



An Roinn Iompair,
Turasóireachta agus Spóirt
Department of Transport,
Tourism and Sport

Quality Assurance Process 2018

Appendix D

In-Depth Check Reports

This appendix details the four in-depth check reports with respect to:

Killaloe Bypass, Shannon Bridge Crossing and R494

Improvement

Tourism Ireland Web and Creative Development Project

MetroLink

National Indoor Arena Phase II



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Quality Assurance Process 2018

Killaloe Bypass In-Depth Check

September 2019

Document Purpose

This document sets out the template to be filled in by the evaluator, in conjunction with the division/unit/agency, while completing an in-depth check as part of the Quality Assurance Process. This document is drawn directly from the In-Depth Check Methodology document used by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport's (DTTaS) Strategic Research and Analysis Division (SRAD) to carry out the evaluation. It is split into five sections in accordance with the five identified steps of the in-depth check process, as outlined in the Public Spending Code (PSC).

Document Format

Section A: Introduction

Section B: Evaluation

1. Logic Model Mapping
2. Summary Timeline of Life Cycle
3. Analysis of Key Documents
4. Data Audit
5. Key Evaluation Questions

Section C: Summary and Conclusions

Summary and Use

The templates, once completed, will be the in-depth check and will be attached as an appendix to the Department's annual Quality Assurance report. The Summary and Conclusions section, to be no longer than two paragraphs, will be copied in to the main report under the In-Depth Check section.

Section A: Introduction

This introductory section details the headline information on the project/programme under review. It should be noted that this review was conducted during 2019 and in accordance with the Public Spending Code regulations that were in place at that time. An updated Public Spending Code came into effect from 1 January 2020.

Project/Programme Summary	
Name	Killaloe Bypass, Shannon Bridge Crossing and R494 Improvement
Description	<p>The scheme was proposed by Clare County Council and North Tipperary County Council to provide the appropriate road infrastructure for Killaloe and Ballina, whose historical character and community infrastructure is threatened by heavy traffic. The scheme proposes to cater for the planned local, regional and national development in this area. The proposed scheme has three elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A new road crossing of the River Shannon, south of Killaloe, relieving the congested Old Killaloe Bridge;• A western bypass of Killaloe, connecting the new bridge with the R463 along the west bank of Lough Derg, removing through traffic from Killaloe; and,• On-line improvements to the R494, connecting this new bridge with the M7 link road at Birdhill.
Responsible Body	Clare County Council
Current Status	Expenditure being considered
Start Date	2005
End Date	2023
Projected Overall Cost	€69.5m

Project Description

The proposed Killaloe Bypass, Shannon Bridge Crossing and the R494 Improvement scheme is a 6.2km project consisting of a bypass to the west of Killaloe village, a new bridge crossing the river Shannon and improvement works to the existing R494. At the time of this review, the business case for the project was still in the process of being updated to ensure Public Spend Compliance following assessment by SRAD.

The project was initiated in the mid-2000s following Clare County Council's decision to abandon plans to widen the historic bridge currently crossing the Shannon between Ballina and Killaloe. The current preferred route for the Killaloe bypass and the location of the new bridge emerged following the publication of the 2009 Route Selection Report. The project progressed through the project phases thereafter, with An Bord Pleanála approving the Compulsory Purchase Orders required in March 2013. However, due to a lack of funding at the time, the scheme failed to proceed to the tendering and construction phases. The scheme was subsequently subject to a high court challenge and Judicial Review in June 2013 which in turn was dismissed in May 2016 allowing the project to advance. In 2018, Clare County Council appointed RPS Consulting Engineers to progress the scheme through the final phases of TII's Project Management Guidelines, with the most recent Phase 3 equivalent Business Case submitted to the Department of Transport Tourism and Sport in September 2019. With increased costs for land acquisitions, the current estimate for total scheme budget is €69.5m.

The scheme has a number of stated objectives, with the foremost aim to reduce journey times for those travelling via the R494 through Killaloe. This will principally be achieved from traffic being rerouted via the new bridge and the bypass around Killaloe from the current route which passes through Killaloe village and the signal controlled bridge. Improved safety and user security, in particular for pedestrians in the environs of Killaloe village and those using the bridge is another important objective of the scheme. However, due to the relatively low levels of accidents, mainly minor nature of previous accidents and a lack of up to date traffic data, a monetary value was not provided for safety benefits in the project's cost benefit analysis. Encouragement of physical activity in the environs of Killaloe is closely related to the main safety objectives of the scheme. The scheme also aims to bring about environmental benefits by reducing noise and emissions pollution from traffic in Killaloe village and improve accessibility to the CLÁR areas in east County Clare.

The project is not explicitly cited in national planning and development policies. However if completed, the project would be fulfilling some of the high level objectives of national level policies such as improved connectivity to poorly served regions. As such, the proposed scheme is more pertinent to the various local and regional development plans. The Killaloe bypass and Shannon bridge scheme is specifically referred to in both the current iteration of the Clare County Development Plan and the Mid-West Area Strategic Plan 2012-2030. Killaloe is recognised as a gateway settlement for east Clare in the Clare county development. The proposed scheme is intended to improve connectivity to Killaloe and the wider region thereby allowing the town to realise additional economic growth and its potential as a tourist destination. The scheme is also recognised as being of strategic value to the economic development prospects of the region as a whole under the Mid-West Area Strategic Plan. If completed, the project will also enable the objectives of various other local and regional plans to be achieved. The Lough Derg Tourism Strategy, for example, identifies the need to reduce current traffic levels in Killaloe in order to enhance its viability as a tourist attraction.

A number of options were explored for the proposed scheme including differing routes and sites for the bypass and bridge respectively in the main route selection report from 2008. The do-nothing option in this case was deemed to be inappropriate in the context of rising traffic and congestion levels in Killaloe and Ballina. Do- minimum options considered included assessing the feasibility of improved public transport in the area and the widening of the existing bridge. In both cases, these solutions were deemed impractical. Low population densities to the west of Killaloe would inhibit the introduction of public bus services. Due to its status as a listed building, as well as the overall impact on the structure, widening the existing bridge was also deemed as an inappropriate option. Similarly, a pedestrian bridge adjacent to the existing bridge was also considered. However, removing the current footpath from the existing road bridge would not result in a free flowing two-way traffic.

Up to eight bridge locations and five bypass options were considered under the do-something options examined in the route selection report. The route that emerged from that process was deemed to be the most effective in terms of minimised environmental impact and on the environs of Killaloe town. The selected route put forward in the current iteration of the business case also allows for the full alignment of the new bridge with the bypass to the west of Killaloe. In addition to the new bridge and bypass, the existing R494 will also be improved from the junction with the new bridge to the Birdhill junction on the former N7. The total length of the proposed scheme including the new infrastructure and the upgraded R494 is 6.2km. This 6.2km section of road will be designed to TII's Type 2 Single Carriageway standards.

Section B – Step 1: Logic Model Mapping

As part of this in-depth check, SRAD has completed a Programme Logic Model (PLM) for the Killaloe Bypass, Shannon Bridge Crossing and R494 Improvement project.

Objectives	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
<p>The objectives of the scheme outlined in the current Phase 3 project Business Case are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy: To improve journey time and efficiency between the Birdhill roundabout and the R463 north of Killaloe, at a cost that offers good value for money; • Safety: To reduce the risk to pedestrians crossing the Shannon at Killaloe; • Environment: To improve air quality and reduce the level of traffic noise and vibration in Killaloe village; to avoid, minimise and mitigate negative impacts on nature conservation areas, particularly designated sites and protected species; • Accessibility and Social Inclusion: To reduce social exclusion by improving access to CLÁR designated areas in east County Clare • Physical Activity: To encourage increased walking and cycling in the vicinity of Killaloe • Integration: To support the land use and transportation strategies set out in the County Clare Development Plan 	<p>The exchequer is expected to contribute to the full cost of delivering the scheme. As of September 2019, the estimated Exchequer cost of the project is €69.5m. This expenditure will be distributed across the following activity areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Contract Construction (€42.7m) • Main Contract Supervision (€2.7m) • Archaeology (€0.13m) • Advance Works (€0.14m) • Residual Network (€0.03m) • Land and Property (€17.8m) • Planning and Design (€2.6m) • Sub-total: €66.2m • Total with 5% contingency: €69.5m <p>In addition, there will be administration and staff costs associated with the project that will be borne by Clare County Council.</p> <p>The project has also had significant legal resource inputs to contest the High Court challenge taken by opponents of the scheme in 2013.</p>	<p>Scheme appraisal process in accordance with TII Project Appraisal Guidelines, Common Appraisal Framework and Public Spending Code.</p> <p>Public consultation</p> <p>Land search and purchases.</p> <p>Advance works</p> <p>Design</p> <p>Construction</p> <p>Supervision</p> <p>High Court Judicial Review proceedings</p>	<p>The appraisal process will determine whether the project is to proceed or not. In the case of approval, the main intended output of the project is a 6.2km road scheme consisting of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Killaloe Bypass: The bypass will extend from the new proposed bridge to the west of Killaloe, connecting with the existing R463 to the north of the village. This section of the scheme is approximately 2km long. • New Shannon Bridge Crossing: Located 1km to the south of Killaloe, this 0.9km section of the scheme will cross the River Shannon connecting the Killaloe bypass to the R494. • R494 Improvement: The existing R494 will be improved, including widening and realignment works as part of the overall scheme. This section of the project is approximately 3.3km in length. <p>High Court Ruling</p> <p>2008 Route Selection Report</p>	<p>The main intended outcomes of the scheme include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved journey times and journey time reliability for travellers currently passing through Killaloe; • Improved safety, in particular, pedestrians within the environs of Killaloe and those using the existing bridge will benefit from reduced traffic flows through the village. • Improved environmental conditions in Killaloe as a result of removing the current level of traffic from the village. Environmental benefits of the scheme largely arise from reduced noise and emissions. The route selected was also chosen to minimise environmental impacts • Improved access to the CLÁR designated areas in east County Clare

			<p>CPO Notice to Treat</p> <p>An Bord Pleanála approval for scheme and CPO</p>	
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Description of Programme Logic Model

Objectives: The business case outlines the main objectives of the scheme which are distributed across a number of areas. Like most major road projects, the main objectives of this project revolve around economic gains and safety improvements. Other project objectives are in line with the TII's guidelines, with environment, accessibility and inclusion, physical activity and integration objectives all outlined in the main business case. Given the context of the traffic situation in Killaloe and Ballina, the objectives are vindicated. However, the degree to which they are SMART, as required by DTTaS's Common Appraisal Framework, is not apparent. In particular the economy and safety objectives should have clearly defined performance targets incorporated, e.g., reduce travel times and road traffic incidents by "x" amount. Given that there is a projected 6-minute journey time saving in the project's cost-benefit analysis, this figure should be incorporated into the project's economy objectives.

Inputs: The main inputs into this project for the selected preferred route are related to the construction of the scheme. Central Government funding, with an estimated €69.5m required, is the most critical input in this regard, allowing for the construction related phases of the project outlined below to be carried out.

Cost Element	(€m)
Main Contract Construction	€42.71m
Main Contract Supervision	€2.72m
Archaeology	€0.13m
Advance Works	€0.14m
Residual Network	€0.03m
Land & Property	€17.84m
Planning & Design	€2.63m
Total	€66.20m
Total with 5% Contingency	€69.51m

There have been a number of other ancillary inputs into the project to date including the legal resources required to contest the High Court challenge taken against the proposed scheme in 2013.

Activities: The activities for this project include:

- **Planning and Design:** The planning aspects of this project have already been largely completed, with the preferred route and standard of road selected. The design process for the new Shannon Bridge has also largely been completed.
- **High Court process:** This process arose out of a High Court challenge taken against the scheme in 2013 which ultimately proved unsuccessful. However, this was a critical activity which has allowed the project to advance to its current stage.
- **CPO process:** The CPO process is another critical element of any road project with the required lands procured for the preferred route of the scheme. The CPO Notice to Treat was issued in August 2016 on the advice of the Senior Counsel.

- **Scheme appraisal:** The Strategic Research and Analysis Division in the DTTaS is responsible for reviewing the business case for the project and ensuring that the scheme is compliant with the Public Spending Code and good value for exchequer funds.
- **Advance works:** Preliminary construction activity for the proposed scheme along the selected route
- **Main Construction Works:** The main construction works for the project are associated with the construction of the new off-line Killaloe bypass and the new Shannon Bridge. The upgrading of the existing R494 will also be carried out during the period the other two sections of the scheme are under construction.

Outputs: The project to date has a number of associated outputs. These include the notices of approval for the project and respective CPO from An Bord Pleanála. In addition, the High Court decision in favour of the project proceeding can also be regarded as an output of the defensive legal activities undertaken by the Sponsoring Authority, Clare County Council. Various iterations of the project business cases will also be produced as part of the appraisal process.

