

MARESCONNECT

Maritime Usage Licence Application for Site Investigations for the MaresConnect Interconnector Reference: MUL240008

National Maritime Planning Framework



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DOCUMENT RELEASE FORM

MaresConnect

P2578_R6413_Rev0

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Interconnector Reference: MUL240008

National Maritime Planning Framework

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GLOSSARY

AA

Appropriate Assessment

AA

Appropriate Assessment

AtoN

Aids to Navigation

CEN

European Committee for Standardization (Comité Européen de Normalisation)

CIL

Commissioners for Irish Lights

DECC

Department of Energy and Climate Change

DHLGH

Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

EENL

Etchea Energy Nominees Limited

EIA

Environmental Impact Assessment

EIAR

Environmental Impact Assessment Report

EU

European Union

EPS

European Protected Species

FLO

Fisheries Liaison Officer

FMMS

Fisheries Management and Mitigation Strategy

GB

Great Britain

GW

Gigawatt

IMO

International Maritime Organization

ISO

International Organization for Standardization

MCL

MaresConnect Ltd.

MSFD

Marine Strategy Framework Directive

MUL

Maritime Usage Licence

MULA

Maritime Usage Licence Area

MW

Megawatt

NRA

Navigation Risk Assessment

NIS

Natura Impact Statement

NM

Nautical Mile

NMPF

National Marine Planning Framework

OMPP

Overarching Marine Planning Policies

ORE

Offshore Renewable Energy

OWF

Offshore Wind Farm

PCI

Projects of Common Interest

SAC

Special Area of Conservation

SAR

Search and Rescue

SEA

Strategic Environmental Assessment

SISAA

Supporting Information for Screening for
Appropriate Assessment

SMPP

Sectoral Marine Planning Policies

SOLAS

Safety of Life at Sea

SPA

Special Protection Area

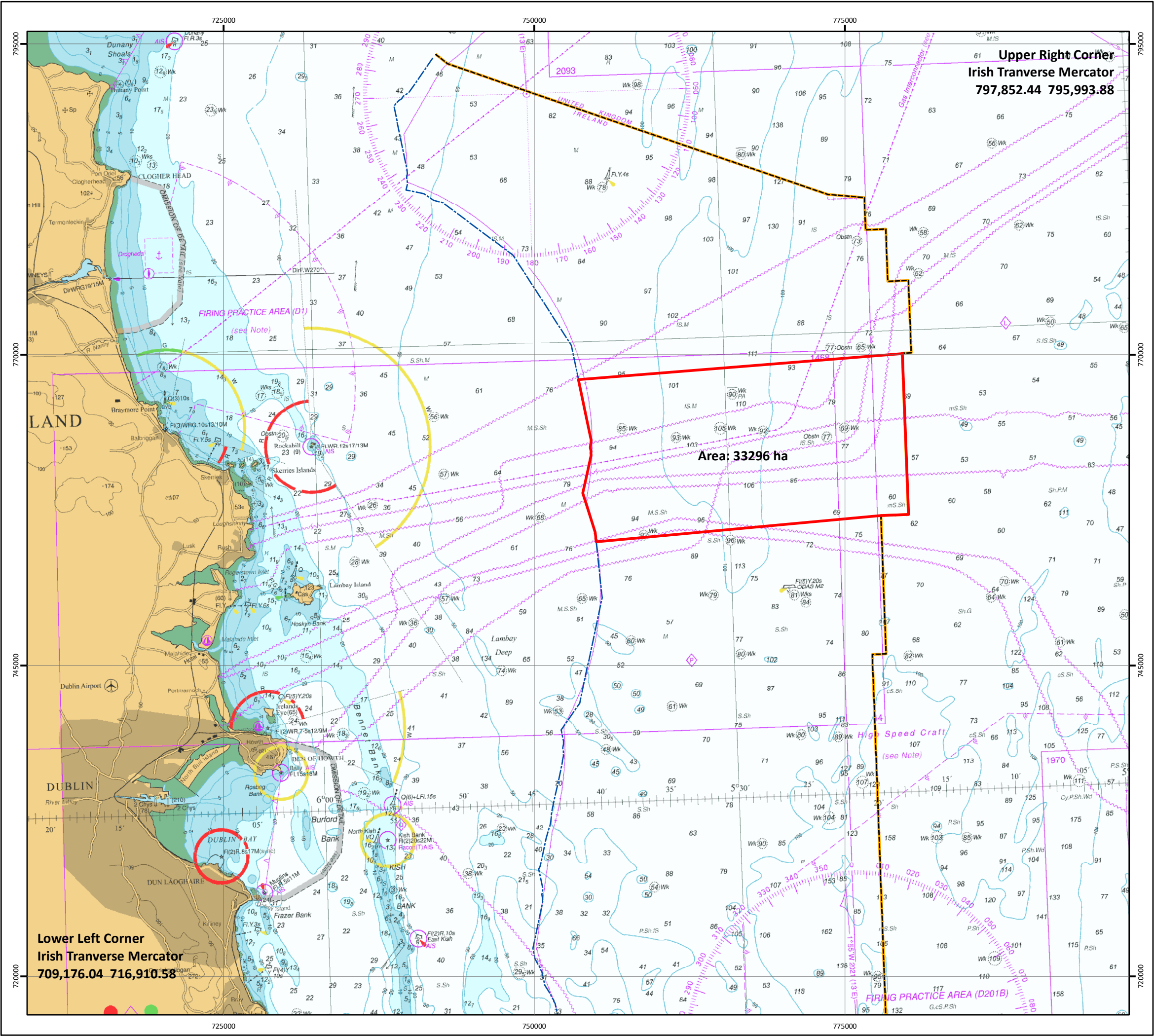
1. INTRODUCTION

The MaresConnect Interconnector (MaresConnect) is a proposed 750-megawatt (MW) electricity interconnector connecting the Great Britain (GB) and Republic of Ireland (ROI) electricity transmission networks. It is being developed by MaresConnect Limited (MCL), a special purpose vehicle incorporated in Ireland and joint owned by Foresight Group Holdings Limited (Foresight) and Etchea Energy Nominees Limited (EENL). The construction of the interconnector is scheduled to commence in 2025, with testing and full operation from 2028.

MCL is currently exploring the potential for an electricity interconnector off the coast of County Dublin, with consideration given to five potential landfall zones: Ardgillan, Balcarrick, Loughshiny, Robswalls, and Rush. A Foreshore Licence (reference FS007635) has already been granted to MCL for conducting site investigation surveys from Mean High Water (MHW) to the 12 nautical mile (nm) limit.

However, changes in legislation have impacted the scope of this exploration. With the introduction of a new maritime regime in the Republic of Ireland on July 17, 2023, it became necessary for applicants to obtain a Maritime Usage Licence (MUL) to conduct surveys beyond the 12nm limit into the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). In response to this, MaresConnect has opted to maintain the existing foreshore licence and apply for a MUL to extend survey activities from the 12nm limit to the EEZ. It should be noted that if MaresConnect are successful in obtaining a MUL, the site investigation and survey activities will align with those conducted with Foreshore Licence (reference FS007635) from Mean High Water (MHW) to the 12nm limit.

