



An Roinn Comhshaoil,
Aeráide agus Cumarsáide
Department of the Environment,
Climate and Communications

Joanne Stauton
Maritime Area Regulatory Authority
2nd Floor, Menapia House,
Drinagh Business Park,
Drinagh,
Wexford,
Y35RF29

Via email

30 January 2025

Re: Maritime Usage License Application Reference No. MUL230024

Dear Ms. Stauton,

I refer to recent communications in respect of the above referenced maritime usage license application currently under consideration by your agency.

The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC), has reviewed the application and notes the following:

DECC understands that the proposed cable system will aim to provide high speed strategic international telecommunications connectivity from a landfall at Ballyloughnane, County Galway traversing the Irish Maritime Area to the southwest of Ireland. This project comprises both geotechnical surveys and geophysical investigations to inform if constructing a new subsea telecoms cable system is feasible linking Ireland to EU Member States. When fully operational, the cable will provide high speed international telecommunications connectivity - a key driver in social, economic and industrial growth and in the development of regions and of the Irish State as a whole.

Ireland is ranked 5th in the 2022 EU Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI), meaning that it is among the leading EU Member States in terms of the uptake and use of digital technologies. In an increasingly interconnected world, continued investment in sustainable telecommunications connectivity will be critical to ensuring that Ireland can address digital-related challenges, enabling citizens to participate and benefit fully from a more integrated digital single market, improving skills, reducing the digital divide, fostering and strengthening innovation, and providing better job opportunities.

Demand for capacity on subsea cables is projected to grow considerably over the next decade, having experienced a 44% compound annual growth rate since 2018. This is driven by an increase in



digital activity, due to new services such as streaming and generative AI, and an increase in users. This creates a need for investment to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to meet future demand.

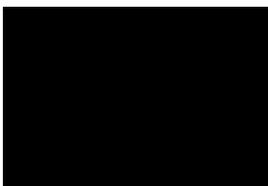
It is DECC's strong policy position to encourage and boost investment in Ireland's national and international subsea telecoms connectivity. Guaranteeing existing and future international telecommunications connectivity is critically important to support the future needs of society and enterprise in Ireland. The strategic importance of implementing new, and enhancing existing high quality, secure and reliable connectivity to global telecommunications networks is reinforced across several Government publications including the National Development Plan (NDP) 2021 - 2030, Harnessing Digital - the Digital Ireland Framework, the Climate Action Plan 2023, the National Marine Planning Framework, and others. Moreover, DECC's Digital Connectivity Strategy (DCS) outlines that Ireland wants to ensure that international connectivity infrastructure is "resilient, suitably diverse, and robust so that it can serve the demands of the national requirements".

It is in this policy context that DECC supports increased capacity between Ireland and mainland Europe, between Ireland and North America, the UK and internationally, to meet the demand for digital and data services into the future, as well as increased diversity in telecommunications cables routes to ensure network resilience and safeguard international connectivity in the event of a route failure. DECC notes the proposed cable system development will provide connectivity to EU Member States. Accordingly, DECC would strongly welcome this planned investment in new infrastructure that will enhance Ireland's connectivity internationally and considers it to be in line with this Department's policy position in relation to encouraging high-capacity international telecommunications connectivity.

Furthermore, DECC would be supportive of any projects/ proposals which are broadly in line with the policies laid out in the Telecommunications chapter of the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF).

In conclusion, it is this Department's view that the proposed project aligns with Government policy in this instance.

Yours sincerely,



Tim Forde
Chief Technology Officer
Strategy Development and Business Management Division
Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications