

Application for a Maritime Usage Licence under the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021

Important Information

Before completing this form please read the declaration and consent at the end of the application form

It is important to note that a change in applicant name will require a new application.

This application and supporting documentation should be submitted by email to licence@mara.gov.ie

Please complete the form electronically. Type details in the boxes provided, space will expand as you type. Please complete form to a high level, i.e. give comprehensive answers to questions, answers which only reference supporting documentation are not sufficient.

Maritime Usage Licence:

Part 5 (sections 110 to 133) of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 (MAPA) provides for the granting of maritime usage licences.

Section 112 of the Act states that the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) is the competent authority for the purposes of Part 5 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) regulations 2011 (S.I No. 477 of 2011) and appropriate assessments to which that Part applies.

Section 114 of the Act states that the Minister may by regulations provide for class of Schedule 7 usage to be exempted usage for the purposes of this Part.

<u>Schedule 7</u> of the Act lists the Maritime Usages that may be undertaken in the maritime area pursuant to licence

Schedule 8 of the Act lists the types of conditions that MARA may attach to a licence.

Privacy Policy:

MARA may require you to provide certain personal data in order to carry out our legislative and administrative functions. MARA will treat all personal data that you provide as confidential and will process your details in accordance with its obligations under data protection legislation, including the Data Protection Act 2018 and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

A Privacy Statement explaining how MARA, as the Data Controller, will process the personal data you provide, how that information will be used and what rights you may exercise in relation to your personal data, is available in this link: **Privacy Statement.**

Freedom of Information (FOI)/ Access to Information on the Environment (AIE)

Applicants should be aware that under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 and the European Communities (Access to Information on the Environment) Regulations 2007 to 2018, information provided by them to MARA may be liable to be disclosed.

Applicants are asked to consider if any of the information supplied by them in their application should not be disclosed and clearly identify the specific sections of their application containing such information, specifying the reasons for its confidentiality/sensitivity. MARA will consult with applicants about this information before making a decision on any Freedom of Information/Access to Information on the Environment request received.

MARA 2nd Floor, Menapia House, Drinagh Business Park, Drinagh, Wexford, Y35RF29

www.maritimeregulator.ie



Part 1: Applicant Information				
1.1 Applicant Details				
Name of Applicant (the name that will appear on the licence)	Gas Networks Ireland			
Company/Organisation (if applicable)	Gas Networks Ireland			
Address/Company Address	Gasworks Road, Cork, Ireland			
Eircode/Postcode	T12 RX96			
Contact Name within Company/Organisation	- Gas Networks Ireland			
Contact Phone No.				
Contact Email Address	@gasnetworks.ie			
Is the company registered in Ireland for tax purposes?	Yes			

1.2 Contact Details (if different from above)				
Full Name	Not Applicable			
Address	Not Applicable			
Eircode/Postcode	Not Applicable			
Contact Name	Not Applicable			
Contact Phone No.	Not Applicable			
Contact Email Address	Not Applicable			

Daniel IA management and the second				
Person/Agency acting on behalf of Applicant	Nicholas O'Dwyer Ltd			
Address	Unit 4E, Nutgrove Office Park, Churchtown Upper, Dublin, Ireland			
Eircode/Postcode	D14 V3F6			
Contact Name (if applicable)				
Contact Phone No.				
Contact Email address	⊉nodwyer.com			



1.4 Applicant's Legal Advisor (if applicable)						
Name/Company Name	A&L Goodbody LLP					
Address	International Financial Services Centre, 3 Dublin Landings, North Wall Quay, Dublin 1					
Eircode/Postcode	D01 C4E0					
Contact Name (if applicable)	N/A					
Contact Phone No.	01 649 2000					
Contact Email address	@algoodbody.com					
	@algoodbody.com					



Part 2: Proposal Details (Attach additional documents as required)

2.1 In relation to this application, have you previously applied for a declaration as to whether or not a licence was required for this usage? If so, please provide the reference number associated with that application.

No.

2.2 Specify the Maritime Usage(s) being applied for with reference to Schedule 7 of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 as amended:

Schedule 7, Paragraph 3: Marine environmental surveys for the purposes of site investigation or in support of an application under Part XXI of the Act of 2000.

2.3 Description of proposed Maritime Usage.

The project for which the proposed SI works relate to is one of National Strategic Importance.

