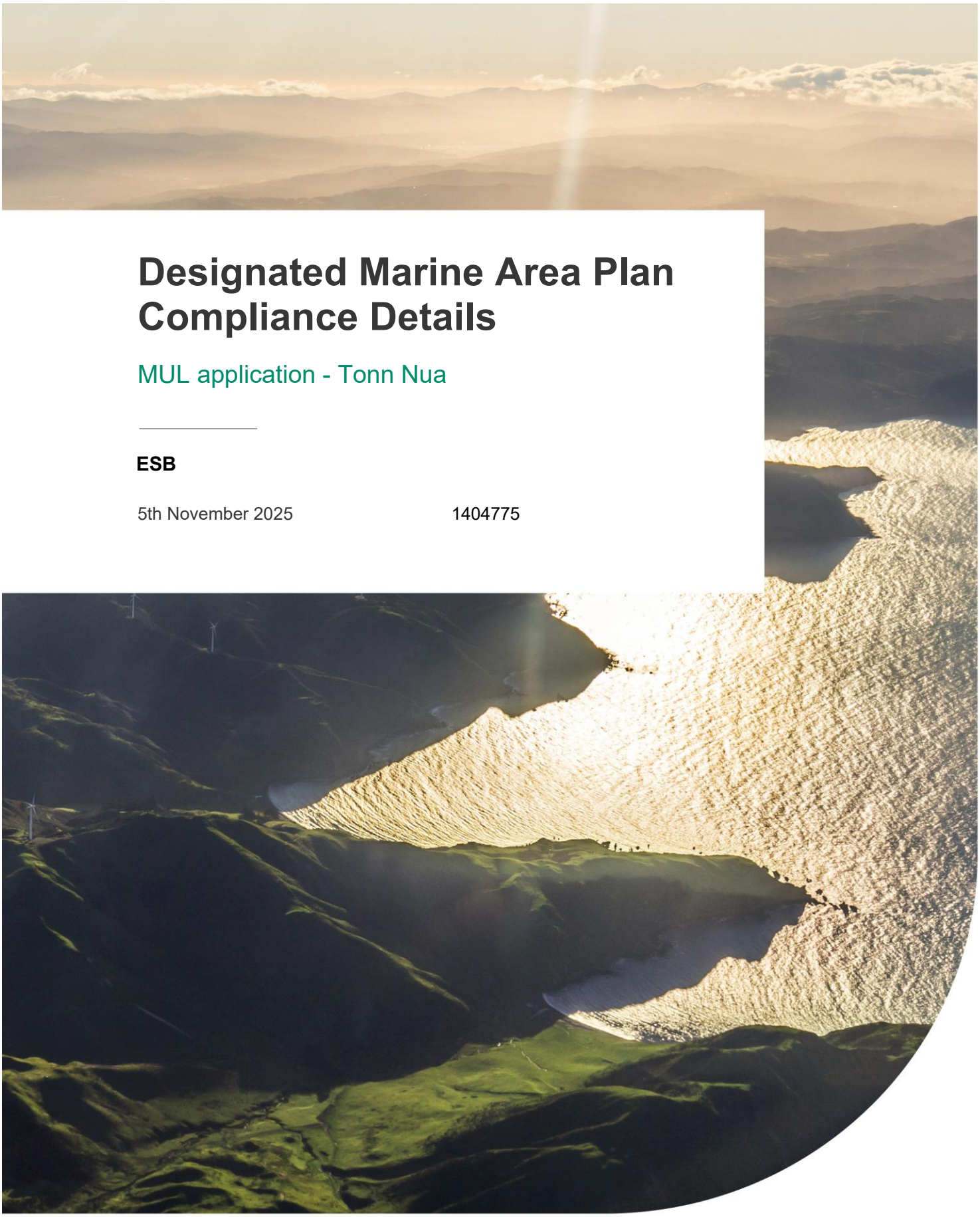

Designated Marine Area Plan Compliance Details

MUL application - Tonn Nua

ESB

5th November 2025 1404775

OUR VISION

Working to create a world powered by renewable energy

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Document history

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Contents

Glossary

Term	Definition
Adverse Effect on Site Integrity (AEOSI)	A finding under the Habitats Directive when a plan or project would undermine the ecological functions of a Natura 2000 site; SI works must demonstrate no AEOSI either alone or in-combination.
Annex IV Species	Species listed under Annex IV of the EU Habitats Directive that require strict protection, including cetaceans, seals, and marine turtles.
Appropriate Assessment (AA)	A process required under the Habitats Directive to assess whether a plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of a Natura 2000 site.
Designated Maritime Area Plan (DMAP)	A spatial planning tool established under the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021, designating maritime areas for specific uses such as offshore renewable energy.
Maritime Area A – Tonn Nua	The first DMAP-designated area for offshore renewable energy, located in the Celtic Sea and targeted for ~900 MW of offshore wind by 2030.
Maritime Area Planning Act 2021	The legislation establishing Ireland's new marine planning system, including DMAPs and the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA).
Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA)	The State body responsible for licensing, compliance, and enforcement under the Maritime Area Planning system.
Mitigation Measures	Measures built into the design and execution of SI works to avoid, minimise, or offset potential environmental impacts.
Natura 2000 Site	A network of protected areas across the EU established under the Habitats and Birds Directives, including SACs and SPAs.
Natura Impact Statement (NIS)	A report prepared to inform Appropriate Assessment, demonstrating whether a project would result in AEOSI on a Natura 2000 site.
Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE)	Renewable energy technologies deployed at sea, primarily offshore wind in the context of the SC-DMAP.
ORESS (Offshore Renewable Electricity Support Scheme)	Ireland's competitive auction scheme to procure offshore renewable capacity; ORESS 2.1 relates to the first DMAP-led projects.
Site Investigation (SI) Works	Temporary surveys, sampling, and monitoring activities undertaken to gather baseline environmental, geotechnical, and geophysical data for offshore project development.
