

**Zero Emission Vehicles Ireland (ZEVI)**

# National EV Infrastructure Charging Strategy 2026-2028

SEA Screening Report

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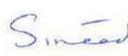
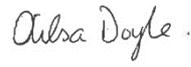
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# 1. Introduction

Zero Emission Vehicles Ireland (ZEVl), a dedicated Office within the Department of Transport, was established to accelerate Ireland's transition to zero-emission mobility. ZEVl coordinates national measures that support consumers, businesses and the public sector in moving away from fossil-fuel vehicles and leads on the planning and delivery of electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure. In line with the Climate Action Plan 2023, ZEVl's work contributes to achieving a 30% electrification of the private car fleet by 2030 and to wider transport decarbonisation objectives.

The National EV Infrastructure Charging Strategy 2026-2028 represents the next phase of Ireland's approach to developing a reliable, accessible and future-proof public charging network. It builds on the National EV Charging Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2025 and on delivery programmes that have expanded high-power en-route charging and supported destination and neighbourhood charging. The Strategy responds to continued growth in EV uptake and the increasing operational maturity of the charging ecosystem, providing updated direction on governance and monitoring so that infrastructure provision remains ahead of demand.

The Strategy is being prepared in the context of the EU Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation (AFIR), which places obligations on Member States regarding minimum charging power per vehicle, price transparency, ad-hoc access and open data. ZEVl is developing a national Data Strategy to support AFIR implementation, enabling near real-time data capture and publication for publicly accessible charge points. The National EV Infrastructure Charging Strategy 2026-2028 also aligns with the National Road EV Charging Network Plan (2024) and the Regional and Local EV Charging Network Plan (2025), which together provide a coherent framework for delivering home-adjacent, neighbourhood, destination and en-route charging. This includes rural and regional settings.

Through these measures, the Strategy aims to ensure equitable access to charging, support local authority delivery, facilitate private investment and integration with grid planning, and maintain compliance with national and EU policy over 2026-2028. This Screening Report has been prepared to determine whether the National EV Infrastructure Charging Strategy 2026-2028 requires Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and/or Appropriate Assessment (AA).

## 2. Strategic Environmental Assessment

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

The SEA process is comprised of the following steps:

- Screening: Decision on whether or not SEA of a Plan or Programme is required. This is the current stage of the SEA process to which this report relates.

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

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

- Issuance of a SEA Statement identifying how environmental considerations and consultation have been integrated into the Final Plan or Programme.

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

## 3. Guidance and Legislation

### 3.1 Legislative Overview

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

The objective of the SEA Directive is *'to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans...with a view to promoting sustainable development'* (Article 1 SEA Directive 2001).

In Ireland, the SEA Directive has been transposed into national legislation through the following regulations:

- European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations (S.I. 435/2004) as amended by S.I. No. 463/2025; and
- European Union (Land Use Planning – Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2025 (SI No. 456/2025).

As the Strategy is not a 'development plan', as defined by the regulations, S.I. No. 435/2004, amended, is the applicable legislation to the Strategy.

### 3.2 Guidance Documents

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

- SEA Screening Good Practice Guidance (EPA, 2021)
- Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland (EPA, 2003)
- Implementation of SEA Directive (2001/42/EC): Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment- Guidelines for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2004)
- Implementation of Directive 2001/42 on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment (European Commission, ND)
- SEA Resource Manual for Local and Regional Planning Authorities (EPA, 2015)
- Integrating Climatic Factors into Strategic Environmental Assessment in Ireland - A Guidance Note (EPA, 2019)
- Synthesis Report on Developing Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies For Plans and Programmes in Ireland (EPA, 2019)

## 4. ZEVI National EV Infrastructure Charging Strategy 2026-2028

### 4.1 Legislative Background

The National EV Infrastructure Charging Strategy 2026–2028 sits within a well-defined European and national policy context. At EU level, the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation (EU) 2023/1804 (AFIR) mandates widespread availability, interoperability and transparent operation of EV charging, including distance-based requirements on the TEN-T network, kW-per-vehicle obligations, ad-hoc payment and open data. Complementary instruments include the Energy Efficiency Directive (EU) 2023/1791, the Renewable Energy Directive (EU) 2023/2413, updated CO<sub>2</sub> performance standards for vehicles, and the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive 2024 (EU) 2024/1275, which strengthens charging readiness in buildings. Nationally, the Strategy aligns with the Climate Action Plan, the National Development Plan review, ZEVI’s National Road EV Charging Network Plan (2024) and the Regional and Local EV Charging Network Plan (2025).

### 4.2 Plan Overview

**Purpose and scope:** The National EV Infrastructure Charging Strategy 2026-2028 provides a national pathway for public EV charging to 2028, with a view to 2030. It focuses on delivering a user-centred, accessible and reliable network across four location types: home-adjacent/neighbourhood, destination, and en-route (including high-power hubs), together with enabling measures on data, standards and universal design. It does not authorise site-specific works; rather, it sets direction, delivery structures and funding envelopes within which implementing bodies and private operators bring forward projects subject to their own consents.

**User needs:** Updated personas and journeys (e.g. apartment residents, rural commuters, taxi drivers, tourists, commercial van and HDV users, and persons with reduced mobility) inform siting and service levels. Universal Design Guidelines (2024) are embedded to ensure inclusive layouts, information and payment.

### 4.3 Network Targets and Delivery Architecture

**Targets:** Consistent with AFIR’s power-per-vehicle requirement and national ambitions toward ~712 MW of publicly accessible LDV charging by 2030, the Strategy prioritises delivery over 2026–2028 through phased programmes and mid-term review in 2027. On national roads, high-power hubs are being delivered via LDV1–3 grant schemes; at regional/local level, local authorities implement destination and neighbourhood charging in line with their strategies and ZEVI guidance. Government schemes underway include Shared Island Sports Club chargers, Dublin and Limerick destination schemes, and local authority pilots that test innovative operating models, behind-the-meter solutions, flexible tariffs and renewable integration.

### 4.4 Implementation Approach (2026–2028)

Phase 1 (2025-2026) consolidates en-route delivery (162+ hubs and ~498 high-power/fast points committed across LDV schemes), alongside early destination pilots. Phase 2 (2027-2028) scales destination and neighbourhood networks based on utilisation evidence and local authority plans, with continued private-sector delivery on strong commercial sites. Where feasible, cross-pavement solutions and shared charging models reduce pressure on public on-street provision. A 2027 mid-term review uses operator open data to assess performance, gaps and AFIR compliance, and to inform subsequent funding and regulation.

### 4.5 Grid Integration and Data

The National EV Infrastructure Charging Strategy 2026-2028 works with ESB Networks, EirGrid and the CRU to align with PR6 investments, demand flexibility and smart charging standards (ISO 15118/-20), enabling load management, dynamic pricing and future V2G/V2H readiness. ZEVI’s Data Strategy will provide open, near real-time information on location, availability, connector type, pricing and uptime to support users, planning and regulatory oversight.

## 4.6 Environmental Considerations at Strategy Level

The Strategy emphasises equitable distribution, accessibility and efficient utilisation, encourages integration of renewables and storage at hubs, and promotes smart charging to reduce peak grid impacts. Any site-specific works, where proposed by authorities or operators, will be brought forward under the applicable consenting regimes and, where relevant, will be subject to project-level environmental assessment and AA as required.

# 5. SEA Screening Methodology

## 5.1 SEA Screening Methodology

The procedure broadly follows the SEA Decision Tree adapted from the research report Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes (P/P) in Ireland (Scott and Marsden, 2001), the adaptation of such is shown in Figure 5.1 below.

According to the EPA guidance, the screening process comprises three principal stages:

1. Applicability
2. Screening
3. Determination

The guidance states that the overall characteristics of the plan or programme should first be considered, by means of Stage 1 ‘Applicability’ check to see if it falls within the requirements of the SEA Directive.

Should this Stage 1 Applicability check determine that the plan or programme is of a type that falls within the requirements of the SEA Directive, the potential environmental significance of implementing the proposed plan or programme should then be considered, against the significance criteria outlined in Annex II (2) of the SEA Directive (Stage 2 ‘Screening’).

EPA guidance for the Screening process is outlined in Figure 5.1.

