



February 18, 2026

Licence@mara.gov.ie

**RE: MUL230026, Wicklow County Council**

A Chara,

The Marine Divisions of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) welcome the opportunity to provide comments on Wicklow County Council's application for a marine usage licence (MUL230026) to undertake maintenance dredging within Wicklow Port.

It is essential that the sea-fishing and aquaculture sectors are fully recognised and given a high priority as a long-standing, pre-existing, and traditional activity in the marine environment as the proposed dredging is being evaluated.

Fishers and aquaculture site holders are primary food producers dependent upon certain marine areas which are particularly important for food production. This primary production is critical to supplying the downstream indigenous seafood processing and export industries and in sustaining the livelihoods of coastal communities. The importance of these primary and secondary food production activities is reflected in the Government's Food Vision 2030 policy.

To inform the DAFM comments, the observations of the Marine Institute (MI) and Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) on the application were requested.

MI note that national and international fishing operations are recorded in close proximity to the mouth of Wicklow harbour and the proposed dumping site (<https://atlas.marine.ie>; 2014 to 2018). There are no aquaculture sites within or adjacent to the dredge or disposal areas. Considering the short nature and small areas of proposed operations, they should not interfere with fishing activities, assuming any necessary Marine Notices are made, or fish ecology/biology.

BIM note that main concern from a fisheries context would be disturbance to fishing, and accidental entanglement with static fishing gear and/or by fishing vessels with the deployed equipment by the dredging/dumping vessels at the proposed dumping location.

Therefore, timely notification to notify fishers on the ground, through direct contact using the Irish Fleet Register [Sea-Fishing Boat Licence Applications, Forms and Conditions](#) should be taken. Additional, usual channels of communication, such as Marine Notices, the Producer Organisations such as the IS&EFPO, IIMRO, NIFA, local RIFF, all the relevant harbour port offices and local authority offices, and local media including Marine Times where possible covering the impacted area.

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DAFM recognises that the applicant's aim is to promote co-existence and minimise potential disruption to commercial fishing activities in the area. The evaluation of potential impacts of the maintenance dredging at Wicklow Port, on commercial sea fishing activities needs to be given consideration within the context of the requirements set out under the Maritime Area Planning Act and the National Marine Planning Framework. (NMPF). The principles in the NMPF of avoiding, minimising, or mitigating impacts on access to existing activities (including specific policies on Fisheries and Aquaculture) should be followed and any proposed activity should incorporate the principle of maximising coexistence with established activities in marine areas.

Please also find attached documents from the MI and BIM which provide further comments for consideration.

Yours sincerely,

**Marine Divisions**  
**An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara**  
*Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine*