MARA
An tÚdarás Rialála Limistéir Mhuirí
Maritime Area Regulatory Authority

Minutes of the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) Board Meeting

Date	10 September 2024
Venue	Boardroom at the offices of The Commissioner of Irish Lights, Dublin
Time	10:30 – 13:00
Chair	Mark Mellett Vice Admiral DSM (Rtd), Phd (MM)
Board Members Present	Ms. Karen Banks (KB) Dr. Ruth Brennan (RB) Mr. Philip Daly (PD) Mr. Patrick Gibbons (PG) Ms. Niamh Kenny (NK) Online Dr. James Massey (JM) Mr. Brendan McGrath (BMCG) Online Mr. Paul O'Neil (PON) Ms. Alma Walsh (AW)
In attendance	MARA Executive – Ms. Laura Brien (CEO), Ms. Sorcha Byrne (Secretary), Ms Danielle O'Dowd (DOD), Ms. Yvonne Doris (YD)

Agenda Items

1. Board Only Session (10:30 - 10:45)

2. Welcome and apologies
The Chair welcomed board members with apologies noted for Mr. Patrick Moran and noted NK will join the meeting later. It was confirmed a quorum was in place. The Chair noted any matters raised during the non-executive session will be addressed during agenda items.

3. Declarations of Interest
None declared.

4. Draft minutes of meeting
4.1 Board Minutes – Minutes adopted.
4.2 ARC Minutes – The draft minutes for the ARC meeting of 26 July 2024 will be considered by the ARC at its next meeting and then will be presented to the Board for approval.

5. Matters arising
1. The Chair reviewed the actions from the July board meeting, noting:
- Agenda Item 3.1 – MARA to Chair the National Maritime Regulatory Liaison Group. CEO has initiated engagement with the Department of Defence. Engagement underway with Welsh and Scottish and preparations underway for a Dutch study trip. Action the addition of Naval Service (NS) to glossary. Scientific and Technical Reference Committee will be brought to next Board Meeting.

- Agenda Item 4 – Financial Statements process completed. Policy on bad debts to be presented at next Board Meeting. Draft procedures on the management of surplus funds is in progress.
- Agenda Item 5 – Revised paper on self-financing due at December board meeting.
- Prefix for JM to be amended from Mr. to Dr. in minutes.

2. The board reviewed the updated Delegation of Authority and requested the removal of the words “on any matter” on page 3 of 8. The following resolution was adopted:
   That at its meeting on 10 September 2024, the Board approved the updated Delegation of Authority attached at agenda item 5.0, subject to amendment.

6. CEO Report

Note: NK joined the meeting.

MARA’s CEO provided an Executive summary covering the key activities completed this period.
Freedom of Information (FOI) and Access to Information on the Environment (AIE) requests have proven to be resource intensive on the organisation. Initial training offering delivered to staff during the summer period. MARA’s approach will aim to be high on transparency through access to documentation on the MARA website as phases of applications progress, with personal information/commercially sensitive information redacted.
The Executive continue to engage with DECC on the Foreshore regime to give consideration to potential transfer of applications to MARA. The Board recognised the potential impact on MARA and sought to be updated on this work via future CEO reports.
The key risks for this period highlighted the impact on operational delivery across the organisation following the return of secondees to DECC. Recruiting for replacements is an on-going. The Board requested the Executive to establish exit interview procedures as a mechanism to capture HR data on the organisation.
The Board discussed monitoring the pace at which decisions on authorisations can be made, consideration will be given to the development of a dashboard to provide the Board with an indication of processes. The CEO outlined the Executive continue to refine processes and procedures and look at potential legislative amendments.
The Board discussed consistency for MARA document branding.
An update was given in relation to the Marine Institutes report into exemptions.
Actions:

- Future CEO reports to include status update entitled “proactive measures to close out historical foreshore activities”.
- Executive to establish procedures for exit interviews.

7. Statement of Strategy

The strategic plan has been submitted to DECC who will arrange for it to be laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas. Work is underway for a video launch for the Statement of Strategy (SOS). A high level summary of the implementation and progress reporting process for the SOS was presented to the board.

8.0 Review of Corporate Governance Policy

The Board adopted the revised Code of Conduct with amendment.
Actions:

- Executive to arrange for publication of the Code of Conduct on MARA’s website.

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9.0 Board Effectiveness

The Chair requested that Board members complete the self-assessment questionnaire and return it to the Secretariat by the 30th of September 2024.

Actions:

- Executive to collect and collate Board self-assessment questionnaire responses.

10.0 ARC Report

The Chair of the ARC confirmed no ARC meeting since the completion of the financial statements as associated papers. A recommendation in relation to the procurement of service for the Internal Audit is expected and may be approved by written resolution.

11.0 Risk Register

An updated risk register was presented. This standing agenda item should have a minimum 15 minutes allocated with potential for this to be extended as required at future meetings. The Board requested information on the register is presented concisely.

Actions:

- Secretariat to provide minimum 15 minutes for risk register standing agenda item.

12.0 Procurement Report

The report gave an overview of the range of procurement currently underway noting that those with a threshold over €100k will be brought to the Board for its approval.

13.0 Office Accommodation Report

The board noted the update of the office fit out project and accepted the recommendation to allow the process of discussions with the landlord to run for another 3 to 4 weeks in order to seek an acceptable solution with the following direction to progress in the discussions (i) ability for a lease extension (ii) Ideally achieve no or limited change to rent as part of any rent review, as a minimum clarity is needed around the review process (iii) potential for BER rating improvements (iv) no dilapidations claim.

Actions:

- Executive to progress discussions along the four key points as directed by the Board.

14.0 Compliance, Enforcement and Revenue Collection

Presentation by Director of Compliance, Enforcement and Revenue Collection, Yvonne Doris.

15.0 AOB

It was agreed to reschedule the next board meeting to Tuesday, 29th October 2024 with city centre location. Duration for future board meetings to run from 10:30 to 14:00 (include working lunch).

Actions:

- Secretariat to source venue for October Board meeting, ensuring hybrid option.
- Secretariat to reflect revised duration of future Board meetings.
- Advanced apologies for AW and PD noted for October meeting.

ENDS.