

Assessment, Research and Data Unit Appropriate Assessment Screening and Determination Report			
To:	Maritime Authorisations Unit	From:	Tom Manning, Marine Analyst Dr Ciar O'Toole, Senior Marine Advisor
Date:	29/10/2025	Maritime Usage Licence Application No:	MUL240033
Applicant:	Uisce Éireann Colvill House, 24-26 Talbot Street, Dublin 1 D01 NP86		
Type of maritime usage activity in accordance with Schedule 7 of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021:	<i>Schedule 7 (3): Marine environmental surveys for the purposes of site investigation or in support of an application under Part XXI of the Act of 2000.</i>		
Location of proposed maritime usage:	Galway Bay and coastal areas extending northwest to Roundstone, County Galway and southwest to Loop Head Lighthouse, County Clare.		
Licence application received:	19/12/2024		

1. Background

Uisce Eireann has applied to the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) for a Maritime Usage Licence (MUL) to undertake Marine environmental surveys for the purposes of scientific discovery or research, falling under Schedule 7(3) of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 (the MAP Act). The proposed Maritime Usage is for the purpose of developing a hydrodynamic water quality model to support water quality assessments - Uisce Eireann 'Marine Modelling Studies - Lot 4 Galway Bay', the data from which will then be used to inform potential future Uisce Eireann works in the region.

2. Description of maritime usage and local site characteristics

2.1 Brief description of the maritime usage

The proposed maritime usage is to carry out (i) bathymetric surveys (ii) ADCP deployment, operation and retrieval (iii) collection of data from tidal gauges and; (iv) the collection of water quality samples for analysis as described in Table 1. The platforms proposed for deployment and recovery of equipment are 2 no. <25m. survey vessels. Vessel launch, transit, anchoring and dynamic positioning is proposed to position survey platforms during marine surveys. The proposed maritime usage area is shown in Figure 1.

Table 1. Proposed Maritime Usage

Proposed Survey type	Proposed methodology
Bathymetric Surveys	Vessel mounted single beam and multibeam echo sounders (200-700kHz) for 28 survey days across proposed bathymetric survey areas, as per applicants submitted maps.
ADCP surveys	Deployment operation and recovery of 26 no. ADCPs. 1 ADCP is proposed within each ADCP survey area, shown in Figure 1 below. 3 of the proposed ADCP will be vessel mounted and towed. Fixed ADCPs are proposed to be in place for between 35 days and 60 days.
Tidal Gauges	18 no. tidal gauges proposed, mounted on existing pre-determined structures. It is proposed that tide gauges will be in place for a period of 35 days
Water quality surveys	Collection by handheld Niskin bottles or Sondes sampling from shore or vessel.

The proposed maritime usage is for a 5-year period. Within the proposed maritime usage period the duration of survey work is proposed as a total of approximately 60 days of 13-hour surveys.

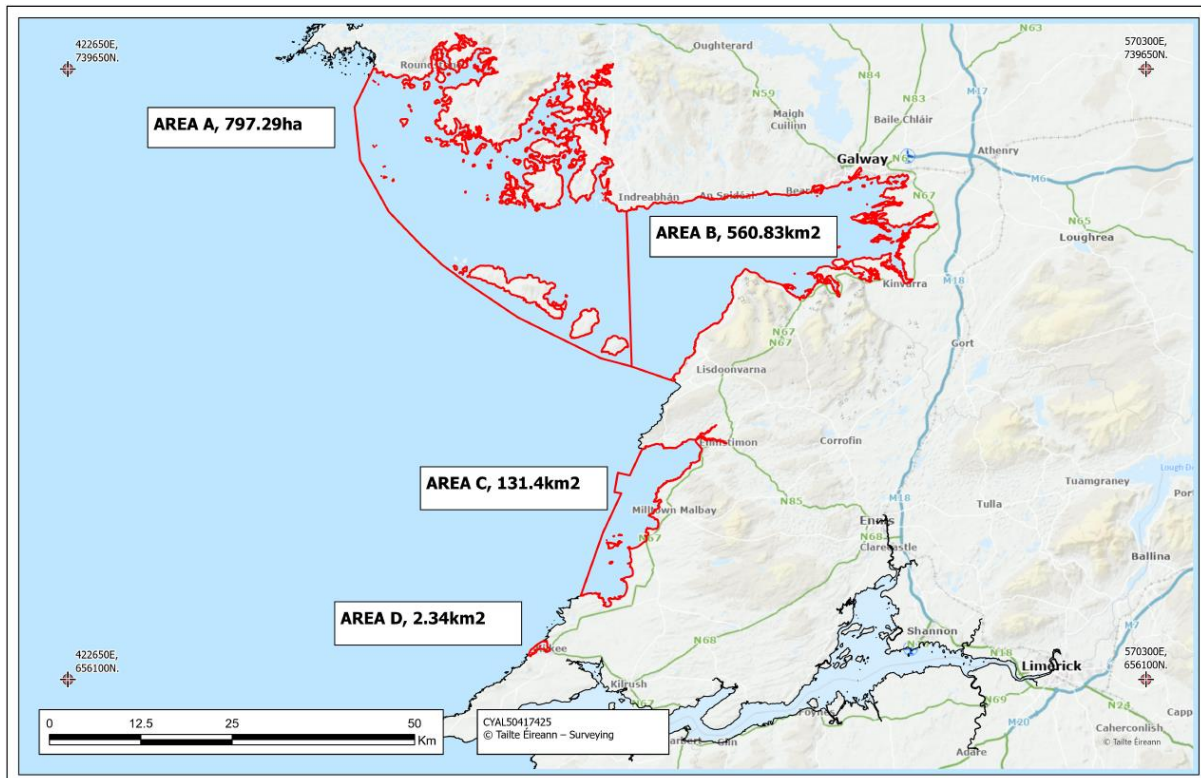


Figure 1. Site Location Map

2.2 Brief description of the site characteristics

The subject area is Galway Bay, the coast of Clare and the Aran islands. The northern area is characterised by an indented coastline with inlets, small islands and rocky intertidal interspersed with areas of sandy beach. The southern areas and Aran Islands are characterised by rocky coasts and limestone reefs in the sublittoral with vertical steps and platform features. Benthic broadscale habitats are circalittoral mixed and sandy sediments with areas of sublittoral and infralittoral rock. The average depth of the survey areas is between 25 and 30 metres, to a maximum depth approximately 50m.

The applicant submitted a Supporting Information for Screening of Appropriate Assessment (SISAA) report in support of the application.

3. Identification of relevant European sites

The MUL application is subject to screening for appropriate assessment in accordance with Regulation 42 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended, to determine if it alone, or in-combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have a significant effect on a European site, in view of best scientific knowledge and the conservation objectives of the sites.

The proposed maritime usage is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European site(s). The European sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs)) listed on Table 1 have been considered for appropriate assessment, given the nature, scale and Zone of Influence of the maritime usage, the conservation objectives of the European sites and using the Source-Pathway-Receptor model.

Table 2 - Identification of relevant European sites, their qualifying interests and site-specific conservation objectives. Those Qualifying Interests marked in bold have been screened in for Stage 2 appropriate assessment.

European site & site code	Distance from proposed MUL area (km)	List of Qualifying Interests	Connections (Source-pathway-receptor)	European Site Screened in	Site-specific conservation objectives
West Connacht Coast SAC, Site code 002998.	5-10km	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i> (Common Bottlenose Dolphin) [1349] <i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	No	No	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives: West Connacht Coast SAC 002998. Version 2. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Slyne Head Islands SAC, Site Code: 000328.	12km	Reefs [1170] <i>Tursiops truncatus</i> (Common Bottlenose Dolphin) [1349] <i>Halichoerus grypus</i> (Grey Seal) [1364]	No	No	NPWS (2015) Conservation Objectives: Slyne Head Peninsula SAC 002074. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
Slyne Head Peninsula SAC, Site code 002074.	10 – 15 km	Coastal lagoons [1150] Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] Reefs [1170] Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410] Embryonic shifting dunes [2110]	No	No	NPWS (2015) Conservation Objectives: Slyne Head Peninsula SAC 002074. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

		Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120] Machairs (* in Ireland) [21A0] <i>Tursiops truncatus</i> (Common Bottlenose Dolphin) [1349] <i>Najas flexilis</i> (Slender Naiad) [1833]			
Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC, Site Code: 002111.	0-5km.	Common (Harbour) Seal (<i>Phoca vitulina</i>) Harbour Porpoise (<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>) Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1365] [1140] Tidal Mudflats and Sandflats [1150] Coastal Lagoons* [1160] Large Shallow Inlets and Bays [1170] Reefs [1330] Atlantic Salt Meadows [1410] Mediterranean Salt Meadows [21A0] Machairs* [3130] Oligotrophic to Mesotrophic Standing Waters	Yes - Visual disturbance and above water noise, collision risk. No	Yes - Potential for likely significant effects to occur to QI seals at haul-out sites. No	<u>NPWS (2014)</u> Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC Conservation Objectives: Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

