An tÚdarás Inniúil um Thorann Aerárthaí

Aircraft Noise Competent Authority

Amendment of the Noise Abatement Objective relating to Aircraft Noise Management at Dublin Airport

# Strategic Environmental Assessment Statement

November 2026



Report

Amendment of the Noise Abatement Objective relating to Aircraft Noise Management at Dublin Airport

# Strategic Environmental Assessment Statement

For ANCA

13 November 2026

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

1.1.1 This Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Statement sets out the findings of the Aircraft Noise Competent Authority (ANCA) in relation to ANCA's SEA of the following plan, for the purposes of the EU SEA Directive (2001/42/EC)1 and implementing Irish regulations (SI 435/2004)2 (the SEA Regulations):

- The Noise Abatement Objective for Dublin Airport (the NAO), as amended in accordance with Section 9(2)(a) of the Aircraft Noise (Dublin Airport) Regulation Act 2019 (the Act of 2019).

1.1.2 Related to the Infrastructure Application (F23A/0781), a noise problem was identified on 22nd January 2026. This triggered the process of aircraft noise regulation through the adoption of the International Civil Aviation (ICAO) Balanced Approach, as implemented by Regulation 598/2014 and the 2019 Act. As part of that process, ANCA is required to define, restate or amend the NAO where a noise problem is identified before considering mitigation measures under section 9 of the 2019 Act.

1.1.3 The proposed amendments to the NAO seeks to "Limit and reduce the long-term adverse effects of aircraft noise on health and quality of life, particularly at night, through measures that mitigate impacts and provide certainty to the communities and the airport operator as part of the sustainable development of Dublin Airport". The amended expected outcomes of the NAO are therefore that:

- The number of people highly sleep disturbed and highly annoyed in 2031 shall reduce by 20% compared to 2023;
- The number of people highly sleep disturbed and highly annoyed in 2036 shall reduce by 25% compared to 2023;
- The number of people highly sleep disturbed and highly annoyed in 2041 shall reduce by 30% compared to 2023;

1.1.4 The number of dwellings, schools and hospitals exposed to aircraft noise above 65 dB $L_{den}$ and/or 55 dB $L_{night}$ will be tracked, with the expectation that measures will be used to mitigate and/or limit the number of dwellings, schools and hospitals exposed in each relevant year under ENR.

1.1.5 The size of the 55 dB $L_{den}$ and 50 dB $L_{night}$ contours will be tracked with the expectation that these will reduce compared to 2023 in each relevant year under ENR. Noise mitigation measures may also be considered with reference to these contours.

## 1.2 Summary of the SEA Process

1.2.1 SEA is used to describe the application of environmental assessment to plans and programmes in accordance with the SEA Directive and the SEA Regulations. The proposed amendments to the NAO is considered to be a 'plan' for the purposes of the SEA Directive and the SEA Regulations. The 'plan' in this case constitutes a 'minor modification' to the existing NAO..

1.2.2 The specific purpose of SEA is to ensure that early consideration is given to environmental aspects when a plan or programme is in development. The key stages of the SEA process, as set out in the SEA Process Checklist (EPA, 2008), are the following:

- Screening – the process of determining whether implementation of a plan or programme would be likely to have significant environmental effects on the environment.

- Scoping – the process of deciding the proposed scope of the detailed environmental assessment that will be documented within the SEA Environmental Report itself. The SEA Regulations require consultation with prescribed "Environmental Authorities" in that regard (currently the Environmental Protection Agency (the EPA), the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications).

- Environmental Assessment – the process of identifying the likely significant effects of implementing the plan or programme, alongside its realistic alternatives, on each of the scoped in environmental factors, and proposing mitigation and monitoring measures to address these effects. This step of the process involves preparation of an Environmental Report, further consultation with the Environmental Authorities and consultation with the public generally.

- Information on Decision – the process of explaining how environmental considerations have been integrated into and addressed through the plan or programme.