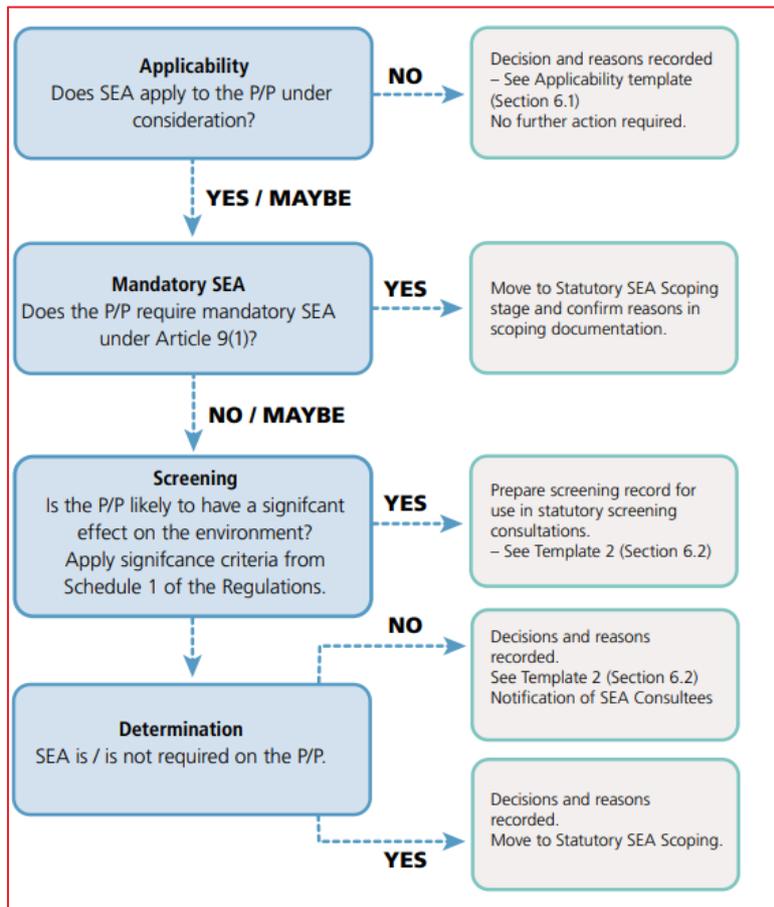


Figure 5.1 SEA Screening Process under S.I. 435/2004, as amended Source: (EPA, Good Practice Guidance on Screening, 2021)

## 5.2 Stage 1 ‘Applicability’

The Applicability Stage of Screening consists of a four-step process. As outlined in Table 5.1 below:

Table 5.1 Stage 1 ‘Applicability’ Steps Source: (EPA, Good Practice Guidance on Screening, 2021)

<b>Step 1:</b>	Establish the status of the plan or programme-making body Is the P/P prepared and/or adopted by an authority at national, regional or local level or prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government?
<b>Step 2:</b>	Establish the nature of the plan or programme Is the P/P required by legislative, regulatory, or administrative provisions?
<b>Step 3:</b>	Check the plan or programme is not exempt Is the sole purpose of the P/P for national defence, civil emergency or finance / budget?
<b>Step 4:</b>	Check if the plan or programme requires mandatory SEA Is the P/P prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecoms, tourism, town and country planning or land use <sup>13</sup> and does the P/P set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in the Annexes of the EIA Directive; or Will the P/P require assessment under Art. 6 or 7 of the EU Habitats Directive?

There are three possible outcomes following Stage 1 Applicability Screening:

- **The SEA Directive does not apply-** The P/P is not of a type which falls within the remit of the SEA Directive / SEA Regulations. It is recommended as good practice to keep a note of the deliberations alongside the P/P on the relevant website, alongside the AA screening determination. There is no requirement to notify the environmental authorities.
- **The SEA Directive does apply-** The P/P is of a type which falls within the remit of the SEA Directive / SEA Regulations and requires mandatory SEA. Proceed to SEA Scoping and statutory consultation with the designated environmental authorities. The Screening outcome should be confirmed within the SEA Scoping Report.
- **The SEA Directive may apply-**The P/P may be within the remit of the SEA Directive as either it relates to use of a small area at local level or minor modifications to a relevant P/P, it is a P/P which may set the framework for future development consent even though not listed as a P/P type, or there is uncertainty in relation to any of the provisions considered at the Applicability Stage, and so a case-by-case determination will be required. Proceed to Stage 2 Screening.

An Applicability Screening template (**‘Template 1’**) is provided in the EPA guidance document and is utilised in Section 6.1 of this SEA Screening Report.

### 5.3 Stage 2 ‘Screening’

Stage 2 consists of determining, on a case-by-case basis, if SEA is required for a Plan or Programme which has characteristics that may give rise to significant effects or for which there is uncertainty on key characteristics. Although an SEA Screening Report is not a mandatory requirement in the legislation it has become embedded good practice and is the recommended approach in this guidance note.

The Screening Stage consists of a four-step process, outlined in Table 5.2, as set out in the EPA’s Good Practice Guidance on SEA Screening Report.