A review of MARA's application prioritisation criteria is presented below which concludes that the application is Very High Priority under National & EU Priorities for reasons of "Compliance, Enforcement and Regularisation Priority" and "Critical State Infrastructure or Utilities".

Prioritisation Criteria	Description
European Priority	The European Commission (EC) introduced Regulation 994/2010, published in 2010 concerns measures to safeguard security of supply (SoS) for Member States. This regulation mandates that all Member States formulate "Preventive Action Plans" and "Emergency Plans" to deal with gas supply crises and to ensure that gas supplies are guaranteed to households and other protected customers for a certain period of 30 days. Article 6 of this regulation also introduced an infrastructure standard (commonly referred to as the N-1 Infrastructure Standard or N-1 for short) requiring Member States to ensure that the necessary measures are taken so that in the event of disruption to the single largest piece of gas infrastructure, the capacity of the remaining gas infrastructure is able to satisfy total gas demand on a day of exceptionally high gas demand, defined as a day occurring with a statistical probability of once in 20 years. Ireland has a legal requirement under Regulation (EU) 2017/1938 to
	meet a prescribed infrastructure standard. It requires that EU Member States are capable of meeting exceptionally high gas demand in the event of a loss of its largest single piece of gas infrastructure.
	As per the National Risk Assessment carried out by the CRU in December 2022, Ireland is unable to meet the infrastructure standard in the event of failure of its largest piece of gas infrastructure.
National Priority	During 2022 and 2023, the Department of Energy Climate & Communications reviewed a range of Ireland's energy security policies and subsequently published 'Energy Security in Ireland to 2030 – Energy Security Package' in November 2023. Analysis showed that Ireland must enhance its resilience in the event of a disruption to the country's national gas supplies. Policy makers decided that a disruption to Ireland's supplies of gas is an unlikely, but high impact event, and a disruption would lead to unacceptably high economic and social costs.



Action 17 of the Energy Security Package seeks to address the risk to the security of Ireland's gas supply through the implementation of a state-led Strategic Gas Emergency Reserve. In line with the Government decision to develop a Strategic Gas Emergency Reserve, and as a final part of the review of Ireland's energy security, the DECC, in consultation with the gas transmission system operator (GNI), is completing further studies to support this review. The implementation of a Strategic Gas Emergency Reserve is on a transitional and temporary basis for use in the event of a disruption to natural gas supplies.

The above aligns with the "Compliance, Enforcement and Regularisation" and "Critical State Infrastructure or Utilities" criterion of the MARA's Application Prioritisation Scoring System, which emphasises the need to prioritise projects such as this to ensure Ireland's Energy Security.

Gas Networks Ireland (GNI) intends to apply to the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) for a maritime usage license (MUL) to conduct marine Site Investigations (SI) and environmental surveys within the Shannon Estuary adjacent to the townlands of Shannakea Beg, Cahiracon, Foynes Island, Leahys and Corgrig. The objective of the proposed activities/works is to provide high quality baseline data that can contribute to a reliable basis for site selection and any subsequent design, Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) for the Strategic Gas Emergency Reserve Project, should a site be taken forward to the planning/consenting stage.

Description of the Maritime Usage

It is proposed that the following activities are investigated and included within a Maritime Usage Licence (MUL) application to MARA (see Proposed MUL Map):

- 1. The MUL Application boundary is the overall extent of the application to allow for drop-down camera surveys and up to 30 benthic grab samples to locate and investigate the reef structures that are reported in the Shannon channel. The location and extent of these reefs are important to determine from an environmental perspective and their extent is presently unknown. Their proximity and extent could be critical factors in the siting of any potential Strategic Gas Emergency Reserve (SGER). It is proposed to capture 30 transects of up to 30m each using a drop-down camera and video surveillance to inspect the seabed and identify any reef structures in the vicinity. The camera drop down surveys do not disturb the seabed but are intended to recover ecological information on the benthic community and any reef structures.
- 2. Geophysical surveys comprising the following within the Proposed MUL Area:
 - a. Magnetometer towed behind a small survey vessel using 20m spacing of main lines and cross lines at 100m spacing. Swathe width achieving 25% overlap onto neighbouring lines.
 - b. sub-bottom profiler towed behind a small survey vessel using 20m spacing of main lines and cross lines at 50m spacing. Swathe width achieving 25% overlap onto neighbouring lines.
 - c. side-scan sonar towed behind a small survey vessel using 20m spacing of main lines and cross lines at 100m spacing. Swathe width achieving 25% overlap onto neighbouring lines.
 - d. bathymetric survey using either single or multibeam echo sounders from a specific vessel or towed behind a small survey vessel. Line spacing to be determined by survey method.



