



February 18, 2026

licence@mara.gov.ie

RE: MUL240003, Wexford County Council

A Chara,

The Marine Divisions of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) welcome the opportunity to provide comments on Wexford County Council's application for a Marine Usage Licence to conduct **marine environmental surveys**.

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 surveys are 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.

The MI observed, as identified in the application, that there are some fishing operations, spawning and nursery grounds recorded in the near vicinity to the proposed licence area and provide the following resource: **2014 – 2018; Ireland's Marine Atlas**: <https://atlas.marine.ie>

The MI also advise that there are Licensed Aquaculture Sites and Shellfish Water Directive Areas in the vicinity of the proposed licence area which can be checked using the following link: <https://dafm-maps.marine.ie/aquaculture-viewer/>

Considering the short nature and small area of the proposed operations, the MI note that survey operations should not interfere with fishing activities, (assuming any necessary Marine Notices are made), or fish ecology/biology or aquaculture.

Cumulative impacts should be given consideration regarding similar activities that are either proposed or planned to take place in close spatial and temporal proximity to the survey area.

BIM also advised that commencement dates of the proposed activity should be disseminated through the usual channels of communications, such as Marine Notices, the Producer Organisations, the relevant harbour port offices and local authority offices, and local media where possible.

Oifigí an Rialtais, An tIonad Náisiúnta Bia Mara, An Cloichín, Cloich na Coillte, Co. Chorcaí, P85 TX47.

Government Buildings, National Seafood Centre, Clogheen, Clonakilty, Co Cork, P85 TX47

T +353 (0)23 8859500

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DAFM recognises that the developer's aim is to promote co-existence and minimise potential disruption to commercial fishing activities in the area. The evaluation of potential impacts of **marine environmental surveys** on any fishing or aquaculture 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.

DAFM would like to state that while the proposed works are not anticipated to impact unduly on inshore fishers, relevant local fishing organisations should nevertheless be included on the provision of any Notices to Mariners in this respect and be made aware of proposed works at the earliest opportunity.

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