		[1355] [1833] Slender Naiad (<i>Najas flexilis</i>) [1351]			
Connemara Bog Complex SAC, Site code 002034.	0-5km	<i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355] Reefs [1170] Coastal lagoons [1150] <i>Salmo salar</i> (Salmon) [1106] <i>Najas flexilis</i> (Slender Naiad) [1833]	No	No	NPWS (2015) Conservation Objectives: Connemara Bog Complex SAC 002034. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
Galway Bay Complex SAC, Site code 000268.	0-5km.	<i>Phoca vitulina</i> (Harbour Seal) [1365] Reefs [1170] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Coastal lagoons [1150] Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae</i>) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410]	Visual disturbance and above water noise, collision risk No	Potential for likely significant effects to occur to QI seals haul-out sites. No	NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Galway Bay Complex SAC 000268. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

		Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355]			
Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex SAC: Site Code 000020	0.5-5km	Reefs [1170] Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130] substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) [6210] Submerged or partially submerged sea caves [8330]	No	No	NPWS (2014) Conservation Objectives: Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex SAC. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
Inagh River Estuary SAC: Site code 000036	0-1 km,	<i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410] Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120] Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130]	No	No	NPWS (2017) Conservation Objectives: Inagh River Estuary SAC 000036. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.
Carrowmore Point to Spanish Point and Islands SAC: Site code 001021	0-1 km,	Reefs [1170] Coastal lagoons [1150] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) [7220]	No	No	NPWS (2014) Conservation Objectives: Carrowmore Point to Spanish Point and Islands SAC 001021. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
Carrowmore Dunes SAC: Site code 002250	0-5 km	Reefs [1170] Embryonic shifting dunes [2110]	No	No	NPWS (2014) Conservation Objectives: Carrowmore Dunes SAC 002250. Version

		Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120] Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130]			1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
Kilkee Reefs SAC: Site code 002264	0-1km	Reefs [1170] Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] Submerged or partially submerged sea caves [8330]	No	No.	NPWS (2014) Conservation Objectives: Kilkee Reefs SAC 002264. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
Inisheer Island SAC: Site code 001275	1-5km	Coastal lagoons [1150] Reefs [1170]	No	No	NPWS (2014) Conservation Objectives: Inisheer Island SAC 001275. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
Inishmaan Island SAC; Site code 000212	1-5km	Reefs [1170] Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] Embryonic shifting dunes [2110] Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120] Machairs (* in Ireland) [21A0]	No	No	NPWS (2014) Conservation Objectives: Inishmaan Island SAC 000212. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
Inishmore Island SAC Site Details	Proposed Maritime Usage within	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour porpoise) Reefs [1170] [1351]Coastal lagoons [1150]	No	No.	NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Inishmore Island SAC 000213. Version 2. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government

Site code 000213	European Site	Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] Embryonic shifting dunes [2110] Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120] Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130] Dunes with <i>Salix repens</i> ssp. <i>argentea</i> (<i>Salicion arenariae</i>) [2170] Humid dune slacks [2190] Machairs (* in Ireland) [21A0] Submerged or partially submerged sea caves [8330]			and Heritage.
Kerry Head Shoal SAC; Site code 002263	5-10km	Reefs [1170]	No	No	NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Kerry Head Shoal SAC 002263. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
Kingstown Bay SAC; Site code 002265	5-10km	Large shallow inlets and bays [1160]	No	No	NPWS (2011) Conservation Objectives: Kingstown Bay SAC 002265. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
Lough Corrib SAC Site code 000297	5-10km	<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029] <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092]	No	No	NPWS (2017) Conservation Objectives: Lough Corrib SAC 000297. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

		<i>Petromyzon marinus</i> (Sea Lamprey) [1095] <i>Lampetra planeri</i> (Brook Lamprey) [1096] <i>Salmo salar</i> (Salmon) [1106] <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355] <i>Najas flexilis</i> (Slender Naiad) [1833]			
Lower River Shannon SAC Site code 002165	>10km	Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time [1110] Estuaries [1130] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Coastal lagoons [1150] Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] Reefs [1170] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410] <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029] <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> (Sea Lamprey) [1095] <i>Lampetra planeri</i> (Brook Lamprey) [1096]	No	No	NPWS (2012) Conservation Objectives: Lower River Shannon SAC 002165. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

		<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> (River Lamprey) [1099] <i>Salmo salar</i> (Salmon) [1106] <i>Tursiops truncatus</i> (Common Bottlenose Dolphin) [1349] <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]			
Cliffs of Moher SPA Site code 004005	1-5km	Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A009] Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188] Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) [A199] Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>) [A200] Puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>) [A204] Chough (<i>Pyrrhonorax pyrrhonorax</i>) [A346]	No	No	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives: Cliffs of Moher SPA 004005. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Connemara Bog Complex SPA Site code 004181	5-10 km	Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>) [A098] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182]	No	No	NPWS (2023) Conservation Objectives: Connemara Bog Complex SPA 004181. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Cregganna Marsh SPA: Site code 004142	1-5km	Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395]	No	No	NPWS (2023) Conservation Objectives: Cregganna Marsh SPA 004142. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Dingle Peninsula SPA: Site code 004153	>50km	Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A009] Peregrine (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>) [A103] Chough (<i>Pyrrhonorax pyrrhonorax</i>) [A346]	No	No	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives: Dingle Peninsula SPA 004153. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government

					and Heritage.
Illaunonearau n SPA Site code004114	>10km	Barnacle Goose (<i>Branta leucopsis</i>) [A045]	No	No	NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Illaunonearau SPA 004114. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Inishmore SPA Site code 004152	0-5km	Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188] Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A194] Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) [A199] Little Tern (<i>Sternula albifrons</i>) [A885]	No	No	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives: Inishmore SPA 004152. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Inner Galway Bay SPA Site code 004031	0-5km	Black-throated Diver (<i>Gavia arctica</i>) [A002] Great Northern Diver (<i>Gavia immer</i>) [A003] Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] Grey Heron (<i>Ardea cinerea</i>) [A028] Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [A069] Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142]	No	No	NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Inner Galway Bay SPA 004031. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

		Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160] Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) [A169] Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182] Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] Wigeon (<i>Mareca penelope</i>) [A855] Sandwich Tern (<i>Thalasseus sandwicensis</i>) [A863] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]			
Kerry Head SPA Site code 004189	>50km	Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A009] Chough (<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>) [A346]	No	No	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives: Kerry Head SPA 004189. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Loop Head SPA; Site code 004119	>10km	Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188] Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) [A199]	No	No	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives: Loop Head SPA 004119. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Magharee Islands SPA Site code 004125	>50km	Storm Petrel (<i>Hydrobates pelagicus</i>) [A014] Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>) [A018] Barnacle Goose (<i>Branta leucopsis</i>) [A045]	No	No	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives: Magharee Islands SPA 004125. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

		Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182] Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A194] Little Tern (<i>Sternula albifrons</i>) [A885]			
Mid-Clare Coast SPA Site code 004182	0-5km	Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] Barnacle Goose (<i>Branta leucopsis</i>) [A045] Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137] Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) [A144] Purple Sandpiper (<i>Calidris maritima</i>) [A148] Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) [A169] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	No	No	NPWS (2014) Conservation Objectives: Mid-Clare Coast SPA 004182. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA Site code 004077	>10km	Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038] Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054] Scaup (<i>Aythya marila</i>) [A062] Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140]	No	No	NPWS (2012) Conservation Objectives: River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA 004077. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

		Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143] Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160] Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] Greenshank (<i>Tringa nebularia</i>) [A164] Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] Wigeon (<i>Mareca penelope</i>) [A855] Shoveler (<i>Spatula clypeata</i>) [A857] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]			
Slyne Head to Ardmore Point Islands SPA Site Details Site code 004159	0-5km	Barnacle Goose (<i>Branta leucopsis</i>) [A045] Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A194] Sandwich Tern (<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>) [A863] Little Tern (<i>Sternula albifrons</i>) [A885]	No.	No.	NPWS (2022) Conservation objectives for Slyne Head to Ardmore Point Islands SPA [004159]. First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives Version 1.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

4. Assessment of likely significant effects

Table 3. identification of potential direct and indirect impacts that may have an effect on the conservation objectives of European sites, taking into account the nature and scale of the proposed maritime usage.

Potential Impacts	Possible significance of Potential impacts (duration, magnitude, etc.)
Visual and above water noise disturbance	Potential for likely significant effects to occur to QI seals haul-out sites within Galway Bay Complex SAC and Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC.

Within the proposed survey area twenty-six ADCP sites are proposed, indicated in mapped information provided by the applicant. The ADCP areas that overlap with European sites are listed in Table 2 above. The potential footprint of the impact of a proposed ADCP on benthic habitats within the listed sites would be small in size and of temporary duration. The ADCP usage proposed within Kilkieran Bay and Islands is vessel mounted.

The underwater noise from the proposed equipment (MBES SBES & ADCP) is high frequency (>200kHz) operating in shallow water (<100m). This is known to be outside the range that causes disturbance to cetacean QI species in the region and therefore would not result in impacts on QIs of European Sites.

The potential for visual and above water noise disturbance on bird SCI species to cause possible significant effects is ruled out due the limited scope and duration of the proposed maritime usage.

However, due to the proximity of potential Harbour Seal haul-out sites to some of the proposed locations for survey work, there may be visual and above noise disturbance impacts on this QI. It is identified that there is potential for likely significant effects to occur to QI seals haul-out sites within both Galway Bay Complex SAC and Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC.

In-combination effects

MARA has developed a stepwise approach for identifying other plans and projects that may impact on European sites in-Combination with the proposed maritime usage. Using professional and scientific judgement, the key steps for assessing cumulative effects are as follows:

1. Defining the Cumulative Effects Spatial Scope (CESS)

2. Defining the Cumulative Effects Temporal Scope (CETS)
3. Impact identification
4. Pathway identification
5. Prediction
6. Identification of Plans or Projects that could act in combination
7. Screening Stage Cumulative Effects Assessment conclusion
8. Managing cumulative impacts - to be carried out as part of Stage 2 AA process

The CESS has been defined as the entire proposed maritime usage area and the CETS as five years i.e. the proposed MUL duration.

A search of relevant databases undertaken on the 29/09/2025. Relevant projects within the CESS and the CETS were considered. Particular attention was given to the projects shown on Table 4, which have the potential to act in-combination with the proposed maritime usage.

Table 4: List of projects which, in particular, were considered to have potential in-combination impacts on European sites at Galway Bay Complex SAC and Kilkieran Islands SAC

Application Ref.	Project description	Distance from proposed MUL area (km)	Project Status
2022-MAC-007	Sceirde Rocks Offshore ORE Array Area and Infrastructure Corridor site investigations.	<5	Granted 23/12/2022
FS007372	Saoirse Wave Energy Limited ORE - Marine environmental surveys (site investigation).	<1	Applied 30/11/2022
FS007161 and FS007543	Marine environmental surveys (site investigation) for the proposed Sceirde Rocks ORE.	<2	Granted 16/02/2022
MUL230024	Deep Sea Fibre Networks Ltd. Marine Survey and Site Investigations for a cable route for the PISCES subsea telecoms cable system.	<1	Granted 19/04/2024
T09-005A T09-018	Fishery Order areas - European Flat Oyster.	<1	Licensed
T09-119, T09-124, T09-144, T09-136A,	Aquaculture Sites for species including Atlantic salmon, Pacific oyster, Blue Mussel	<1	Licensed

T09-146AT, 09-114A, T09-105C, T09-141A T09-155, T09- 107 T09-456A, T09-009OFO, T09-010OFO, T09-203A, T09-203B, T09-114B T09- 011AOFO, T09-149A, T09-078-1, T09-093A, T09-155-1.	Great Atlantic Scallop, Manila Clam, European Flat Oyster, Seaweed species.		
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The following plans, related to the development of the maritime environment were also considered:

- The Climate Action Plan 2025,
- The National Water Action Plan
- The National Marine Planning Framework

Likely significant in-combination effects between this application and the plans listed above on the conservation objectives of the European sites considered in this report can be excluded at this stage. However, it is not possible to rule out potential in-combination impacts between some of the activities listed in Table 4 and the proposed maritime usage activity at this stage.

Were mitigation measures considered during the screening process?

No.

5. Screening Determination Statement

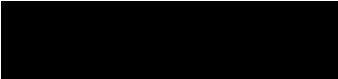
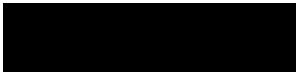
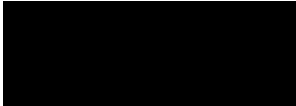
The assessment of significant effects:

On the basis of the information on file, and having regard to:

- The nature and scale of the proposed development
- The potential for in-combination effects with other plans and projects
- Possible visual and above water noise disturbance

Having considered the legal framework applicable to appropriate assessment, it was concluded that the proposed maritime usage by Uisce Éireann, Colvill House, 24-26 Talbot Street, Dublin 1, to carry out Marine environmental surveys for the purposes of scientific discovery or research at Galway Bay and coastal areas extending northwest to Roundstone, County Galway and southwest to Loop Head Lighthouse, County Clare (MUL240033) will require Stage 2 appropriate assessment.

It cannot be excluded on the basis of objective scientific information, that the proposed project, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site.

Signature and Date of Recommending Officers	 Tom Manning Marine Analyst	Date 02/10/2025
	 Dr Ciar O'Toole Senior Marine Advisor	Date 29/10/2025
Signature and Date of Decision Maker	 John Evans Director of Assessment, Research and Data Unit	Date 29/10/2025