This MUL application is focused on conducting site investigation surveys to assess various factors, including seabed suitability and stability for routing cables and other electrical infrastructure associated with the interconnector project from the 12nm limit to the EEZ. The surveys and associated works are envisioned as temporary and short-term in nature. Additionally, it is expected that the data collected during these surveys will serve as baseline information for future environmental assessments, should the MaresConnect project progress to the planning and consenting stage. It's important to note that these site investigation surveys and works are independent of any potential future development of the MaresConnect project.



MARITIME USAGE LICENCE MAP 1

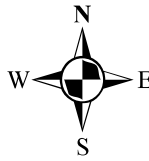
LOCATION OVERVIEW
MaresConnect Interconnector MUL Boundary

Drawing No: P2578M-LOC-001

B

Legend

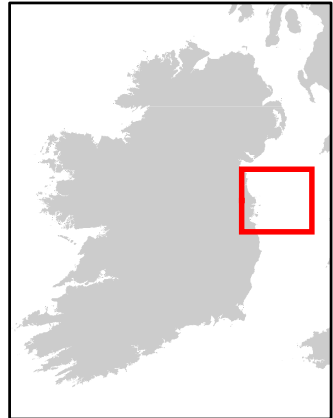
- Maritime Usage Area
- EEZ Boundary
- 12 NM Territorial Sea Limit



Note: Coordinates listed in
Irish Transverse Mercator
EPSG 2157

Map prepared by:
MRes
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NOTE: Not to be used for Navigation

Date	25 June 2024
Coordinate System	IRENET95 Irish Transverse Mercator
Projection	Transverse Mercator
Datum	IRENET95
Data Source	GEBCO; ESRI, MaresConnect, MarineFind; DECC
File Reference	J:\P2578\Mxd_QGZ\00_OffshoreIreland\01_LOC\ P2578M-LOC-001.mxd
Created By	
Reviewed By	
Approved By	

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1.2 Marine Planning

1.2.1 National Marine Planning Framework

The National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) was published on 1st July 2021. It brings together all marine based human activities, detailing how marine activities will interact with each other to ensure sustainable use of marine resources by 2040. All applications for activities or developments in Ireland's marine area will be considered by the appropriate Regulator in terms of their consistency with the objectives of the plan.

The NMPF establishes 32 Overarching Marine Planning Policies (OMPPs), which apply to all proposals capable of having impacts in the maritime area, and 16 Sectoral Marine Planning Policies (SMPPs). For any proposed project or activity, a range of OMPPs and SMPPs may need to be considered to ensure full compliance with the NMPF.

The MUL, application number: MUL240008 is for the MaresConnect site investigation works to determine the suitability for electricity and fibre optic cable routeing and other electrical infrastructure associated with the possible development of an Electricity interconnector from the 12nm limit to the EEZ. The NMPF supports the development of electricity interconnectors through the Energy Transmission SMPPs.

This project is in line with these objectives as it will be assisting the State in meeting the Government's offshore electricity transmission system, and connection between the offshore and onshore electricity grids, which is necessary for wider development of Ireland's offshore and onshore renewable energy sector. The project is in line with additional OMPPs under Infrastructure and Employment by supporting the diversification or regeneration of marine industries and by adding to the net increase in marine related employment in Ireland. Table 1-1 presents the OMPPs and the Energy – Offshore Renewable SMPP, summarising how the proposed site investigations align with those policies. For a full description of the policies, please refer to the NMPF (<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a4a9a-national-marine-planning-framework/#national-marine-planning-framework>)

1.3 NMPF Compliance Statement

Planning Policy	Policy Objective	MaresConnect Electricity Interconnector Compliance Statement
Environmental – Ocean Health Policy 1	<p>Compliance with NMPF policies relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Biodiversity ▪ Non-Indigenous Species ▪ Water Quality ▪ Seafloor and Water Column Integrity ▪ Marine litter ▪ Underwater Noise <p>Should include demonstration of contribution to the relevant Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) targets identified.</p>	Requires compliance with biodiversity, non-indigenous species, water quality, seafloor and water column integrity, marine litter and underwater noise policies. The proposed site investigations will not have significant adverse impacts on these topics as standard regulations will be complied with and mitigation proposed to minimise any identified effects. (See supporting documents submitted with this application Supporting Information for Screening for AA (SISAA) (P2578-R6410-Rev0)) and Risk Assessment for Annex IV Species (P2578_R6412_Rev0) and the Assessment of Impacts of Maritime usage (AIMU) report (P2578-R6411-Rev0)
Biodiversity 1	<p>Proposals incorporating features that enhance or facilitate species adaptation or migration, or natural native habitat connectivity will be supported, subject to the outcome of statutory environmental assessment processes and subsequent decision by the competent authority, and where they contribute to the policies and objectives of this NMPF. Proposals that may have significant adverse impacts on species adaptation or migration, or on natural native habitat connectivity must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference and in accordance with legal requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ avoid, ▪ minimise, or mitigate significant adverse impacts on species adaptation or migration, or on natural native habitat connectivity. 	The proposed site investigations will not have significant adverse impacts on species adaptation or migration or on natural native habitat connectivity. Mitigation has been proposed to avoid or minimise potential effects on qualifying interest twaite shade and migratory waterbirds that use any of the 9 European sites that have been screened in and will require an AA. See documents entitled 'Supporting Information for SISAA (document reference P2578-R6419) and submitted with this application and Risk Assessment for Annex IV Species (document reference P2578_R6412)
Biodiversity 2	Proposals that protect, maintain, restore and enhance the distribution and net extent of important habitats and distribution of important species will be supported, subject to the outcome of statutory environmental assessment processes and subsequent decision by the competent authority, and where they contribute to the policies and objectives of this NMPF. Proposals must avoid significant reduction in the distribution and net extent of important habitats and other habitats that important species depend on, including avoidance of activity that may result in disturbance or displacement of habitats.	The proposed site investigations will not lead to habitat reduction. See documents entitled 'Supporting Information for Screening for AA (P2578-R6410-rev0) submitted with this application for more information.

Planning Policy	Policy Objective	MaresConnect Electricity Interconnector Compliance Statement
Biodiversity 3	<p>Where marine or coastal natural capital assets are recognised by Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposals must seek to enhance marine or coastal natural capital assets where possible. Proposals must demonstrate that they will in order of preference, and in accordance with legal requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> avoid, minimise, or mitigate significant adverse impacts on marine or coastal natural capital assets, or if it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts on marine or coastal natural capital asset proposals must set out the reasons for proceeding. 	The proposed site investigations will not have significant adverse impacts on marine or coastal natural capital assets.
Biodiversity 4	<p>Proposals must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference and in accordance with legal requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> avoid, minimise, or mitigate significant disturbance to, or displacement of, highly mobile species. 	Mitigation has been proposed to avoid or minimise potential for significant disturbance to priority species. See the document entitled 'Non-Statutory Environmental Report' (P2578-R5972-Rev0), and the document's entitled 'Supporting Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment (P2578-R6410-Rev0) and 'Risk Assessment for Annex IV Species' (P2578-R6412) submitted with this application.
Protected Marine Sites 1	Proposals must demonstrate that they can be implemented without adverse effects on the integrity of SACs or SPAs). Where adverse effects from proposals remain following mitigation, in line with Habitats Directive Article 6(3), consent for the proposals cannot be granted unless the prerequisites set by Article 6(4) are met.	The proposed site investigations can be implemented without adverse effects on Natura 2000 sites. See documents entitled 'Supporting Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment (P2578-R6410-Rev0).
Protected Marine Sites 2 and 3	<p>Protect Marine sites 2:</p> <p>Proposals supporting the objectives of protected marine sites should be supported and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> be informed by appropriate guidance must demonstrate that they are in accordance with legal requirements, including statutory advice provided by authorities relevant to protected marine sites. <p>Protect Marine sites 3:</p> <p>Proposals that enhance a protected marine site's ability to adapt to climate change, enhancing the resilience of the protected site, should be supported and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> be informed by appropriate guidance. must demonstrate that they are in accordance with legal requirements, including statutory advice provided by authorities relevant to protected marine sites. 	The proposed site investigations will not conflict with these policies.

Planning Policy	Policy Objective	MaresConnect Electricity Interconnector Compliance Statement
Protected Marine Sites 4	<p>Until the ecological coherence of the network of protected marine sites is examined and understood, proposals should identify, by review of best available evidence (including consultation with the competent authority with responsibility for designating such areas as required), the features, under consideration at the time the application is made, that may be required to develop and further establish the network. Based upon identified features that may be required to develop and further establish the network, proposals should demonstrate that they will, in order of preference, and in accordance with legal requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ avoid, ▪ minimise, or ▪ mitigate significant impacts on features that may be required to develop and further establish the network, or if it is not possible to mitigate significant impacts, proposals should set out the reasons for proceeding. 	<p>An assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed site investigations on sensitive marine features which are not protected has been carried out (See the document entitled 'Assessment of Maritime Usage (AIMU) report; P2578-R6411-Rev0). No significant adverse impacts have been identified. The proposed site investigations are therefore in line with this policy.</p>
Non-indigenous Species 1	<p>Reducing the risk of the introduction and / or spread of non-indigenous species is a requirement of all proposals. Proposals must demonstrate a risk management approach to prevent the introduction of and / or spread of non-indigenous species, particularly when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ moving equipment, boats or livestock (for example fish or shellfish) from one water body to another, introducing structures suitable for settlement of non-indigenous species, or the spread of non-indigenous species known to exist in the area of the proposal. 	<p>All vessels used for the proposed site investigations will comply with the latest International Maritime Organization (IMO), Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and environmental requirements for their classification and with any national requirement of the territorial or offshore waters to be operated in. Compliance with national statute will reduce the risk of the introduction or spread of non-indigenous species.</p>
Water Quality 1 and 2	<p>Water Quality 1:</p> <p>Proposals that may have significant adverse impacts upon water quality, including upon habitats and species beneficial to water quality, must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference and in accordance with legal requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ avoid, ▪ minimise, or ▪ mitigate significant adverse impacts. <p>Water Quality 2:</p> <p>Proposals delivering improvements to water quality, or enhancing habitats and species, which can be of benefit to water quality, should be supported.</p>	<p>The proposed site investigations will not have a significant adverse impact upon water quality and will not conflict with these policies.</p>
Sea-floor and Water Column Integrity 1, 2 and 3	<p>Proposals that incorporate measures to support the resilience of marine habitats will be supported, subject to the outcome of statutory environmental assessment processes and subsequent decision by the competent authority and where they contribute to the policies and objectives of this NMPF. Proposals which may have significant adverse impacts on marine, particularly deep sea, habitats must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference and in accordance with legal requirements:</p>	<p>The proposed site investigations will not have a significant adverse impact upon marine habitats and will not conflict with these policies.</p>

Planning Policy	Policy Objective	MaresConnect Electricity Interconnector Compliance Statement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ avoid, ▪ minimise, or ▪ mitigate significant adverse impacts on marine habitats, or <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ if it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts on marine habitats must set out the reasons for proceeding. <p>Policy 2: Proposals, including those that increase access to the maritime area, must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference and in accordance with legal requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ avoid, ▪ minimise, or ▪ mitigate adverse impacts on important habitats and species. <p>Policy 3: Proposals that protect, maintain, restore and enhance coastal habitats for ecosystem functioning and provision of ecosystem services will be supported, subject to the outcome of statutory environmental assessment processes and subsequent decision by the competent authority, and where they contribute to the policies and objectives of this NMPF. Proposals must take account of the space required for coastal habitats, for ecosystem functioning and provision of ecosystem services, and demonstrate that they will, in order of preference and in accordance with legal requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ avoid, ▪ minimise, or <p>mitigate for net loss of coastal habitat.</p>	
Marine Litter 1	<p>Proposals that facilitate waste re-use or recycling, or that reduce marine and coastal litter will be supported, where they contribute to the policies and objectives of this NMPF. Proposals that could potentially increase the amount of litter that is discharged into the maritime area, either intentionally or accidentally, must include measures (such as development of a waste management plan) to, in order of preference and in accordance with legal requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ avoid, ▪ minimise, or ▪ mitigate the litter <p>Demonstration of these measures must provide satisfactory evidence that the proposal is able to manage all waste without creation of litter.</p>	Liquid or non-liquid pollutants or waste material will not be dumped, thrown, or otherwise disposed of into the sea. All refuse and materials shall be kept onboard the vessel and safely disposed of onshore according to the MARPOL Convention.

Planning Policy	Policy Objective	MaresConnect Electricity Interconnector Compliance Statement
Underwater noise 1	<p>Proposals must take account of spatial distribution, temporal extent, and levels of impulsive and / or continuous sound (underwater noise) that may be generated and the potential for significant adverse impacts on marine fauna. Where the potential for significant impact on marine fauna from underwater noise is identified, a Noise Assessment Statement must be prepared by the proposer of development. The findings of the Noise Assessment Statement should demonstrably inform determination(s) related to the activity proposed and the carrying out of the activity itself. The content of the Noise Assessment Statement should be relevant to the particular circumstances and must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstration of compliance with applicable legal requirements, such as necessary assessment of proposals likely to have underwater noise implications, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AA; - EIA; - Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA); - Specific response to 'strict protection' requirements of Article 12 of the Habitats Directive in relation to certain species listed in Annex IV of the Directive; and - Species protected under the Wildlife Acts. ▪ An assessment of the potential impact of the development or use on the affected species in terms of environmental sustainability; ▪ Demonstration that significant adverse impacts on marine fauna resulting from underwater noise will, in order of preference and in accordance with legal requirements be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ avoided, ▪ minimised, or ▪ mitigated, or ▪ if it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts on marine fauna, the reasons for proceeding must be set out. <p>This policy should be included as part of statutory environmental assessments where such assessments require consideration of underwater noise.</p>	<p>The Non-Statutory Environmental Report (P2578-R5972) document and the document entitled 'Supporting Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment (P2578- R6410-Rev0) as well as the document entitled 'Annex IV Risk Assessment' (P2578-R6412-Rev0) submitted with this application have considered all underwater noise sources and the potential impacts on marine fauna. Appropriate mitigation has been proposed to avoid or minimise potential impacts.</p>
Air Quality 1 and 2	<p>Policy 1: Proposals that support a reduction in air pollution should be supported, subject to the outcome of statutory environmental assessment processes and subsequent decision by the competent authority, and where they contribute to the policies and objectives of this NMPF. Proposals must demonstrate consideration of their contribution to air pollution, both direct and cumulative.</p> <p>Policy 2:</p>	<p>All vessels used for the proposed site investigations will comply with the latest IMO, SOLAS and environmental requirements for their classification and with any national requirement of the territorial or offshore waters to be operated in. This includes regulations around atmospheric emissions.</p>

Planning Policy	Policy Objective	MaresConnect Electricity Interconnector Compliance Statement
	Where proposals are likely to result in or facilitate an increase in air pollution, proposal should demonstrate that they will, in order of preference in accordance with legal requirements and standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ avoid, ▪ minimise, or mitigate air pollution.	
Climate Change 1	For the lifetime of the proposal, the following climate change matters must be demonstrated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ estimation of likely generation of greenhouse gas emissions, both direct and indirect; ▪ measures to support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions where possible; ▪ likely impact of climate change effects upon the proposal from factors including but not limited to: sea level rise, ocean acidification, changing weather patterns; ▪ measures incorporated to enable adaptation climate change effects; ▪ likely impact upon climate change adaptation measures adopted in the coastal area relevant to the proposal and/or adaptation measures adopted by adjacent activities; ▪ where likely impact upon climate change adaptation measures in the coastal area relevant to the proposal and/or adaptation measures adopted by adjacent activities is identified, these impacts must be in order of preference and in accordance with legal requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ avoided, ▪ minimised, ▪ mitigated, if it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts, the reasons for proceeding must be set out.	The proposed site investigations will not change the physical features of the coast or effect flood defence or habitats that provide carbon sequestration ecosystem services as the works with regard to this application is taking place entirely offshore.
Climate Change 2	Proposals should demonstrate how they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ avoid contribution to adverse changes to physical features of the coast; ▪ enhance, restore or recreate habitats that provide a flood defence or carbon sequestration ecosystem services where possible. Where potential significant adverse impacts upon habitats that provide a flood defence or carbon sequestration ecosystem services are identified, these must be in order of preference and in accordance with legal requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ avoided, ▪ minimised, ▪ mitigated, ▪ if it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts, the reasons for proceeding must be set out. 	The proposed site investigations will not change the physical features of the coast or effect flood defence or habitats that provide carbon sequestration ecosystem services as the works with regard to this application is taking place entirely offshore.

Planning Policy	Policy Objective	MaresConnect Electricity Interconnector Compliance Statement
	This policy should be included as part of statutory environmental assessments where such assessments are required.	
Co-existence 1	Proposals should demonstrate that they have considered how to optimise the use of space, including through consideration of opportunities for co-existence and co-operation with other activities, enhancing other activities where appropriate. If proposals cannot avoid significant adverse impacts (including displacement) on other activities they must, in order of preference: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ minimise significant adverse impacts, ▪ mitigate significant adverse impacts, or if it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts, proposals should set out the reasons for proceeding.	Measures to be followed to allow co-existence with the fishing industry are described in the Assessment of Impacts of Maritime Usage (P2578-R6411) which accompanies this application. No significant adverse impacts have been identified.
Infrastructure 1	Appropriate land-based infrastructure which facilitates marine activity (and vice versa) should be supported. Proposals for appropriate infrastructure that facilitates the diversification or regeneration of marine industries should be supported.	The proposed site investigations will not conflict with these policies.
Access 1 and 2	Policy 1: Proposals, including in relation to tourism and recreation, should demonstrate that they will, in order of preference: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ avoid, ▪ minimise, or ▪ mitigate significant adverse impacts on public access. Policy 2: Proposals demonstrating appropriate enhanced and inclusive public access to and within the maritime area, and that consider the future provision of services for tourism and recreation activities, should be supported, subject to the outcome of statutory environmental assessment processes and subsequent decision by the competent authority, and where they contribute to the policies and objectives of this NMPF.	Mitigation has been proposed to avoid or minimise potential for minimal disruption to public access to tourism and recreation areas. See the document entitled 'Assessment of Impacts of Maritime Usage Report' (P2578-R411-Rev0),
Employment 1	Proposals should demonstrate contribution to a net increase in marine related employment in Ireland, particularly where the proposals are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ in line with the skills available in Irish coastal communities adjacent to the maritime area. ▪ improve the sustainable use of natural resources; and ▪ diversify skills to enable employment in emerging industries 	MCL is an Irish based company with offices and permanent employees based in County Dublin. Where appropriate, MCL will select Irish contractors or contractors who can demonstrate they are maximising local Irish content.
Heritage Assets 1	Proposals that demonstrate they will contribute to enhancing the significance of heritage assets will be supported, subject to the outcome of statutory environmental assessment processes and subsequent decision by the competent authority, and where they contribute to the policies and objectives of this NMPF. Proposals unable to	The Assessment of Impacts of Maritime Usage (P2578-R6411-Rev0) details measures to be implemented to avoid impacts to heritage assets.

Planning Policy	Policy Objective	MaresConnect Electricity Interconnector Compliance Statement
	<p>contribute to enhancing the significance of heritage assets will only be supported if they demonstrate that they will, in order of preference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ avoid, ▪ minimise, or ▪ mitigate harm to the significance of heritage assets, and ▪ if it is not possible, to mitigate harm, then the public benefits for proceeding with the proposal must outweigh the harm to the significance of the heritage assets. 	
Rural Coastal and Island Communities 1	Proposals contributing to access, communications, energy self-sufficiency or sustainability of rural coastal and / or island communities should be supported. Proposals should ideally be inclusive of continual education, skills development and training in marine sectors, thus improving the sustainability, social benefits and economic resilience of rural and island communities.	The proposed site investigations will not conflict with this policy.
Seascape and Landscape 1	<p>Proposals should demonstrate how the likely significant impacts of a development on the seascape and landscape of an area have been considered. Proposals will only be supported if they demonstrate that they, in order of preference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ avoid, ▪ minimise, or ▪ mitigate significant adverse impacts on the seascape and landscape of the area. <p>If it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts, proposals must set out the reasons for proceeding. This policy should be included as part of statutory environmental assessments.</p>	The proposed site investigations will not have a visual impact on the seascape or landscape.
Social Benefits 1 and 2	<p>Policy 1:</p> <p>Proposals that enhance or promote social benefits should be supported. Proposals unable to enhance or promote social benefits should demonstrate that they will, in order of preference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ minimise, or ▪ mitigate significant adverse impacts which result in the displacement of other existing or authorised (but yet to be implemented) activities that generate social benefits. <p>Policy 2:</p> <p>Proposals that increase the understanding and enjoyment of the marine environment (including its natural, historic and social value), or that promote conservation management and increased education and skills, should be supported.</p>	The proposed site investigations will not conflict with these policies.
Transboundary 1	Proposals that have transboundary impacts beyond the maritime area, on either the terrestrial environment or neighbouring international jurisdictions, must show evidence of consultation with the relevant public authorities,	The proposed site investigations will not have transboundary impacts within the MULA. However,

Planning Policy	Policy Objective	MaresConnect Electricity Interconnector Compliance Statement
	including terrestrial planning authorities and other country authorities. Proposals should consider transboundary impacts throughout the lifetime of the proposed activity.	surveys will be taking place which cross into other jurisdictions i.e. Great Britain.
Aquaculture SMPP 1,2,& 3	<p>Policy 1: Proposals for sustainable development of aquaculture that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate use of innovative approaches, and/ or contribute to diversification of species being grown in a given locality, particularly proposals applying a multi-trophic approach, and / or enhances resilience to the effects of climate change should be supported. <p>Policy 2: Non-aquaculture proposals in aquaculture production areas must demonstrate consideration of, and compatibility with, aquaculture production. Where compatibility is not possible, proposals must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> avoid; minimise; mitigate significant adverse impacts on aquaculture. if it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts upon aquaculture, proposals should set out the reasons for proceeding. <p>Policy 3: Land-based coastal infrastructure that is critical to and supports development of aquaculture should be supported, in accordance with any legal requirements and provide environmental safeguards contained within authorisation processes are fully met.</p>	The proposed site investigations will not have an impact on Aquaculture.
Defence and Security SMPP	<p>Any proposal that has the potential to interfere with the performance by the Defence Forces of their security and non-security related tasks must be subject to consultation with the Defence Organisation. This includes potential interference with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety of navigation and access to naval facilities; Firing, test or exercise areas; Communication, and surveillance systems; Fishery protection functions. <p>Proposals should only be supported where, having consulted with the Defence Organisation, they are satisfied that it will not result in unacceptable interference with the performance by the Defence Forces of their security and non-security related tasks. Any proposal will be subject to the relevant Environmental Assessments, as set out in the introduction to this NMPF.</p>	The proposed site investigations will not interfere with the performance of the Defence Forces.

Planning Policy	Policy Objective	MaresConnect Electricity Interconnector Compliance Statement
Energy – Natural Gas Storage SMPP	Subject to assessments required for the protection of the environment, and only where in keeping with the outcome of the review of the security of energy supply of Ireland’s electricity and natural gas systems (which is being carried out by Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications), natural gas storage proposals should be supported.	The proposed site investigations will not conflict with this SMPP.
ORE Policy 1	Proposals that assist the State in meeting the Government’s offshore renewable energy targets, including the target of achieving 5 gigawatt (GW) of capacity in offshore wind by 2030 and proposals that maximise the long-term shift from use of fossil fuels to renewable electricity energy, in line with decarbonisation targets, should be supported. All proposals will be rigorously assessed to ensure compliance with environmental standards and seek to minimise impacts on the marine environment, marine ecology and other maritime users.	The proposed site investigations will not conflict with these policies.
ORE Policy 2	Proposals must be consistent with national policy, including the Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (ORED) and its successor. Relevant Projects designated pursuant to the Transition Protocol and those projects that can objectively enable delivery on the Government’s 2030 targets will be prioritised for assessment under the new consenting regime. Into the future, areas designated for offshore energy development, under the Designated Marine Area Plan process set out in the Maritime Area Planning Bill, will underpin a plan-led approach to consenting (or development of our marine resources) (Note – see Appendix D on Spatial Designation Process in the NMPP document).	The development of a new electricity interconnector as a consequence of the feasibility works being undertaken by MCL will need to demonstrate it is consistent with national policy and the Offshore and onshore Renewable Energy Development Plan and its successor. The proposed site investigations do not conflict with this policy and are in line with the plan to develop sustainably Ireland’s offshore renewable energy.
ORE Policy 3	Any non-ORE proposals that are in or could affect sites held under a permission or that are subject to an ongoing permitting or consenting process for renewable energy generation (wind, wave or tidal should demonstrate that they will in order of preference: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ avoid, ▪ minimise, ▪ mitigate adverse impacts, or if it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts, proposals should set out the reasons for proceeding. Applicants for non-ORE proposals in or affecting ORE sites should engage ORE developers in consultation during the pre-application processes as appropriate.	Other potential ORE proposals have been identified which potentially overlap spatially with the proposed site investigations. All sites are under feasibility stages, and none are held under permission or subject to an ongoing permitting or consenting process for renewable energy generation. At present only the seven Phase 1, (six located in off the east coast in the Irish Sea and one on the west coast in the Atlantic Sea) projects have been granted leases over the seabed for final environmental surveys and to apply to An Bord Pleanála for planning permission in 2023.
ORE Policies 4 - 11	Policy 4: Decisions on ORE developments should be informed by consideration of space required for other activities of national importance described in the NMPP. Policy 5:	The proposed site investigations will not conflict with these policies.

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	<p>Proposals for activity that may adversely impact ORE test projects by virtue of being within or adjacent to ORE test sites, or between site and landfall of ORE test projects that may adversely impact ORE test site projects, should demonstrate that they will in order of preference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ avoid, ▪ minimise, ▪ mitigate adverse impacts. <p>Policy 6: Proposals for infrastructure enabling local use of excess energy generated from emerging marine technologies (wave, tidal, floating wind) should be supported.</p> <p>Policy 7: Where potential for ports to contribute to ORE is identified, plans and policies related to this port must encourage development in such a way as to facilitate ORE and related supply chain activity.</p> <p>Policy 8: Proposals for ORE must demonstrate consideration of existing cables passing through or adjacent to areas for development, making sure ability to repair and carry out cable-related remedial work is not significantly compromised. This consideration should be included as part of statutory environmental assessments where such assessments are required.</p> <p>Policy 9: A permission for ORE must be informed by inclusion of a visualisation assessment that supports conditions on any development in relation to design and layout. Where a development consent is applied for in an area already subject to permission, proposals must include a visualisation assessment to inform design and layout.</p> <p>Visualisation assessments should demonstrate consultation with communities that may be able to view the proposal, in addition to any other</p> <p>ORE development, which had received consent to proceed at a given site at the time the consent application is made, with the aim of minimising impact. Visualisation assessments will be informed by specific emerging guidelines (detailed in the actions set out in Annexes to this NMPF). Prior to specific guidelines being available, policy and best practice relating to visualisation assessment should be used. This consideration must be included as part of statutory environmental assessments where such assessment is required.</p> <p>Policy 10: Opportunities for land-based, coastal infrastructure that is critical to and supports development of ORE should be prioritised in plans and policies, where possible.</p> <p>Policy 11:</p>	

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	Where appropriate, proposals that enable the provision of emerging renewable energy technologies and associated supply chains will be supported.	
Energy - Petroleum SMPP	<p>Policy 1:</p> <p>Proposals in areas where petroleum activities or petroleum production infrastructure have already been approved, or where applications consistent with the Government's prohibition on new exploration activity are under consideration, should only be authorised where compatibility with the existing, authorised or proposed activity can be satisfactorily demonstrated or the proposal is clearly of strategic or national importance.</p> <p>Compatibility should be achieved, in order of preference, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ avoiding, or ▪ minimising, or ▪ mitigating diverse impacts. ▪ If it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts, proposals should set out the reasons for proceeding. <p>Policy 2:</p> <p>Proposals potentially affecting future potential activity in areas (blocks) subject to existing petroleum authorisations should avoid sterilisation of that area for future petroleum-related activity consistent with Government policy, and demonstrate how they, in order of preference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ avoid, or ▪ minimise, or ▪ mitigate potential adverse impacts on those activities. <p>If it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts, proposals should set out the reasons for proceeding.</p>	There are no petroleum activities within the MULAA. The proposed site investigations will not conflict with these policies.
Energy – Transmission SMPP	<p>Policy 1</p> <p>Subject to the appropriate environmental assessments, electricity transmission proposals that maintain or improve the security and diversity of Ireland's energy supply should be supported, including interconnectors, relevant EU Projects of Common Interest (PCIs), and projects in receipt of relevant alternative EU priority energy infrastructure classification provided for by the EU TEN-E regulations.</p> <p>This should include development of the offshore transmission system and connection with the onshore transmission system necessary to meet the Government's target of 5 GW of offshore renewables by 2030, as well as development of associated transmission system / interconnector infrastructure for hybrid offshore projects, connecting offshore renewable energy installations with Ireland and one or more other electricity transmission systems.</p> <p>Policy 2:</p>	MCL is investigating the feasibility of developing an 750MW electricity interconnector off the east coast of Ireland, the MaresConnect Interconnector. Development of a new interconnector has potential to assist the State in meeting the Government's offshore renewable energy targets, of 7GW of offshore energy by 2030 as well as development of associated transmission system / interconnector infrastructure for hybrid offshore projects, connecting offshore renewable energy installations with Ireland and one or more other electricity transmission systems. The proposed site investigations will support the development of the

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	<p>Proposals for activities that are in or could affect energy transmission proposals in sites held under a permission or that are subject to an ongoing permitting or consenting process for energy transmission proposals should demonstrate that they will, in order of preference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ avoid, ▪ minimise, ▪ mitigate adverse impacts, or ▪ if it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts, proposals should set out the reasons for proceeding. <p>Policy 3: Decisions on transmission developments should be informed by consideration of space required for other activities of national importance described in the NMPF.</p> <p>Policy 4: Where possible, opportunities for land-based, coastal infrastructure that is critical to and supports energy transmission should be prioritised in plans and policies. Designation of land-based zones for the purposes of co-ordination and integration with relevant Marine Plans must be considered, where appropriate.</p> <p>Policy 5: Proposals for construction or operation activities within one nautical mile of either of the two existing natural gas interconnector pipelines shall be avoided.</p> <p>If construction or operation activities are proposed to take place within one nautical mile of either of the two existing natural gas interconnector pipelines, the views of Gas Networks Ireland in relation to how such activities could impact the pipelines shall be taken into account and either appropriate mitigation measures put in place or the proposed activities altered.</p> <p>If construction or operation activities involve the crossing of either of the two existing natural gas interconnector pipelines by other pipelines or cables, the views of Gas Networks Ireland in relation to how such activities could impact the pipelines shall be taken into account and either appropriate mitigation measures be put in place or the proposed activities altered.</p> <p>Policy 6: Subject to required assessments for the protection of the environment, and only where in keeping with the outcome of the review of the security of energy supply of Ireland's electricity and natural gas systems (which is being carried out by Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications), and not involving the importation of fracked gas, additional proposals for natural gas transmission/ import infrastructure should be supported.</p>	<p>Energy Transmission projects. This proposal is therefore in line with these policies.</p>
Fisheries SMPP	<p>Policy 1: Proposals that may have significant adverse impacts on access for existing fishing activities, must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference:</p>	<p>Measures to be followed to allow co-existence with the fishing industry are described in the Assessment of Impacts of Maritime Usage (P2578-R6411-Rev0) which accompanies this application. A Fisheries</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ avoid, ▪ minimise, or ▪ mitigate such impacts. ▪ If it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts on fishing activity, the public benefits for proceeding with the proposal that outweigh the significant adverse impacts on existing fishing activity must be demonstrated. <p>Policy 2:</p> <p>Where significant impact upon fishing activity arising from any proposal is identified, a Fisheries Management and Mitigation Strategy (FMMS) should be prepared by the proposer of development or other maritime area use, in consultation with local fishing interests and other interests as appropriate. All efforts should be made to agree the FMMS with those interests. Those interests should also undertake to engage with the proposer and provide best available, transparent and accurate information and data in a timely manner to help complete the FMMS. The FMMS should be drawn up as part of readying a proposal prior to submission, with measures identified to be considered in finalising conditions of any authorisations granted. Development of the strategy should be coordinated with other relevant assessments such as EIA where possible.</p> <p>The content of the FMMS should be relevant to the particular circumstances and could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An assessment of the potential impact of all stages of the development or other suggested use on the affected fishery or fisheries, both in socio-economic terms and in relation to environmental sustainability. This assessment should include consideration of any impact upon cultural identity within fishing communities, as well as identifying indirect / in-combination matters. ▪ A recognition that the disruption to existing fishing opportunities / activity should be minimised as far as possible. ▪ Demonstration of the public benefit(s) that outweigh the significant impacts identified. ▪ Reasonable measures to mitigate any constraints which the proposed development or use may place on existing or proposed fishing activity. ▪ Reasonable measures to mitigate any potential impacts on sustainability of fish stocks (e.g. impacts on spawning grounds or areas of fish or shellfish abundance) and any socio-economic impacts. Where it does not prove possible to agree the FMMS with all interests: ▪ Divergent views and the reasons for any divergence of views between the parties should be fully explained in the FMMS, and dissenting views should be given a platform within the said FMMS to make their case. 	<p>Liaison Officer (FLO) will be appointed to the project who will engage with the industry. No significant adverse impacts have been identified to the industry or essential fish habitat, however mitigation measures have been outlined in the Assessment of Impacts of Maritime Usage (P2578-R6411-Rev0).</p>
Mineral Exploration and Mining SMPP	Only proposals which are in line with national policy on mineral exploration and mining should be considered, provided they fully meet the environmental safeguards contained within the mineral exploration and mining consent processes.	The proposed site investigations will not conflict with this SMPP.