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	An environmental assessment process applied to plans and programmes, such as the SC-DMAP, to ensure sustainability.
Water Framework Directive (WFD)	EU Directive requiring Member States to protect and enhance the status of water bodies and achieve "good status" objectives.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviation or Acronym	Meaning
AA	Appropriate Assessment
AEOSI	Adverse Effect on Site Integrity
CAP	Climate Action Plan
DMAP	Designated Maritime Area Plan
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FCS	Favourable Conservation Status
GW	Gigawatt
km	kilometre
m	metre
MARA	Maritime Area Regulatory Authority
MMO	Marine Mammal Observer
MW	Megawatt
NBAP	National Biodiversity Action Plan
NIS	Natura Impact Statement
ORE	Offshore Renewable Energy
ORESS	Offshore Renewable Electricity Support Scheme
PAM	Passive Acoustic Monitoring
RA	Risk Assessment
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SC-DMAP	South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan
SCI	Special Conservation Interest (species listed for protection in an SPA)
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SI	Site Investigation
SISAA	Supporting Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment
SPA	Special Protection Area
USB	Ultra Short Baseline (acoustic positioning system)
UHRS	Ultra High-Resolution Seismic survey
WFD	Water Framework Directive

1. Introduction

This statement addresses the consistency of the proposed site investigation (SI) works at the Tonn Nua site (Maritime Area A) with the South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan (SC-DMAP) (see Figure 1.1), as required under Question 4.2 of the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) Guidance Note for Applicants (August 2025).

DMAPs are prepared under the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 as part of Ireland's marine spatial planning system. They are plan-led mechanisms that designate specific areas of Ireland's maritime space for particular uses, setting out policies, objectives, and spatial priorities for sustainable management.

The SC- DMAP is Ireland's first DMAP, covering an area of the Celtic Sea identified as having significant potential for offshore renewable energy (ORE). Its purpose is to:

- Provide spatial certainty to developers, stakeholders, and regulators;
- Enable the delivery of 5 GW of offshore wind by 2030, with further capacity beyond 2030;
- Balance ORE development with the protection of the marine environment, biodiversity, fisheries, navigation, and cultural heritage; and
- Ensure Ireland's offshore renewable development proceeds in a sustainable, coordinated, and plan-led manner.

