

Maritime Usage Licensing and Planning Advisory Directorate			
Maritime Usage Licence Assessment Report			
To:	John Evans Director	From:	Ross Fitzgerald Marine Analyst
Date:	17/09/2026	Maritime Usage Licence Application Reference No:	MUL240050
MUL Applicant Name:		SalvOcean Ltd.	
MUL Applicant Registered Address:		First Floor, 85 Great Portland Street, London, W1W 7LT, United Kingdom	
Licence application received:		20/08/2025	
Types of maritime usage activities in accordance with Schedule 7 of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021:		3. Marine environmental surveys for the purposes of site investigation or in support of an application under Part XXI of the Act of 2000.	
Location of proposed maritime usages:		72km Northwest of Malin Head, Co. Donegal	
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening		EIA not required (EIA Screening Form dated 20/07/2026)	
1st request for additional information (RAI) issued:	09/07/2026	Response to 1st RAI received:	17/07/2026
Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening		AA Screening Determination dated 20/07/2026	
Notice requesting Natura Impact Statement (NIS) issued:	N/A	NIS received:	20/08/2025
Public body consultation:	14/01/2026 – 16/02/2026	Observations from public bodies received:	Six
Public consultation:	06/08/2026 – 12/09/2026	Submissions from the public received:	None

Contents

1.	Background	3
2.	Location and Description of the Proposed Maritime Usage	3
3.	Assessment	6
3.1	National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF).....	6
3.2	Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (2014/52/EU) (EIA Directive).....	6
3.3	National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP)	6
3.4	Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended.....	7
3.5	Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)	7
3.6	Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC).....	7
3.7	Annex IV species	9
3.8	Appropriate Assessment.....	10
3.8.1	Assessment of Likely/Potential Impacts on European Sites	11
3.8.2	Assessment of In-combination effects	11
3.8.3	Mitigation measures	13
3.8.4	Residual effects.....	13
3.8.5	Assessment of Transboundary effects	13
3.8.6	Appropriate assessment conclusion	14
4.	Consideration of other maritime users.....	14
5.	Site visit.....	14
6.	Public body consultation	15
7.	Public consultation	18
8.	Recommendation.....	18
9.	Appropriate Assessment Determination	19
10.	Appendix 1	20

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. Donegal (application Area A).

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 (application Area B). 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. Section 8 of this report therefore recommends part-granting the MUL, to exclude application Area B. Sections 2 to 7 of this report assess application Area A only.

2. Location and Description of the Proposed 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 20/09/1940¹. 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:

Multibeam echosounder and Side Scan Sonar

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

Sub-bottom profiler

May be used, where necessary

Hydrocarbon leak detection survey

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

¹ <https://www.wrecksite.eu/wreck.aspx?16336>

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.

Table 1 – indicative equipment specifications and expected sound pressure levels

Equipment	Model	Deployment	Sound Pressure Level (dB re 1 μ Pa)
Survey vessel	MV <i>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