1.2.3 Following production of an SEA Screening Report, on **12th January 2026**, ANCA made a Screening Determination that SEA applies to the proposed amendments to the NAO. ANCA subsequently produced an SEA Scoping Report to set out the proposed scope of the detailed environmental assessment. ANCA issued this Scoping Report to the Environmental Authorities on **30th January 2026**. ANCA then prepared a Draft Environmental Report which detailed the SEA that was undertaken on the proposed amendments to the NAO for Dublin Airport.

1.2.4 Separately, but concurrently, to the SEA, ANCA also carried out an Appropriate Assessment (AA) of the proposed amendments to the NAO, in line with the requirements of the EU Birds and Habitats Directive[1] and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (the Habitats Regulations[2]). Following production of an AA Screening Report and consideration of the consultation submissions, ANCA made a Screening Determination that AA requirements do not apply to the proposed amendments to the NAO. This process was also carried out for the DRD.

1.2.5 ANCA published the DRD, the proposed amendments to the NAO and related reports, and the SEA Draft Environmental Report along with an AA Screening Report together for public consultation, which ran for a period of 14 weeks from **28th May** to **3rd September 2026**. At the same time, the SEA Draft Environmental Report was issued to the Environmental Authorities.

1.2.6 Following the consultation, a Consultation Report and SEA Final Environmental Report were produced, along with a revised NAO Report, to account for the submissions made during the public consultation (including those from the Environmental Authorities). The Amended NAO was then formally adopted by ANCA by Chief Executive Order.

## 1.3 Purpose of this SEA Statement

1.3.1 In accordance with the SEA Regulations, ANCA is required to prepare a statement providing information on the decision to implement the Amended NAO. This 'SEA Statement' represents the final stage of the SEA process, as prescribed in the SEA Process Checklist and the SEA Pack (EPA, 2020).

1.3.2 This SEA Statement provides the following information:

[1] Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds; Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.
[2] SI 477/2011.

- How environmental considerations have been integrated into the Amended NAO (Chapter 2);
- How the Environmental Report, submissions and observations made to ANCA by the Environmental Authorities and the public[3], have been taken into account during the preparation of the Amended NAO (Chapter 3);
- The reasons for choosing the Amended NAO in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with (Chapter 4); and
- The measures decided upon to monitor the environmental effects of implementation of the Amended NAO (Chapter 5).

## 1.4 Consultant Team

1.4.1 This Statement has been prepared by Logika Consultants Ltd. ('Logika'), part of the Logika Group. Logika are the Consultant Team engaged to provide expert support to ANCA in the drafting of the NAO. Specifically, Logika are responsible for providing SEA and AA input to the NAO process.

[3] Consultations under Article 14 of the SEA Regulations were not deemed necessary due to the absence of transboundary environmental effects.

# 2 How Environmental Considerations were Integrated into the Plan

## 2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The SEA and AA processes were undertaken in parallel to the preparation of the Amended NAO, with the consultant teams working closely with ANCA (including through weekly project meetings) throughout the development of the Amended NAO. This approach ensured that environmental considerations were integrated into the Amended NAO from the outset, and the potential environmental implications of those instruments were taken into account.

## 2.2 Environmental Baseline and Sensitivities

2.2.1 The integration process commenced at the SEA Scoping stage with consideration of the key environmental issues likely to be relevant to the Amended NAO, and the likely magnitude and geographic extent of the potential effects. This stage of the process included consultation with the prescribed Environmental Authorities, and in particular the EPA, which provided a scoping submission.

2.2.2 Baseline environmental conditions were ascertained in relation to only population and human health as these were the aspects scoped in for detailed assessment. Information for the environmental baseline was obtained from a range of documents as referenced in Chapter 4 of the Final Environmental Report. For each of the two environmental aspects scoped in, a Zone of Influence (ZoI) was identified relating to the possible impacts.

2.2.3 The baseline information was used to highlight key environmental and sustainability issues or sensitivities and to provide an evidence base for likely future environmental conditions without the Amended NAO. These issues included noise levels, emissions and air pollution and associated health impacts in the vicinity of Dublin Airport, and the national/international climate emergency in the context of the scoped in aspect(s). Along with a review of other relevant plans and programmes, the baseline information was also used to focus the SEA objectives, and assess positive and negative impacts associated with the implementation of the Amended NAO.

## 2.3 Environmental Assessment

2.3.1 The methodology for undertaking the environmental assessment of the proposed amendments to the NAO is set out in Chapter 3 of the SEA Final Environmental Report. The methodology includes the future baseline and assessment case (i.e. what is being assessed); the SEA objectives, indicators and targets for each of the scoped-in environmental aspects (the assessment framework); and the significance criteria used.

2.3.2 For SEA, the impacts of the proposed amendments to the NAO must be described relative to an identified baseline scenario, which describes how matters would develop in the absence of the proposed amendments to the NAO. The future baseline described in the Final Environmental Report therefore assumed that daa will seek to grow the airport in line with existing local and national policy. The assessment case considered only the changes made from the existing NAO compared to the proposed amendments to the NAO, this being a tightening in policy objectives relating to the numbers of receptors exposed to certain noise thresholds.

2.3.3 The results of the assessment are detailed in Chapter 6 of the Final Environmental Report. The assessment presented compared the impacts of the changes from the NAO to the Amended NAO on each of the relevant SEA objectives. These results were fed back to ANCA through the drafting of

the report, both prior to and subsequent to the public consultation, and during the weekly project meetings.

## 2.4 Appropriate Assessment

2.4.1 The Habitats Directive and Habitats Regulations require AA to be carried out where a plan is likely to have a significant impact on a designated "European site" (also referred to as "Natura 2000" sites), either individually or in combination with other plans or projects. European sites include Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). Each of these sites is designated because of their specific biodiversity value: for SPAs this is because of their value for wild birds; for SACs, it is because of the important habitats and species that they support. More specifically, AA is required if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective scientific information following screening, that the plan, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site. As with SEA, in determining this position, a Screening exercise is undertaken to establish whether the potential for such effects exists.

2.4.2 AA Screening was therefore undertaken broadly concurrently, but separately, to SEA Scoping. ANCA, in its role as competent authority, was required to make a Screening Determination on whether AA was required in respect of the NAO. Having regard to the information provided in the AA Screening Report and the consultation submissions, ANCA determined that there was no potential for impacts on European sites to occur as a result of implementing the Amended NAO, either individually or in combination with any other plan or project, and therefore Appropriate Assessment was not required.

## 2.5 Mitigation Measures

2.5.1 Annex 1 of the SEA Directive requires the Environmental Report to set out 'the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme'. The SEA of the Amended NAO concluded that there would be no significant adverse environmental effects. Therefore, no further mitigation measures were required.

# 3 How Submissions, Observations, Consultations and the Environmental Report were Integrated into the Plan

## 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Consultation with the Environmental Authorities (listed below) was undertaken on the SEA Scoping Report and the SEA Draft Environmental Report:

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);
- The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage;
- The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine Environment; and
- The Minister for Climate, Energy and the Environment.

3.1.2 In addition, the SEA Draft Environmental Report was also made available for public consultation, alongside the proposed amendments to the NAO, the NAO Review Report, the draft RD, and the DRD Report, as well as the AA Screenings for the proposed amendments to the NAO and RD.

3.1.3 As prescribed in the SEA Directive and Regulations, ANCA was required to take account of the Environmental Report and of any opinions expressed upon it as it prepared the Amended NAO for adoption.

3.1.4 A brief summary of the consultations, key submissions and how these were addressed through the SEA (including any minor modifications) is set out below.