- e. Marine Refraction Seismic surveys may be undertaken across the proposed MUL Area along approximately 2no. lengths of 355m survey lines
- f. Electrical Resistivity Tomography (ERT) survey which consists of electrodes placed on the seabed. There will be up to 20 ERT lines of 315m in length with a diameter of 20mm.
- 3. Phase 1 Site investigations Allowance for:
 - o 60 no. boreholes
 - 80 no. cone penetration tests (CPTs) 60 no. at borehole locations to clear for Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) and 20 no. as standalone investigation locations
 - o 50 no. seabed grab samples
 - o 30 no. surface water samples

To determine the optimum location of the SGER infrastructure, boreholes and CPTs will be carried out from a Jack Up Barge supported on four legs penetrating into the seabed bed. The barge will be manoeuvred into place using a supporting vessel. Boreholes are to progress up to a maximum of 50m depth below bed level and may be terminated early if sufficient bedrock is encountered. CPTs are to progress to a maximum depth of 20m but will be terminated when bedrock is encountered. Grab samples will be collected at the using 0.1m² grabs collected for grading, loss of ignition and assessment of benthic community.

Boreholes will be carried out using sonic methods through the seabed sediment, with rotary coring used to advance through the bedrock. The maximum borehole diameter will be 300mm.

Surface water samples will be a maximum of 5 litres each.

Intertidal sediment cores (vibrocores) will be collected as shoreline conditions allow on up to 5 transects perpendicular to the shore in the vicinity of any likely development footprint once this is established. On each transect cores would be sampled at 3 height levels on the shore – Upper, Mid and Lower, with Lower as close to a spring low tide as possible. Total of 18 intertidal coring locations to a depth of approximately 15cm for grading, heavy and trace metals, hydrocarbons, loss on ignition and assessment of intertidal benthic community.

4. Phase 2 Site Investigations: A further 20 boreholes within the proposed MUL Area at some future date once the preferred location is known, to coordinate with detailed design stage and potentially in alliance with a Design & Build contractor.

Phase 2 boreholes will be undertaken within the general vicinity of the Phase 1 site investigation area, with final locations to be determined during the detailed design stage once the preferred infrastructure layout has been established.

- 5. Archaeological Surveys within the proposed MUL area: Pending the results of the geophysical surveys, other relevant archaeological investigations, including underwater inspections may be required in the vicinity of any likely development footprint once this is established. Surveys may include intertidal walk over surveys including metal detection surveys or dive surveys.
- 6. Metocean Surveys: Allowance for 2 wave buoys or wave sensors. These are floating buoys with an anchorage system secured on the riverbed. Allowance for a further 4 buoys supporting the following monitoring equipment:
 - Conductivity, Temperature, Depth Sensors



- o Optical Salinity Sensor
- o Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler
- o Optical or Electrochemical Dissolved Oxygen Sensor
- o pH Sensor/Probe
- Turbidity sensor
- Turbidity meter/sediment trap

2.4 Describe the nature and scale of any structure to be erected in the maritime area.

No permanent structures will be erected in the maritime area under this licence.

2.5 Proposed licence duration and reasons for proposed duration.

The proposed duration and the reasons for proposed duration is set out as follows:

Phase 1 Site Investigations

Duration: Approx 16 Weeks

Start Date: Q4 2025

Phase 2 Site Investigation

Duration: Approx 12 Weeks

Start Date: Estimated start date 2027 but dependent on consent for main Project

Metocean monitoring buoys will be deployed as soon as is feasible following final grant of the MUL. They will be deployed for a minimum of one year and a maximum of two years.

The proposed licence duration would be for 5 years to account for potential delays in the consenting process.

2.6 Indicative timing of the works/activity: (i) Start date (ii) Duration (iii) Any other information relevant to timing.

- i) Works would commence as soon as feasible following licence execution taking-into-account suitable weather windows and vessel availability. Works are currently programmed to start in Q4 2025.
- ii) Duration of the Phase 1 Site Investigation works would be up to four months and Phase 2 Site Investigation works would be up to three months.

