQuiet programmes.	None	None	Should this occur the net impact on overall noise levels will be positive
Land use planning and management				
3	Keep under review land-use policies in relation to aircraft noise through the review of existing land use planning frameworks in so far as they relate to Dublin Airport.	None	None	Review and report only
4	Monitor noise encroachment associated with Dublin Airport to ensure that airport noise policy is appropriately informed through land use planning frameworks in so far as they relate to Dublin Airport.	None	None	Review and report only
Noise abatement operating procedures				
5	Request daa to undertake a review of Departure Noise Abatement Procedures and to publish the findings	None	None	Review and report only
6	Request daa to monitor and publicly report key performance with respect to the Airport's existing Noise Abatement Procedures	None	None	Review and report only
Monitoring and community engagement				
7	Request daa to produce annual noise contours and metrics and to share this information with interested parties	None	None	Review and report only
8	Encourage daa to continue to operate noise complaint management systems and respond to all aviation-related noise complaints in a timely manner	None	None	No specific relevance to environmental receptors
9	Promote the introduction of live (or near live) flight reporting software (such as Webtrak)	None	None	Review and report only
10	Engage proactively with communities through the Dublin Airport Environment Working Group (DAEWG) and the St. Margaret's Community Liaison Group	None	None	No specific relevance to environmental receptors



Noise Action Plan for Dublin Airport

Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment

Action	Description	Potential impact on European sites	Mitigation required	Comment
11	Promote the enhancement of the Noise Flight Track System to include where appropriate additional fixed and/or mobile noise monitoring terminals	None	None	Action will result in additional data being collected
All				
12	Review any updates in advice from bodies such as the WHO and the European Environment Agency in relation to aircraft noise and its health and quality of life effects	None	None	Review and report only
13	Request the submission of an annual report by daa outlining measures undertaken to achieve actions listed in this table	None	None	Review and report only

Table 3 Proposed Actions of the Revised Noise Action Plan



4 Mitigation specific to European sites

In relation to European sites, there will be no impacts as a result of the implementation of the Draft Dublin Airport Noise Action Plan. Therefore no mitigation is necessary or proposed for the protection of European sites.

5 In-combination effects

It is a requirement of the *Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations, 2011* that when considering whether a plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of a European site the assessment must take into account in-combination effects with other current or reasonably foreseeable plans and projects.

- If it can be clearly demonstrated that the plan or project will not result in any effects at all that are relevant to the integrity of a European site then the plan or project should proceed without considering the in-combination test, further;
- If there are identified effects arising from the plan or project even if they are perceived as minor and not likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of a European site alone, then these effects must be considered 'in-combination' with the effects arising from other plans and projects.

As appraised in this report the proposed implementation of the Draft Noise Action Plan will not have any significant effects on any European sites. As such it can be concluded that it will, either on its own or in-combination with other developments, have no impact on the European sites.

Furthermore, future development at and related to Dublin Airport will be required to comply with the Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023 which has itself been subject to the Appropriate Assessment process and for which a Natura Impact Report (NIR) was prepared. While there are no policies in the Fingal Development Plan specifically related to airport noise and European sites (Objective DA09 relates to the impacts of noise on residential communities), a new Local Area Plan (LAP) is to be prepared for the airport by Fingal County Council. As stated in the NIR for the Fingal Development Plan, the new LAP "*will provide an opportunity to reinforce environmental considerations*".

6 Screening conclusion

This report concludes on the best scientific evidence that it can be clearly demonstrated that no elements of either the Draft Dublin Airport Noise Action Plan or the updated Actions set out in the Revised Noise Action Plan will result in any impact on the integrity or Qualifying Interests/Special Conservation Interests of any relevant European site, either on their own or in-combination with other plans or projects, in light of their conservation objectives.

As such no mitigation measures are required for the protection of these European sites.

It is considered that this report provides sufficient relevant information to allow the Competent Authority (Fingal County Council) to carry out an AA Screening, and reach a determination that the Draft Dublin Airport Noise Action Plan will not affect the integrity of any of the relevant European sites under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) in light of their conservation objectives.