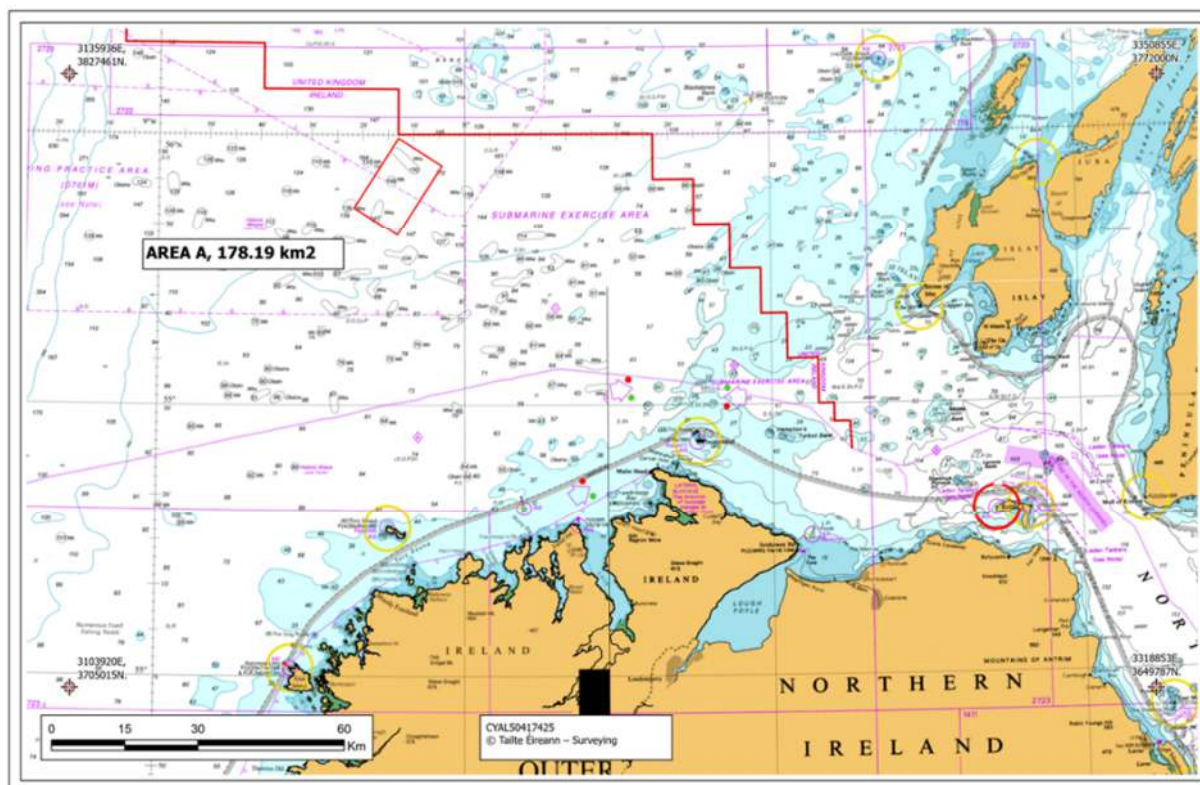


Figure 1 – Location of the proposed maritime usage area

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.

The proposed maritime usage is located to the southwest of the Stanton Banks in an area of approximate depths 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 maritime usage area.

3. Assessment

In assessing a MUL application, MARA must have regard to the criteria specified in the MAP Act, as discussed in this section.

3.1 National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF)

MARA must have regard to the Marine Planning Policy Statement (MPPS) which outlines the government's overarching vision, policies, and principles for managing the country's maritime area. MARA must also have regard to the NMPF, which sets the framework for implementing the forward planning component of our marine planning system as set out in the MPPS. The applicant has, as part of the Assessment of Impacts of the Maritime Usage report submitted in support of this application, indicated how the proposed project will be in compliance with the NMPF. In addition, a number of environmental and sectoral activity policies detailed in the NMPF are covered in other sections of this report, including, but not limited to, the National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP), the Birds and Habitat Directives, the Water Framework Directive (WFD), the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and Consideration of other maritime users.

Underwater Cultural Heritage

The NMPF includes a policy on Heritage Assets, which supports the conservation of the historic environment and heritage assets both along the coast and in the underwater environment. The policy notes that proposals not specifically contributing to enhancing cultural heritage assets must demonstrate that they avoid, minimise or mitigate against harm to heritage assets. The applicant states that a review of the National Monuments Services Historic Environment and Wreck Viewer applications was performed, which indicates the presence of numerous historic wreck sites within the area. However, the applicant states that the proposed project will have no contact with the seabed, or with the SS *City of Simla* or any additional wreck sites. Therefore, it is considered that there is no potential for impact to heritage assets from the proposed maritime usage.

3.2 Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (2014/52/EU) (EIA Directive)

MARA carried out a screening for EIA of the proposed maritime usage, having considered Schedules 5 and 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001. An EIA Screening Form was issued by MARA on 20/07/2026 and it was concluded that the activities do not fall within the scope of the EIA Directive and therefore an EIA is not required.