The main intended outputs of the project are the new Shannon Bridge, the bypass for Killaloe village and an upgraded R494. The intention is to build and upgrade the 6.2kms of the scheme sections to TII's type 2 single-carriageway standard. The Killaloe bypass and new Shannon Bridge will equate to 2.9km. The remaining 3.3km of the scheme will be delivered through the upgrading of the R494 from the Birdhill roundabout to Ballina.

Outcomes: There are a number of expected outcomes arising from the outputs of the project. The new bridge and bypass will improve journey times and journey time reliability for traffic currently travelling through Killaloe and to the east Clare CLÁR areas. The diversion of traffic around Killaloe, facilitated by the proposed scheme, will also bring about improved pedestrian safety and reduced pollution in the village. The scheme will improve safety along the length of the proposed route by providing both pedestrian and cycling facilities along its 6.2km length. The new carriageway and realigned R494 is also intended to minimise traffic collisions. The accessibility, environmental and safety improvements are also intended to indirectly improve Killaloe's potential as a tourist destination.

Section B – Step 2: Summary Timeline of Project/Programme

The following section tracks the Killaloe Bypass, Shannon Bridge Crossing and R494 Improvement project from inception to conclusion in terms of major project/programme milestones.

2005	RPS provide Shannon Bridge Crossing, Constraints Study Report
October 2006	Report on Preliminary Design, constraints study and route selection for Shannon Bridge crossing and associated roads.
2008	Roughan O'Donovan appointed as consultant engineers. They produce Killaloe Bypass, Shannon Bridge Crossing and R494 Improvement, Constraints Study Report
2009	Roughan O'Donovan produce Killaloe Bypass, Shannon Bridge Crossing and R494 Improvement Route Selection Report
October 2010	Clare County Council submits EIS and associated CPO documentation to NRA for review. NRA recommendation regarding publication of Statutory Orders
July 2011	Ministerial approval to publish Statutory Orders
November 2011	Cost-benefit analysis produced
February 2012	Environmental Impact Statement (EIA) and Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) for Killaloe, Shannon Bridge and R494 submitted to An Bord Pleanála
March 2013	An Bord Pleanála approve EIA, CPO and Natura Impact Statement
June 2013	High court challenge launched for Judicial Review of the scheme
May 2016	High Court rejects Judicial Review challenge
August 2016	CPO Notice to Treat issued
May 2018	Clare County Council appoint RPS Consulting Engineers to provide detailed scheme design, tender administration, contract administration and cost controllers for the project
April 2019	Submission of Phase 3 Business Case to SRAD, DTTaS
September 2019	Submission of updated Phase 3 Business following SRAD feedback
2023	Projected scheme construction completion year
2053	Planned forecast year (end year of project appraisal analysis) for the scheme

Section B – Step 3: Analysis of Key Documents

The following section reviews the key documentation relating to appraisal, analysis and evaluation for the Killaloe Bypass, Shannon Bridge Crossing and R494 Improvement scheme.

Project/Programme Key Documents		
No.	Title	Details
1	Killaloe Bypass, Shannon Bridge Crossing and R494 Improvement Business Case	Most recent Phase 3 business case submitted to SRAD (Dated August 2019, received by SRAD September 2019)
2	DHA0038 ABP approval 2013	Letter from An Bord Pleanála approving the current scheme design
3	DKA0025 ABP CPO approval Feb 2012	Letter from An Bord Pleanála approving the CPO to allow for the current scheme design to be constructed
4	Judgment 4 May 2015 - V1 High Court vs Sweetman	Summary of High Court judgement that found in favour of allowing the project to proceed
5	Shannon Crossing Killaloe timeline	Timeline of main events associated with the project to date
6	Copy of SC Comparison of 2011 and 2019 cost estimates	Excel file showing comparison of 2011 and 2019 cost breakdowns
7	Killaloe Bypass - Senior Counsel - Opinion - 28 July 2016 Notice to Treat	Legal advice from Senior Counsel recommending that the required CPOs be carried out along the selected route for the project.
8	killaloe-bypass-and-r494-improvement-route-selection-report-12090	2009 Route Selection Report produced by Roughan O'Donovan. The analysis supporting the current route of the scheme and the alternative routes considered at the time are outlined in the document.
9	Killaloe Bypass, Shannon Bridge Crossing and R494 Improvement – SRAD Response	SRAD response to the Phase 3 Business Case submitted for the project in April 2019.
10	SRAD Assessment of Killaloe – SBC – R494	SRAD assessment of the September 2019 Phase 3 Business Case. Completed October 2019.

Key Document 1: Phase 3 Business Case (September 2019)

At the time of writing, the most recent version of the project business case was submitted in September 2019. The business case follows the standard TII template and covers a number of key areas such as project context and need, project objectives and the cost-benefit analysis. Two appendices outlining the total scheme budget and a comparison of the 2011 and 2019 estimated costs of the project are also included.

Based on a recent 2018 traffic count and the most recent cost estimates of €69.5m, the cost-benefit analysis presented in the business case has a benefit cost ratio (BCR) of 3.44. The cost-benefit analysis applies both high and low traffic growth scenarios as sensitivity tests. When applied, the BCR ranges from 3.19 to 3.58. While the shadow costs of the public funds and labour are applied, there is no reference to the shadow cost of carbon being used in the analysis.

A number of revisions to this version of the business case are required to achieve PSC compliance. There is a need for greater specificity in the objectives, with some objectives not meeting the SMART criteria outlined in the CAF. The requirement for SMART objectives was previously highlighted by SRAD in their April 2019 review of an earlier iteration of the business case (see Key Document 9). The risk register developed for the project should be attached as an appendix or supporting document to the main business case. This version of the business case also lacks a detailed financial analysis over the 30-year appraisal period.

Key Document 2: DHA0038 ABP approval 2013

2013 letter from An Bord Pleanála outlining the reasons and considerations for approving the proposed scheme. The scheme's congruence with local development plans, the poor standard of the current R494 and its potential to alleviate traffic congestion in Killaloe and Ballina are among the reasons cited by An Bord Pleanála for approving the project.

Key Document 3: DKA0025 ABP CPO approval Feb 2012

2013 letter from An Bord Pleanála approving the Compulsory Purchase Orders for the scheme.

Key Document 4: Judgment 4 May 2016 - V1 High Court vs Sweetman

Summary of the High Court Challenge against the scheme in 2013. There is a summary of the applicant's main grounds for challenging the decision by An Bord Pleanála to approve the scheme, which were environmental. The document also provides the reasoning behind the Court's eventual judgement (delivered May 2016) to reject the application to reverse An Bord Pleanála's decision.

Key Document 5: Shannon Crossing Killaloe timeline

Timeline of key events associated with the project provided by DTTaS Roads Division. This timeline complements the project history outlined in the business case.

Key Document 6: Copy of SC Comparison of 2011 and 2019 cost estimates

Since the cost of the scheme was originally estimated in 2011 there has been significant cost inflation. As part of the recent submission, new cost estimates for the scheme were devised. This document provides comparison of the 2011 and 2019 cost estimates across the major expenditure headings. The document shows the 46% increase in costs from €45.2m in 2011 to the current €69.5m. There have been significant increases in a number of expenditure areas including archaeology (505% increase) and main contract supervision (80% increase).

Key Document 7: Killaloe Bypass – Senior Counsel - Opinion - 28 July 2016 Notice to Treat

Letter from Senior Counsel advising that in light of the High Court judgement the acquiring authority (Clare County Council) should proceed with issuing the Notice to Treat for the required lands for the scheme.

Key Document 8: Route Selection Report

The 2009 route selection, summarised in the main business case, outlines the analysis and processes undertaken to determine the preferred route for the proposed scheme. Under current TII guidelines, the publication of the route selection report represents the culmination of Phase 2 in the project lifecycle. However, the report predates the current TII guidelines on evaluating route options and therefore lacks elements expected such as the CBA analysis of a number of options. Although traffic conditions and estimated journey time savings are presented, these projected time savings are not monetised. Rather, the report is largely qualitative in nature using multi-criteria style analysis to determine which route had the least impact across areas such as heritage, ecology and costs. Other issues considered were the underlying geology for each of the routes. On this basis, five routes were narrowed down to three, with Option B ultimately emerging as the most preferable route for the new elements of the proposed scheme. Options regarding the upgrade of the R494 section of the scheme were not explored in detail in this report.

Key Document 9: Killaloe Bypass, Shannon Bridge Crossing and R494 Improvement – SRAD Response

SRAD response to the Phase 3 business case submitted for the project in April 2019. PSC requirements which the letter seeks the sponsoring authority to address include the specificity of objectives, verification of traffic data, alternative options and the use of shadow prices.

Key Document 10: SRAD Assessment of Killaloe – SBC – R494

SRADS's in-depth assessment of the revised version of the business case submitted in September 2019, which was in the process of being finalised at the time of writing of this in-depth check. Similar to the letter issued in April, the assessment raises a number of PSC requirements which have not been met with the latest version of the business case. The lack of an evaluation schedule is noted alongside the lack of options assessed in the CBA and the use of a 0.8 shadow price of labour. The assessment also raises some minor concerns regarding the objectives meeting the CAF's SMART criteria. While the scheme is not intended to generate revenue, a financial appraisal is still required and should be presented in the business case. The ongoing assessment of the business case doesn't however currently cite the lack of a financial appraisal in the business case. Similarly, a detailed risk register is not included in the business case and is not noted in the SRAD assessment.

Section B – Step 4: Data Audit

The following section details the data audit that was carried out for the Killaloe Bypass, Shannon Bridge and R494 Improvement scheme. It evaluates whether appropriate data is available for the future evaluation of the project/programme.

Data Required	Use	Availability
Journey Time Data	To evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme in achieving the project's economy objectives to reduce journey times and improve journey time reliability between the new bypass and the existing route through Killaloe	Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) surveys, Automatic Traffic Counts (ATC), Junction Turning Counts (JTC) surveys, Traffic Monitoring Units (TMU)
Collision Data	To evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme in achieving the safety objectives of reducing the frequency and severity of collisions.	Road Safety Authority (RSA), online collision map
Vulnerable Road User Safety Data	To evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme in achieving the safety objective of improving safety for pedestrians and cyclists	RSA's online collision map distinguishes between accidents involving pedestrians and cyclists. It may also be possible to record manually the number of pedestrians and cyclists in the vicinity of Killaloe and Ballina to determine if any increase has occurred
Walking and Cycling Numbers	To evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme in achieving the safety objective of improving safety for pedestrians and cyclists	Video counts are proposed
Air Quality Data	To evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme in achieving environmental objectives.	While the capability exists to record emission levels at strategic points along the current route, no existing data has been presented
Noise Pollution Data	To evaluate effectiveness of the scheme in achieving environmental objectives.	While the capability exists to record noise levels at strategic points along the current route, no existing data has been presented
Tourist Numbers	To evaluate effectiveness of the scheme in promoting increased tourism activity in Killaloe as envisaged under local area development plan objectives	Potentially difficult to isolate the additionality in tourist numbers directly attributable to the scheme although data on visitor numbers could be ascertained via surveys of local businesses, etc.

Data Availability and Proposed Next Steps

Given that the project is at the equivalent of Phase 3, Planning and Design, of TII's project lifecycle phases, ex-post data to evaluate the scheme largely does not yet exist. However, with regard to the key indicators such as journey time savings, mechanisms to record the data are readily available. Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) surveys, Automatic Traffic Counts (ATC), Junction Turning Counts (JTC) surveys and Traffic Monitoring Units (TMU) are currently utilised to monitor journey times and journey time reliability. The 2018 traffic count likely used at least one of these mechanisms although this is not indicated in the main business case. Similarly, the methods of previous traffic counts to support the development of the project have not been outlined in the current iteration of the business. Traffic data and travel time could also be used to ascertain if accessibility has improved to the CLÁR areas via Killaloe and the R494 in the event where the scheme is completed.

Safety data for the current R494 and route through Killaloe is also currently available via the Road Safety Authority's (RSA) online road collisions map. This online tool allows the user to ascertain the location, severity, number of casualties and the main road user type involved in accidents over the period 2005 to 2018. This tool is highlighted in the business case and usefully reinforces the narrative particularly around pedestrian safety in Killaloe as accidents involving both pedestrians and cyclists are recorded. Other safety databases of potential use to the future evaluation of the project include the RSA's Personal Injury Accident database for the period 2005 to 2012. Any increase in cycling and walking in the vicinity of the scheme should also be observable in the event where it is completed, with the business case noting that video counts may be a viable way of gathering this data.