2.7 Do the proposed maritime usages provide for public use, commercial use or private use? Provide details.

The proposed maritime usage is to undertake marine environmental and geophysical surveys for the purposes of site investigation or in support of an application under Part XXI of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The objective of the proposed activities/works is to provide high quality baseline data that can contribute to a reliable basis for site selection and any subsequent design, Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) for the Strategic Gas Emergency Reserve Project, should a site be taken forward to the planning/consenting stage. The



Marine SI works will be for private use only and there will be no public access at any stage to any of the works.

2.8 Could the proposed works restrict public use/enjoyment of the nearshore e.g. fishing, sailing, surfing, swimming, walking or other activities? Provide details.

The works will be temporary and will only take up a very small area of the nearshore for a matter of hours (max 2 days depending on depth of bedrock) in any one location. Any restriction will be minor and temporary. A notice to mariners will be issued in advance of any site investigation activity and there is ongoing communication and dialogue with stakeholders i.e. Shannon Foynes Port Company (SFPC).

2.9 Please outline any engagements that have taken place with marine users or other stakeholders in the proposed area that may be affected by the proposal and attach supporting documentation where relevant.

No formal engagement has taken place to date with marine users or other stakeholders in the proposed area.

2.10 Describe briefly any consultations undertaken with other relevant authorities (e.g. Local Authority, Port/Harbour authority etc.) or State Agencies. e.g. National Parks & Wildlife Service, National Monuments Service of Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

GNI has engaged with Shannon Foynes Port Company (SFPC) on a number of occasions to consult on the proposed project, the potential locations of planned site investigations (SI) works and to coordinate with SFPC in respect of port operations and SFPC development proposals. These discussions ensure that SFPC are fully informed of the scope and purpose of the SI works. GNI will continue to consult with SFPC throughout the project to maintain alignment and to address any emerging concerns.

To date, no other consultations have been undertaken with relevant authorities or other State agencies in relation to the proposed SI activities; however, engagement with relevant authorities/state agencies will be carried out as part of the future planning consent process.

2.11 Please provide the reference number and title of any existing Foreshore licence you may hold within the footprint, or otherwise in the vicinity of the proposed Maritime Usage area.

MUL240034 – Gas Networks Ireland – Marine environmental surveys within the Shannon Estuary – Granted

2.12 Please provide the reference number of any current application for a Foreshore Licence to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Does this application for a foreshore licence relate to or impact any part of the maritime area the subject of this licence application? If so, please provide details of the foreshore licence application.

Not Applicable.			



2.13 What environmental reports, if any, have you submitted with this application?

(Supporting information for screening for Appropriate Assessment/ Natura Impact Statement/ Risk Assessment for Annex IV Species/ Assessment of Impact on the Maritime Usage Report)

- Supporting information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment (SISAA)
- Natura Impact Statement (NIS)
- Assessment of Impact on the Maritime Usage Report (AIMU)
- Risk Assessment for Annex IV Species (RAAIVS)
- Archaeological Impact Assessment Report

Part 3: Location and Spatial Extent of Proposed Maritime Area (Attach additional documents as required)

3.1 Location of proposed Maritime Usage

The MUL Area covers an area of 11.19km² and extends from the townland of Shannakea Beg along the Clare coast to Cahiracon (Ed Killadysert), across the Shannon Estuary to Shannon Foynes Island and along the Limerick coast to the townland of Leahys.

- 3.2 Total size of the proposed Maritime Area (in m², ha or km², as appropriate).
- 11.19km²
- 3.3 Please provide the distance of the main body of the proposed maritime area from the shore at its closest point in km.

The proposed Maritime Area adjoins the High Water Mark (HWM), as defined by the Chief Boundary Surveyor (CBS), in its closest point to the shore.

3.4 Is any of the maritime area in the proposed site in private ownership? If yes please provide documentary evidence of same (e.g. folio).

No

3.5 Any other site details considered relevant:

Not Applicable.



Part 4: Maps and Drawings. Please refer to <u>Technical Guidance</u> on map and drawing requirements.