Appendix I: Background

The European⁴ network is a Europe-wide network of ecologically important sites (SPAs and cSACs – also known as ‘European Sites’ or collectively the ‘Natura 2000 Network’) that have been designated for protection under either the EU Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds) or the EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna).

The main aim of the Habitats Directive is “to contribute towards ensuring biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats of wild fauna and flora in the European territory of the Member States to which the treaty applies”. Any actions taken must be designed to “maintain or restore, at a favourable conservation status, natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora of Community interest”. Under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, an assessment is required where a plan or project may give rise to significant effects upon a European site.

In addition, it is a matter of law that candidate SACs (cSACs) and Sites of Community Importance (SCI) are considered in this process;

Article 6 (paragraphs (3) and (4)) of the Habitats Directive states that:

(3) Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.

(4) If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of European is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted.”

The requirements of the Habitats Directive are transposed into Irish law by means of the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011* (hereafter referred to as the *Birds and Habitats Regulations*)⁵ and by the *Planning and Development Act 2000*, as amended.

In Ireland, the statutory agency responsible for the designated areas is NPWS.

Stages in the assessment

European Commission guidance (2001)⁶ sets out the principles on how to undertake decision making in applying the Habitats Directive. The requirements of the Habitats Directive comprise four distinct stages:

Stage 1: Screening is the process which initially identifies the likely significant effects upon a European site of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether these impacts may be significant. It is important to note that the burden of evidence is to show, on the basis of objective information, that there will be no significant effect; if the effect may be significant, or is not known, that would trigger the need for an Appropriate Assessment. There is European Court of Justice case law to

⁴ The EU Habitats Directive, Article 3.1, states “A Coherent European ecological network of Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas pursuant to Directive 79/409/EEC shall be set up under the title Natura 2000”

⁵ SI No. 477 of 2011

⁶ European Commission (2001) *Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting European Sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6 (3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*

the effect that unless the likelihood of a significant effect can be ruled out on the basis of objective information, then an Appropriate Assessment must be made.

Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment is the detailed consideration of the impact on the integrity of the European site of the project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site's conservation objectives and its structure and function. This is to determine with scientific certainty whether or not there will be adverse effects on the integrity of the site in light of its conservation objectives. This stage also includes the development of mitigation measures to avoid or reduce any possible impacts.

Stage 3: Assessment of alternative solutions is the process which examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that would avoid impacts on the integrity of the European site, should avoidance or mitigation measures be unable to cancel out adverse effects.

Stage 4: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain. At Stage 4 an assessment is made with regard to whether or not the development is necessary for imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) and, if so, of the compensatory measures needed to maintain the overall coherence of the European network.

Conservation Objectives of European sites

The conservation objectives for a European Site are intended to represent the aims of the Habitats and Birds Directives in relation to that site. To this end, habitats and species of European Community importance should be maintained or restored to 'favourable conservation status' (FCS), as defined in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive below:

The conservation status of a natural habitat will be taken as 'favourable' when:

- Its natural range and the area it covers within that range are stable or increasing;
- The specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future;
- Conservation status of typical species is favourable as defined in Article 1(i).

The conservation status of a species will be taken as favourable when:

- Population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats;
- The natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future;
- There is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

Guidance from the European Commission⁷ indicates that the Habitats Directive intends FCS to be applied at the level of an individual site, as well as to habitats and species across their European range. Therefore, in order to properly express the aims of the Habitats Directive for an individual site, the conservation objectives for a site are essentially to maintain (or restore) the habitats and species of the site at (or to) FCS.