In terms of pollution, the capability to monitor various greenhouse gases, particulate matter emissions and noise pollution currently exists. However, no data to date has been recorded for these types of pollution and therefore a baseline does not yet exist to benchmark against future pollution levels along the current route in the event where the scheme is opened. The evaluation plan outlined in the business case, notes that it is envisaged that this data will be eventually collected prior to the opening of the scheme.

One of the stated objectives of the project is to fulfil the aims of a number of local and regional development plans. In particular, there is an emphasis on promoting Killaloe as a tourist destination by removing traffic from the village core and the existing bridge linking Ballina. While it is possible to conduct surveys to estimate visitor numbers in Killaloe and its immediate vicinity, isolating the effect of the scheme on visitor numbers, if it proceeds to completion, is not a straightforward exercise. The business case cites increased traffic demand generated by the scheme as a means of generating additional tourist activity. It is proposed in the business case to use a control group of towns and villages with similar characteristics to Killaloe such as Portumna in Co. Galway.

Section B – Step 5: Key Evaluation Questions

The following section looks at the key evaluation questions for the Killaloe Bypass, Shannon Bridge and R494 Improvement scheme based on the findings from the previous sections of this report.

Does the delivery of the project/programme comply with the standards set out in the PSC?

In its current form, the submission relating to this project cannot be satisfactorily deemed to be fully compliant with the Public Spending Code. It should be noted, however, that as expenditure is being considered on this project it has not yet been signed off as compliant with the Public Spending Code. Following earlier feedback by SRAD on PSC requirements, a revised business case is currently in development.

There are a number of areas which the Sanctioning authority should seek to rectify before allowing the project to proceed to Phase 4 of TII's project lifecycle. These areas are summarised as follows:

- Objectives need to conform to the SMART criteria of the Common Appraisal Framework. Specific details such as journey time savings and safety targets are not included in the current objectives. It should be noted that such targets are referenced elsewhere in the document. Minor issues with the objectives are also cited in the assessment;
- No detailed financial analysis, including discounted cash flows, is presented in the latest business case. The Sanctioning authority should seek this analysis based on current cost estimates and ensure it has been conducted in an appropriate manner;
- Issues regarding options relating to the R494 section of the scheme, as raised in the initial evaluation of the business case submitted in April, have not been addressed in the current version of the business case. This has been noted in the SRAD assessment;
- Clarification should be sought on the use of the shadow price of carbon in the cost-benefit analysis. It has also been noted in the SRAD assessment that the shadow price of labour has been incorrectly applied;
- The business case would benefit from the inclusion of the project risk register; and,
- It is not explicitly stated in the project budget if sunk costs have been incurred as a result of the High Court case.

Is the necessary data and information available such that the project/programme can be subjected to a full evaluation at a later date?

As the project has not yet reached implementation phase, there are a number of elements of the data gathering process that have yet to be completed. To date, a number of traffic counts have been conducted which will provide the basis for conducting evaluation of the traffic conditions in Killaloe and Ballina in the event where the scheme is completed. Gathering traffic data post-scheme completion should be relatively straightforward to achieve and subsequent comparison with the current traffic data will allow for the effects on traffic congestion and journey times to be assessed.

Other elements of the data required to determine the effectiveness of the project have not yet been gathered or presented in the submitted version of the business case. Emissions and noise pollution data will need to be obtained. However, the mechanisms for doing so exist. Similarly, the business case cites that video analysis might be of potential use for monitoring pedestrian and cyclist activity before and after the opening of the scheme. In both cases, greater clarity could be provided around the timelines for gathering data prior to the scheme being implemented as it is likely construction activity may impact on both pollution and active travel in the vicinity of the project while it is ongoing. Perhaps the greatest challenge regarding data collection is isolating the scheme's potential impact on tourism activity in Killaloe. It is not evident how such data and effects are to be gathered and measured respectively. The business case notes the potential use of baselining Killaloe against the tourism activity in other similar towns such as Portumna in Co. Galway. Evidence of the effectiveness of this method of quantifying scheme impacts should be ascertained by the sanctioning authority if possible. Surveys of local business are one

potential method of determining tourist activity in the area, although this may not lead to any firm conclusions on the additionality of the project with respect to tourism.

What improvements are recommended such that future processes and management are enhanced?

As this project predates the introduction of the PSC in 2013, there are a certain number of complexities associated with phasing and timelines. The project, at the time of review, is at Phase 3b signoff although certain activities associated with later stages have already been completed, e.g., CPO approval. Although such projects are relatively rare and are usually associated with the postponement of investment as a result of the financial crisis, in future it may be worth considering a requirement that pre-PSC business cases include a list of already completed key actions associated with the current or later phases of the project lifecycle under current guidance. Similarly, sunk costs should also be clearly demonstrated in a legacy business case and its respective economic analysis.

Section C: In-Depth Check Summary and Conclusions

The following section presents a summary of the findings of this in-depth check on the Killaloe Bypass, Shannon Bridge and R494 Improvement scheme.

Summary of In-Depth Check

Analysis of the submissions to date for the Killaloe Bypass, Shannon Bridge and R494 identifies a number of further requirements need to be met before the project can be deemed to be compliant with the Public Spending Code and the Common Appraisal Framework. These requirements largely concern the setting of objectives, the lack of a financial appraisal and assessment of options for the R494 section and the application of shadow prices. The Sanctioning Authority should ensure that these requirements are met before allowing the project to proceed to Phases 4 and 5 in TII's project cycle. At the time of writing, a revised business case is currently being prepared by the project sponsors.

There are also a number of areas with regard to data collection for the project where considerable work remains. While collision data is available via the RSA and traffic counts have been conducted to allow for the generation of a cost-benefit analysis, other related studies, such as pedestrian and cyclist activity in the project study area, remain to be carried out. In addition, data on emissions and noise pollution, particularly in the urban environments of Killaloe and Ballina, has not been collected. These data should be collated both prior to implementation and post-completion of the project to facilitate an effective ex-post assessment of the impact of the project. It should also be noted that while the business case outlines a method to derive the scheme's impact on tourism activity, accurately isolating the scheme's impact on tourism is likely to be difficult. The Sanctioning Authority in this case should ask for evidence to support the assessment method being proposed and more clarity on the proposed evaluation of the project in general.



An Roinn Iompair,
Turasóireachta agus Spóirt
Department of Transport,
Tourism and Sport

Quality Assurance Process 2018

Tourism Ireland Creative

Development In-Depth Check

September 2019

Prepared by the Department of
Transport, Tourism and Sport

www.dttas.ie

Document Purpose

This document sets out the template to be filled in by the evaluator, in conjunction with the division/unit/agency, while completing an in-depth check as part of the Quality Assurance Process. This document is drawn directly from the In-Depth Check Methodology document used by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport's (DTTaS) Strategic Research and Analysis Division (SRAD) to carry out the evaluation. It is split into five sections in accordance with the five identified steps of the in-depth check process, as outlined in the Public Spending Code (PSC).

Document Format

Section A: Introduction

Section B: Evaluation

1. Logic Model Mapping
2. Summary Timeline of Life Cycle
3. Analysis of Key Documents
4. Data Audit
5. Key Evaluation Questions

Section C: Summary and Conclusions

Summary and Use

The templates, once completed, will be the in-depth check and will be attached as an appendix to the Department's annual Quality Assurance report. The Summary and Conclusions section, to be no longer than two paragraphs, will be copied in to the main report under the In-Depth Check section.

Section A: Introduction

This introductory section details the headline information on the project/programme under review. It should be noted that this review was conducted during 2019 and in accordance with the Public Spending Code regulations that were in place at that time. An updated Public Spending Code came into effect from 1 January 2020.

Project/Programme Summary	
Name	Tourism Ireland Creative Development project
Description	Development of creative communications platform
Responsible Body	Tourism Ireland
Current Status	Expenditure Being Considered/Expenditure Being Incurred
Start Date	October 2017
End Date	December 2019
Projected Overall Cost	€1.8m

Project Description

This project details Tourism Ireland's (TI) initiative to develop a new creative communications platform to support wider TI efforts to increase the numbers of tourists visiting Ireland and help counter the erosion of TI's brand performance. TI was established in 1998 under the framework of the Good Friday Agreement as one of "six areas of cooperation" and is responsible for marketing the island of Ireland as a holiday and business tourist destination in international markets. This work is supported through Government's voted Tourism Marketing Fund (TMF) expenditure programme, which had an allocation of approximately €45m in 2019.

We note for reference that the original intended focus of this in-depth check was to examine whether expenditure related to both creative brand development and the roll-out of associated marketing technology software (with a combined projected value of €4m) was compliant with Public Spending Code (PSC) guidance. However, the documentation and data available at the time of review only related to creative development expenditure (€1.8m). This was due to the fact that the person responsible for overseeing the marketing technology software project was seconded to aid with Brexit communications in the Department of the Taoiseach and was unavailable to assist the in-depth check process during the review period.

TI's intent to review and pursue a new creative communications platform for overseas consumers and to invest in marketing technology software was highlighted in their strategic and corporate central marketing plans for 2017-2019. As a joint North-South body, TI's strategic and corporate plans are subject to approval by the North/South Ministerial Council (NSMC), however, owing to the continued suspension of the Northern Ireland Assembly, formal approval of these plans by the NSMC was not obtained and TI's 2017-2019 Corporate Plan was published in 'draft' format in January 2017.

In terms of the creative development components of the project, TI sought to develop a new brand platform to replace the previous "Jump into Ireland" creative campaign, which had been in place for the previous 7 years. Following the publication of their draft corporate plan, TI published a contract notice on the Irish Government Portal, www.etenders.gov.ie, and in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) in October 2017 seeking marketing communications agencies to provide 'Advertising and Marketing Communications Services'. The contract was divided into 2 lots, and the production budget for 'Lot 1 – Strategic and Creative Services' is the focus of this in-depth check. We note that the second lot of the contract, 'Media Planning and Buying Services' is reliant on the creative content developed for Lot 1 but relates to wider TMF marketing expenditure, which is not included in the scope of this review.

Invitations to final tender were issued in March 2018 and following tender presentations and review, the contract for Lot 1 was awarded to Publicis Ltd. in May 2018. Following this, two proposed creative ideas were tested and reviewed in key target markets before the final "Fill Your Heart with Ireland" brand direction was agreed. Over July to December 2018, TI and Publicis completed the planning, development, shooting and delivery of campaign creative content, including photo and video imagery and a branding guidebook. The final "Fill Your Heart with Ireland" advertising and marketing campaign was launched in January 2019 in key target markets and is expected to continue until 2022, with the option of extension to 2025.

In terms of PSC compliance, as the entire project was valued below €5m, TI acted as both Sponsoring and Sanctioning Authority for the project and only a simple project appraisal was required to be undertaken. Although documentation relating to internal review and decision-making processes occurring before January 2017 that identified the creative development project as a key action for inclusion in the 2017-2019 corporate plan were not provided for review, TI's request for tender (RFT) presents a clear and coherent description of the project. Our review thus finds that the project objectives have been clearly identified by TI and that the planning, development and expenditure related to creative development are compliant with relevant guidelines. Moreover, given the specific marketing nature of TI's work, the number of options that could have come under consideration are extremely limited and the approach pursued by TI is considered to be appropriate.

In terms of recommendations for future action, on the basis that project documentation relating to the procurement of marketing technology software could not be retrieved during the period of this review due to the secondment of key staff to the Department of An Taoiseach, we recommend that TI continue to take measures to improve their records management and document retrieval procedures and ensure that overall administration is further improved by the appointment of substitutes for key personnel.

Section B – Step 1: Logic Model Mapping

As part of this in-depth check, SRAD has completed a Programme Logic Model (PLM) for the Tourism Ireland Creative Development project.

Objectives	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
<p>Creation of core communications platform to support efforts to increase numbers of consumers interested in holidaying in Ireland/Northern Ireland.</p> <p>To improve Ireland's perceived competitive differentiation and reverse declines in TI's brand awareness.</p> <p>To generate increased levels of earned media content in target markets.</p> <p>To improve TI's marketing effectiveness through the use web technology software and consumer data.</p>	<p>Creative Development production budget of €1.8m over 2018/2019.</p> <p>Marketing Technology Software budget of €2.2m – noted for reference.</p> <p>Expected wider media spend across all markets of €14m in 2019.</p> <p><u>Estimated agency staffing:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and creative development staff, per agreed production schedules (e.g., 10 days/year). Approx. 4 FTEs to cover account management/admin in central, key and other markets for wider media efforts. 	<p>Development of RFT for advertising and marketing communications services and tender review process.</p> <p>Planning, testing and development of brand positioning, media and final campaign content and strategy in key markets.</p> <p>Rollout of advertising and marketing campaigns in key target markets.</p> <p>Ongoing brand guardianship and review.</p> <p>Acquisition and monitoring of paid and earned media content.</p> <p>Brand tracking survey and analysis of key campaign performance metrics.</p>	<p>Comprehensive "Fill Your Heart with Ireland" creative communications platform, including imagery, modular video content and other campaign assets.</p> <p>Brand tracking report, web traffic and advertising data and wider tourism campaign survey results.</p> <p>Branding guidance document.</p> <p>Breakdown of paid media content in key markets.</p> <p>Breakdown of earned media content in key markets.</p>	<p>Sustained growth in number of tourists visiting and interested in holidaying in Ireland/Northern Ireland and associated increase in tourism revenues.</p> <p>Increased generation of earned media content in international media outlets and on social media.</p> <p>More effective marketing process resulting in robust brand awareness and advertising recall in key target markets.</p>

Description of Programme Logic Model

As noted in the project summary, the primary focus of the PLM outlined above relate to the creative development project. However, owing to the closely-linked nature of the project wider TI functions, the PLM also include some elements of the wider development and roll out of the advertising and marketing strategy.