- 4.1 Please draft a map, titled "Licence Map", outlining the proposed Maritime Area in accordance with the Technical Guidance for Maritime Area Licence Applications and submit same with this application.
- 4.2 Please submit GIS Shapefiles, in accordance with the Applicant Technical Guidance Note and submit same with this application.
- 4.3 Please list any Admiralty Charts, Maps, GIS Shapefiles and/or other Drawings submitted with this application.
 - 20970-NOD-XX-XX-DR-J-06502 Proposed Licence Area Map.pdf
 - 20970-NOD-XX-XX-DR-J-06512 Proposed Grab Sample Locations Map
 - 20970-NOD-XX-XX-DR-J-06513 Proposed Borehole Locations Map
 - 20970-NOD-XX-XX-DR-J-06514 SI Indicative Table of Coordinates
 - MUL Licence Area A Shapefile
 - Indicative Grab Sample Locations Shapefile
 - Indicative Borehole Locations Shapefile
 - Indicative Intertidal Sampling Locations Shapefile
 - Indicative Wave Buoy Locations Shapefile



Part 5: Fishing/Aquaculture Considerations:

5.1 Is the proposal located in proximity to any of the following:

- aquaculture operation
- designated Shellfish Growing Waters
- fish spawning ground
- other sensitive fisheries location

Please Illustrate on appropriate chart including distance in Km.

Several commercial fisheries activities occur within the Shannon Estuary. Local licensed fishing vessels most frequently partake in pot fishing, gillnets and tangle nets (Shannon Estuary Strategic Integrated Framework Plan, 2013). Licenced aquaculture areas are also known to overlap with the proposed MUL Area (Fishery Order ID: T08-004AOFO). Several sections of the Shannon Estuary are also designated under the Shellfish Waters Directive, although not any areas overlap with the proposed MUL Area. The nearest designated shellfish waters are the West Shannon Ballylongford Shellfish Waters located approximately 22km west of the proposed MUL Area.

5.2 Are there other potential impacts of the proposal on fishing/aquaculture in the area? If yes, please describe.

It is possible that the SI works could cause impact to fish, including migratory species depending on the months that survey activities are conducted. Due to the small scale and temporary nature of the SI works, it is assessed that there will be no impact on fish species. However, the small scale and temporary nature of the SI works mean that any impacts are expected to be short term. Overall, significant impact is expected to be unlikely with the implementation of mitigation measures as outlined in the AIMU.

While disturbance to commercial fisheries activity may occur, this disturbance will be of a temporary nature and it has been assessed in the AIMU that there will not be significant impact on commercial fishery activity in the Licence Area.

5.3 Are there any measures proposed to mitigate potential impacts on fisheries or aquaculture? If yes, please describe.

The AIMU sets out mitigation measures in relation to water quality and accidental pollution events which will be implemented to mitigate potential impacts on fisheries or aquaculture sites.



Declaration and Consent:

The details provided here are correct to the best of my knowledge.

I understand that no works will be commenced, by the applicant or the applicant's agents on the proposed site, without a valid licence from MARA. The granting of any Maritime Usage Licence will not give rise on the part of the applicant to any expectation whatsoever for, right or entitlement to a grant of any future licence in respect of all or any part of any area of the Maritime Area.

By submitting this application form, the applicant agrees that the details provided (with personal contact details redacted) are to be published on MARAs website and also that the full information provided including contact details are to be processed and retained by MARA and shared with all relevant public authorities in furtherance of consideration for a Maritime Usage Licence under the MAPA.

I give consent to MARA and its agents to copy this application and to make (a redacted) copy available for inspection and copying by the public. This consent relates to this application, to supporting documentation submitted with the application, to any further information, or submission provided by the applicant or on the applicant's behalf, including any supplementary material submitted in response to a minded to determine notice in respect of this licence application, and to the publication of the licence document.

Name of Signate	ory (block lette	ers):		
			4	
Position Held:				
Head of Engine	ering			
Date:				
25/07/2025				
		S 11 11 (T2-11)	22.0	



Applicant Checklist					
Document	Included				
Application Form (Parts 2 to 5 inclusive)					
Supporting Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment (SISAA) Report					
Risk Assessment for Annex IV Species Report					
Natura Impact Statement (NIS), if initially included	\boxtimes				
Assessment of Impact of the Maritime Usage (AIMU) Report					
Schedule of Works					
Licence Mapping (including GIS Shapefiles)					
Other (Please list below)					

Other		