AI as Boundary Infrastructure in Environmental Assessment

From boundary objects to boundary infrastructure

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Why this matters now

- Accelerating green transition
- Pressure for faster permitting
- Increasing data complexity
- Digitalisation and AI
- Growing expectations for transparency and trust

How do we simplify without oversimplifying?

PRESS RELEASE | Dec 10, 2025 | Brussels | 5 min read

Promoting sustainable growth with simpler smarter environmental legislation

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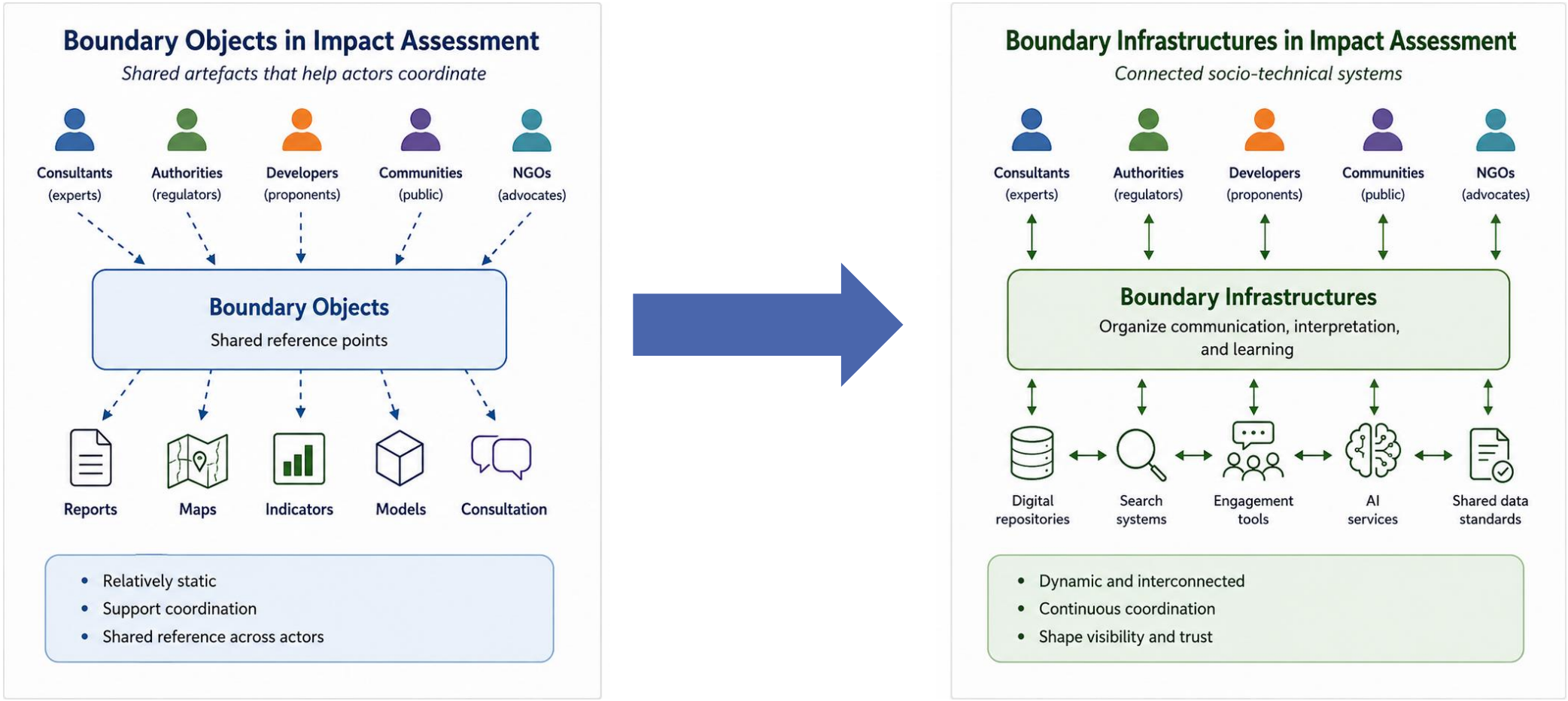
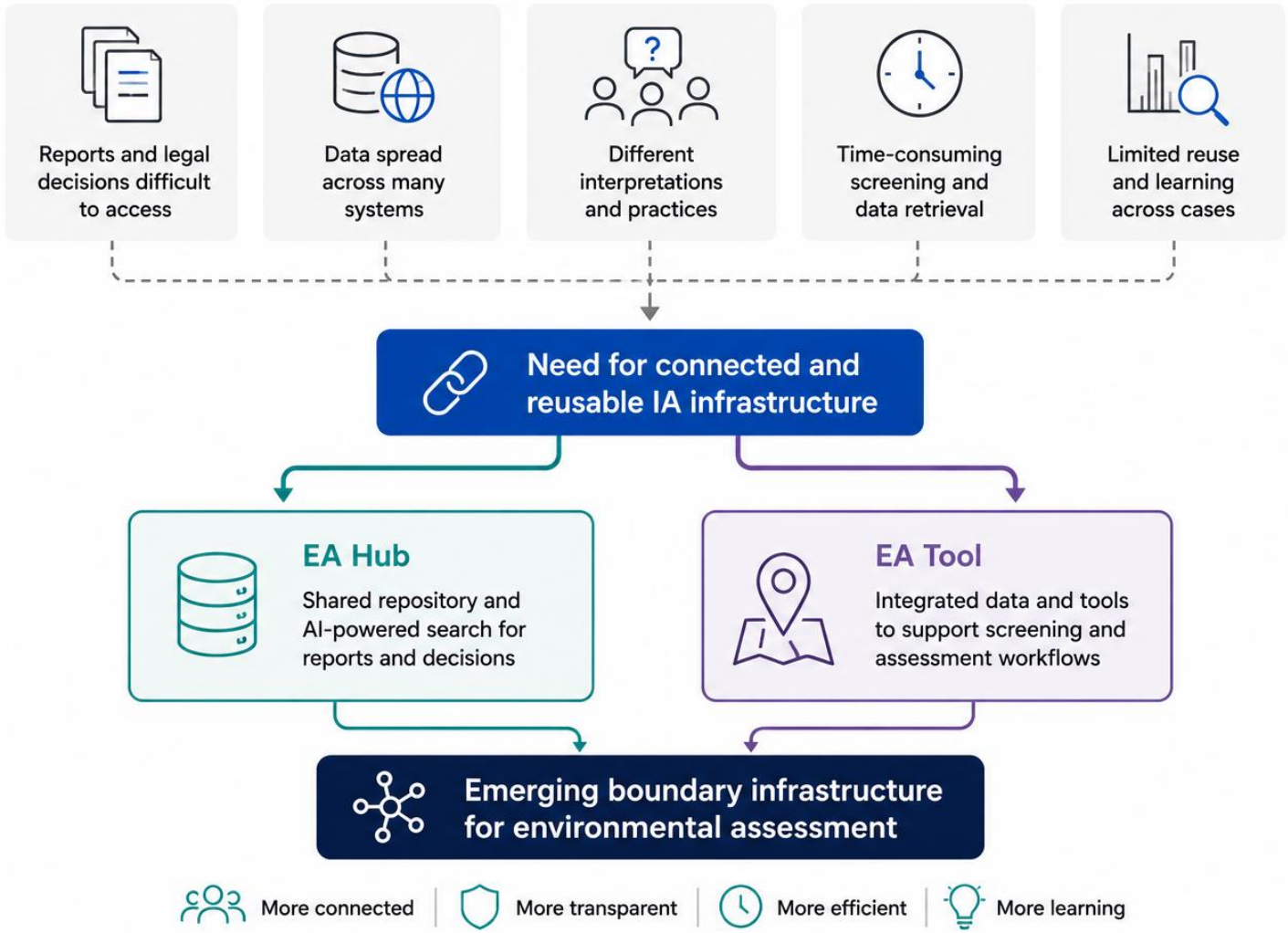
Today, the European Commission presented a package of measures to simplify environmental legislation in the areas of industrial emissions, circular economy, environmental assessments and geospatial data. The changes will contribute to reducing the administrative burden for businesses, while keeping the EU's ambitious objectives to protect the environment and human health. It will accelerate and streamline permitting processes for all projects, in particular in strategic sectors, such as strategic digital projects, critical raw materials projects and affordable housing, facilitating the transition to a clean and digital economy in the EU. Simplifying regulations and reducing administrative burdens is indeed essential to meet these environmental objectives and strengthen the EU's competitiveness.

From boundary objects to boundary infrastructure





Outset and the Danish journey

From fragmentation to infrastructure

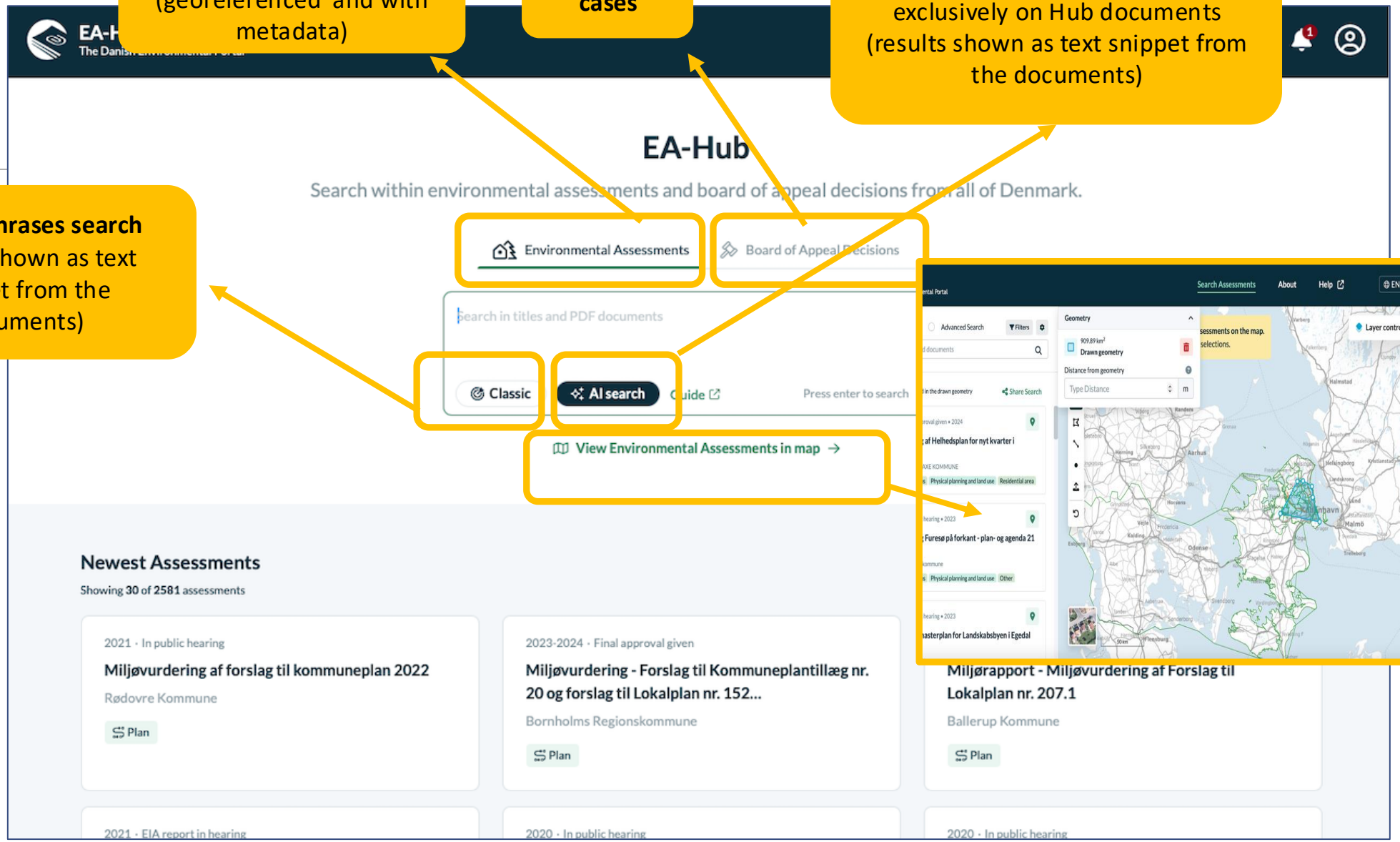
EA Hub

•2.700+ EIA and SEA reports (georeferenced and with metadata)