Objectives: All creative development project objectives were clearly outlined in the tender documentation and are considered to support Tourism Ireland's primary specific goal of increasing the numbers of tourists and income generated to Ireland and Northern Ireland through a robust marketing strategy.

In particular, the leading creative development project objective identified was to create an innovative brand platform and communications strategy for Ireland and Northern Ireland that would improve Ireland's perceived competitive differentiation and reverse the erosion of TI's brand in key target markets. A secondary objective was that the resulting brand and communications platform should be capable of generating significant earned media content in target markets.

We note for reference that TI's Corporate Plan 2017-2019 identifies the primary objective of procuring web marketing technology software as improving TI's marketing effectiveness through better leveraging of web and consumer data to show relevant advertisements to key target audiences.

Inputs: The overall budget allocated to the creative development project is €1.8m for delivery of campaign assets for the resulting advertising and marketing campaign. Given the closely-linked nature of TI work, we have noted wider media spend in the PLM for reference.

In terms of human inputs, TI engaged an outside agency (Publicis) to deliver the creative development aspects of the wider advertising and communication services for the 2018-2022 period, and the RFT detailed expected staffing requirements for all required services. Overall, approximately 4 FTEs were estimated as required for ongoing account management and administration, covering both media buying and planning in key markets, with additional planning and creative development supports (e.g. 10 days/year) to be agreed per final contract production schedules.

Activities: In addition to management of the overall tender process, other activities identified include research, market testing and review of creative content developed by the successful tenderer and the subsequent planning, media buying and roll-out of advertising and marketing campaigns in TI's key target markets. Ongoing brand guardianship and tracking of earned media and other key performance indicators also form important activities in order to monitor the overall performance of the creative communications platform.

Outputs: As a primarily creative project, in addition to the idea behind the final brand platform (i.e., "Fill your Heart with Ireland"), the main outputs of the creative development project are a selection of still imagery and video footage (e.g., 15"/20"/30" and 'Hero Edit' footage) featuring Irish tourist destinations and branding

guidebook that were developed to support subsequent advertising and marketing campaigns. Where necessary, these assets have also been provided in multiple languages to suit key target markets.

Other outputs identified relate to results of analysis undertaken to assess the effectiveness of campaign content, expected web traffic and advertising data reports, wider tourism and brand tracking survey results and breakdowns of paid and earned media content in target markets.

Outcomes: Again, owing to the creative and idea-based nature of the project, there is significant overlap between the project objectives and outcomes identified in the PLM above, i.e., increased levels of tourists visiting or interested in holidaying in Ireland, increased levels of earned media content and more robust brand awareness enabled through more effective marketing.

While direct attribution of these outcomes to the completion of the creative development project realistically cannot be separated from other TMF initiatives, the project is considered to wholly support these outcomes.

Section B – Step 2: Summary Timeline of Project/Programme

The following section tracks the project from inception to expected conclusion in terms of major project/programme milestones.

January 2017	New creative campaign and web marketing project proposed as part of TI's Corporate Plan for 2017-2019.
October 2017	Initial 'Advertising and Marketing Communications Services' RFT contract notice published on www.etenders.gov.ie and in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU).
March 2018	Invitation to Final Tender.
April 2018	Tender submission deadline, presentations on submitted tenders and final evaluation.
May 2018	Contract awarded to Publicis Ltd.
June 2018	Presentation and analysis of proposed communications platforms: "Fill Your Heart with Ireland" and "Ireland: Time Better Spent".
July 2018	Final creative direction, "Fill Your Heart with Ireland", agreed.
July-December 2018	Planning, development, shooting and delivery of campaign creative content, including photo and video imagery and branding guidebook.
January 2019-ongoing	Launch of advertising and marketing campaign in target markets
December 2019	Conclusion of all creative production related elements.
June 2022	Expected termination of wider Advertising and Marketing Communications Services contract, with option of 3-year extension.

Section B – Step 3: Analysis of Key Documents

The following section reviews the key documentation relating to appraisal, analysis and evaluation of the TI creative development project.

Project/Programme Key Documents		
No.	Title	Details
1	Tourism Ireland Corporate Plan 2017-2019 (January 2017)	Draft document for presentation to the North/South Ministerial Council identifying the creative development of new TI brand and use of web marketing technology as key strategic actions.
2	Final Request for Tender (March 2018)	Copy of the final Request for Tender document outlining the background, objectives, requirements, project timeline and expected deliverables for the development of bespoke ' <i>Advertising and Marketing Communications Services</i> '.
3	Pre-campaign market research (August 2018)	16-slide summary presentation presenting the results of qualitative market research that was conducted on two creative campaign ideas before final decision on brand direction.
4	Final campaign presentation and delivery schedule (2018)	A 38-slide presentation outlining the final selected ' <i>Fill Your Heart with Ireland</i> ' brand platform and expected delivery schedule.
5	Brand advertising analysis in key markets (December 2018)	Results of early analysis on the effectiveness of advertising campaign content carried out in each of the key target markets.
6	Campaign deliverables (2018)	Excel spreadsheet detailing footage and stills captured for the 2018 campaign.
7	Production invoices (2018-2019)	Details of TI payments to Publicis London from October 2018 to January 2019.

Key Document 1: Tourism Ireland Corporate Plan 2017-2019

The 31-page draft TI Corporate Plan 2017-2019 was issued in January 2017 for formal submission to the North/South Ministerial Council (NSMC). However, owing to the suspension of the Northern Ireland Assembly, the NSMC was not convened in recent years and the corporate plan thus technically remains a 'draft' document. Given the key role of tourism in supporting the whole-island economy, TI have continued to operate in line with the targets and actions described within the draft document in the absence of formal approval by the NSMC.

After a summary review of TI's performance against the 2014-16 Corporate Plan, the document outlines TI key strategic priorities, challenges, targets and actions over the 2017-2019 period. Commitments to review TI's branding, launch of a new advertising campaign and make increased use of new technology to drive marketing effectiveness, which form the elements of this creative development and web technology project, are identified in the document as key strategic actions within the budgetary framework for TI's Central Marketing team.

Key Document 2: Request for Tender

The final Request for Tender document for 'Advertising and Communications Services' provides clear instruction on TI's role and objectives and outlines clear expectations for the required creative communications platform and project specific areas such as the intended target audiences, expected deliverables, planned budget, and structural requirements to fulfil the project brief. As the value of the contract was above the required OJEU thresholds, the contract and management of the tender process was subject to EU rules (Directive 2014/24/EC).

As outlined in the project summary, the contract was divided in two lots, which were evaluated through the most economically advantageous tender process, and where Lot 1 was assessed with respect to the following weighted award criteria:

- **Lot 1 (Strategic and Creative Services):**
 - **Strategic (20% weight)** – a strategic approach that is insight driven and capable of driving future growth in visitor numbers;
 - **Creative (25% weight)** – a creative route that is compelling, differentiated and that works across all media and geographies;
 - **Structural (5% weight)** – a structure that can flexibly deliver an agreed scope of works to the centre and to TI's Tier 1 and Tier 2 markets and which could be extended in the future to include Tier 3 markets; and,
 - **Economic (50% weight)** – a remuneration model that covers 2018-2021 and that can be flexed to undertake additional assignments in a cost effective manner and economic fit with TI vision.

A similar methodology was used to assess Lot 2 (Media Planning and Buying Services) of the contract, but with the 'Creative' criterion replaced by a more appropriate 'Media' specification. In terms of PSC compliance, though not a formal Business Case, the tender documentation provides a clear statement of TI's objectives and requirements and shows evidence of a robust assessment process being in place.

Key Document 3: Pre-campaign market research

Following the conclusion of the tender process, the successful Lot 1 contractor, Publicis, developed two campaign ideas ("Ireland: Time Better Spent" and "Fill Your Heart with Ireland") that were then submitted to a behaviour and attitudes market research company (B&A) commissioned to carry out qualitative market research on behalf of TI. This 16-slide presentation presents summary results from 13 two-hour long focus groups for "Culturally Curious" tourists held across the UK, France, Germany and USA. The two brand platforms were assessed in terms of their comprehension and relevance, likeability, emotional power, distinctiveness, potential longevity and for any significant cultural differences. In all cases the second "Fill Your Heart with Ireland" was universally preferred. In

terms of PSC compliance, this documentation shows evidence of a robust assessment process being in place before commitment to a final brand direction.

Key Document 4: Final campaign presentation and delivery

This 38-slide presentation details the approved creative brand platform, '*Fill Your Heart with Ireland*', and outlines the expected timeline for the development of the campaign, and their proposed recommendations for how to reframe and differentiate Ireland's and TI's brand of '*Joyful Immersion*' from other competitors. The presentation also outlines the production and delivery schedule for key campaign assets.

Key Document 5: Brand advertising analysis in key markets

This 41-slide presentation by Kantar Millward Brown presents survey results on the newly developed final campaign content in each of the four key target markets that was conducted prior to wider advertising/marketing roll-out in January 2019. Each country survey had 150 participants and sought to assess key metrics such as awareness, engagement, enjoyment, brand appeal and other emotional indicators, which were compared to country and travel norms. We note that the tested content performed extremely positively in the UK, France and USA, with strong results also recorded in Germany. Again, in terms of PSC compliance requirements for simple appraisals, though not a formal evaluation of the overall project, this documentation shows evidence of robust and evidence based testing and project monitoring before key decision gateways, which is in line with PSC guidance.

Key Document 6: Campaign deliverables

A Microsoft Excel document highlighting and tracking delivery of key campaign assets, such as stills and videos that were delivered for multi-purpose use. Included are details of four Hero Edits, which were submitted in 16:9 and 1:1 aspect ratios, 16 social short edits and 60 still images.

Key Document 7: Production invoices

Copies of 7 creative development production invoices detailing payments to Publicis London from October 2018 to January 2019 for services provided (incl. shooting footage, language edits, music licensing) were provided by TI for review. The invoices total €1.08m (ex-VAT) in expenditure.

Section B – Step 4: Data Audit

The following section details the data audit that was carried out for the Web and Creative Development Project. It evaluates whether appropriate data is available for the future evaluation of the project/programme.

Data Required	Use	Availability
Wider tourism/travel survey data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To monitor changes in tourism volume and value in key markets. To aid in benchmarking of overall performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CSO publishes monthly and quarterly reports on Irish tourism volumes and value by area of residence/key market. Northern Ireland tourism data is collated by NI Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). International tourism data is collated by Eurostat and the UN's World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO).
Brand tracking results, web traffic metrics and survey data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help estimate overall marketing campaign performance. To gauge and monitor the impact and effectiveness of creative content. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market research results and early brand tracking metrics to test final campaign content provided. Web tracking metrics for key Irish tourism informational sites (e.g. Ireland.com) assumed to be held by TI. Also note that TI conduct regular surveys/analysis on overall performance of wider TMF programme with comprehensive annual market and brand tracking reports available.
Project invoices and breakdown of FTE inputs and paid media content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tracking of project expenditure and projected/actual efficiency of delivery. Determining potential return on marketing investment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expected staffing levels detailed in final tender. Detail of actual FTEs for project assumed held by TI. - Invoices related to development of creative content available (Lot 1 of final tender). Breakdown of paid media content was not provided as part of QA process but assumed to be held by TI.
Breakdown of earned media content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help estimate campaign coverage and to gauge the effectiveness of TI's communications platform in target markets. To help quantify rate of return and estimate equivalent advertising value. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No data provided. Unclear if/what type of data is being gathered and what methodology is used by TI to determine EAV.

Data Availability and Proposed Next Steps

As a primarily creative international marketing project within the larger TMF programme, gathering sufficient data that would allow one to attribute any change in wider tourism performance metrics to the specific creative and promotional content developed as part of TI's new communication platform directly is a significant challenge.

