

**Ireland's EIA Conference 2025
Breakout Session**

Making EIA Reports more Proportionate

Josh Fothergill and Jo Wotton

Welcome & Introductions

Jo Wotton MIEMA CEnv

- Associate Director, Environmental Planning
- LUC

Josh Fothergill FIEMA CEnv

- Founder & Director
- FothergillTC



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Disproportionate EIA?

Delays to Consenting

Where are my concerns dealt with?

EIA = Everything IA

Overly Long EIAR

How has the environment been protected?

Stakeholder Fatigue

Expensive

Too much information

Ineffective Scoping

What is significant?

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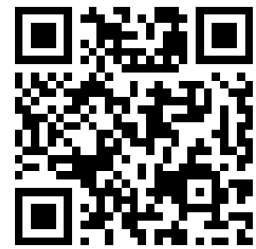
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**Are EIA Reports
disproportionate? If so, why do
you think this is?**

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Session 1 Slido Results (34 Participants)

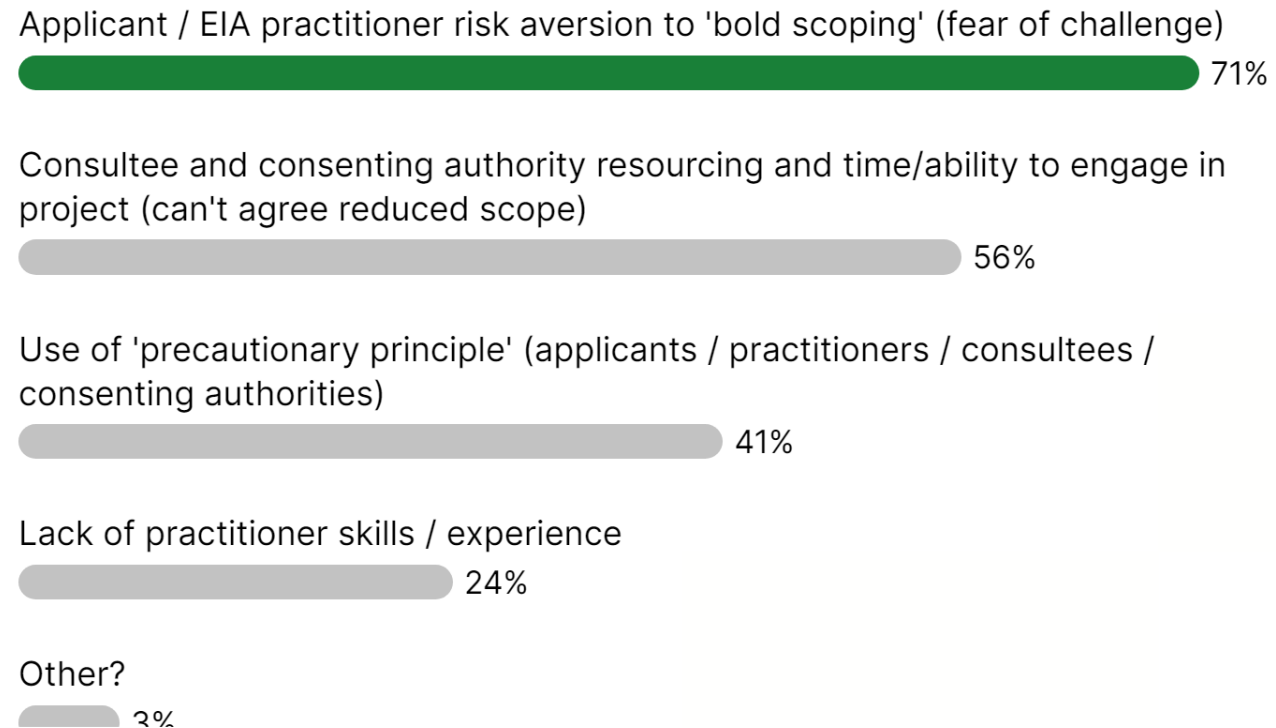


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Active poll

34 83

Are EIA Reports disproportionate? If so, why do you think this is?



Session 2 Slido Results (34 Participants)



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Active poll

23

Are EIA Reports disproportionate? If so, why do you think this is?

Use of 'precautionary principle' (applicants / practitioners / consultees / consenting authorities)



Applicant / EIA practitioner risk aversion to 'bold scoping' (fear of challenge)



Consultee and consenting authority resourcing and time/ability to engage in project (can't agree reduced scope)



Lack of practitioner skills / experience

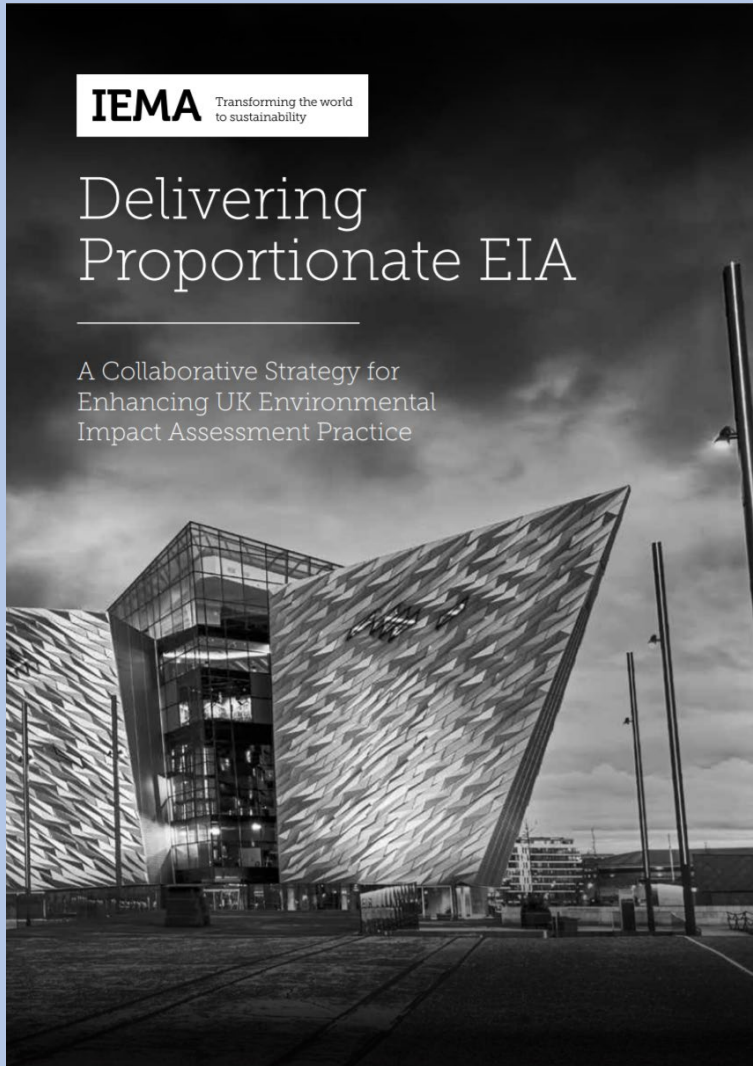


Other?



Proportionate EIA is...

EIA that delivers valuable & accessible information that positively influences development design and consenting to the benefit of developers, communities and the environment



[Fothergill et al, 2017 (IEMA)]

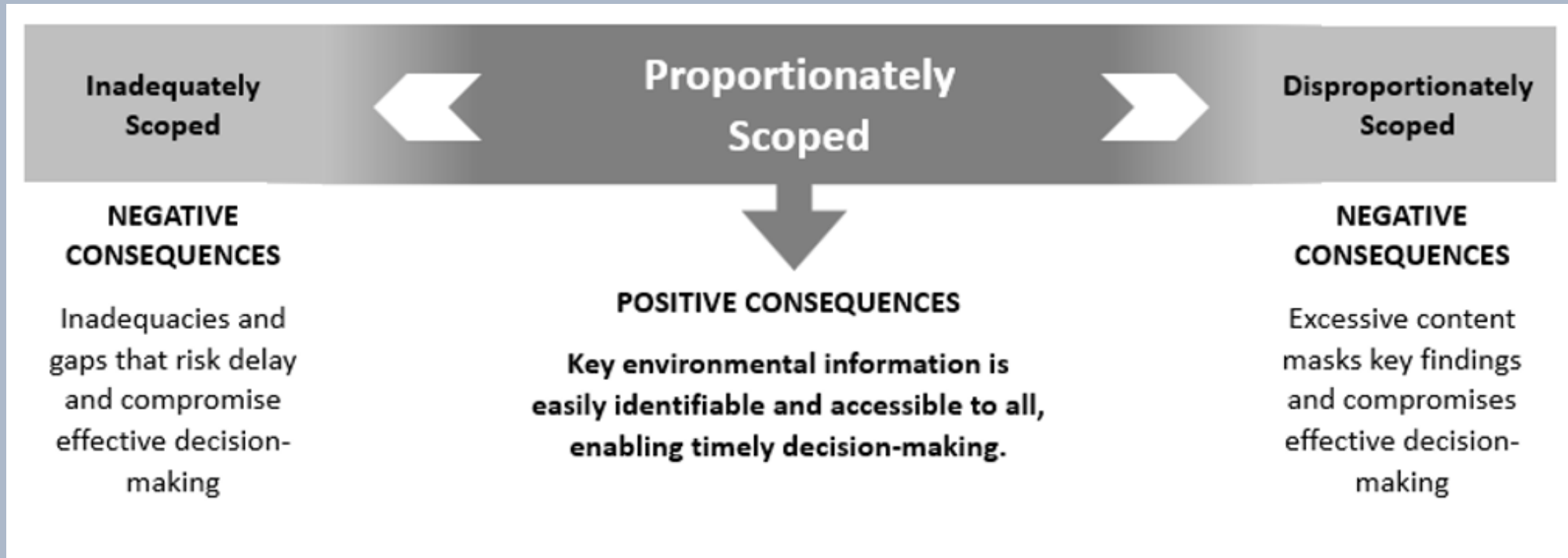
Key Areas for Action

- 1. Enhancing People** – so those involved have the skills, knowledge & confidence to avoid overly precautionary approach.
- 2. Improving Scoping** – to generate a more consistently focused approach to this critical activity throughout the EIA process.
- 3. Sharing Responsibility** – enabling a proportionate assessment requires collaborative actions working towards a shared goal.
- 4. Embracing Innovation & Digital** - modernising EIA practices to deliver more effective and efficient assessment and reporting.

Solution 1: Seek consensus before writing EIAR

Reap the rewards of consultee discussion + buy-in

Too Little and Too Much info = ***Problematic EIAR***

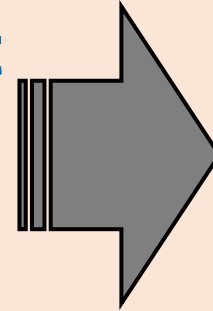


Solution 2: Conduct an *EIAR Teardown* session

Take a complete EIAR / a topic Chapter & its Appendices and literally *tear it apart*...

Identify what is:

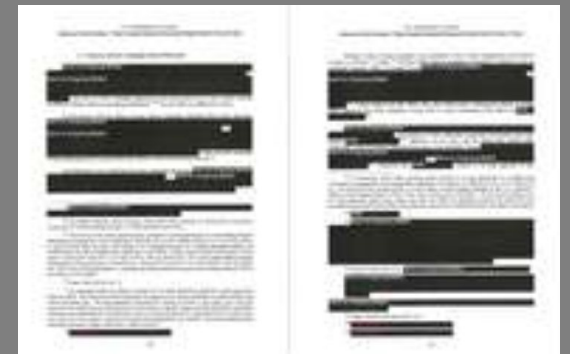
- **Essential information** & **useful context**
- Repeated content available elsewhere / undue filler that could be removed.



What your EIAR said...



Vs



Valuable reader content!

Outcomes: Change EIAR approach, Update consenting / statutory advice, Adapt Guidance...