+1.500 legal cases

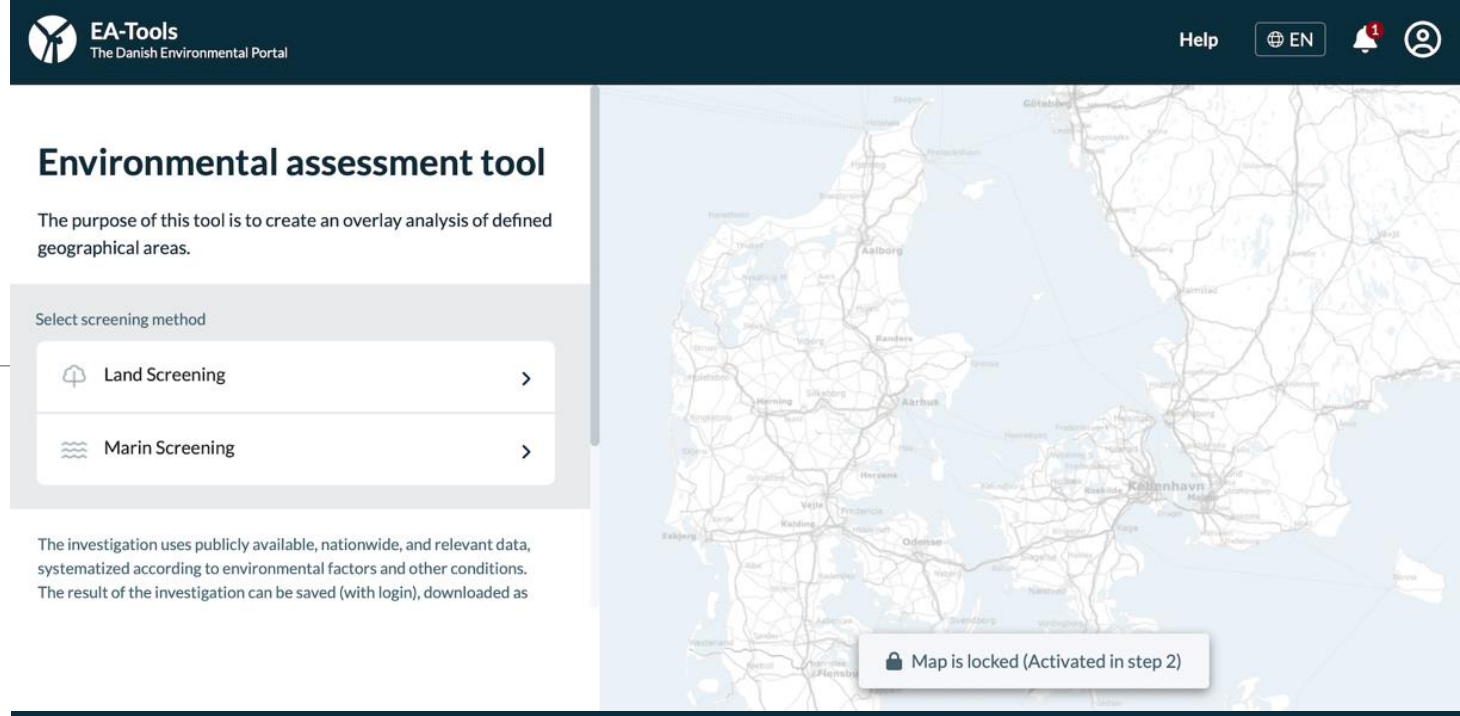
AI search built on language model – exclusively on Hub documents (results shown as text snippet from the documents)