To achieve this purpose, the SC- DMAP sets out the following key objectives:

- Plan-Led Development – ensuring offshore renewable energy occurs only within designated maritime areas in a co-ordinated manner.
- Renewable Energy Delivery – enabling 5 GW of offshore wind by 2030 and further capacity thereafter.
- Safeguarding Biodiversity and Natura 2000 Sites – avoiding or minimising impacts on designated sites, habitats, and species.
- Multi-Use Seas – promoting co-existence with navigation, fisheries, recreation, and cultural heritage.
- Protecting Cultural and Natural Heritage – recognising seascape and archaeological sensitivities.
- Evidence-Based Planning and Governance – establishing governance frameworks, monitoring, and data sharing.
- Benefits for Communities and the Economy – ensuring offshore renewable energy delivers socio-economic value for Ireland's coastal regions.

Within this DMAP, Maritime Area A – Tonn Nua (*"New Wave"*) has been designated as the location for the first offshore wind project under ORESS 2.1, with a target capacity of approximately 900 MW by 2030. Tonn Nua reflects the State's new approach to designating maritime areas for ORE in a way that accelerates renewable energy deployment while safeguarding biodiversity and promoting co-existence with other maritime activities.

7°42.0'W

7°6.0'W

6°30.0'W

52°12.0'N

51°54.0'N

51°36.0'N

Project:

Tonn Nua MUL

Title:

Figure 1.1: MUL Application Area

Key

MUL Application Area

12 nautical mile (NM) Irish limit

Scale @ A3:1:400,000

Coordinate System: IRENET95 Irish Transverse Mercator
Graticules: WGS 84

0 5 10 15 20 km

N

Date: 08-10-25 | Prepared by: NN | Checked by: KG

Ref: IE211913_M_004_A

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2. Consistency with the South Coast DMAP

The following sections demonstrate how the proposed SI works at Tonn Nua are consistent with the policies and objectives of the SC- DMAP. Each objective is addressed in turn, with reference to the supporting assessments submitted as part of this application. Taken together, the evidence shows that the SI works are fully aligned with the plan-led framework established by the SC-DMAP, contributing to Ireland's offshore renewable energy ambitions while safeguarding the environment and supporting co-existence with other maritime users.

Objective 1 – Plan-Led Development

"No fixed offshore wind development… should be permitted… beyond the four Maritime Areas." (pp. 9–10)
The proposed SI works are located within and immediately adjacent to Maritime Area A – Tonn Nua (see Figure 1-1), which the South Coast DMAP designates for fixed offshore wind development. By confining activities to this defined boundary, the project is fully consistent with Objective 1, ensuring development can proceed within designated maritime areas in a co-ordinated, plan-led manner.

Objective 2 – Renewable Energy Delivery

"To support Ireland's legally binding climate objectives through enabling achievement of 5 GW by 2030… 20 GW by 2040, and 37 GW by 2050." (p. 27)
The SI works do not in themselves deliver renewable energy capacity. However, they are a necessary enabling step within Maritime Area A – Tonn Nua. By gathering baseline geophysical, geotechnical, metocean and environmental data, the surveys provide the information required to design, assess, and consent offshore wind projects in the area. In this way, the SI works are consistent with Objective 2 because they create the technical and environmental evidence base needed to realise the ~900 MW project envisaged under ORESS 2.1, and ultimately to contribute to the national 5 GW offshore wind target by 2030.

Objective 3 – Safeguarding Biodiversity and Natura 2000 Sites

"…policy objectives… seek to avoid, minimise and mitigate potential adverse environmental effects…" (p. 24)
The SI works embed robust mitigation measures to ensure protection of biodiversity and Natura 2000 sites, consistent with Objective 3. The Supporting Information for Screening the Appropriate Assessment (SISAA, Attachment 4.3.1) could not rule out likely significant effects, and a full Natura Impact Statement is therefore provided (NIS, Attachment 4.3.2). The NIS concluded that with mitigation, the SI works will not result in adverse effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site, either alone or in-combination. The Risk Assessment for Annex IV Species (Attachment 4.4) found negligible risk to strictly protected species, and the Compliance with Objectives of the Water Framework Directive Assessment (Attachment 4.5) confirmed that WFD objectives will not be compromised. Together, these findings confirm alignment with Objective 3.