However, key data needs identified that could be used to help estimate and quantify project performance and the return on marketing investment include the regular collation of brand tracking survey results (e.g., advertising recall, overall campaign influence in decision-making), web traffic metrics, wider CSO, NISRA and UNWTO tourism and travel survey data, and records of paid and earned media content in target markets.

While they would form important inputs for any assessment of overall creative/brand performance, the breakdowns of paid and earned media content primarily relate to Lot 2 (Media Planning and Buying) of the final tendered contract which is considered outside the scope of this review. However, it is important that these elements are tracked consistently over the project life-cycle to facilitate wider performance evaluation.

Furthermore, although there is no detail provided on an evaluation plan for this specific creative development project, we note TI conducts wider annual surveys and reviews of the whole TMF programme that would include elements of brand tracking. We also note the recently completed Value for Money and Policy Review (VfM) of the TMF programme over 2006 to 2016, which suggested a positive and improving return on investment on web and creative expenditure over 2013-2016. This VfM report will be presented to Government in 2020 and a much reduced but similar methodology could likely be applied to this project. However, no consideration of potential differences in the type of data collected and methodology used to determine earned media value and any return on marketing investment for this specific project were included in the scope of this review.

Section B – Step 5: Key Evaluation Questions

The following section looks at the key evaluation questions based on the findings from the previous sections of this report.

Does the delivery of the project/programme comply with the standards set out in the PSC?

As this project was valued under €5m, compliance with the PSC required a simple single appraisal to have been undertaken by the Sponsoring Agency. While the documentation provided for review does not detail the internal decision-making process that identified the project for inclusion in TI's corporate plans for 2017-2019 (i.e., stages before approval-in-principle), the tender and other key documentation provided in relation to the creative development platform show evidence of a clearly defined project need, a robust decision-making process and that the procurement process was carried out in accordance with EU regulations.

It should be noted that while the project objectives were specific to TI's primary marketing function, we would welcome further clarity on whether any alternative options to improve performance and marketing effectiveness were considered before the final project was selected for inclusion in TI's corporate plans.

Is the necessary data and information available such that the project/programme can be subjected to a full evaluation at a later date?

As a creative marketing project within the larger TMF programme, gathering sufficient data that would allow one to attribute any change in wider tourism performance metrics to the specific creative and promotional content developed as part of TI's new communication platform directly is a significant challenge. However, we are satisfied that the methodology used to assess and select the final creative development platform demonstrated that key performance indicators have been identified and a similar survey and assessment could be made at a later date to monitor brand awareness and effectiveness.

We would also expect that the implementation and use of marketing technology software would generate additional data that would be beneficial to any assessment of TI's marketing effectiveness.

What improvements are recommended such that future processes and management are enhanced?

Noting that ongoing Brexit negotiations impacted TI's internal staffing resources, the unavailability of documentation during the review period in relation to the roll-out of web technology marketing software suggests that records management and document retrieval processes are areas that could be improved. We would also recommend that TI appoint substitutes for key project personnel and ensure that all staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities with respect to ongoing records management.

Finally, while we note that TI conducts annual surveys to monitor their performance and the recent completion of a value-for-money review of the wider TMF programme, the PSC recommends that an evaluation/review plan should be developed as part of the project business case. While the documentation provided for review confirms

that robust evaluation took place at key decision gates, it is unclear whether a project-specific evaluation plan is in place for the post-implementation stage.

Section C: In-Depth Check Summary and Conclusions

The following section presents a summary of the findings of this in-depth check.

Summary of In-Depth Check

The purpose of this in-depth check was to assess Tourism Ireland's (TI) initiative to develop a new creative communications platform to support wider TI efforts to increase the numbers of tourists visiting Ireland and help counter the erosion of TI's brand performance.

Overall, this review finds that TI identified a clear project need, had a robust internal assessment process in place, and that the procurement stage was carried out in accordance with OJEU regulations. We recommend that TI continue efforts to ensure appropriate records management and document retrieval procedures are put in place to ensure that the temporary loss of key personnel does not hinder wider project administration, but overall, we are satisfied that the creative development aspects of the project were conducted in line with PSC guidance.



An Roinn Iompair,
Turasóireachta agus Spóirt
Department of Transport,
Tourism and Sport

Quality Assurance Process 2018

MetroLink In-Depth Check

October 2019

Document Purpose

This document sets out the template to be filled in by the evaluator, in conjunction with the division/unit/agency, while completing an in-depth check as part of the Quality Assurance Process. This document is drawn directly from the In-Depth Check Methodology document used by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport's (DTTaS) Strategic Research and Analysis Division (SRAD) to carry out the evaluation. It is split into five sections in accordance with the five identified steps of the in-depth check process, as outlined in the Public Spending Code (PSC).

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Section B: Evaluation

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Summary and Use

The templates, once completed, will be the in-depth check and will be attached as an appendix to the Department's annual Quality Assurance report. The Summary and Conclusions section, to be no longer than two paragraphs, will be copied in to the main report under the In-Depth Check section.

Section A: Introduction

This introductory section details the headline information on the project/programme under review. It should be noted that this review was conducted during 2019 and in accordance with the Public Spending Code regulations that were in place at that time. An updated Public Spending Code came into effect from 1 January 2020.

Project/Programme Summary	
Name	MetroLink
Description	MetroLink will be a north-south urban railway service running between Swords (a north county Dublin suburb) and the city centre, connecting high demand destinations such as Dublin Airport, Dublin City University, the Mater Hospital, Dublin city centre, and providing interchange with the Luas Green Line at Charlemont.
Responsible Body	Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII)/ National Transport Authority (NTA)
Current Status	Expenditure Being Incurred
Start Date	2018 ¹
End Date	2027
Projected Overall Cost	€3bn

Project Description

The MetroLink will be a metro train line running from the north Dublin suburb of Swords to Charlemont, south of the city centre where it will link with the Charlemont Luas, via Dublin airport. According to the current design for the route, the train line will run for 19km, primarily underground and will have 16 stations. The MetroLink is designed to meet growing demand for transport in north Dublin, to provide a high-quality airport link, and to connect other services such as commuter rail, the DART, and the Luas. If successful, it will provide a high capacity, fast and sustainable mode of transport which will help to avoid further growth in traffic congestion, and contribute to the decarbonisation of the transport sector, thereby contributing to climate action targets.

The activities of this project include: a series of options studies, development of the preferred route, various stages of consultation, economic appraisal of a range of options, financial appraisal, the development of the Business Case, environmental screenings, the construction of MetroLink from 2021/2022-2027, the operation of the MetroLink, and the evaluation of the MetroLink project. The project timeline runs until 2030/33 when it is expected that infrastructural construction will have been completed and the service operational for 3-6 years, allowing for the evaluation of the project.

As the MetroLink project is still in an early stage of the 'Expenditure Being Incurred' phase, a detailed Business Case for the proposed redesign is not yet available. Therefore this in-depth check focuses on ensuring that the plan for the project's appraisal (as outlined in Document 4- the Project Appraisal Plan (PAP)) indicates that the full process of this project is likely to be in line with Public Spending Code (PSC) guidelines.

¹ This project has had numerous iterations; however this in-depth check is concerned only on the latest version of this project -Metrolink- which commenced in 2018.

Section B – Step 1: Logic Model Mapping

As part of this in-depth check, SRAD has completed a Programme Logic Model (PLM) for the 'Route Selection and Option Study Programme' of the larger MetroLink project.

Objectives	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
<p>Provide safe, high frequency, high capacity, fast, efficient and sustainable public transport connecting Swords, Dublin Airport, Irish Rail, DART, LUAS, Dublin Bus and Dublin city centre</p> <p>Serve growing travel demand in north Dublin, south east Dublin and Dublin city centre</p>	<p>€3bn+</p> <p>The time and expertise of staff from TII, NTA, DTTAS, An Bord Pleanála, Local Authorities, DCHG, DHPLG, Jacobs and others</p> <p>4,000 construction workers</p> <p>Building materials (for stations, track, carriage etc.)</p> <p>Land</p>	<p>Completion of option studies to inform the development of the 'emerging preferred route', alternative and the 'preferred route'</p> <p>Consultation at various stages</p> <p>Incorporation of feedback gathered via consultations</p> <p>Economic appraisal (including the production of a cost-benefit analysis) and the development of a business case</p> <p>Financial appraisal</p> <p>Environmental screenings and assessments</p> <p>Construction of MetroLink</p> <p>Evaluation of MetroLink</p>	<p>19km long rail line running primarily underground, from Estuary park and ride (north of Swords) to Charlemont, via Dublin airport and Dublin city centre</p> <p>Approximately 16 new MetroLink stations</p> <p>Enough vehicles to provide 30 trains per hour in each directions</p> <p>A park and ride facility at Estuary Park with 3,000 parking spaces</p> <p>A depot</p> <p>Ancillary infrastructure</p>	<p>MetroLink will transport over 15,000 passengers per hour, per direction (50+ million per year)</p> <p>Integrating with the DART system at Tara Street, the Maynooth and Kildare Rail lines at Glasnevin, and the Luas Green Line at Charlemont</p> <p>Provision of a sustainable mode of transport, and therefore contributing to the achievement of Ireland's climate change targets</p> <p>Providing residents of north Dublin with safe, fast, and sustainable travel to Dublin airport and city centre, and opportunities to connect with other key transport infrastructure</p> <p>Safe, fast and sustainable travel to north Dublin and Dublin airport from Dublin city centre, and south of the city centre</p>

Description of Programme Logic Model

Objectives: The key objective of this project is to provide a high-capacity mode of sustainable public transport which connects north Dublin, Dublin airport and Dublin city centre. Other objectives include connections with the DART line, commuter rail and the Luas. Population projections indicate that demand for transport is likely to increase in areas along the route corridor, and MetroLink is designed to provide a high-capacity and high-frequency service to meet this demand. The successful delivery of this project aims to ensure that increased travel demand can be met, while avoiding the congestion that population growth would otherwise bring. It also aims to provide a reliable connection to Dublin airport, which will benefit residents, tourists and workers travelling to the airport.

Inputs: The provisional cost estimate for this project is €3bn, though this is likely to be revised in 2021/2022. Construction is due to commence once the cost estimate has been finalised in 2021/2022. In addition to financing of the project, another key input is staffing resources. This includes the time and expertise of staff from a range of Government Departments, agencies and private companies involved in the research, scoping, design and planning of the project, in addition to the labour which will be required for the actual construction of MetroLink. Construction will also require land and building materials.

Activities: This project has been considered, in various forms, and multiple times over several decades. However, only the activities which specifically pertain to this iteration of the project are relevant to this in-depth check. At the beginning of the process, a series of option studies were completed to inform the development of the ‘emerging preferred route’ and alternatives. The ‘emerging preferred route’ was then put forward for public consultation, and the feedback gathered during this process informed the development of the preferred route. This is being followed by further stages of consultation, the feedback from which will inform later stages of design and implementation.

Economic appraisal is another process which is being carried out in parallel to the various stages of design and consultation. This process of economic appraisal includes the production of a cost-benefit analysis. To meet the requirements of the public spending code, this CBA should consider the preferred option in addition to several alternative options, including a do-nothing or do-minimum option. As this document is under development, and has not yet been submitted to DTTAS for review, it has not been included in this in-depth check process, and therefore it is not possible to ascertain at this stage whether this document will meet the requirements of the Public Spending Code. However, the Project Appraisal Plan (Document 4) is a preliminary document which outlines the process through which the business case will be drafted, and this document is considered to meet the requirements of the PSC. Once the Business Case (including economic appraisal/CBA) has been completed, it will be submitted to SRAD, which will advise on whether it meets PSC requirements and, if not, advise on the amendments necessary to achieve compliance. The business case will also include a financial appraisal, which must also meet the requirements of the PSC. In addition to a review by SRAD, the business case will undergo technical review by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

The fifth document to be included for analysis as part of this in-depth check process is the ‘Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report’. Jacobs was awarded the tender to complete this process and draft this document. This document concludes that further environmental assessments will need to be conducted, and reports drafted. These include the ‘Environmental Impact Assessment’ itself, an ‘Appropriate Assessment’, and potentially a ‘Natura Impact Statement’ also. This process will continue in parallel to other project activities.

The construction of MetroLink is scheduled to begin in 2021/2022, once costs have been fully estimated. It is due to be complete by 2027.

The Public Spending Code requires that projects are evaluated in the future, and that an evaluation plan is developed and included at an early stage—it should be referenced in the project appraisal plan and detailed within the business case. In the case of this project, the project appraisal plan indicates that the project will be evaluated 3-6 years after its completion. To be Public Spending Code compliant, the evaluation plan should clearly state the objectives of the project. These should be SMART, metrics for the measurement of each objective should be stated in advance, and the necessary data should be gathered at each stage, to ensure that the evaluation process can be successfully completed. As this project is still at an early stage, a full evaluation plan has not yet been developed. However, the reference to it in the project appraisal plan indicates that it is on track for Public Spending Code compliance at this early stage. When the business case is submitted to SRAD for review, SRAD will advise if amendments to the evaluation plan are necessary to ensure PSC compliance.

Outputs: The outputs of this project will be the rail line itself, the trains, the stations, depot, and a park and ride facility at Estuary Park. The specific details of the outputs, outlined in this document, are based on the latest design and specifications—the preferred route—as described in Document 2. These plans may be subject to change as the project progresses.

The preferred route described within the documents supplied includes a 26km long rail line running primarily underground, from Estuary Park park and ride north of Swords to Sandymount, via Dublin airport and Dublin city centre. However, the route has since been redesigned and is now, 19km long and terminating at Charlemont. The new route, announced in March 2019 includes 15 new stations.² The stations will include ancillary infrastructure such as ticket machines real-time information screens. MetroLink itself will consist of a number of trains and carriages (over 60 metres in length), though a precise number is not referenced in any of the documents reviewed for this in-depth check. It can be assumed that the final number of trains and carriages will be sufficient to meet the operational target of providing 30 trains per hour in each direction. The park and ride facility at Estuary Park will include 3,000 car parking spaces.

Outcomes: In order to later evaluate a project, it is necessary to define the outcomes it is designed to achieve in advance. These outcomes should be SMART and should be assigned specific metrics/indicators within the evaluation plan. Baselines should be established in advance, and the necessary data gathered, to ensure that the evaluation can reasonably determine whether or not specific outcomes have been achieved. At this stage of the project, the outcomes have been clearly stated, but a full evaluation plan has yet to be developed.

The outcomes for this project include:

- MetroLink will transport over 15,000 passengers per hour per direction (50m+ per year);
- MetroLink will integrate with the DART network at Tara Street, Maynooth and Kildare Rail lines at Glasnevin and the Luas Green Line at Charlemont;
- Provision of a sustainable mode of transport, and therefore contributing to the achievement of Ireland's climate change targets
- Residents of north Dublin can safely, quickly, easily, and sustainably travel to Dublin airport and the city centre, and can connect with other key transport infrastructure.
- People can travel to north Dublin, and Dublin airport, safely, quickly, easily, and sustainably, from Dublin city centre, and south Dublin.

² The latest route design is available on metrolink.ie

The first two outcomes are SMART, and therefore suitable for evaluation, however the three others will require more specification if they are to be evaluated properly. For example, specific journey time goals could be set and used to evaluate whether or not the last two objectives have been met.

Section B – Step 2: Summary Timeline of Project/Programme

The following section tracks the MetroLink Project from project inception to conclusion in terms of major project/programme milestones:

2001	Proposals for a Dublin metro system included in ‘A Platform for Change—Outline of an integrated transportation strategy for the Greater Dublin Area-2000 to 2016’, by the Dublin Transportation Office (now part of the NTA).
2005	The infrastructure investment plan ‘Transport 21’ was announced, including the old Metro North and Metro West projects.
2006	The Railway Procurement Agency (RPA) (now part of TII) published 3 potential route options for Metro North.
2008	The RPA published preferred route for Metro North.
October 2011	Metro North scheme was granted a Railway Order.
November 2011	Metro North was deferred indefinitely due to fiscal constraints.
September 2015	The Fingal/North Dublin Transport Study was published, and it was announced that the Metro North project would resume. A new alignment options report was commissioned.
2015	A range of options for both Metro North and its integration with the Luas Green line were drawn up and subjected to two stages of multi-criteria analysis.
March 2018	The Metro North project was relaunched as MetroLink
2018	TII published the ‘Luas Green Line Tie-In Study’ to identify the preferred location for connecting the two services.
2018	ARUP finalised the options study, identifying a preferred route/alignment for the MetroLink
2018	TII published a study assessing the feasibility and cost of upgrading the existing Luas Green Line to metro standard, to allow through running of metro services from Swords to Sandyford.
March-May 2018	Public Consultation on the preferred route for the MetroLink
2019	The decision to postpone the upgrade of the Luas Green Line to Metro standard; and in the meantime, to instead increase the capacity of the existing Luas Green Line, was announced in a report titled ‘Constructability Report: Green Line Closure’.
March 2019	The Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report is published, and it concludes that both an Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment are necessary.

March-May 2019	Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report consultation period
Mid 2020	The Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment will be published, and followed by a period of statutory consultation during which the public will be invited to provide comments or feedback.
2020	Business case drafted
2020	Railway Order application to An Bord Pleanála
2021	Railway Order grant
2021/2022	Business case update
2021/2022-2027	Construction of MetroLink commences once costs have been accurately estimated
End-2027	MetroLink opens
2030-2033	Evaluation of MetroLink

Section B – Step 3: Analysis of Key Documents

The following section reviews the key documentation relating to appraisal, analysis and evaluation of the MetroLink Project.

Project/Programme Key Documents		
No.	Title	Details
1	MetroLink Public Consultation 2018	National Transport Authority, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (March 2018)
2	MetroLink: Integrated Transport, Integrated Life: Preferred Route	National Transport Authority, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (March 2019)
3	MetroLink Project Appraisal Plan (Draft)	Transport Infrastructure Ireland (April 2019)
4	MetroLink Project Appraisal Plan	Transport Infrastructure Ireland (May 2019)
5	MetroLink Environmental Impact Scoping Report	National Transport Authority, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Document No. P02.5 2019.05.24 (May 2019)

Key Document 1: MetroLink Public Consultation 2018

This document details the emerging preferred route of the project and was produced as a resource for the process of public consultation. It goes through the process through which this route was designed; describes briefly two alternative options; outlines the integration of MetroLink with other transport services; describes issues and challenges facing and posed by the project; summarises the project's cost-benefit analysis; outlines the implementation, communications and consultation processes; and, invites submissions and comments on the proposal.

Key Document 2: MetroLink: Integrated Transport, Integrated Life: Preferred Route

This document outlines the preferred route, and other key characteristics of the proposed project. This purpose of this document is for public consultation on the preferred route. It follows on from earlier publications regarding the 'emerging preferred route' in March/April 2018. Public feedback on the 'emerging preferred route' informed amendments made to that route, which are now seen in the 'preferred route' featured in this document.

The document opens with an infographic providing an overview of the project's key characteristics, and goes on to summarise: feedback received on the earlier publication of 'the emerging preferred route', the project schedule, policy background, needs addressed, design, and details of the route itself.

Key Document 3: MetroLink Project Appraisal Plan (Draft)

This is an early version of the MetroLink Project Appraisal Plan. The purpose of this document is to summarise the project and the problems it intends to address, and to outline the proposed structure for the forthcoming full appraisal. This document includes an introduction to the problems to be addressed and the objectives and details of the planned project, transport modelling methodology, data requirements, travel demand projections, appraisal methodology, sensitivity analysis, financial appraisal and appraisal deliverables. This version of the document was submitted to the Strategic Research and Analysis Division for initial feedback and advice on developing a Public Spending Code compliant PAP.

Key Document 4: MetroLink Project Appraisal Plan

This is the final version of the MetroLink Project Appraisal Plan. It is broadly similar to the draft version described above. A section on 'Scenario Analysis' has been added to the chapter dedicated to 'Sensitivity Analysis', and a final chapter dedicated to 'Monitoring and Evaluation' has been included.

Key Document 5: Environmental Impact Scoping Report

The EIA Scoping Report is a deliverable of the EIA process. It provides a description of the proposed project, identifies likely significant impacts of the construction and operation of the proposed project, sets out the assessment methodologies of the EIA report and outlines the likely content of the full report. It acts as a common reference/resource during the process of consultation between competent authorities about the developers, about the scope and methodology of the planned EIA report, and what extent of information is required to meet the requirements of the EIA process.

The document includes the policy context, a description of the study area, a baseline assessment, an assessment of potential impacts and a proposed methodology for impact assessment across 20 environmental categories, including human health, air quality, biodiversity, and cultural heritage. The potential for interactions and cumulative effects is also considered, and deemed likely considering the scale of the project in question. The scoping report concludes that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) will be carried out for the project, which considering its scale is likely to have a significant number of environmental impacts.

Section B – Step 4: Data Audit

The following section details the data audit that was carried out for the MetroLink project. It evaluates whether appropriate data is available for the future evaluation of the project/programme.

Data Required	Use	Availability
Passenger numbers	Determining whether passenger number targets have been met	It should be possible to gather this data from ticketing records
Frequency and number of journeys made	Determining whether frequency and journey number targets have been met	It should be possible to gather this data from Real Time Information records
Emissions data	Determining whether MetroLink is a sustainable mode of transport	Key Document 5 states that baseline assessments of air quality and GHG emissions will be made. This will provide a point of comparison for data gathered once MetroLink is operational.
Connectivity to DART (Does MetroLink line have a stop in close proximity to a DART station)	Determining whether or not MetroLink connects with DART	This can easily be assessed through measuring the distance between stations.
Connectivity at Glasnevin (Does MetroLink have an interchange at relevant railway station)	Determining whether or not MetroLink connects with Commuter rail	This can easily be assessed through measuring the distance between stations.
Evidence of modal shift and/or evidence of meeting new transport demand which would alternatively been met by unsustainable modes	Contribution to achievement of Ireland's climate change targets - Determining whether provision of metro contributed to reduction in CO ₂ emissions	This will be more difficult to determine. Data from ticketing records, data on modal shift from surveys, and before and after emissions data could contribute to determining this.

Note: As this project is at an early stage, the full business case and evaluation plan have not yet been drafted. Therefore the data audit above is based on noting the project objectives outlined, and considering how the achievement of these could be evaluated. These are not necessarily the indicators which will be included in the evaluation plan for this project.

Data Availability and Proposed Next Steps

The data required to evaluate the transport service related objectives of this project are likely to be available due to ticketing records kept through the ordinary operation of this service. Emissions data can be gathered and compared to the baseline data gathered as part of the environmental screening processes, and data on modal shift is already gathered in transport surveys and can therefore be applied in the evaluation of this project. The evaluation plan included in the Business case should clearly state which metrics/indicators will be used in evaluating the achievement of project outcomes; and a plan for ensuring that the necessary data will be gathered and recorded should be drafted and implemented.

Section B – Step 5: Key Evaluation Questions

The following section looks at the key evaluation questions for the MetroLink project, based on the findings from the previous sections of this report.

Does the delivery of the project/programme comply with the standards set out in the PSC?

This project is still at an early stage, so it cannot yet be determined whether it will meet the requirements of the Public Spending Code. However, the available documentation suggests that the process so far has been guided by the principles of the PSC.

In particular,

- Key Documents 3 and 4 indicate that a robust appraisal process has been initiated;
- The options studies referenced, the project appraisal plan, and the ongoing processes of consultation indicate that a large range of options are being developed, considered, compared and appraised; and,
- Document 4 states that an evaluation plan will be included in the completed business case, and Document 5 states that a baseline for air quality and other environmental factors will be established, allowing for the evaluation of relevant outcomes at a later date.

Is the necessary data and information available such that the project/programme can be subjected to a full evaluation at a later date?

Yes, the data audit above specifies what data could be used to evaluate each of the project objectives. As the business case is not yet complete, the actual evaluation plan was not available for this in-depth check. Therefore the data audit above is based on how the stated objectives could be evaluated, rather than how they will be. However records collected through ticketing, Google maps data and emissions data (which could be compared to the baselines established during environmental screenings), could all be utilised in the evaluation of this project.

What improvements are recommended such that future processes and management are enhanced?

The documentation provided indicates that this project has thus far been progressed with a strong evidence base, giving due regard to PSC requirements and decision gates. Given the limited documentation available at this early stage, it is not possible to make recommendations for future improvements.

Section C: In-Depth Check Summary and Conclusions

The following section presents a summary of the findings of this In-Depth Check on the MetroLink project.

Summary of In-Depth Check

The MetroLink is a project in the 'Expenditure Being Incurred' phase of the project lifecycle, as some of the project budget has already been spent. However, the project is still at an early stage and therefore the full business case is not yet available. Therefore this in-depth check evaluates the PSC compliance of the project so far, and references what should be included in the completed business case to ensure that the project is compliant as it progresses.

The Public Spending Code requires that projects are appraised to an appropriate level, depending on their projected cost. With a projected cost of over €3bn, MetroLink is an example of a mega project and requires a cost-benefit or cost-effectiveness analysis (required for projects costed at €20m or above), within which a range of options are appraised, including a do nothing/do minimum option. MetroLink's business case will include a CBA, and this document will be reviewed by SRAD to ensure compliance with the PSC. As the project is costed at above €100m, it will also be subject to technical review by the Investment Projects and Programmes Office within the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

The business case must include a comprehensive evaluation plan in which specific metrics/indicators are assigned to each of the project objectives, to ensure that the project can later be evaluated fully. The project appraisal plan supplied indicates that such an evaluation plan will be developed.