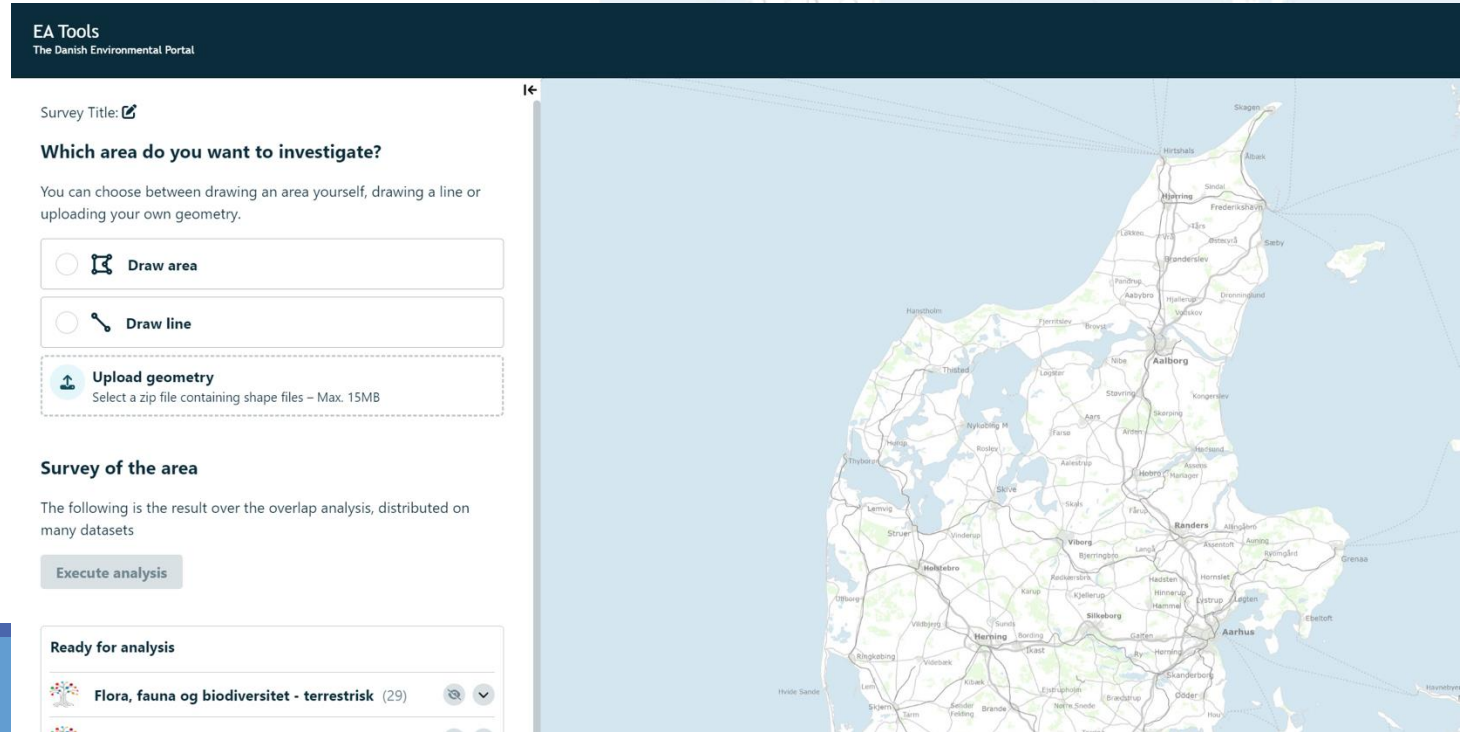
Words/phrases search (results shown as text snippet from the documents)



EA tool

- Over 700 curated GIS datasets- covering both onshore an offshore, purpose-built for environmental assessment and permitting
- Structured according to the environmental factors in the European and Danish regulation
- Autogenerate screening reports for a chosen geography
  - Land-based screening
  - Marin screening





Observed infrastructural and governance effects

The curated, trustworthy data has led to:

- Improved accessibility and communication
- Shared learning across projects and institutions
- Law proposal to secure the tools/infrastructure become sustainable
- Expansion and innovation
  - Toward AI agents supporting screening, legal compliance and reporting
  - Cross-boundary data space (offshore)
- Increased standardisation and consistency
  - Scoping template
  - Digital templates for EIA screening (infrastructure and extraction)
  - Cross-ministry initiative to standardise and digitalise EA

Conclusion

Main argument

AI in Impact Assessment should not only be understood as a technical tool

It increasingly functions as:

- A communicative infrastructure
- A mediator of interpretation
- A coordinator across professional boundaries
- A shaper of visibility, comparison, and trust

Final reflection

The key question is therefore not whether AI enters IA – but what kind of infrastructure we are building around it – and for it.

Let’s continue the conversation!

Message me your questions or comments in the IAIA26 app.

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