**Table 5.2 Summarised Stage 2 ‘Screening’ Steps Source: (EPA, Good Practice Guidance on Screening, 2021)**

<b>Step 5:</b>	Describe the characteristics of the P/P and the receiving environment including any environmental problems.
<b>Step 6:</b>	Identify the potential for significant environmental effects
<b>Step 7:</b>	Statutory consultation with Designated Environmental Authorities
<b>Step 8:</b>	Draft Determination

Stage 2 of the SEA Screening methodology consists of an environmental significance screening, which may be undertaken to assess whether a plan or programme, which has not been screened out by the ‘Applicability Stage’, is likely to result in significant environmental effects and should therefore, be taken forward for SEA.

An SEA Screening template (**‘Template 2’**) is provided in the EPA guidance document and is utilised in Section 6.1 of this SEA Screening Report.

Annex II of the SEA Directive sets out the “statutory” criteria that should be addressed when undertaking the ‘Screening Stage’. Annex II of the SEA Directive is transposed into national legislation as Schedule 1 ‘Criteria for determining whether a Plan or Programme (or Modification thereto) is likely to have significant effects on the Environment’ of the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004, as amended.

The ‘Significance Criteria’ and sub-criteria are outlined below.

#### **4. The characteristics of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, having regard, in particular, to:**

- *The degree to which the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;*

- *The degree to which the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, influences other plans including those in a hierarchy;*
- *The relevance of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;*
- *Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme;*
- *The relevance of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).*

**5. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to**

- *The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;*
- *The cumulative nature of the effects;*
- *The transboundary nature of the effects;*
- *The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents);*
- *The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);*
- *The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:*
  - *special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;*
  - *exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values;*
  - *intensive land-use.*

*The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status.”*

## **5.4 Stage 3 ‘Determination’**

As soon as practicable after making the final determination as to whether SEA is required or not, the plan maker should make a copy of the decision, including, as appropriate, the reasons for requiring or not requiring an environmental assessment, available for public inspection at the P/P offices and on the website.

The P/P maker should also send a copy of the final determination to the relevant SEA environmental authorities notified during screening. This determination should stay linked to the P/P or modification on the website to ensure transparency and provide important information on decision making during the lifetime of the P/P or if any modifications are made.

# **6. SEA Screening**

## **6.1 Stage 1 – SEA ‘Applicability’**

As outlined in Section 5.2, Stage 1 ‘Applicability’ of the SEA Screening methodology constitutes the use of Template 1, based upon the relevant Applicability steps. Template 1 is reproduced as Table 6.1.

**Table 6.1 Template 1 Stage 1 ‘Applicability’ of SEA Screening. Source: (EPA, Good Practice Guidance on Screening, 2021)**

	General Details	
	Type and title of P/P:	National EV Infrastructure Charging Strategy 2026-2028
	Name of P/P Maker:	ZEVI
	Date:	2026
Step 1 of the Applicability Screening	Status of P/P maker	
	Is the P/P prepared and/or adopted by an authority at national, regional or local level or prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government?	<p>Yes.</p> <p>The National EV Infrastructure Charging Strategy 2026-2028 is prepared by Zero Emission Vehicles Ireland (ZEVI), a dedicated Office within the Department of Transport, which is a national-level competent authority responsible for transport decarbonisation, EV infrastructure planning, and policy delivery. Therefore, the Strategy is considered a document prepared by an authority at the national level.</p>
	Is the P/P required by legislative, regulatory, or administrative provisions?	<p>No.</p> <p>The National EV Infrastructure Charging Strategy 2026-2028 is not required by statute. While it supports national and EU policy objectives (including AFIR obligations, Climate Action Plan targets, and national EV adoption goals), there is no legislative, regulatory or administrative requirements mandating the preparation of this Strategy. It is a non-statutory strategic framework intended to guide national planning and coordination of public EV charging infrastructure.</p>
Step 2 of the Applicability Screening	Nature of the P/P	
	Is the P/P prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use?	<p>Yes.</p> <p>The National EV Infrastructure Charging Strategy 2026-2028 relates to transport and energy, sectors listed in the SEA Directive.</p>
	Does the P/P provide a framework for the development consent for projects listed in the EIA Directive?	<p>No.</p> <p>The National EV Infrastructure Charging Strategy 2026-2028 does not set a framework for future development consent of projects. It:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• does not specify locations for infrastructure.</li> <li>• does not allocate land or identify development zones.</li> <li>• does not provide parameters for design, construction, or operation.</li> <li>• does not give statutory authority for works.</li> </ul> <p>Actual infrastructure delivery occurs through separate local authority plans, grant schemes, operators’ proposals, each subject to its own consenting and environmental assessment requirements.</p>
	Is the P/P likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site which leads to a requirement for Article 6 or 7 assessments?	<p>No.</p> <p>The National EV Infrastructure Charging Strategy 2026-2028 does not require AA under Article 6(3) because; it does not outline or authorise projects, it is high-level and non-spatial.</p>
Step 4 of the Applicability Screening	Exemptions	
	Is the sole purpose of the P/P to serve national defence or civil emergency or is it a	No.