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	<p>Policy 3: Proposals that enhance the sustainability of fisheries or support a sustainable fishing industry, including the industry's diversification and or enhanced resilience to the effects of climate change, should be supported provided they fully meet the environmental safeguards contained within authorisation processes.</p> <p>Policy 4: Infrastructural proposals that enable access to fishing activities should be supported provided they fully meet the environmental safeguards contained within authorisation processes.</p> <p>Policy 5: Proposals, regardless of the type of activity they relate to, enhancing essential fish habitat, including spawning, nursery and feeding grounds, and migratory routes should be supported. If proposals cannot enhance essential fish habitat, they must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ avoid, ▪ minimise, ▪ mitigate significant adverse impact on essential fish habitat, including spawning, nursery and feeding grounds, and migration routes. ▪ If it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impact on essential fish habitat, proposals must set out the reasons for proceeding. <p>Policy 6: Ports and harbours should seek to engage with fishing and other relevant stakeholders at an early stage to discuss any changes in infrastructure that may affect them.</p> <p>Any port or harbour developments should take account of the needs of the dependent fishing fleets with a view to avoiding commercial harm where possible.</p> <p>Where a port or harbour has reached a minimum level of infrastructure required to support a viable fishing fleet, there should be a presumption in favour of maintaining this infrastructure, provided there is an ongoing requirement for it to remain in place and that it continues to be fit for purpose.</p>	
Ports, Harbours and Shipping SMPP	<p>Policy 1: To provide for shipping activity and freedom of navigation the following factors will be taken into account when reaching decisions regarding development and use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The extent to which the locational decision interferes with existing or planned routes used by shipping, access to ports and harbours and navigational safety. This includes commercial anchorages and approaches to ports as well as key littoral and offshore routes; ▪ A mandatory Navigation Risk Assessment (NRA); ▪ Where interference is likely, whether reasonable alternatives can be identified; and 	<p>All vessels used for the proposed site investigations will comply with the latest IMO, SOLAS and environmental requirements for their classification and with any national requirement of the territorial or offshore waters to be operated in. Commissioners for Irish Lights (CIL) standard navigational safety requirements will be adhered to with regards to positioning, mooring, marking and lighting of all equipment deployed under the MUL.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where there are no reasonable alternatives: whether mitigation through measures adopted in accordance with the principles and procedures established by the International Maritime Organisation can be achieved at no significant cost to the shipping or ports sector. <p>Policy 2: Proposals that may have a significant impact upon current activity and future opportunity for expansion of port and harbour activities should demonstrate that they will, in order of preference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> avoid, minimise, or mitigate significant adverse impacts, and if it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts on current activity and future opportunity for expansion of port and harbour activities, proposals should set out the reasons for proceeding. <p>Policy 3: Proposals that may have a significant impact upon current activity and future opportunity for expansion of port and harbour activities must demonstrate consideration of the National Ports Policy, the National Planning Framework, and relevant provisions related to the TEN-network.</p> <p>Policy 4: Proposals within ports limits, beside or in the vicinity of ports, and / or that impact upon the main routes of significance to a port, must demonstrate within applications that they have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> been informed by consultation at pre-application stage or earlier with the relevant port authority; have carried out a navigational risk assessment including an analysis of maritime traffic in the area; and have consulted Department of Transport, MSO and Commissioners of Irish Lights. <p>Applicants must continue to engage parties identified in pre-application processes as appropriate during the decision-making process.</p> <p>Policy 5: Proposals for capital dredging will be supported where it is necessary to safeguard national port capacity and Ireland's international connectivity, and where required compliance assessments associated with authorisations have been carried out and incorporated into subsequent competent authority decision(s).</p> <p>Policy 6: In areas of authorised dredging activity, including those subject to navigational dredging, proposals for other activities will not be supported unless they are compatible with the dredging activity.</p> <p>Policy 7: Proposals for maintenance dredging activity will be supported where:</p>	<p>Potential impacts on shipping and navigation have been assessed in Assessment of Impacts of Maritime Usage (P2578-R6411-Rev0) which accompanies this application. The proposed site investigations will not conflict with this SMPP.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> relevant decisions by competent authorities incorporate the outcome of statutory environmental assessment processes, as well as necessary compliance assessments associated with authorisations, including in relation to the planning process; there will be no significant adverse impact on marine activities or uses or the maritime area. Any potential adverse impact will be, in order of preference, avoided, minimised or mitigated; dredged waste is managed in accordance with internationally agreed hierarchy of waste management options for sea disposal; if disposing of dredged material at sea, existing registered disposal sites are used, in preference to new disposal sites; and where they contribute to the policies and objectives of this NMPF. <p>Policy 8: Proposals that cause significant adverse impacts on licensed disposal areas should not be supported. Proposals that cannot avoid such impact must, in order of preference"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> minimise, mitigate, or if it is not possible to mitigate the significant adverse impacts, proposals must set out the reasons for proceeding. <p>Policy 9: Proposals for the management of dredged material must demonstrate that they have been assessed against the waste hierarchy.</p> <p>Policy 10: Proposals identifying new dredge disposal sites which are subject to best practice and guidance from previous studies should be supported where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> competent authority decisions incorporate necessary compliance assessments associated with authorisations; and they contribute to the policies and objectives of this NMPF. <p>Proposals must include an adequate characterisation study, be assessed against the waste hierarchy and must be informed by consultation with all relevant stakeholders.</p>	
Safety at Sea SMPP	<p>Policy 1: Proposals for installation, operation, and decommissioning of Offshore Wind Farms must demonstrate how they will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimise navigational risk between commercial vessels arising from an increase in the density of vessels in maritime space as a result of wind farm layout; and 	All vessels used for the proposed site investigations will comply with the latest IMO, SOLAS and environmental requirements for their classification and with any national requirement of the territorial or offshore waters to be operated in. CIL standard navigational safety requirements will be adhered to