Overall, the documentation supplied for this in-depth check indicates that MetroLink is in compliance with the PSC at this stage of the project. As the project progresses, SRAD will review the economic appraisals developed as part of the business case to ensure continued compliance. This project commenced in 2018 and has so far operated under the requirements of the Public Spending Code published in 2013; however a revised version of the PSC was published in December 2019.

Therefore future documents will be reviewed with reference to the 2019 iteration of the PSC in line with Circular 24/2019 which announced both the publication of the new PSC and the date from which it would be effective (1st of January 2020)



An Roinn Iompair,
Turasóireachta agus Spóirt
Department of Transport,
Tourism and Sport

Quality Assurance Process 2018

National Indoor Arena Phase II In- Depth Check

September 2019

Prepared by the Department of
Transport, Tourism and Sport

www.dttas.ie

Document Purpose

This document sets out the template to be filled in by the evaluator, in conjunction with the division/unit/agency, while completing an in-depth check as part of the Quality Assurance Process. This document is drawn directly from the In-Depth Check Methodology document used by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport's (DTTas) Strategic Research and Analysis Division (SRAD) to carry out the evaluation. It is split into five sections in accordance with the five identified steps of the in-depth check process, as outlined in the Public Spending Code (PSC).

Document Format

Section A: Introduction

Section B: Evaluation

1. Logic Model Mapping
2. Summary Timeline of Life Cycle
3. Analysis of Key Documents
4. Data Audit
5. Key Evaluation Questions

Section C: Summary and Conclusions

Summary and Use

The templates, once completed, will be the in-depth check and will be attached as an appendix to the Department's annual Quality Assurance report. The Summary and Conclusions section, to be no longer than two paragraphs, will be copied in to the main report under the In-Depth Check section.

Section A: Introduction

This introductory section details the headline information on the project/programme under review. It should be noted that this review was conducted during 2019 and in accordance with the Public Spending Code regulations that were in place at that time. An updated Public Spending Code came into effect from 1 January 2020.

Project/Programme Summary	
Name	National Indoor Arena Phase II Project
Description	Capital project to build state-of-the-art indoor facilities that cater for a number of Irish sports teams
Responsible Body	Sport Ireland
Current Status	Expenditure Incurred
Start Date	July 2017
End Date	June 2019
Projected Overall Cost	€25.1m

Project Description

The National Indoor Arena (NIA) is a core piece of infrastructure which forms part of the National Sports Campus (NSC) at Blanchardstown. It includes world-class indoor training, competition and associated facilities for a range of sports. The project was designed to be delivered over two phases.

Phase I of the NIA, which provides indoor facilities for athletics, gymnastics, basketball and a range of other codes, was completed in November 2016. Phase II of the NIA (the subject of this in-depth check) comprises a covered synthetic pitch facility, primarily for soccer, Gaelic games and rugby (but capable of accommodating all field-sports), together with ancillary changing, strength and conditioning, physio facilities etc. Work on these facilities was completed in June 2019.

The overall need for the project was outlined in the project's revised business case, submitted to DTTaS in May 2017. It includes references to centres of excellence and sporting facilities in other jurisdictions including the UK, New Zealand and Australia. The need for the project is further discussed in relation to the sub-standard facilities available to Irish athletes. The business case cites problems such as a dependence on a small number of hotels with poorer quality facilities, enormous challenges accessing and timetabling the use of ad-hoc facilities and compromised security when training is held in public spaces with significant security costs.

The initial tender for the contract to complete Phase I and II of the NIA was submitted to the National Sports Campus Development Authority (NSCDA), the predecessor to Sport Ireland, in November 2014. Following this it was agreed that the tender of contractor Heron Buckingham JV (HBJV) constituted the most economically advantageous tender. Subsequently contracts were signed on 23 January 2015. This contract provided for work to begin on Phase I of the NIA.

In parallel to this process, in February 2016 CHL Consulting submitted a cost-benefit analysis (CBA) for Phase II of the NIA to the Economic Financial and Evaluation Unit (EFEU) within DTTaS, the precursor to the Strategic Research and Analysis Division. The initial CBA was deemed not to be in compliance with the Public Spending Code (PSC) and was revised several times. Issues identified by the EFEU included:

- The need for a more specific, focused list of project objectives expressed in terms of the benefits they are expected to provide and those whom they are intended to benefit;
- The need to apply a 5% discount rate in line with the guidance contained in the PSC and Common Appraisal Framework (CAF) at the time;
- The need to calculate the benefits and costs of the project over a 30-year time frame;
- The need to consider a “scaled back” or do-minimum project as one of the options assessed; and,
- The calculation of benefits attributable to the project, such as the holding of international events or the health benefits accruing to the Irish population as a result of increased participation in sport due to the project.

Following correspondence between Sport Ireland and the EFEU and several revisions to the project CBA and business case, it was agreed that a new appraisal methodology should be adopted. The EFEU noted that quantifying the benefits for the proposed project was extremely challenging and the quantification of options explored previously was not sufficiently rigorous to include in a CBA.

This was due to the difficulty associated with calculating benefits, due to the lack of evidence of the economic value or monetised benefits arising from enhancing the competitiveness of elite athletes or the “feel good” factor associated with international sporting success for Irish teams.

Following consultation with DPER, the EFEU recommended that project options be appraised through a combination of multi-criteria analysis (MCA) and cost effectiveness analysis (CEA) in line with the guidance set out in the PSC and CAF. CEA was viewed as more effective as it compares the relative costs of the various options available for achieving projects objectives, rather than ascertaining if the benefits outweigh the costs of a given option. It was also recommended that an ex-post project review be carried out by Sport Ireland to determine if the project met its objectives.

On this basis a revised business case was submitted to DTTaS in May 2017, which estimated the total cost of the project at €28.5m.

Section B – Step 1: Logic Model Mapping

As part of this in-depth check, SRAD has completed a Programme Logic Model (PLM) for the National Indoor Arena Phase II project.

Objectives	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
<p>To provide indoor sports facilities which cater for competition, training, sports medical/sports science, coaching and other supports.</p> <p>Specifically the Projects Business case sets out the following objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To enhance the competitive performance of elite players and teams in these codes, through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring their access to facilities comparable with competing elite athletes nationally and internationally; Facilitating centralised access in Ireland to the full breadth of services, supports and facilities that best international practice delivers in performance management and development for elite 	<p>Estimated €28.5m (including VAT) CAPEX to be financed from the Exchequer, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction Preliminaries A cost contingency of 10% Professional fees <p>Estimated annual OPEX of €0.4m, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional fees Gas Maintenance Water rates Refuse collection 	<p>Design, construction and operation of separate soccer/GAA facilities on a site of medium scale including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A full-size indoor soccer/GAA pitch A half-size rugby/GAA pitch Sprint track Ancillary facilities for soccer, rugby and GAA A shared reception building 	<p>Half-size rugby pitch and sprint area (7,400m²)</p> <p>Full-size soccer pitch (9,600m²)</p> <p>Reception area (215m²)</p> <p>Soccer/GAA facilities: Ground floor (1,400m²):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 Dressing rooms 2 Staff changing rooms Briefing rooms, Physio room Boot clean Plant Storage <p>First Floor (815m²):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offices Conference Meeting rooms Player breakout area Storage <p>Rugby facilities: Ground Floor (2,550m²):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 dressing rooms Staff changing rooms 	<p>Access for elite players and teams to facilities which are comparable with other elite sporting facilities nationally and internationally.</p> <p>Facilitate centralised access in Ireland to the full breadth of services, supports and facilities that best international practice delivers in performance management and development for elite players and athletes.</p> <p>Enhanced facilities and supports available for diverse categories of high-performance participants as required, including sportswomen, youth academies and other target groups.</p> <p>Facilitation of a greater quantity and quality of coaching education and development in the relevant codes that enhances participation and popularity throughout Ireland.</p>

<p>players and athletes;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhancing facilities and supports available for diverse categories of high-performance participants as required, including sportswomen, youth academies and other target groups. <p>2. To facilitate a greater quantity and quality of coaching education and development in the relevant codes, enhancing participation and popularity throughout Ireland;</p> <p>3. To enhance Ireland's capacity and attractiveness as a location for international events, tournaments, conferences and competitions in and related to these sporting codes, and thereby serve to showcase the country, to develop international relationships and engagement, to attract overseas visitors, and to develop skills, knowledge and capacities in relevant fields of interest;</p> <p>4. To directly and indirectly encourage interest and participation in soccer, rugby and Gaelic games throughout Ireland, and in</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physio room, Strength and conditioning room Medical/rehab facility Boot camp Storage <p>First Floor (2,200m²):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rugby player breakout area Café Viewing area Offices Conference rooms Media rooms Storage Plant 	<p>Enhancement of Ireland's capacity and attractiveness as a location for international events, tournaments, conferences and competitions in relevant sporting codes.</p> <p>Directly and indirectly encourage interest and participation in soccer, rugby and Gaelic games throughout Ireland, and in doing so generate the physical and mental health, welfare, community, and quality of life benefits associated with such participation.</p>
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<p>doing so generate the physical and mental health, welfare, community, and quality of life benefits associated with such participation.</p>				
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Description of Programme Logic Model

Objectives: The objectives of the project are framed in relation to enhancing the competitiveness of Irish athletes and the provision of world class training facilities to support coaching, enhance Ireland's attractiveness as a destination for international sporting events and directly and indirectly encourage participation in sport in Ireland. As noted by Sport Ireland during the development of the business case, it is difficult to quantify the benefits arising from objectives related to Ireland's sporting teams' successes or the resulting increase in the participation in sport. Therefore in relation to the specific, measurable, appropriate and realistic (SMART) criteria it will be difficult to measure the success of the project based on quantitative metrics. In recognition of this fact, CEA was chosen to analyse the relative cost of different options in achieving the project's stated objectives, rather than a CBA which would be used to compare the total costs and benefits of the project. A post-project review is also planned to evaluate if the option which was chosen was the most effective and efficient in meeting the projects objectives.

Inputs: Following the use of an MCA and CEA, Option 3 (develop Separated facilities on site of medium scale) was deemed to be the preferred option. A summary of the estimated capital and operating costs are presented in the tables below, as outlined in the revised Phase II NIA Business Case submitted to SRAD in May 2017.

Capital Cost Expenditure Heading	Cost (€m)
Construction	15.3
Preliminaries	2.3
Contingency (10%)	1.8
Inflator (to August 16 prices)	1.5
Future Inflation (August 16 to October 17)	1.4
Sub-Total	22.2
Professional Fees	2.7
Total Cost (Exc. VAT)	24.9
VAT on Construction	3.0
VAT on Professional Fees	0.6
Total Cost (Inc. VAT)	28.5

Operating Cost Expenditure Heading	Annual Cost (€)
Professional Fees	500
Electricity	120,000
Gas	75,500
Maintenance	48,250
Water Rates	7,500
Refuse Collection	5,000
Total	437,200

While the figures presented above are estimates of the total expenditure on the project based on the project business case, the total project expenditure amounted to €25.1m, of which €21.5m was spent on construction, €2.9m was spent on VAT, and €0.6m was spent on legal and professional fees. It should be noted that Sport Ireland are still in the final accounting phase of the project and some further invoices are still expected so these figures are likely to increase slightly.

Year	Construction Costs	Construction VAT	Professional Fees	Total
2017	€3.6m	€0.49m	€0.25m	€4.4m
2018	€16.4m	€2.2m	€0.36m	€19m
2019	€1.5m	€0.2m	€0.03m	€1.8m
Total	€21.5	€2.9m	€0.64m	€25.1m

Activities: The main activities required for the scheme include the design, construction and operation of separate rugby and soccer/GAA facilities on a site of medium scale, including:

- A full size indoor soccer/GAA pitch
- A half size rugby/GAA pitch
- Sprint track
- Ancillary facilities for soccer, rugby and GAA
- A shared reception building.

Following the completion of the project a post project review will also be conducted.

Outputs: The primary output of the project will be the construction of new indoor sports training facilities including covered pitches and ancillary facilities such as strength and conditioning facilities, briefing areas and conference rooms. It is envisioned that these facilities should be of a high standard and equivalent to facilities available in other jurisdictions. The provision of these coaching, training, sports medicine, nutrition, sports

science, physio and rehabilitation facilities in one centre of excellence should reduce the dependence of Ireland's elite athletes on sub-standard facilities available at sport clubs and hotels, maximising the time spent on athletic development and minimising the waste of time and resources through the ad-hoc provision of fragmented services.