The European Commission guidance recommends that screening should fulfil the following steps:

1. Determine whether the plan (or policy) is directly connected with or necessary for the management of European sites;

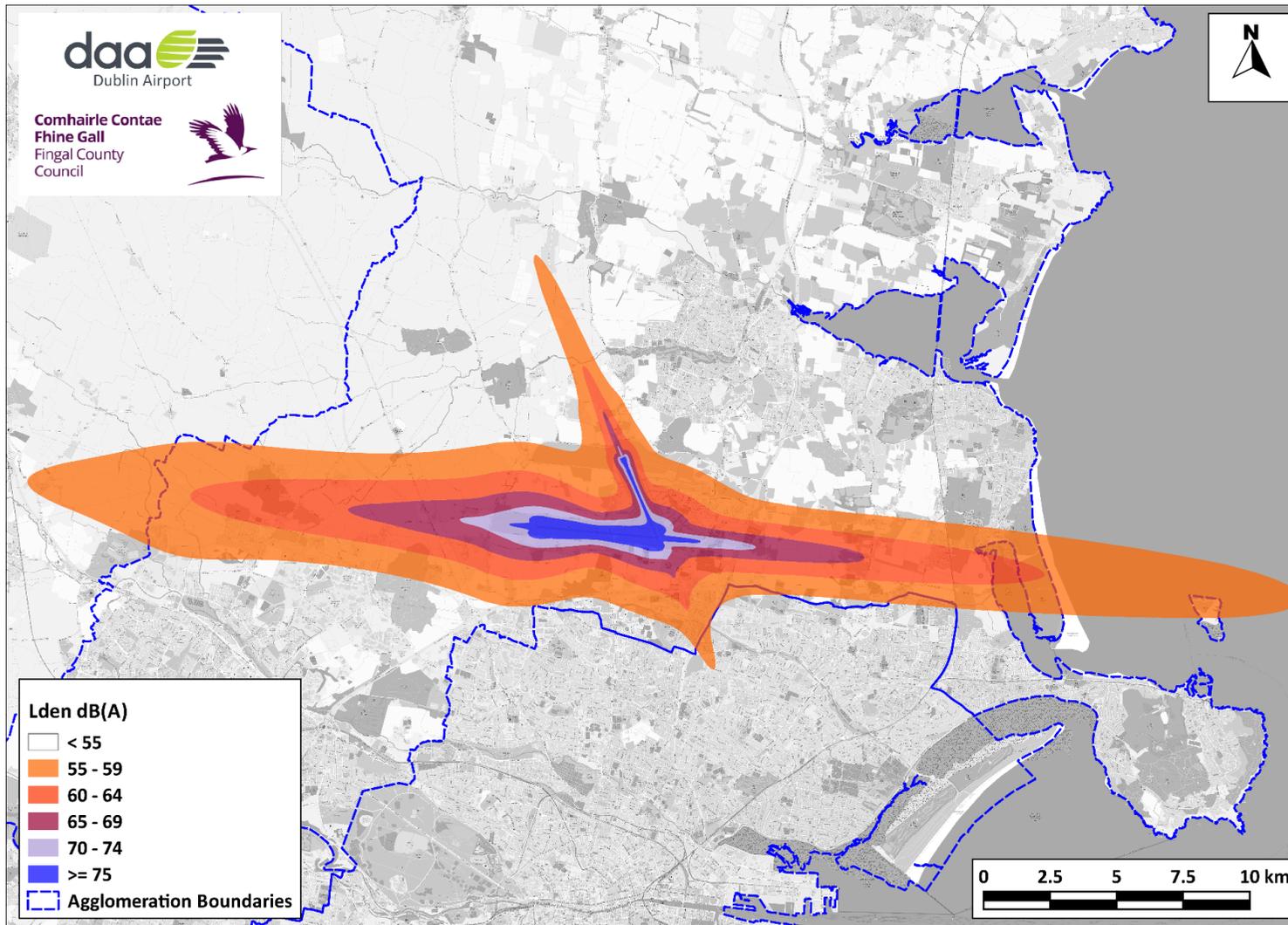
⁷ Managing European sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. (European Commission 2000)

Noise Action Plan for Dublin Airport

Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment

2. Describe the plan and describe and characterise any other plans or projects which, in combination, have the potential for having significant effects on European sites;
3. Identify the potential effects on European sites;
4. Assess the likely significance of any effects on European sites.

