

Maritime Usage Licence and Planning Advisory Directorate

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Determination Report

To:	Dr. Ciar O' Toole Senior Marine Advisor	From:	Ross Fitzgerald, Marine Analyst
Date:	20/07/2026	Maritime Usage Licence Application No:	MUL240050
Applicant:	SalvOcean Ltd., First Floor, 85 Great Portland Street, London, W1W 7LT, United Kingdom		
Type of maritime usage activity in accordance with Schedule 7 of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021:	<i>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:	72km Northwest of Malin Head, Co. Donegal		
Licence application received:	20/05/2025		

1. Background

SalvOcean Ltd. (the applicant) has applied to the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) for a Maritime Usage Licence (MUL) to undertake *Marine environmental surveys for the purposes of site investigation or in support of an application under Part XXI of the Act of 2000* under Section 7(3) of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 (the MAP Act). The proposed site investigation activities are required to provide information on the wreck of the SS *City of Simla*, located approximately 72km northwest of Malin Head, Co. Donegal¹.

2. Description of maritime usage and local site characteristics

2.1 Brief description of the maritime usage

The proposed maritime usage area is shown on Figure 1 and has a total area of approximately 178km². The SS *City of Simla* was a British cargo steam ship which was reportedly struck by a German U-boat torpedo on 20/09/1940². The applicant states that the wreck is split into two sections and, while the location of the main body of the wreck is known, the location of the stern section (approx. 50 meters in length) has not been located to date. The purpose of this survey is to locate the missing stern section and to obtain detailed photogrammetry of both sections of the wreck, which may form the basis of a future application for cargo recovery operations.

The proposed maritime usage will involve geophysical, digital imagery and hydrocarbon leak detection surveys within the proposed maritime usage area as follows:

1) *Multibeam echosounder and Side Scan Sonar*

Will be used to locate and map the target wreck over a maximum of 120 hours

2) *Sub-bottom profiler*

May be used, where necessary

3) *Hydrocarbon leak detection survey*

May be carried out, if necessary, to detect hydrocarbons emitting from the target wreck using a remotely operated vehicle (ROV)

4) *Digital imagery and video acquisition*

ROV-mounted cameras will be used to capture digital images and video of the target wreck and surrounding areas

The indicative equipment specifications and expected sound pressure levels are provided in table 1.

¹ The applicant has also included proposals to carry out similar surveys on the wreck of the MV *Accra*, which lies approximately 436km northwest of Belmullet, Co. Mayo. The MV *Accra* lies outside the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) area and agreed Continental Shelf therefore it is outside of the remit of this application.

² <https://www.wrecksite.eu/wreck.aspx?16336>

Table 1 – indicative equipment specifications and expected sound pressure levels

Equipment	Model	Deployment	Sound Pressure Level (dB re 1 μ Pa)
Survey vessel	<i>MV Glomar Supporter</i> or similar	n/a	165-175
Vessel Dynamic Positioning	DP2 Kongsberg Kpos 21	Hull mounted	178
Acoustic Transponders	EdgeTech CAT Coastal Acoustic Transponder	Equipment mounted	192
Obstacle Avoidance Sonars	Teledyne	Equipment mounted	160-180
Underwater Navigational Signals (Ultra short Baseline)	Sonardyne Compatt 6 8300-3111	Equipment mounted	187-196
Work Class remotely operated vehicle (ROV)	Millennium® Plus	Launched from Vessel	130-160
Work Class ROV	Schilling Robotics HD	Launched from Vessel	130-160
Multibeam echosounder (MBES)	Sonic-V Series	Hull mounted	196-224
Ultra-High Resolution MBES	Teledyne RESON SeaBat® 7125	ROV mounted	196-224
Sub Bottom Profiler	EdgeTech 3300	Hull Mounted	167-175
Sub Bottom Profiler	Immomar	ROV mounted	240

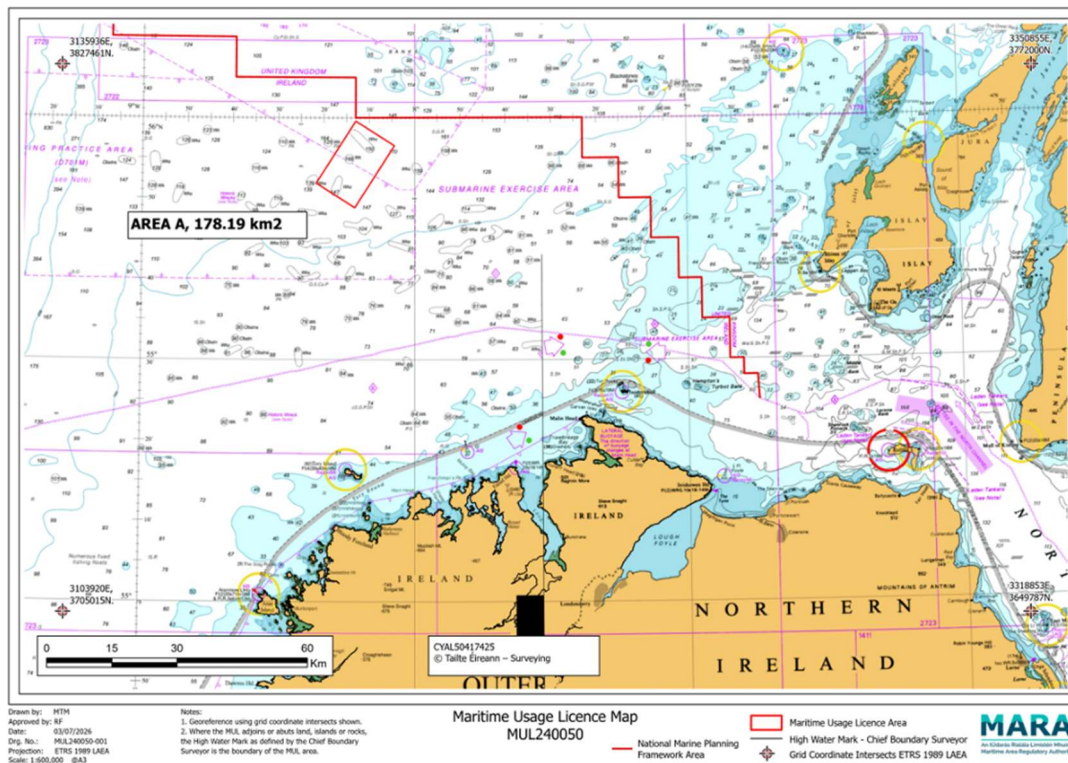


Figure 1 – Location of the proposed maritime usage area

The applicant indicates that the proposed surveys will occur between March and November due to the greater likelihood of favourable weather conditions and will run on a 24-hour basis. The applicant states that the survey operations are expected to take 14 days to complete. The applicant has applied for a MUL of three years duration to allow planning for survey operations with regard to charter of an appropriate survey vessel, assembling the survey team and allowing for favourable weather conditions.

2.2 Brief description of the site characteristics

The proposed maritime usage area is located to the southwest of the Stanton Banks in an area of approximate depths of between 150 and 173m. The benthic broad habitat type is predominantly deep circalittoral mud, with some deep circalittoral sand at the southern and western extents of the proposed area.

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 sites, in view of best scientific knowledge and the conservation objectives of the sites. The applicant submitted a Supporting Information for Screening of Appropriate Assessment (SISAA) report in support of the application which was referred to during this assessment

The proposed maritime usage is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European site(s). The European sites listed in Table 2 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	Approx. distance from proposed MUL area (km)	List of Qualifying Interests	Connections (Source-pathway-receptor)	European Site Screened in	Site-specific conservation objectives
Horn Head and Rinclevan SAC [000147]	66	Embryonic shifting dunes [2110] Shifting dunes along the shoreline <i>with</i> <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] Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and/or <i>Isoeto-Nanojuncetea</i> [3130] <i>Vertigo geyeri</i> (Geyer's Whorl Snail) [1013] <i>Halichoerus grypus</i> (Grey Seal) [1364] <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i> (Petalwort) [1395] <i>Najas flexilis</i> (Slender Naiad) [1833]	No	No	NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Horn Head and Rinclevan SAC [000147]. Version 2.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
Gweedore Bay and Islands SAC [001141]	72	Coastal lagoons [1150] Reefs [1170] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220]	No	Yes	NPWS (2015) Conservation Objectives: Gweedore Bay and Islands SAC [001141].

		Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410] 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] Decalcified fixed dunes with <i>Empetrum nigrum</i> [2140] Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (<i>Calluno-Ulicetea</i>) [2150] Dunes with <i>Salix repens</i> ssp. <i>argentea</i> (<i>Salicion arenariae</i>) [2170] Humid dune slacks [2190] Machairs (* in Ireland) [21A0] Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and/or <i>Isoeto-Nanojuncetea</i> [3130] European dry heaths [4030] Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060] <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130] <i>Euphydrys aurinia</i> (Marsh Fritillary) [1065] <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355] <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i> (Petalwort) [1395] <i>Najas flexilis</i> (Slender Naiad) [1833]			Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
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		<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes – potential for underwater noise from survey activities to cause injury, displacement or disturbance		
Lough Swilly SAC [002287]	86	Estuaries [1130] Coastal lagoons [1150] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330] Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) [6410] Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0] <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]	No	Yes	NPWS (2011) Conservation Objectives: Lough Swilly SAC [002287]. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
		<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes – potential for underwater noise from survey activities to cause injury, displacement or disturbance		

Rutland Island and Sound SAC [002283]	91	Coastal lagoons [1150] Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] Reefs [1170] Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] <i>Phoca vitulina</i> (Harbour Seal) [1365] 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] Humid dune slacks [2190]	No	No	NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Rutland Island and Sound SAC [002283]. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
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Slieve Tooley/Tormore Island/Loughros Beg Bay SAC [000190]	115	Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) [1330] <i>Halichoerus grypus</i> (Grey Seal) [1364] Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410] 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] Decalcified fixed dunes with <i>Empetrum nigrum</i> [2140] Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (<i>Calluno-Ulicetea</i>) [2150] Dunes with <i>Salix repens</i> ssp. <i>argentea</i> (<i>Salicion arenariae</i>) [2170] Humid dune slacks [2190] Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060] Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130] <i>Vertigo angustior</i> (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) [1014] <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]	No	No	NPWS (2026) Conservation Objectives: Slieve Tooley/Tormore Island/Loughros Beg Bay SAC [000190]. Version 2.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
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St. John's Point SAC [000191]	135	Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] Reefs [1170] Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210] Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) [6410] Alkaline fens [7230] Limestone pavements [8240] Submerged or partially submerged sea caves [8330] <i>Euphydryas aurinia</i> (Marsh Fritillary) [1065]	No	Yes	NPWS (2015) Conservation Objectives: St. John's Point SAC [000191]. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
		<i>Tursiops truncatus</i> (Common Bottlenose Dolphin) [1349]	Yes – potential for underwater noise from survey activities to cause injury, displacement or disturbance		
Bunduff Lough and Machair/Trawalua/Mullagh more SAC [000625]	147	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] Reefs [1170] Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120] Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130]	No	Yes	NPWS (2026) Conservation Objectives Bunduff Lough and Machair/Trawalua/Mullagh more SAC [000625]. Version 2.0. National Parks and

		Humid dune slacks [2190] Machairs (* in Ireland) [21A0] <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210] Alkaline fens [7230] <i>Euphydryas aurinia</i> (Marsh Fritillary) [1065] <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i> (Petalwort) [1395]			Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
		<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes – potential for underwater noise from survey activities to cause injury, displacement or disturbance		