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow for recreational vessels within the Offshore Wind Farm (including consideration of turbine height) or redirect recreational vessels, minimising navigational risk arising between recreational and commercial vessels. <p>Policy 2: Proposals for infrastructure that have the potential to significantly reduce under-keel clearance must demonstrate how they will, in order of preference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> avoid, minimise, mitigate adverse impacts, or if it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts, proposals should set out the reasons for proceeding <p>Policy 3: All proposals for temporary or permanent fixed infrastructure in the maritime area must ensure navigational marking in accordance with appropriate international standards and ensure inclusion in relevant charts where applicable.</p> <p>Policy 4: Establishing, changing or disestablishing Aids to Navigation (AtoN) must be sanctioned, in advance of works, by the CIL.</p> <p>Policy 5: Proposals must identify their potential impact, if any, on Maritime Emergency Response (Search and Rescue (SAR), Maritime Casualty and Pollution Response) operations. Where a proposal may have a significant impact on these operations it must demonstrate how it will, in order of preference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> avoid, minimise, mitigate adverse impacts, or <p>if it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts, proposals should set out the reasons for proceeding, supported by parties responsible for maritime SAR.</p>	with regards to positioning, mooring, marking and lighting of all equipment deployed under the MUL.
Seaweed Harvesting SMPP	<p>Support the sustainable harvesting of seaweed having regard to the important economic and social contribution it makes to coastal communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and maintain a fit for purpose regulatory framework that supports sustainable harvesting, ensures that key seaweed species, which support multiple vital ecosystems are safeguarded, and respects existing formal and informal rights to harvest. 	The proposed site investigations will not conflict with these SMPPs.

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	Support ongoing research to build on available data to support sustainable seaweed harvesting.	
Sport and Recreation SMPP	<p>Policy 1: Proposals that promote sustainable development of water-based sports and marine recreation, while enhancing community health wellbeing and quality of life, should be supported, provided that due consideration is given to environmental carrying capacities and tourism pressures.</p> <p>Policy 2: Proposals should demonstrate the following in relation to potential impact on recreation and tourism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The extent to which the proposal is likely to adversely impact sports clubs and other recreational users, including the extent to which proposals may interfere with facilities or other physical infrastructure. ▪ The extent to which any proposal interferes with access to and along the shore, to the water, use of the resource for recreation or tourism purposes and existing navigational routes or navigational safety. ▪ The extent to which the proposal is likely to adversely impact on the natural environment. <p>Policy 3: Opportunities to promote inclusive development of water-based sports and marine recreation should be supported, where appropriate and at the applicable scale, with a focus on facilities for people with disabilities.</p> <p>Policy 4: Proposals that improve access to marine and coastal resources for tourism activities, and sport and recreation should be supported, where appropriate, at the applicable scale and aligned with existing development plans.</p> <p>Policy 5: Proposals should seek to enhance water safety through provision of appropriate International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and European Committee for Standardization (CEN) compliant safety signage. In general the safety of persons should be a key consideration for planners and due consideration should be given to best practice guidance for marine and coastal recreation areas endorsed by the Visitor Safety in the Countryside Group.</p>	No significant impacts have been identified on these receptors (see the Assessment of Impacts of Maritime Usage Report; P2578-R6411-Rev0). The proposed site investigations will not conflict with these SMPPs.
Telecommunications SMPP	<p>Policy 1: Proposals that guarantee existing and future international telecommunications connectivity which is critically important to support the future needs of society, Government, the provision of Public Services and enterprise in Ireland should be supported.</p> <p>Policy 2: Preference should be given to proposals where evidence is provided of an integrated approach to development and activity, such as the bundling of cables (electricity and communications) where suitable, as well as pipelines for</p>	MCL is investigating the feasibility of developing an 750MW electricity interconnector off the east coast of Ireland, the MaresConnect Interconnector. Development of a new interconnector has potential to assist the State in meeting the Government's offshore renewable energy targets, of 7GW of offshore energy by 2030 as well as development of associated transmission system / interconnector infrastructure for hybrid offshore projects,

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	<p>multiple activities, to minimise impacts on the marine environment, infrastructures and other users. Compatibility should be achieved, in order of preference, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ avoiding, or ▪ minimising, or ▪ mitigating adverse impacts, or ▪ If it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts, proposals should set out the reasons for proceeding. <p>Policy 3: Preference should be given to proposals that protect submarine cables whilst achieving successful seabed user coexistence, such as the bundling of cables (electricity and communications) as well as pipelines for multiple activities where suitable. Proposals should specify if separate access to cables for the purposes of repair and maintenance is required. With regard to decommissioning redundant submarine cables, a risk-based approach should be applied with consideration given to cables being left in situ where this would minimise significant impacts on the physical, natural, societal, historic, and economic value of the area.</p> <p>Policy 4: Proposals that ensure and enhance connectivity of Ireland’s rural and island communities to high quality telecommunications networks should be supported.</p>	<p>connecting offshore renewable energy installations with Ireland and one or more other electricity transmission systems. The proposed site investigations will support the development of the Energy Transmission projects. This proposal is therefore in line with these policies.</p>
Tourism SMPP	<p>Policy 1: Where appropriate, proposals enabling, promoting or facilitating sustainable tourism and recreation activities, particularly where this creates diversification or additional utilisation of related facilities beyond typical usage patterns, should be supported.</p> <p>Policy 2: Proposals must identify possible impacts on tourism. Where a potential significant impact upon tourism is identified it should be demonstrated how the potential negative consequences to tourism in communities will be minimised. This must include assessment of how the benefits of proposals are not outweighed by potential negative impacts.</p> <p>Policy 3: Proposals for tourism development should seek to optimise facilities and use of space by taking a cross-sectoral development approach that provides for multiple activities, whilst minimising the extent to which the proposal is likely to adversely impact on the natural environment.</p>	<p>No significant impacts have been identified on these receptors (see the Assessment of Impacts of Maritime Usage Report; P2578-R6411-Rev0). The proposed site investigations will not conflict with these SMPPs.</p>
Wastewater Treatment and Disposal SMPP	<p>Policy 1: Proposals by Irish Water related to the treatment and disposal of wastewater that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ service the social and economic development of the country under the National Planning Framework; 	<p>The proposed site investigations will not conflict with these SMPPs.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> resolve environmental issues at priority areas identified by the EPA; contribute to the realisation of the objectives of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ireland's River Basin Management Plan 2018 – 2021 The Water Services Policy Statement 2018 – 2025 Marine Strategy Framework Directive 2012 - 2020 should be supported, provided they fully meet the environmental safeguards contained within relevant authorisation processes. <p>Policy 2:</p> <p>Proposals that have the potential to significantly adversely affect existing and planned wastewater management and treatment infrastructure where a consent or authorisation or lease has been granted or formally applied for by Irish Water should not be authorised unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> compatibility with the existing, authorised, proposed or otherwise identified in consultations with Irish Water activity, can be satisfactorily demonstrated. the proposal is clearly of strategic or national importance. <p>Where possible, proposals that may affect Irish Water activities or plans should engage with Irish Water at the earliest available opportunity. Compatibility should be achieved, in order of preference, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> avoiding adverse impacts on those activities; and / or minimising impacts where they cannot be avoided; and / or mitigating impacts where they cannot be minimised. 	