3.3 National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP)

Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan sets the national biodiversity agenda for the period 2023–2030. The objectives of the NBAP focus on the conservation and restoration of biodiversity. Objective 2 of the NBAP is to meet urgent conservation and restoration needs.

Part of its focus is to elevate efforts to tackle invasive alien species. It is recommended that a condition be included in the Proposed Licence, if granted, to address the potential risks from invasive alien species as a result of the survey activities. Sections 3.5–3.8 of this report also address, the Water Framework Directive (WFD), the Marine Strategy Framework (MSFD) and the Habitats and Birds Directives and recommend conditions to be included in the Proposed Licence, if granted, to minimise impacts on biodiversity from the proposed activities.

3.4 Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended

Section 15(1) of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended (the ‘Climate Act’) requires relevant bodies, including MARA, to perform their functions in so far as practicable in a manner consistent with the governance framework set out therein. The Act sets legally binding targets for the reduction of greenhouse gases by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050. Considering the temporary nature of the proposed activities, no significant increases in carbon emissions are expected to be produced.

3.5 Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)

The WFD requires EU member states to protect and improve water quality in all waters to achieve at least good ecological status in inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater by 2027, at the latest. The ecological status of coastal waterbodies is based on the assessment of biological quality elements (phytoplankton, benthic invertebrates, macroalgae, angiosperms) as well as supporting chemical (specific pollutants), physico-chemical (e.g. temperature, salinity, nutrients) and hydromorphological quality elements. As the proposed maritime usage will take place approximately 58 km from the closest WFD waterbody (Tory Island Waters coastal waterbody), it is considered that it will not have an effect on water quality of inland, transitional and coastal surface waters and/or groundwaters. Notwithstanding this, it is recommended that a condition be included in the Proposed Licence, if granted, relating to the preparation of an oil pollution emergency plan to mitigate for any accidental introduction of contaminants to the marine environment.

3.6 Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC)

The MSFD sets the framework for European marine environmental policy. It aims to achieve Good Environmental Status (GES) for all marine waters in Europe and protect the resource base for marine related economic and social activities. Ireland’s 2024 assessment² under Article 8 of the MSFD sets out the status of the 11 qualitative descriptors that describe the state of the marine environment. Table 2 sets out the status of the relevant descriptors and

² [Ireland’s Marine Strategy Part 1: Article 8, 9 and 10 report 2024.](#)

assesses the potential impacts of the proposed activities. Subject to the mitigation described in Table 2, the status of the descriptors will not be negatively impacted from the proposed activities.

Table 2: Assessment of impact of proposed activities on MSFD descriptors

MFSD Descriptor	Good Environmental Status achieved	Assessment
Biological diversity	Partially achieved	MARA has undertaken an Appropriate Assessment and in respect to the proposed maritime usage (see Section 3.8). Mitigation measures have been identified and included in the Proposed Licence, which address potential impacts on biological diversity (including protected habitats and species).
Non-indigenous species	Yes	To ensure that the proposed activities will not result in the unintended introduction of non-indigenous species, a condition is recommended in the Proposed Licence, if granted, relating to the control of invasive species.
Population of commercial fish/shellfish	Partially achieved	The proposed maritime usage overlaps primarily with demersal mixed species fishing areas and spawning and nursery grounds for a range of commercially fished species including Haddock, Hake, Herring, Megrin, Horse Mackerel, Mackerel and <i>Nephrops</i> . However, the proposed maritime usage is temporary in nature and is unlikely to have a significant impact on fish spawning or nursery grounds. It is not expected that the activities will negatively impact on the GES status of this descriptor.
Marine food webs	Unclear	The balance and diversity in marine food webs is not expected to be impacted as a result of the proposed activity.
Eutrophication	Yes	The proposed maritime usage does not involve the addition of nutrients to the marine environment and as such there will be no impact on the GES status of this descriptor.
Sea-floor integrity	Partially achieved	The proposed maritime usage will not involve interaction with the sea-floor and as such there will be no impact on the GES status of this descriptor.
Alteration of hydrographical conditions	Yes	The proposed activities will not alter the hydrographical conditions (e.g. changes in wave action, currents, salinity, temperature) in the MUL application area. There will be no impact on the GES status of this descriptor.

Concentrations of contaminants	Yes	It is recommended that a condition be included in any licence granted, relating to the preparation of an oil pollution emergency plan to mitigate for any accidental introduction of contaminants to the marine environment from any vessels employed in the proposed maritime usage. Given the nature and duration of the proposed maritime usage, it is not expected that the maritime usage will negatively impact on the GES status of this descriptor.
Contaminants in fish/seafood for human consumption	Yes	The proposed maritime usage activity will not result in the introduction of contaminants in fish or seafood and therefore, will not impact on the GES status of this descriptor.
Marine Litter	No	The proposed maritime usage will not result in the introduction of marine litter to the marine environment and thus will not impact on the achievement of GES status of this descriptor. The Proposed Licence, if granted, includes a general condition requiring the holder to remove all plant and equipment associated with the activities and to restore the licensed area to its original condition.
Introduction of energy including underwater noise	Yes	The impacts of underwater noise introduced as a result of the proposed maritime usage are assessed in Section 3.7 and 3.8 of this report. It is recommended that a condition relating to management of underwater noise disturbance in relation to marine mammals, be included in the Proposed Licence, if granted. In order to inform the data collected as part of MSFD requirements, it is recommended that the holder should provide details of all acoustic surveys to the Marine Environment Section of the relevant government department in the reporting format of the OSPAR Impulsive Noise Registry. A condition relating to this requirement has been included in the Proposed Licence.

3.7 Annex IV species

Articles 12 and 13 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EC) impose obligations on Member States to establish a system of strict protection for animal and plant species listed on Annex IV of the Directive. The applicant submitted a Risk Assessment for Annex IV Species (RAAIVS) report in

support of the MUL application and in line with national guidance on underwater noise³. The risk assessment considered the scope of the proposed maritime usage, the relevant Annex IV species (cetaceans, otters, bats, turtles), the receiving environment for those Annex IV species and the potential impacts of the proposed maritime usage. Due to the location, scale and scope of the proposed maritime usage, it was considered by the applicant that there was no potential to impact otters, bats or turtles.

The applicant's risk assessment of the proposed maritime usage on cetacean species concluded that, based on the results of the marine mammal noise exposure criteria given by Southall *et al.*, 2019⁴, and a review of available distribution and density data for cetaceans in Irish and Scottish waters (SCANS-IV⁵, ObSERVE II⁶ surveys, WGMME⁷ report), the proposed geophysical surveys have the potential to lead to behavioural responses and injury Temporary Threshold Shift (TTS) to a range of cetacean species, should they be present within the proposed project area while the sub bottom profiler and/or multibeam echosounder is in use.

However, there is also potential for the proposed geophysical surveys to lead to Permanent Threshold Shift (PTS), should a cetacean species be within close range as the activities are being carried out. Therefore, effective mitigation will be required to avoid potential adverse impacts on these species. It is recommended to include a condition in the Proposed Licence, if granted, relating to the need for the applicant to adhere to the most up to date national guidance for underwater noise and marine mammals. Strict implementation of these guidelines will mitigate against any potential impacts arising from the proposed activities.

The applicant has stated that a derogation licence from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) under the (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended, is not required for the proposed maritime usage.

3.8 Appropriate Assessment

The Habitats Directive (92/43/EC) and the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) are transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended (the Regulations) and by Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000. The application was subject to screening for appropriate assessment (AA) by MARA in accordance with the Regulations. MARA made an Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Determination on 20/07/2026 which concluded that the proposed maritime usage will require Stage 2 AA as

³ [Guidance to Manage the Risk to Marine Mammals from Man-made Sound Sources in Irish Waters. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2014](#)

⁴ <https://www.aquaticmammalsjournal.org/article/vol-45-iss-2-southall/>

⁵ <https://www.tiho-hannover.de/en/clinics-institutes/institutes/institute-of-terrestrial-and-aquatic-wildlife-research-itaw/scans-iv-survey>

⁶ <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-climate-energy-and-the-environment/press-releases/observe-phase-ii-aerial-project-reports/>

⁷ https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/Working_Group_on_Marine_Mammal_Ecology_WGMME_/26997367?file=54558947

it could not 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 European sites.

Five Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) were screened in for appropriate assessment by MARA. No Special Protection Protections Areas (SPAs) were screened in. The screened-in SACs, their Qualifying Interests (QIs) and likely or potential source of impact as a result of the proposed maritime usage are given in Appendix 1. The applicant submitted a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) in support of the application, dated 20/05/2025.

3.8.1 Assessment of Likely/Potential Impacts on European Sites

The AA Screening Determination identified the potential for underwater noise from survey activities to cause injury, displacement or disturbance to those cetacean species listed as QIs for the SACs in Appendix 1 that may be present in the vicinity of the proposed survey activities.

Marine mammals depend on sound for a wide range of functions including navigation, perception of their environment, communication, prey identification and capture, and the detection of predators. Given the marine mammal injury criteria proposed by Southall *et al.*, 2019⁸, the geophysical survey equipment to be used in the proposed maritime usage could interfere with these functions by inducing permanent auditory injury (or Permanent Threshold Shift (PTS)) at very close range or temporary hearing impairment (or Temporary Threshold Shift (TTS)) and disturbance at further distances from the noise source. Therefore, the measures listed in Section 3.8.3 will be required to mitigate against these potential significant effects. Taking into account these proposed mitigation measures there will not be significant adverse impacts on marine mammal populations at these SACs.

3.8.2 Assessment of 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. Table 3 below outlines the potential sources of impact that could act in combination with the proposed material amendment.

The spatial scope of the in-combination assessment is the proposed material amendment area and a 3km buffer zone around it. This is based on the fact that the applicant has proposed to carry out geophysical surveys throughout the extent of the proposed material amendment

⁸ <https://www.aquaticmammalsjournal.org/article/vol-45-iss-2-southall/>

area and adding a 3km buffer to include the JNCC Effective Deterrent Range (EDR) for assessing the significance of noise disturbance from Sub Bottom Profilers on Harbour porpoise⁹, which has a known sensitivity 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 2-year licence and thus the temporal scope is 2 years.

Table 3 - Potential sources of impact that could act in-combination with the application

Impact	Potential Cumulative Pathway
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.

Prediction:

The magnitude and extent of identified likely cumulative effects have been predicted below.

Underwater noise disturbance, displacement or harm (PTS or auditory injury) from survey activities

There is the potential for increased underwater noise disturbance effects on marine mammals if other relevant projects, capable of producing similar underwater noise sources, were to take place at the same time.

Identification of Plans or Projects that could act in combination

A search was carried out on 14/09/2026 of relevant databases (including EPA, An Coimisiún Pleanála, Foreshore Unit, MARA, planning authorities) for other plans and projects with characteristics that may cause in-combination effects with the proposed maritime usage, on the QIs of the European sites identified on in Appendix 1. 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

These plans promote sustainable development and integrated management planning in the maritime environment. It is unlikely that any of these plans will result in a negative in-combination effect on the conservation objectives of the identified European sites.

⁹ <https://data.jncc.gov.uk/data/2e60a9a0-4366-4971-9327-2bc409e09784/jncc-report-803.pdf>

In-Combination Effects Assessment conclusion

Given that no other projects were found to have the potential to act in combination with the proposed maritime usage and the plans listed above are unlikely to result in negative in-combination effects on the conservation objectives of the identified European sites, significant in-combination effects can be excluded for the proposed maritime usage.

3.8.3 Mitigation measures

Mitigation measures for those impacts identified in Section 3.8.1 are detailed below. These mitigation measures are recommended to be included as conditions in the Proposed Licence, if granted.

Underwater noise

The most up to date national underwater noise guidance must be adhered to for all geophysical activities, including the relevant monitored zones for the particular geophysical surveys being undertaken.

Marine Mammals

- i) The Holder shall appoint a marine mammal observer(s) for the purposes of overseeing the Permitted Maritime Usage. The Holder shall ensure the marine mammal observer(s) shall satisfy the requirements of the most up to date national guidance. During the activity the Holder shall comply with the directions of the marine mammal observer(s).
- ii) The Holder shall implement risk control and mitigation measures for marine mammals in strict accordance with the most up to date national guidance.
- iii) The Holder shall, within 30 days of completion of the Permitted Maritime Usage, forward a report of the marine mammal observer(s) operations and mitigation undertaken, to offshore@npws.gov.ie and compliance@mara.gov.ie.
- iv) The Holder shall publish the report and recording and data forms on their website within 60 days of completion of the Permitted Maritime Usage unless otherwise agreed with the Grantor.

3.8.4 Residual effects

This assessment has identified likely/potential significant impacts on European Sites and their conservation interests in Section 3.8.1 and recommends mitigation measures as conditions in the Proposed Licence. It is considered that the mitigation measures described and their implementation through licence conditions will remove, or reduce to imperceptible levels, all negative impacts and that residual effects will not arise.

3.8.5 Assessment of Transboundary effects

The mitigation measures proposed as part of this appropriate assessment will mitigate against any transboundary effects on other European sites.

3.8.6 Appropriate assessment conclusion

The appropriate assessment screening process identified likely/potential significant impacts due to underwater noise disturbance, displacement or harm from survey activities. Likely significant impacts from the proposed maritime usage could not be ruled out, beyond reasonable scientific doubt, without mitigation. The potential for in-combination effects from the proposed maritime usage with other plans and projects could be ruled out, beyond reasonable scientific doubt.

Mitigation measures were identified to ensure that impacts on European sites and their QIs and SCIs do not occur. Therefore, with adherence to the mitigation measures specified in Section 3.8.3 and in view of best scientific knowledge, and of the site's conservation objectives, the project, individually, or in-combination with other plans or projects, will not have adverse effects on European sites.

The appropriate assessment determination is detailed in Section 9.

4. Consideration of other maritime users

MARA has had regard to the rights of other users as set out in Section 3 (3)(b) of the MAP Act. Given the location of the proposed maritime usage, it is unlikely to affect commercial shipping or recreational maritime users to any significant degree.

As part of the AIMU submitted in support of the application, the applicant provided an assessment of the overlap of the proposed maritime usage area with commercial fishing areas and fish spawning and nursery grounds. The proposed maritime usage overlaps primarily with demersal mixed species fishing areas and spawning and nursery ground for a range of commercially fished species including Haddock, Hake, Herring, Megrim, Horse Mackerel, Mackerel and *Nephrops*. However, the proposed maritime usage is temporary in nature and is unlikely to have a significant impact on fish spawning or nursery grounds, or on fishing activity. In order to ensure fishers and other vessel users are notified of the proposed maritime usage a condition in respect of the requirement to publish a marine notice via the Marine Safety Division of the Department of Transport, prior to the commencement of activities, is recommended to be included in the Proposed Licence.

5. Site visit

A site visit was not undertaken due to the offshore location of the proposed maritime usage.

6. Public body consultation

Observations on the MUL application were invited from relevant public bodies to ensure that MARA takes account of all other relevant maritime usages and interests in the application area. Six responses were received. The following tables summarise the observations from public bodies with a response given below each submission summary. The MARA website should be consulted to view the full details of the observations received.

1. Observations summary – Marine Survey Office (MSO)
A submission was received on 07/01/2026 from the MSO, which states that they have no objection to the proposed maritime usage from a navigational safety perspective. The MSO notes that the proposed maritime usage area contains three known international submarine cables and that the licensee shall ensure all precautions to avoid interference, disruption and damage to these cables. The MSO recommended conditions to be applied to the licence if granted, which relate to: The requirement for a marine notice to be issued Navigational safety The requirement for <i>Navtex</i> and radio broadcast warnings The need to liaise with the MSO and Commissioner for Irish Lights (CIL) regarding the marking and lighting of any moored instruments The need for vessels to be suitably certified The need to notify the MSO if Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships are to be deployed The particulars of information to be provided to the UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) and INFOMAR

MARA Response:

MARA notes the issues raised by the MSO. It is recommended that conditions be included in the Proposed Licence, if granted, in respect of the requirement to publish marine notices, the need for vessels to conform with the requirements of Irish certification standards, the need to provide information to the UKHO and INFOMAR, where relevant, and to not damage or interfere with any third party's property while carrying out the Permitted Maritime Usage. In addition, MARA is required to have regard to the rights of the public or any class of the public over the foreshore in relation to navigation and navigational safety – this requirement has been incorporated into MARA's overall assessment of the licence application.

2. Observations summary – Commissioners of Irish Lights (CIL)

A submission was received on 03/02/2026 from CIL stating they have no objection to the granting of a licence for the proposed maritime usage from a safety of navigation perspective.

MARA response:

MARA notes the submission from CIL.

3. Observations summary – Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM)

A submission was received on 09/02/2026 from DAFM, which along with its own comments, also summarises comments and observations from the Marine Institute. These are made in more detail in the Marine Institutes separate submissions and are considered under the relevant separate heading below. In their submission, DAFM states that:

- The sea-fishing and aquaculture sectors should be fully recognised and given high priority as a long-standing, pre-existing, and traditional activity in the marine environment within the context of the assessment of the proposed maritime usage
- The evaluation of potential impacts of the proposed maritime usage 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
- Relevant local fishing organisations should be included on the provision of any Notices to Mariners and be made aware of proposed works at the earliest opportunity

MARA response:

MARA notes the issues raised by DAFM. The potential impacts of the proposed maritime usage on fish and fisheries have been assessed in Sections 3.6 and 4 of this report. It is recommended that conditions be included in the Proposed Licence, if granted, in respect of the requirement to publish a marine notice.

4. Observations summary – The Marine Institute (MI)

A submission was received on 28/01/2026 from the MI, which notes that the proposed maritime usage area is in an area of heavy fishing activity and overlaps spawning and nursery grounds for numerous fish species. The MI states that the proposed survey activities are

short in duration and should not significantly impact fish or fishing operations, assuming the publishing of the necessary notices to mariners.

MARA response:

MARA notes the submission from the MI. The potential impacts of the proposed maritime usage on fish and fisheries have been assessed in Sections 3.6 and 4 of this report. It is recommended that conditions be included in the Proposed Licence, if granted, in respect of the requirement to publish a marine notice.

5. Observations summary – Dept. Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH)

A submission was received on 16/02/2026 from the Development Applications Unit (DAU) of DHLGH incorporating observations from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) in relation to nature conservation. The NPWS considers that the proposed maritime usage is unlikely to give rise to likely significant effects on any European site subject to implementation of the proposed mitigation and adherence to best practice guidance. The NPWS also state that the applicant should note that there may be a requirement for Regulation 54 consent under the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended.

MARA response:

MARA notes the submission from the DAU. The AA has identified likely/potential significant impacts on European Sites and their conservation interests in Section 3.8 and recommends measures to mitigate against any potential significant effects arising as a result of the proposed maritime usage. The applicant has submitted a Risk Assessment for Annex IV Species report in support of this application and has confirmed that they are not required to apply for a derogation under Regulation 54 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended.

6. Observations summary – Geological Survey Ireland (GSI)

A submission was received on 04/02/2026 from GSI recommending the use of their various data sets when conducting the EIAR, SEA, planning and scoping processes for any developments, plans and policies.

