

Assessment, Research and Data Unit			
Appropriate Assessment Screening and Determination Report			
To:	Maritime Authorisations Unit	From:	Suzanne Wylde Senior Marine Advisor
Date:	12th November 2025	Maritime Usage Licence Application No:	MUL250013
Applicant:	Uisce Éireann, Colvill House, 24-26 Talbot Street, Mountjoy, Dublin		
Type(s) 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:	Greater Dublin Drainage Scheme, Irish Sea and Baldoyle Bay		
Licence application received:	1 st September 2025		

1. Background

Uisce Éireann (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 in accordance with Schedule 7(3) of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 (the MAP Act). The information gleaned from the proposed maritime usage will inform and support the Greater Dublin Drainage project in its aim to upgrade and provide additional wastewater infrastructure for the Greater Dublin Area.

2. Description of maritime usage(s) and local site characteristics

2.1 Brief description of the maritime usage

The applicant proposes to undertake marine site investigations (Table 1) in the Irish Sea and in Baldoyle Bay. The applicant expects that the proposed maritime usage will take 8 weeks to complete. The applicant has applied for a licence duration of five years.

Table 1: Marine environmental surveys proposed to be undertaken in Baldoyle Bay and the Irish Sea.

Marine environmental surveys
Land based techniques such as seismic refraction, ground -penetrating radar or electrical resistivity tomography.
Bathymetric techniques (multibeam echosounder (MBES), sidescan sonar (SSS)), and geophysical techniques (sub- bottom profiler (SBP) and ultra-high resolution seismic (UHRS) boomer or spark). Geomagnetic surveying using a magnetometer will also be undertaken. Positioning information will be provided via an ultra-short baseline (USBL) system.
Boreholes (4 no.) in the intertidal and in the Irish Sea (10 No.) and cone penetration testing within the boreholes.
Drop down video survey.
Benthic grab samples and water samples (conductivity, temperature and depth) will be taken from locations in the Irish Sea.

2.2 Brief description of the site characteristics

The proposed MUL area is comprised of two distinct areas – Baldoyle Bay and an area in the Irish Sea extending east from Portmarnock Beach. The portion of the MUL area in the Irish Sea consists of moderate energy sand and moderate and high energy coarse sediment. Baldoyle Bay is a transitional waterbody. The habitat types within the estuary consist predominantly of mud shores and some salt marshes.

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 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 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.

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

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
Baldoyle Bay SAC (Site code IE000199)	Within MUL area	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410]	Yes – possible habitat loss and/or degradation.	Yes	NPWS (2012) Conservation Objectives: Baldoyle Bay SAC 000199. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC (Site Code IE003000)	Within MUL area	Reefs [1170] <i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes – possible disturbance from underwater noise; possible habitat loss and/or degradation.	Yes	NPWS, 2013 Conservation Objectives: Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC 003000. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
Ireland's Eye SAC (Site Code IE002193)	<5km	Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]	No	No	NPWS (2017) Conservation Objectives: Ireland's Eye SAC 002193. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.
Malahide estuary SAC (Site Code IE 000205)	<5km	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410] Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120]	No	No	NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Malahide Estuary SAC 000205. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

		Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130]			
Howth Head SAC (Site Code IE000202)	2km	Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] European dry heaths [4030]	No	No	NPWS (2016) Conservation Objectives: Howth Head SAC 000202. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
Rogerstown Estuary SAC (Site code IE000208)	5-10km	Estuaries [1130] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia 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 (2013) Conservation Objectives: Rogerstown Estuary SAC 000208. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
Lambay Island SAC (Site Code IE000204)	7km	Reefs [1170] Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]	No	Yes	NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Lambay Island SAC 000204. Version 2. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
		<i>Halichoerus grypus</i> (Grey Seal) [1364] <i>Phoca vitulina</i> (Harbour Seal) [1365] <i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes – possible disturbance from underwater noise		
South Dublin Bay SAC (Site Code IE000210)	10-20km	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Embryonic shifting dunes [2110]	No	No	NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: South Dublin Bay SAC 000210. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Codling Fault Zone SAC (Site code IE003015)	25km	Submarine structures made by leaking gases [1180]	No	Yes	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives: Codling Fault Zone SAC 003015. Version 2. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
		Phocoena phocoena (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes – possible disturbance from underwater noise		
North Dublin Bay SAC (Site Code IE000206)	10-20km	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] 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] Humid dune slacks [2190] <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i> (Petalwort) [1395]	No	No	NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: North Dublin Bay SAC 000206. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
North-West Irish Sea SPA (Site Code IE004236)	Within area	MUL Red-throated Diver (<i>Gavia stellata</i>) [A001] Great Northern Diver (<i>Gavia immer</i>) [A003] Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A009] Manx Shearwater (<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>) [A013] Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>) [A018] Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A065] Little Gull (<i>Larus minutus</i>) [A177] Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182] Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [A183] Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184]	Yes - possible above and under water noise disturbance; visual disturbance.	Yes	NPWS (2023) Conservation Objectives: North-west Irish Sea SPA 004236. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

			<p>Great Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus marinus</i>) [A187] Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188] Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>) [A192] Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A194] Little Tern (<i>Sterna albifrons</i>) [A195] Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) [A199] Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>) [A200] Puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>) [A204]</p>			
Baldoyle Bay SPA (Site Code IE004016)	Within area	MUL	<p>Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</p>	Yes - possible above and under water noise disturbance; visual disturbance; possible habitat loss and/or degradation.	Yes	NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Baldoyle Bay SPA 004016. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
Ireland's Eye SPA (Site Code IE004117)	Within area	MUL	<p>Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184] Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188] Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) [A199] Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>) [A200]</p>	Yes - possible above and under water noise disturbance; visual disturbance; possible habitat loss and/or degradation.	Yes	NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Ireland's Eye SPA 004117. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
Malahide Estuary SPA (Site Code IE004025)	2km		<p>Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) [A005] Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054] Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>) [A067] Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [A069] Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140]</p>	Yes – possible above and under water noise disturbance.	Yes	NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Malahide Estuary SPA 004025. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

		<p>Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] 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] Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</p>			
<p>Howth Head Coast SPA (Site Code IE004113)</p>	2km	<p>Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188]</p>	<p>Yes – possible above water noise disturbance.</p>	Yes	<p>NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Howth Head Coast SPA 004113. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage</p>
<p>North Bull Island SPA (Site Code IE004006)</p>	2km	<p>Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054] Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056] Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143] Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) [A144] 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] Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) [A169] Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046]</p>	<p>Yes – possible above water noise disturbance, visual disturbance.</p>	Yes	<p>NPWS (2015) Conservation Objectives: North Bull Island SPA 004006. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.</p>

<p>Rogerstown Estuary SPA (Site Code IE004015)</p>	<p>7km</p>	<p>Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056] Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130] Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137] Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143] Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Rogerstown Estuary SPA 004015. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.</p>
<p>Lambay Island SPA (Site Code IE004069)</p>	<p>7km</p>	<p>Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [A183] Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A009] Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184] Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188] Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) [A199] Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>) [A200] Puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>) [A204] Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>) [A018] Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) [A043]</p>	<p>Yes - possible above and under water noise disturbance and/or visual disturbance.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Lambay Island SPA 004069. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.</p>
<p>South Dublin Bay and River Tolka SPA (Site IE004024)</p>	<p>6km</p>	<p>Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130] Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137] Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143] Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) [A144] Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>) [A192] Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A194]</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>NPWS (2015) Conservation Objectives: South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.</p>

		Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046]			
Skerries Islands SPA (Site code: IE004122)	16km	Purple Sandpiper (<i>Calidris maritima</i>) [A148] Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) [A169] Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184] Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>) [A018] Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046]	No	No	NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Skerries Islands SPA 004122. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Dalkey Islands SPA (Site Code IE004172)	14km	Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>) [A192] Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A194]	No	No	NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Dalkey Islands SPA 004172. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Rockabill SPA (Site code: IE004014)	16km	Purple Sandpiper (<i>Calidris maritima</i>) [A148] Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>) [A192] Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A194]	No	No	NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Rockabill SPA 004014. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

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.)
Disturbance from underwater noise	Possible temporal impacts on marine mammals and birds.
Visual disturbance and above water noise disturbance.	Possible temporal impacts on qualifying interests of SPAs.
Habitat loss and/or degradation	The works will be temporary in nature and will not result in permanent habitat loss and/or degradation.

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 5km and the CETS as 5 years. The definition of the CESS is based on the geophysical survey methods proposed and the Effective Deterrence Range¹ for Harbour porpoise, given their known sensitivity to anthropogenic noise sources. And the CETS is the proposed MUL duration.

A search of relevant databases undertaken on the 11th November 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.

¹ [JNCC Report 803.](#)

Table 4: List of projects which, in particular, were considered to have potential in-combination impacts on European sites.

Application Ref.	Project description	Distance from proposed MUL area (km)	Project Status
LIC230018	Microsoft Ireland (Site investigations)	<5km	Licensed
LIC230016	Microsoft Ireland (Site investigations)	<5km	Licensed
MUL230034	Codling Wind Park Limited (Site investigations)	5-10km	Licensed
MUL240023	Iarnród Éireann (Site investigations)	5-10km	Licensed
MUL240010	Eirgrid (Site investigations)	5-10km	Applied
S0031-01	Malahide Marina Village Ltd (Dumping at Sea)	<5km	Permitted
S0004-03, S0024-02, S0033-01,	Dublin Port Company (Dumping at Sea)	5-10km	Permitted
S0038-01	Dublin Port Company (Dumping at Sea)	5-10km	Applied

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

- Climate Action Plan 2025,
- Water Action Plan 2022-2027,
- Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029.

Likely significant in-combination effects between this application and the plans listed above and projects listed on Table 4 on the conservation objectives of the European sites considered in this report cannot be excluded at this stage.

Were mitigation measures considered during the screening process?

No

5. Screening Determination Statement

<p>The assessment of significant effects:</p> <p>On the basis of the information on file, and having regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nature and scale of the proposed development; • The distance to the nearest European sites; • The potential for in-combination effects with other plans and projects; • Possible disturbance from underwater noise; • Possible visual and above water noise disturbance; • Possible habitat loss and/or degradation. <p>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, Mountjoy, Dublin to carry out marine environmental surveys at Baldoye Bay and the Irish Sea (MUL250013) 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.</p>		
Signature and Date of Recommending Officer	 Suzanne Wylde Senior Marine Advisor	12 th November 2025
Signature and Date of Decision Maker	 Jon Evans Director of Assessment, Research and Data Unit	19 th November 2025