

Request for Observations from Public Bodies MUL250010

Gas Networks Ireland – Cahiracon/Foynes

Proposed activity:

The MUL Area covers an area of 11.19km² and extends from the townland of Shannakea Beg along the Clare coast to Cahiracon (Ed Killadysert), across the Shannon Estuary to Shannon Foynes Island and along the Limerick coast to the townland of Leahys.

The proposed maritime usage is to undertake marine environmental and geophysical surveys for the purposes of site investigation or in support of an application under Part XXI of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The objective of the proposed activities/works is to provide high quality baseline data that can contribute to a reliable basis for site selection and any subsequent design, Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) for the Strategic Gas Emergency Reserve Project, should a site be taken forward to the planning/consenting stage.

BIM comments:

There is reference to aquaculture and fishing activities in the AIMU report. Several commercial fisheries activities occur within the Shannon Estuary. Local licensed fishing vessels most frequently partake in pot fishing, gillnets and tangle nets (Shannon Estuary Strategic Integrated Framework Plan, 2013). Licenced aquaculture areas are also known to overlap with the proposed MUL Area (Fishery Order ID: T08-004AOFO). Several sections of the Shannon Estuary are also designated under the Shellfish Waters Directive, although not any areas overlap with the proposed MUL Area. The nearest designated shellfish waters are the West Shannon Ballylongford Shellfish Waters located approximately 22km west of the proposed MUL Area.

The main concern would be due to suspended sediments from survey activity. It should be noted that the licence site T07-007 (Pacific Oyster, Blue Mussel, European Flat Oyster) is also in approx. 3 km from proposed activity, and the eastern side of the oyster shellfish order (T08-004AOFO) overlaps on the proposed MUL area (Figure 1) . However, BIM is not aware of any current aquaculture activity on these aquaculture sites at present. As already noted in the MUL application and AIMU report the nearest active designated shellfish waters at Ballylongford Shellfish waters is 22km away from the proposed survey area and any suspended sediments would have little impact on these shellfish sites downriver. The AIMU report also identifies the temporary nature of the activity will not have significant impact on commercial fishery activity in the licence area.

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.