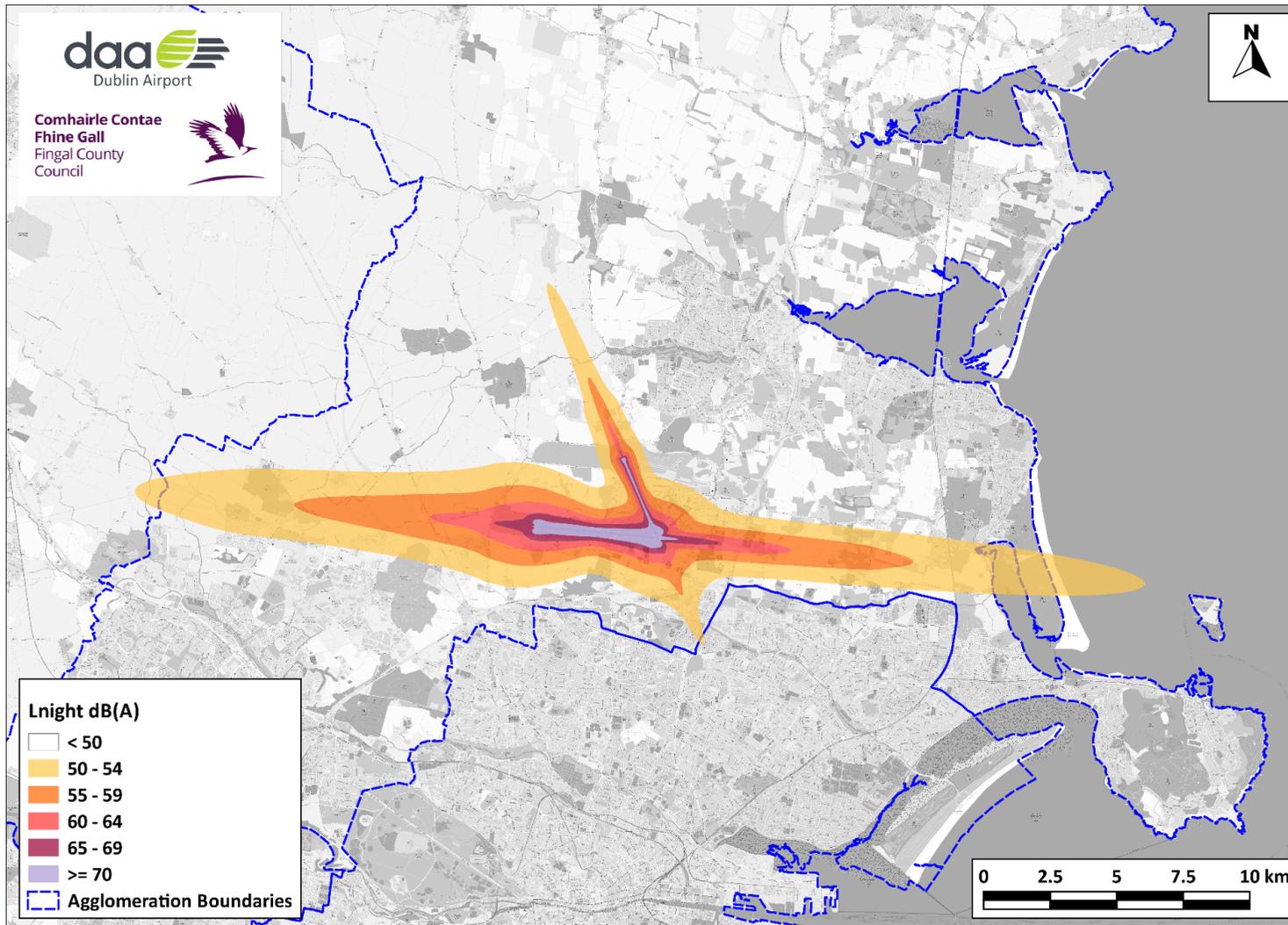
Appendix II: Noise Exposure Maps



Draft Noise Action Plan Figure 9: 2016 L_{den} Noise Exposure Contours

Noise Action Plan for Dublin Airport

Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment



Draft Noise Action Plan Figure 10: 2016 L_{night} Noise Exposure Contours



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