

Request for Observations on an application for a Maritime usage licence Ref: MUL240012

Proposed activity:

The proposed works will gather information on water currents, bathymetry and ancillary data on temperature, conductivity and salinity within Donegal Bay, Sligo Bay and their adjoining waters. This data is required by Uisce Éireann in order for them to carry out numerical modelling for the purposes of informing future design and installation of wastewater treatment and to examine the impact that wastewater causes on water quality and designated shellfish waters in the surrounding areas.

BIM comments:

Fisheries comments:

BIM acknowledge the reference to the commercial fisheries activities in *“the waters within Donegal Bay, Sligo Bay Killala Bay and their environs are used by Ireland’s inshore fishing fleet for line fishing, net fishing, midwater trawling, bottom trawling, dredging and (Ireland’s Marine Atlas, 2022). Pot fishing is also carried out over the vast majority of this area.”*

Aquaculture comments:

BIM note that there is no likely significant effect on shellfish and aquaculture as a result of the Proposed Activities. The attached AIMU report highlights the following; *“Aquaculture (Finfish: Salmon) takes place within Foreshore Licence Area A (figure 3). Aquaculture Licence sites are also present within Foreshore Licence areas D and E. These areas will be avoided, by navigational necessity, and therefore no potential for impact is possible.”*

The main concern from a fisheries context would be disturbance to fishing, and accidental entanglement with static fishing gear by the survey vessels, and/or by fishing vessels with the deployed survey equipment. Disturbance to fishing activities is likely to be minimal as the application details that the likely survey vessel used *“A shallow draft vessel likely to be no larger than 16m length, 6m beam and 2m draught”*. However, the risk of damage to static fishing gear is a realistic one. Instances of this has happen historically, where strings of pots were reported as being towed by survey vessels.

The main comment to make therefore is that early and continuous communication is made with stakeholders in the survey areas to avoid any conflicts arising from such incidents as stated above.

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.