Cummeen Strand/Drumcliff Bay (Sligo Bay) SAC [000627]	162	Estuaries [1130] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] 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] <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210] Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) [7220] <i>Vertigo angustior</i> (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) [1014] <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> (Sea Lamprey) [1095] <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> (River Lamprey) [1099] <i>Phoca vitulina</i> (Harbour Seal) [1365]	No	No	NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives Cummeen Strand/Drumcliff Bay (Sligo Bay) SAC [000627]. Version 2.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
Ballysadare Bay SAC [000622]	173	Estuaries [1130] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] <i>Phoca vitulina</i> (Harbour Seal) [1365] 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] Humid dune slacks [2190] <i>Vertigo angustior</i> (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) [1014]	No	No	NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives Killala Bay/Moy Estuary SAC [000458]. Version 2.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Killala Bay/Moy Estuary SAC [000458]	185	Estuaries [1130] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) [1330] 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] Humid dune slacks [2190] <i>Vertigo angustior</i> (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) [1014] <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> (Sea Lamprey) [1095] <i>Phoca vitulina</i> (Harbour Seal) [1365]	No	No	NPWS (2026) Conservation Objectives Killala Bay/Moy Estuary SAC [000458]. Version 2.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
West Connacht Coast SAC [002998]	203	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i> (Common Bottlenose Dolphin) [1349] <i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes – potential for underwater noise from survey activities to cause injury, displacement or disturbance	Yes	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives West Connacht Coast SAC [002998]. Version 2.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
Tory Island SPA [004073]	60	Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A009] Corncrake (<i>Crex crex</i>) [A122] Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>) [A200] Puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>) [A204]	No	No	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives Tory Island SPA [004073]. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife

					Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
Horn Head to Fanad Head SPA [004194]	66	Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A009] Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>) [A018] Barnacle Goose (<i>Branta leucopsis</i>) [A045] Peregrine (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>) [A103] Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188] Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) [A199] Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>) [A200] Chough (<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>) [A346] Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395]	No	No	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives Horn Head to Fanad Head SPA [004194]. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
West Donegal Coast SPA [004150]	78	Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A009] Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>) [A018] Peregrine (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>) [A103] Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184] Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188] Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>) [A200] Chough (<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>) [A346]	No	No	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives West Donegal Coast SPA [004150]. Version 2.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

4. Assessment of likely significant effects

Table 3 identifies the 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.

Table 3 – Potential direct and indirect impacts of the proposed maritime usage on the conservation objectives of European sites

Potential Impacts	Possible significance of Potential impacts (duration, magnitude, etc.)
Underwater noise disturbance, displacement or harm from survey activities	Potential for underwater sound sources from survey activities to be at a level and duration that would cause a significant negative impact on marine mammals. Significant impacts on seabirds are not likely due to the location, nature and scale of the activities.

In-combination effects

The potential impacts of the proposed maritime usage must be considered individually and also in combination with other plans or projects. All types of plans or projects that could, in combination with this application, have a significant effect, have been considered. This in-combination assessment has been undertaken using professional and scientific judgement and is assessed primarily in terms of potential spatial and temporal impacts.

The spatial scope of the in-combination assessment is a radius of 3km from the extent of the proposed maritime usage area and is based on the maximum distance of underwater noise generated by sub bottom profile survey equipment and the Effective Deterrence Range³ of Harbour porpoise, which is most sensitive to underwater noise. The temporal scope of the in-combination assessment is based on the period over which the activities are proposed. The applicant has applied for a three-year licence and thus the temporal scope is three years.

A search of relevant databases was undertaken on the 10/07/2026. No projects were found to have the potential to act in combination with the proposed maritime usage.

The following plans, related to the development of the maritime environment were also considered:

- The Climate Action Plan 2025
- National Marine Planning Framework 2021

Likely significant in-combination effects between this application, the plans considered and the plans listed above, on the conservation objectives of the European sites considered in this report can be excluded at this stage.

³ Effective Deterrence Range – the radius of a circular area assumed to be disturbed

Were mitigation measures considered during the screening process?

No

5. Screening Determination Statement

The assessment of significant effects:

Having considered the legal framework applicable to appropriate assessment, the information on file, and having regard to:

- The nature and scale of the proposed maritime usage
- The distance to the nearest European sites
- Possible disturbance, displacement or harm to marine mammals from underwater noise

it was concluded that the proposed maritime usage by **SalvOcean Ltd.** to carry out **marine environmental surveys for the purposes of site investigation or in support of an application under Part XXI of the Act of 2000**, approximately 72km northwest of Malin Head, Co. Donegal (**MUL240050**) 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 Officer	 Ross Fitzgerald Marine Analyst	20/07/2026
Signature and Date of Decision Maker	 Dr. Ciar O' Toole Senior Marine Advisor	20/07/2026