## 3.2 SEA Screening Consultation

3.2.1 ANCA consulted the Environmental Authorities by providing them with a copy of the SEA Screening during the period **19th November 2025** to **17th December 2025**, allowing them to provide input to inform the SEA Screening Determination. A submission was received from the EPA on **17th December 2025.**

3.2.2 The submission from the EPA included guidance on the SEA process, along with a list of online resources for use in determining the environmental baseline, guidance on AA and a list of the Environmental Authorities to be consulted with throughout the SEA process.

## 3.3 SEA Scoping Consultation

3.3.1 In accordance with the SEA Regulations, the Scoping Report was issued to the Environmental Authorities on **30th January 2026**, for a period of 4 weeks until **27th February 2026**. This enabled comments to be made regarding the scope and proposed methodology of the subsequent environmental assessment. A submission was received from the EPA on **27th February 2026**.

3.3.2 The submission from the EPA highlighted a series of considerations for the SEA Draft Environmental Report stage, relating in particular to the scope of the SEA; the integration of SEA and the Plan; monitoring and reporting; and data and knowledge gaps. How these points were addressed is set out in Table 3.1 of the Final Environmental Report.

## 3.4 Public Consultation on the Draft Plan and Draft Environmental Report

3.4.1 The Draft Environmental Report was presented for public consultation for a period of 14 weeks from **28th May** to **3rd September 2026**, at the same time as the proposed amendments to the NAO, and a report underlying the NAO and the DRD, and a report underlying the DRD. Consultation on the Draft Environmental Report was also undertaken with the Environmental Authorities. The purpose of the consultation was to give the public and the Environmental Authorities an opportunity to provide submissions and observations on the draft NAO and draft RD, and the findings of the Draft Environmental Report, in accordance with the SEA Regulations. In line with the SEA Directive and Regulations, ANCA must "take account of" the Environmental Report and of any opinions which are expressed upon it as it prepares the NAO and RD for adoption. Therefore, comments received from the Environmental Authorities, members of the public and other stakeholders during the consultation process must be considered and addressed, including if appropriate, changes being made to the final NAO and RD. Responses from the EPA are detailed above in Section 3.2 with details on how they were accounted for in the SEA.

3.4.2 ANCA received a total of 1,129 submissions during the consultation period. Comments were received from an Environmental Authority (the EPA), and a large number of private individuals ~~and~~ community groups, and business organisations. ANCA subsequently produced a Consultation Report which sets out the key themes that emerged through the consultation and how these were addressed in the adopted NAO and RD. The majority of the responses received by ANCA related to the following:

- Expected outcomes;
- Measurable criteria;
- Monitoring and reporting;
- Metrics;
- NAO process, compliance and supporting evidence;
- Effectiveness of the amendments to the proposed NAO; and
- Health Impacts.

3.4.3 Some of the submissions received by ANCA specifically addressed the SEA or AA relating to the proposed amendments to the NAO, whilst others contained elements relating to the environment more generally. A summary of the key points from the Environmental Authorities and how these were addressed through the SEA are set out in **Table 3-1** below.

**Table 3-1: Key points from the EPA Draft Environmental Report consultation response**

| Point raised | How point is accounted for |
|---|---|
| *Assessment of Environmental Effects & SEA Monitoring*<br>The EPA notes the exclusion of noise from the scope of the assessment in Table 3-2 of the two associated SEA ERs1&2. The SEA ERs should assess and document the full range of likely significant environmental effects of implementing the NAO and draft RD, including positive effects. Therefore, in the context of population and human health, noise should | Further clarity on the scope relating to Noise has been included within Table 3-3 of the Final Environmental Report.<br><br>Monitoring of the Plan is covered in Section 6 of the Final Environmental Report. |