Outcomes: The main outcomes of the scheme will be the provision of high-quality training facilities to elite level athletes in Ireland. The provision of these facilities should also support coaching and education within rugby, soccer and GAA. The project also aims to enhance the performance of Ireland's elite level athletes and both directly and indirectly promote participation in these sports, leading to related improvements in quality of life, physical and mental health.

Section B – Step 2: Summary Timeline of Project/Programme

The following section tracks the National Indoor Arena Phase II Project from inception to conclusion in terms of major project/programme milestones.

October 2014	Tenders submitted to NSCDA for completion of Phase I and Phase II of NIA
January 2015	Construction Contracts signed with HBJV
February 2015	Work on NIA Phase I begins
February 2016	Deadline of 15 February set for final decision to proceed with Phase II or not
May 2016	Initial CBA submitted by Sport Ireland
June 2016	Revised CBA submitted following EFEU feedback
November 2016	NIA Phase I completed
May 2017	Sport Ireland a submit revised business case for NIA Phase II applying an MCA and CEA in line with advice from EFEU
June 2017	DTTAS and DPER Ministers agree to proceed with Phase II on the terms negotiated with the construction contractor
July 2017	Work begins on Phase II of NIA
June 2019	Work Completed on Phase II of NIA
TBC	Post-project review to be conducted by Sport Ireland

Section B – Step 3: Analysis of Key Documents

The following section reviews the key documentation relating to appraisal, analysis and evaluation of the National Indoor Arena Phase II Project.

Project/Programme Key Documents		
No.	Title	Details
1	NSCDA Letter to DTTAS	Letter on the tender process used for Phase I and Phase II of the NIA
2	Summary of Cost and Benefits for NIA Phase II	Initial CBA submitted by CHL Consulting on behalf of Sport Ireland
3	Letter on revised CBA	Revised CBA from CHL Consulting based on initial comments from EFEU
4	Sport Ireland Letter to EFEU	Letter from Sport Ireland outlining difficulties in quantifying benefits associated with the project
5	EFEU Letter to Sport Ireland	Letter from the EFEU recommending a new approach to evaluation using MCA and CEA
6	Revised Business Case	Revised Business Case submitted by Sport Ireland on the basis of comments from the EFEU
7	DPER Letter to DTTaS	Letter noting DPER's agreement to proceed with Phase II of the NIA.

Key Document 1: NSCDA Letter to DTTAS

A letter dated 21 November 2014 from the National Sports Campus Development Authority to the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport. The letter informs Department of the outcome of the tendering process for Phase I and Phase II of the NIA. It notes that the tender of contractor HBJV is the most economically advantageous tender, and as a result they have been selected to construct Phase I of the NIA and also provisionally to construct Phase II. A final decision as to whether to proceed with the second phase or not is to be made in advance of a deadline of 15 February 2016.

Key Document 2: Summary of Cost and Benefits for NIA Phase II

Initial summary of cost and benefits for NIA Phase II by CHL Consulting on behalf of Sport Ireland submitted to EFEU for review. The CBA considered the costs and benefits for three options:

1. Do nothing;
2. Build Phase II of the NIA immediately; and,
3. Delay construction for five years.

Costs were estimated using cost estimates from Tobin Engineers while benefits were estimated as being derived from three sources: revenues associated with commercial activity at the site, off-campus revenue arising from parties attending events at the facility, and the externality effects of national reputation gain and enhanced

participation in sport occurring as a result of the construction of the project and subsequent enhancements in performance from Irish sporting teams.

Key Document 3: Letter on revised CBA

A letter dated 2 June 2016 from CHL Consulting to Tobin Consulting Engineers. The letter outlines the main issues raised by the EFEU with the initial CBA and outlines proposed solutions to them. These include the use of a discount rate of 5% in line with the guidance set out in the CAF (at the time), widening the time frame of the analysis to 30 years and including a BCR on each sheet of the analysis. In addition to these amendments, the letter notes that it was not possible to include the shadow cost of public funds in the analysis as requested and that the prevailing market price is used instead. The letter also notes the EFEU's issue with reporting health benefits arising as a result of the project as accruing to the HSE, but notes a benefit of a similar magnitude would occur to Irish citizens. Annexed to the letter is an updated CBA analysis to reflect the changes outlined above.

Key Document 4: Sport Ireland Letter to EFEU

A letter dated 30 March 2017 from Sport Ireland, to EFEU. The letter attempts to address detailed comments which the EFEU provided on a revised Business Case in September 2016. The letter proposes a set of new project objectives and a range of options to be considered in the business case including a do-nothing option, a do-minimum option and three options which involve developing the project as originally proposed, developing a project which has superior facilities to those originally proposed, i.e. two full-size pitches, or the development of the project on a new site. The letter also notes the difficulty in quantifying the benefits arising as a result of the project such as enhancing the performance of elite level athletes or the "feel good" factor associated with the success of Irish teams in international competitions.

Key Document 5: EFEU Letter to Sport Ireland

A letter dated 2 May 2017 from EFEU, to Sport Ireland. The letter confirms the EFEU's acceptance of the new objectives and options which it proposes to analyse in an updated business case. The letter notes that, following consultation with DPER and in light of the difficulties in quantifying the benefits of the project identified by Sport Ireland, the EFEU is of the view that there is not sufficient information to conduct a robust CBA. The EFEU recommends that a combination of MCA and CEA be carried out to determine which of the proposed options achieves the project objectives at the lowest relative cost. The letter notes that a CEA does not ascertain whether the benefits of a given option outweigh the costs, as a CBA would, and therefore also recommends that a monitoring and evaluation plan should form part of the business case. The EFEU recommends that Sport Ireland begin collecting baseline data on the performance of Ireland's elite level athletes which could be used in an ex-post project review to determine if the project was successful in meeting its objectives.

Key Document 6: Revised Business Case

Updated business case submitted by Sport Ireland to the EFEU in May 2017. The revised business case is prepared in line with the recommendations of the EFEU and considers the following options:

- Option 1: Do Nothing;
- Option 2: Develop modest, fully-shared facilities on site (i.e. one shared pitch for all codes);
- Option 3: Develop separated facilities on site of a medium scale (i.e. one full-size and one half-size pitch);
- Option 4: Develop separated facilities on site on a large scale (i.e. two full-size pitches);
- Option 5: Develop significant and separated facilities elsewhere of a medium scale (i.e. one full-size and one half-size pitch at off-site locations).

The costs of construction and operation of each of the above options were considered using an MCA and CEA in line with the guidance contained in the CAF and PSC. On the basis of this analysis, Option 3, which most closely resembles the original proposal for Phase II of the NIA, was chosen as the most cost effective in meeting the project's stated objectives. The project need and its objectives are framed in relation to examples of other sporting centres of excellence and the strategic objectives of the FAI, IRFU and GAA cited in the business case. The business case also notes that Sport Ireland will conduct a post-project review in line with the guidance contained in the PSC.

Key Document 7: DPER Letter to DTTaS

A letter dated 30 June 2017 from DPER DTTaS. This letter notes that the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform agrees in principle to proceed with Phase II of the NIA on the basis of the agreement negotiated between Sport Ireland and HBJV for the revised sum of €26m. The letter notes the EFEU have reviewed the revised business case for the project and are generally satisfied with the approach taken. The letter also notes that the €26m required to fund the project is to be drawn from DTTaS's existing capital expenditure allocation.

Section B – Step 4: Data Audit

The following section details the data audit that was carried out for the NIA Phase II Project. It evaluates whether appropriate data is available for the future evaluation of the project.

Data Required	Use	Availability
No. of athletes and teams using the facilities.	To help gauge the project's effectiveness in ensuring athletes access to facilities comparable with competing elite athletes, nationally and internationally.	It is assumed that these records are held by Sport Ireland.
Performance of elite level Irish athletes, particularly the Irish national soccer and rugby teams	To evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme in achieving the project's objective of enhancing the competitive performance of elite athletes. Measured through performances in competitions such as the 6 Nations, the Rugby World Cup, the UEFA European Football Championship, the FIFA World Cup and related qualification tournaments.	The performance of Irish elite level athletes and the national rugby and soccer team are publicised in the media and available to Sport Ireland.
Ireland's success in bids to host international sporting events and conferences	To evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme in achieving the project's objective of enhancing Ireland's capacity and attractiveness as a location for international events, tournaments and conferences.	It is assumed that these records are held by Sport Ireland and the Sports Policy and National Sports Campus Division
Data on sporting participation in Ireland	To evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme in enhancing participation in and the popularity of sport throughout Ireland.	It is assumed that this information is held by Sport Ireland and the Sport Policy and National Sports Campus Division.
Vouched invoices for project expenditure	To ensure that State monies were used as agreed during the construction and development of the project.	It is assumed that this information is held by Sport Ireland and the Sport Policy and National Sports Campus Division.

Data Availability and Proposed Next Steps

Under the project business case it was agreed that Sport Ireland would conduct a detailed post-project review to examine the effectiveness of the project in meeting its stated objectives. As part of this process, it is assumed that Sport Ireland has recorded relevant information on the number of athletes and teams using the new facilities as well as the performance of elite level athletes in national and domestic competitions.

It is also assumed that Sport Ireland and the relevant Sport Policy and National Sports Campus Division records data on the level of sporting participation in Ireland and can measure any increase as a result of the project.

The Sport Policy and National Sports Campus Division has information on the construction and professional fees arising as a result of the project, which it has received from Sport Ireland.

Section B – Step 5: Key Evaluation Questions

The following section looks at the key evaluation questions for the NIA Phase II Project based on the findings from the previous sections of this report.

Does the delivery of the project/programme comply with the standards set out in the PSC?

The NIA Phase II Project experienced a number of PSC compliance issues in the early project appraisal stages. These were mostly related to technical issues with the proposed CBA to accompany the project. As a result of engagement with the EFEU, the business case and associated CBA were subject to a number of revisions.

Following written correspondence between Sport Ireland and the EFEU, it was agreed that a new business case would be developed. The EFEU agreed with Sport Ireland's assessment that it was extremely difficult to quantify the potential benefits arising from the scheme and that as a result a CBA was not appropriate to analyse whether to proceed with the project or not. Following discussions with DPER the EFEU agreed that the proposed options should be evaluated based on an MCA and CEA and a revised business case was prepared and submitted on this basis.

Having reviewed this revised business case the EFEU was of the view that it was carried out in line with the guidance in the PSC and CAF.

Is the necessary data and information available such that the project/programme can be subjected to a full evaluation at a later date?

Yes, there are a number of previous iterations of the project business cases and supporting CBA, MCA and CEA analyses available for review. There are also detailed records of correspondence between Sport Ireland, the EFEU and other relevant bodies including the construction contractor and DPER.

Sport Ireland have committed to carrying out a post-project review in line with the guidance contained in the PSC. This review, in conjunction with the data already held by Sport Ireland and the Sport Policy and National Sports Campus Division, should be sufficient to assess if the project was the most efficient means of meeting its stated objectives.

What improvements are recommended such that future processes and management are enhanced?

It is likely that delays related to PSC compliance could have been avoided if the initial assessment by the EFEU had identified that a CBA was not appropriate for assessing the proposed project, due to the difficulty in quantifying the benefits of the project such as increased participation in sport or the "feel good" factor associated with the success of the national Rugby or Soccer teams.

Related to the above, and as identified in the 2017 In-depth check of the Redevelopment of Páirc Uí Chaoimh, there is a need to develop improved appraisal guidance for the appraisal of large sports capital infrastructure projects, to assist with monetising of the benefits of arising from these projects.

Section C: In-Depth Check Summary and Conclusions

The following section presents a summary of the findings of this in-depth check on the NIA Phase II Project.

Summary of In-Depth Check

The Project was completed in June 2019. It encountered a number of difficulties with PSC compliance as early drafts of the Business Case and related CBA analysis were found to have a number of technical issues such as the limited number of options assessed, the framing of project objectives, and application of the correct social discount rate.

The project encountered a number of delays mostly due to a legal dispute and resulting conciliation process between the construction contractor and Sport Ireland.

Following extensive correspondence between Sport Ireland and the EFEU, the business case was revised and a new appraisal methodology was agreed which used MCA and a CEA to decide on which option to proceed with. On this basis a revised business case was submitted to the EFEU in May 2017. Following an assessment by the EFEU this business case was adjudged to have been conducted in line with the guidance contained in the PSC and CAF.

It is worth noting that the estimated total cost of the project has been €25.1m, but given that the project is still in its final accounting stage and some invoices are still outstanding this is likely to increase slightly. This figure is broadly in line with the €28.5m estimated expenditure outlined in the project's final business case.