Examples: OWSD-Scotland, EIA Quality Mark

Solution 3: **EIAR Presentation Style & Approach** **Using Narrative and Cross-Referencing**

An EIAR has many audiences...

These audiences have different needs...

EIA often identifies cross-cutting issues....

Hard to write for all these audiences with a *technical + compliance* focussed approach

Using narrative style and cross-referencing helps cater for and direct varied user needs



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What are the solutions to deliver proportionate EIA Reports?

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Session 1 Slido Results (31 Participants)



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Active poll

31 8

What are the solutions to deliver proportionate EIA Reports?



Session 2 Slido Results (21 Participants)



Active poll

21

What are the solutions to deliver proportionate EIA Reports?

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Important info up front
Writing for target audience(s) Avoiding repetition
Consistency frameworks policy issues Template Brevity
Adhere Training sensitivities project Programme time
Research key scale regulatory eiar Facts
environmental support receiving Skills
proportionality Skilled practitioners
Shared data less template text Less repetition
Data and monitoring No repetition

Session 3 Slido Results (10 Participants)



Active poll

10

What are the solutions to deliver proportionate EIA Reports?

Focus only on likely significant effects

Robust conclusions

audience

Specific

Dialogue

Good EIA Scoping

required

legal

Narrative

Engagement

relevent

technical

opinion

Focus

industry

response

driven

Effective scoping

concise

Information effeciency

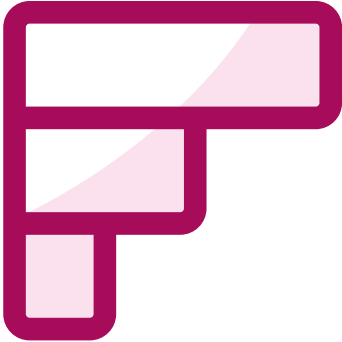
Scoping at appropriate time

Prescoping Engagement with CA

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As practitioners / consultees, do you feel equipped to prepare / input to / comment on proportionate EIA?

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Session 1 Slido Results (26 Participants)



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Active poll

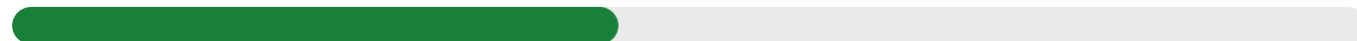
26

As practitioners / consultees, do you feel equipped to prepare / input to / comment on proportionate EIA?

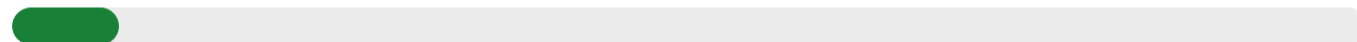
1. Sometimes



2. Yes



3. No



Session 2 Slido Results (17 Participants)



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Active poll

17

As practitioners / consultees, do you feel equipped to prepare / input to / comment on proportionate EIA?

1. No



2. Yes



2. Sometimes



Session 3 Slido Results (9 Participants)



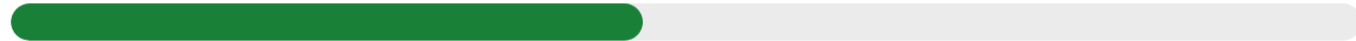
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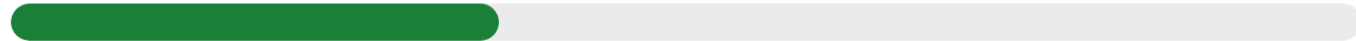
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As practitioners / consultees, do you feel equipped to prepare / input to / comment on proportionate EIA?

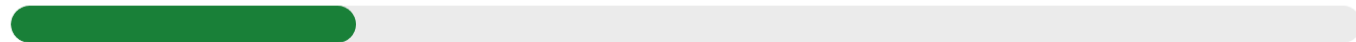
1. No



2. Yes



3. Sometimes



Thank You & Stay in Touch

Jo Wotton MIEMA CEnv

- E: Jo.Wotton@landuse.co.uk

Josh Fothergill FIEMA CEnv

- E: Josh@fothergilltc.com