| | |
|---|---|
| be considered in the scope of the assessment. Additionally, the SEA monitoring programme should include details of proposed monitoring to measure both positive and negative effects and the related targets of the NAO and draft RD. If the monitoring identifies that the targets are not being achieved during the implementation of the Plan, ANCA should include a commitment in the NAO to identify and implement additional suitable and effective remedial action. | |
| ***Broader Considerations***<br>The EEA Environmental Noise in Europe 2025 report identified transport noise among the top three environmental health threats, just behind air pollution and temperature related factors. The EPA noise that there is a target under the Zero Pollution Action Plan (ZPAP) to reduce, by 30%, the share of people chronically disturbed by noise from transport against 2017 levels. The EPA recommends that the EEA report and ZPAP target should be referenced in the finalising of the NAO and RD. | The ZPAP targets are referenced in relation to the Plan's relationship to other Plans and Environmental Protection Objectives, at paragraph 2.3.14 of the Final Environmental Report.<br><br>The EEA Environmental Noise in Europe report is referenced in paragraph 4.2.8 of the Final Environmental Report.<br><br>It is not the concern of the SEA to report on how other Plans and Environmental objectives influence the finalising of the NAO, this is covered in the respective reporting detailing the development of the NAO. |

3.4.4 Relevant aspects of submissions relating to the SEA from other stakeholders were reviewed and taken into account during the preparation of the Amended NAO. Responses to the submissions made are provided in the Consultation Report (ANCA, 2026) within **Section 3.4 of the Consultation Report.**

3.4.5 Minor changes to the Environmental Report included bolstering the text on scoping out noise from the SEA. However, the overall assessment findings and conclusions within the Final Environmental Report remain unchanged.

## 3.5 Post-Consultation Modifications to the Plan

3.5.1 Since the completion of the public consultation exercise, ANCA has determined no changes were required to be made to the proposed amendments to the NAO as a result of points made of submissions. Nor were any material changes required to the contents of the Final Environmental Report as a result of the review of the consultation responses. Further explanation was provided to address the EPA's comment regarding the assessment of the positive impacts on noise, but this did not result in noise being scoped in and therefore did not change the conclusions of the Environmental Report. Logika has reviewed and agrees with the response to the issues in relation to SEA in the consultation report. The conclusions of the SEA therefore remain the same.

# 4 Consideration of Alternatives

## 4.1 Summary of Alternatives Considered and Assessment

4.1.1 Consideration of realistic and reasonable alternatives is a key feature of the SEA process as defined by the SEA Directive and the SEA Regulations. As detailed within the SEA Final Environmental Report, during the review of the NAO (Noise Consultants, 2026), and to establish the required amendments, a series of considerations were taken into account whereby alternative noise metrics and thresholds criteria which would form different measurable outcomes for the NAO were explored. However, in most instances, those explored were discounted on the basis that they did not achieve the ambitions of the NAO. Consequently, no realistic or reasonable alternatives for the SEA were considered.

4.1.2 Furthermore, as no likely significant environmental effects as a result of the Amended NAO were identified, there was also no need to consider alternatives any further.

# 5 Monitoring Measures

## 5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Article 10 of the SEA Directive requires ANCA, as the 'managing authority', to monitor significant environmental effects of implementing the NAO and RD. This must be done in such a way as to also identify unforeseen adverse effects and to take appropriate remedial action. Monitoring should commence as soon as the programme is adopted, with annual reporting carried out for the life of the programme.

5.1.2 However, the environmental assessment of the NAO revealed that there would be no significant adverse environmental effects as a result of adopting the Amended NAO.

5.1.3 Nevertheless, ANCA will monitor the Amended NAO (i.e. with regard noise), as detailed below.

## 5.2 Adopted Monitoring Programme

5.2.1 The assessment of the Amended NAO indicated that there would be no likely significant adverse environmental effects as a result of its implementation. There is therefore no need to put in place any measures to prevent, reduce and / or offset for significant adverse effects with regard the Amendments. For the same reason, monitoring is not required.

5.2.2 However, annual monitoring of the Airport's performance against the NAO will be undertaken as detailed in the NAO Review Report:

*"Progress towards the expected outcomes of the NAO will be monitored through annual reports as prepared by ANCA under Section 21 of the Act of 2019, and through the process of strategic noise action planning under ENR. This will require airport noise to be modelled and reported having regard for the guidance set out in the NAO Guidance Note."*




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