MARA response:

MARA notes the comments from GSI, however the proposed maritime usage is for Schedule 7(3) site investigations only, and EIAR, SEA and planning are not applicable.

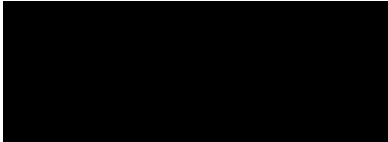
7. Public consultation

A public consultation was undertaken between 06/08/2026 – 12/09/2026, under Regulation 42 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 and under section 117(6)(b) of the MAP Act. No submissions were received.

8. Recommendation

Having considered the information submitted in support of the application, and the criteria specified in the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021, as amended, I recommend that a Maritime Usage Licence in accordance with Section 119 of the Maritime Area Planning Act, 2021, as amended, be part granted to **SalvOcean Ltd., First Floor, 85 Great Portland Street, London, W1W 7LT, United Kingdom**, for Marine environmental surveys for the purposes of site investigation or in support of an application under Part XXI of the Act of 2000, subject to the conditions in the Proposed Licence, for a duration of three years. It is recommended to part grant the MUL to include only Area A of the application as per the proposed MUL map in Appendix 1 of the Proposed Licence.

A part grant is recommended to exclude Area B of the application for the following reasons: The applicant has included proposals to include surveys of the wreck of the MV *Accra* in their application. However, the MV *Accra* lies outside the National Marine Planning Framework area and agreed Continental Shelf. Therefore, MARA is not currently in a position to incorporate this area in a maritime usage licence.

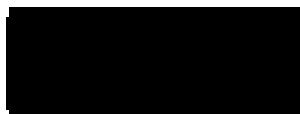
Signed:	
Prepared by:	Ross Fitzgerald Marine Analyst
Date:	17/09/2026

9. Appropriate Assessment Determination

Having considered:

- the application information submitted by the applicant;
- observations received further to public body consultation; and
- this *Maritime Usage Licence Assessment Report*,

together with my own assessment, it can be concluded, and I determine, for the purposes of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and Regulation 42(11) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations) 2011 that the proposal 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 (MUL240050)** (either individually or in combination with any other plans or projects), will not adversely affect the integrity of any European sites, in view of the sites' conservation objectives, subject to the implementation of the mitigation measures specified in the foregoing **Section 3 – Appropriate Assessment**. These mitigation measures are included in the Proposed Licence and must be incorporated into any consent that may be granted in respect of the respective maritime usage licence application.

Signed:	
Appropriate Assessment Determination by:	John Evans Director of Maritime Usage Licensing
Date:	21/09/2026

10. Appendix 1

European sites and qualifying interests which were screened in for appropriate assessment along with potential source of impact and site-specific conservation objectives.

European site & site code	Approx. distance from proposed MUL area (km)	List of Qualifying Interests	Connections (Source-pathway-receptor)	Site-specific conservation objectives
Gweedore Bay and Islands SAC [001141]	72	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes – potential for underwater noise from survey activities to cause injury, displacement or disturbance	NPWS (2015) Conservation Objectives: Gweedore Bay and Islands SAC [001141]. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
Lough Swilly SAC [002287]	86	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes – potential for underwater noise from survey activities to cause injury, displacement or disturbance	NPWS (2011) Conservation Objectives: Lough Swilly SAC [002287]. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
St. John's Point SAC [000191]	135	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i> (Common Bottlenose Dolphin) [1349]	Yes – potential for underwater noise from survey activities to cause injury, displacement or disturbance	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.

Bunduff Lough and Machair/Trawalua/Mullaghmore SAC [000625]	147	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes – potential for underwater noise from survey activities to cause injury, displacement or disturbance	NPWS (2026) Conservation Objectives Bunduff Lough and Machair/Trawalua/Mullaghmore SAC [000625]. 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	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives West Connacht Coast SAC [002998]. Version 2.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.