Objective 4 – Multi-Use Seas

"…seek to maximise opportunities for the co-existence of ORE with other marine activities…" (p. 20)
The SI works are temporary, localised, and designed to minimise interference with other maritime activities. Survey operations will be managed to reduce disruption, and mitigation such as advance notification to mariners and engagement with local stakeholders will ensure activities are communicated clearly and carried out safely. By being limited in scope and duration, the SI works support Objective 4 by enabling co-existence with navigation, fisheries, and other marine users.

Objective 5 – Protecting Cultural and Natural Heritage

"Surveys, site investigation and development… shall… include measures to protect underwater archaeological and cultural heritage…" (pp. 67–68)

The SI works are short-term, and with mitigation (Review of the National Monuments Service (NMS) database and known wreck records, implementation of exclusion zones, applicable during intrusive surveys, around any confirmed or potential heritage assets identified during non-intrusive or desktop surveys, and archaeological monitoring and reporting in line with guidance from the NMS and National Museum of Ireland) will result in no lasting effects on cultural heritage or seascape. The data gathered will inform subsequent project stages, where detailed assessments and mitigation measures for heritage will be developed. This ensures the works are consistent with Objective 5.

Objective 6 – Evidence-Based Planning and Governance

As this application concerns SI works rather than an OWF development, the specific requirement on application sequencing is not applicable. However, the proposed SI works are consistent with the principle ensuring high level data informs any subsequent application.

Objective 7 – Benefits for Communities and the Economy

"Implementation of the SC-DMAP will generate significant associated economic and employment opportunities…" (p. 85)

The SC-DMAP emphasises socio-economic benefits for coastal communities and regional supply chains. Even at this early stage, the SI works will contribute to local economies through the use of ports, contractors, and service providers, while laying the foundation for long-term benefits once offshore wind development proceeds. This ensures consistency with Objective 7.

3. Summary of Consistency

The analysis above demonstrates that the proposed SI works at Tonn Nua align fully with the seven objectives of the SC- DMAP. Each objective is addressed through spatial consistency, robust environmental protection measures, co-existence planning, and socio-economic contributions.

For clarity and ease of reference, the table below (Table 3.1) provides a consolidated summary of how the SI works meet each SC-DMAP objective, along with cross-references to the supporting attachments where detailed evidence is provided.

Table 3.1: Summary of DMAP Objective Consistency

SC-DMAP Objective	SI Works Consistency
1. Plan-Led Development	Activities confined to Maritime Area A; consistent with plan-led approach.
2. Renewable Energy Delivery	SI works provide enabling baseline data to support design, assessment, and consenting of the ~900 MW project at Tonn Nua, thereby facilitating delivery of the 5 GW target.
3. Biodiversity Protection	Embedded mitigation for birds and marine mammals; no AEOSI.
4. Multi-Use Seas	Temporary, localised surveys; advance notification and stakeholder engagement minimise disruption to fisheries and navigation.
5. Cultural & Natural Heritage	No lasting effects; future assessments planned.
6. Evidence-Based Planning	Data collection and reporting commitments; supports cumulative assessment.
7. Socio-Economic Benefits	Local ports, contractors, and services engaged; foundation for benefits.

4. Conclusion

The proposed site investigation works at Tonn Nua (Maritime Area A) are fully consistent with the SC- DMAP. They represent a critical enabling step in delivering Ireland's offshore renewable energy targets in a plan-led, sustainable, and co-ordinated manner.

With robust mitigation in place and supported by the conclusions of the SISAA (Attachment 4.3.1), NIS (Attachment 4.3.2), Annex IV Risk Assessment (Attachment 4.4), and WFD Assessment (Attachment 4.5), the works will not adversely affect the integrity of designated sites, protected species, or other maritime activities.

The project therefore advances the State's *"New Wave"* approach under the DMAP, accelerating renewable energy while safeguarding biodiversity and promoting co-existence with other marine users.

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