General Details	
Type and title of P/P:	National EV Infrastructure Charging Strategy 2026-2028
Name of P/P Maker:	ZEVI
Date:	2026
financial/budget P/P or is it co-financed by the current SF/RDF programme?	The National EV Infrastructure Charging Strategy 2026-2028 does not relate to national defence, civil emergency response, or financial/budget-only planning. It is a strategic document providing national direction on EV charging infrastructure.
Conclusion	
<p>Summarise the relevant information informing the assessment and the main reasons the P/P does or does not fall within the scope of the SEA Directive.</p> <p>Does fall within scope:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The plan does apply to one or more of the sectors in the SEA Directive and does provide a framework for development consent of projects requiring EIA AND/OR the plan is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site and, therefore, requires an assessment under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. SEA is therefore required.</li> <li>There is uncertainty about the nature of the P/P and whether it may give rise to significant effects on the environment. The plan cannot be screened out for SEA or AA and requires a more detailed screening assessment.</li> </ul> <p>Does NOT fall within scope:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The plan does not apply to any of the sectors in the SEA Directive and does not provide a framework for development consent of projects requiring EIA,</li> </ul> <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site and therefore does not require an assessment under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. SEA is therefore not required.</li> </ul> <p>For outcome 1 the plan maker should advise that they will</p>	<p>While the National EV Infrastructure Charging Strategy 2026-2028 could be considered a transport and energy plan prepared by a national authority, it is not required by legislative, regulatory, or administrative provisions. The National EV Infrastructure Charging Strategy 2026-2028 does not set a framework for the development consent of projects listed in the EIA Directive, nor is it likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site. The sole purpose of the National EV Infrastructure Charging Strategy 2026-2028 is not to serve national defence or civil emergency, nor is it a financial/budget Plan/Programme, and it is not co-financed by the current Structural Funds / Regional Development Funds programme.</p> <p>In conclusion:</p> <p>The National EV Infrastructure Charging Strategy 2026-2028 does not fall within the scope of the SEA Directive.</p> <p>While the plan relates to sectors listed in the SEA Directive (transport and energy), it does not provide a framework for development consent of projects requiring EIA, and it is not likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site. SEA is therefore not required.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>The plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site and therefore does not require an assessment under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.</p> <p>SEA is therefore not required.</p>

General Details	
Type and title of P/P:	National EV Infrastructure Charging Strategy 2026-2028
Name of P/P Maker:	ZEVI
Date:	2026
	move forward to SEA scoping. For outcome 2 the P/P should move to Stage 2 Screening. For outcome 3 the applicability template should be completed and kept on file.

## 6.2 Outcome of Stage 1 Applicability

Following Stage 1 Applicability Screening, it is determined that the SEA Directive does not apply to the National EV Infrastructure Charging Strategy 2026-2028 and that proceeding to Stage 2 Screening is not necessary in this case.

## 7. Conclusion

As outlined in Section 6.2, it has been determined that the SEA Directive does not apply to the National EV Infrastructure Charging Strategy 2026-2028, and that proceeding to Stage 2 SEA Screening is not necessary. While the Strategy could be considered a transport and energy sector plan prepared by a national authority, it is not required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions. The Strategy does not set a framework for the development consent for projects listed in the EIA Directive, nor is it likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site. The Strategy is a high-level, non-statutory, non-spatial document which provides national direction for EV charging infrastructure and does not identify or authorise site-specific works.

## 8. References

SEA Screening Good Practice Guidance (EPA, 2021).

Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland (EPA, 2013).

Implementation of SEA Directive (2001/42/EC): Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment- Guidelines for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2004).

Implementation of Directive 2001/42 on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment (European Commission, ND).

SEA Resource Manual for Local and Regional Planning Authorities (EPA, 2015).

Integrating Climatic Factors into Strategic Environmental Assessment in Ireland - A Guidance Note (EPA, 2019).

Synthesis Report on Developing a Strategic Environmental Assessment (Sea) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland (EPA, 2003).