

MAC Report	
Application for a Maritime Area Consent (MAC) under Section 79 of Maritime Area Planning Act 2021, as amended (the Act)	
Application Details	
MAC Applicant:	Galway County Council
MAC Reference No:	MAC250001
Location:	Droim Pier, Leitir Móir, Co. Galway
Date Application received:	20 November 2025
Proposed Maritime Usage:	Galway County Council has applied for a MAC for a pier extension, slipway and associated works at Droim, Leitir Móir, Galway.
Recommendation:	To recommend approval of the MAC sought with conditions attached.

Document Control			
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Contents

1. Overview	3
2. Background	3
3. Proposed Maritime Usage.....	3
4. Site Visit.....	4
5. Review of Legislation & Associated Consents.....	8
5.1 Applicable Provisions of the Maritime Area Planning Act, 2021 as amended (the Act)	8
5.2 Existing Consents & Authorisations	8
5.3 Development Permission	8
5.4 Ownership.....	9
6. Assessment.....	10
6.1 Schedule 5.....	10
6.2 Rehabilitation Schedule	14
6.3 Section 83 – Nature of Use	15
7. Proposed MAC Map (for Illustration purposes only)	16
8. Levy	17
9. Discussion.....	17
a. Terms.....	17
b. Conditions and Reasons for Conditions	18
10. Conclusion & Recommendation	19

1. Overview

On 20 November 2025, MARA received a Maritime Area Consent (MAC) application under Section 79 of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021, as amended (the Act) from Galway County Council for a pier extension, slipway and associated works at Droim, Leitir Móir.

2. Background

The Applicant has stated that the proposed development will allow for an increase in tourist users of the pier as well as providing local fishers with an upgraded amenity which will enable them to grow their fleet and increase their catch size per trip. The facility will also cater for traditional seaweed harvesters. The existing pier offers 30m of berthage which is for the most part tidal, the new extension to the pier will be less tidal so available for berthage for longer periods of the day.

3. Proposed Maritime Usage

The proposed works which are the subject of this application comprise the following:

- Construction of concrete pier extension (13.5m length x 15m width) added to southwest end of the existing pier;
- Construction of new slipway (29m length x 5m width), with a flat deck entry area. Construction of new hardstanding/parking areas to east of the existing bridge and at base of the new slipway;
- Construction of 1200mm high and 600mm wide boundary wall on top of pier; and
- Widening bridge by 3m to facilitate access to the slipway and construction compound to southeast of parking area.

The MAC area sought is 781m² and includes areas for temporary works required to construct the development. The Applicant has stated that, when completed, the extended pier and slipway will provide improved facilities for marine leisure and tourism users and the local fishing and traditional seaweed harvesting community.

The MAC area sought by the Applicant is illustrated in *Figure 1*.

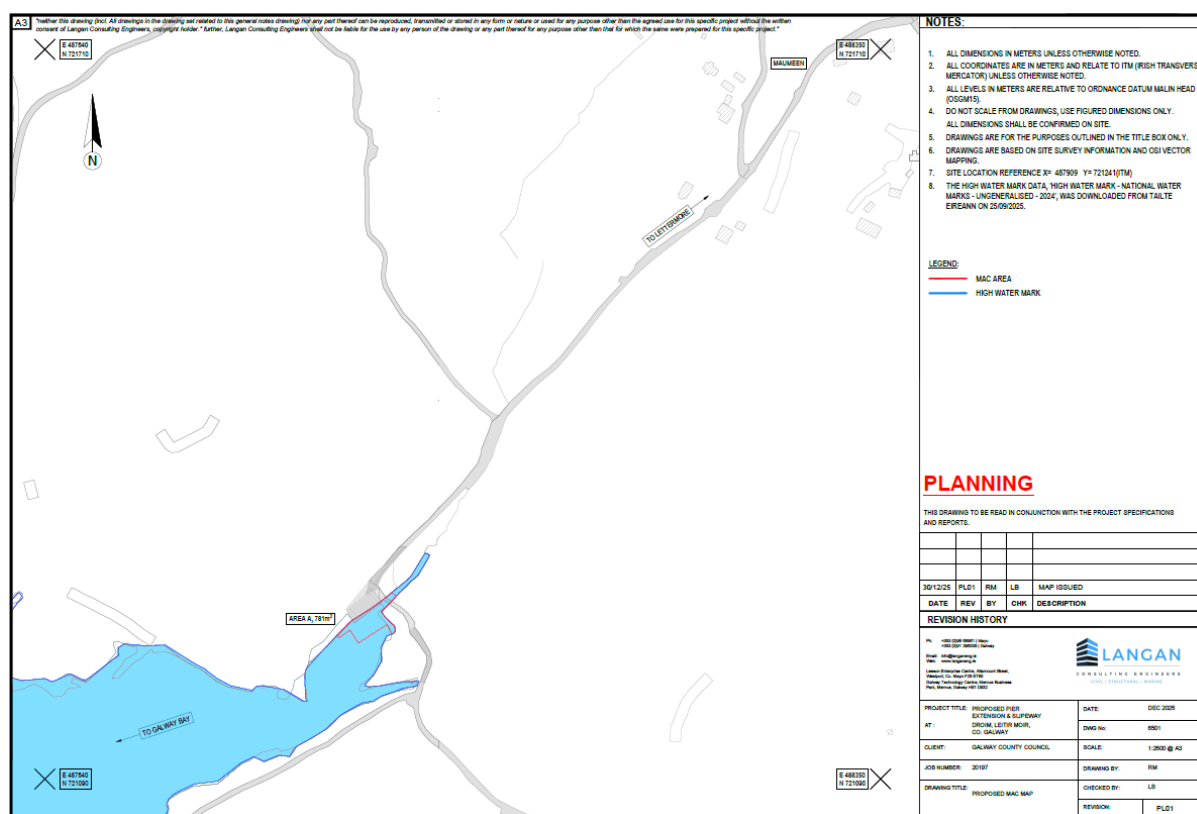


Figure 1 – Applicant map of proposed layout of MAC area at Droim, Leitir Móir, Co. Galway

4. Site Visit

Senior Marine Advisor, Barry Mc Donald inspected the site on 24 March 2026. The proposed works are located at Droim, Leitir Móir, County Galway. *Photographs 1 to 5* detail the current use of the existing pier (above High Water Mark) and site of proposed slipway. On the day of the inspection there was evidence of use for sea fishing. The Applicant clarified by request for additional information that the works will not be wholly or primarily in support of sea fishing or aquaculture. It is estimated by the Applicant that sea fishing will constitute 35% of the proposed maritime usage, marine leisure will be 20% and traditional seaweed harvesting 45%. Have regard to the location and the proposed maritime usage, the percentages would seem a reasonable estimate.

No existing infrastructure or occupation, which would conflict with the proposed maritime usage, was noted within the proposed MAC area during the site visit. Nothing was noted that would prevent the MAC application from proceeding.



Photograph 1 - Fishing gear on the existing pier (BMcD 24/03/2026)



Photograph 2 - The existing pier (BMcD 24/03/2026)



Photograph 3 - The existing pier (BMcD 24/03/2026)



Photograph 4 - Site of proposed slipway (BMcD 24/03/2026)



Photograph 5 - Site of pier extension (BMcD 24/03/2026)

5. Review of Legislation & Associated Consents

5.1 Applicable Provisions of the Maritime Area Planning Act, 2021 as amended (the Act)

Under the Act, MARA has responsibility for granting MACs.

Schedule 3 and schedule 4 of the Act specifies maritime usages for which a MAC is not required, including where the proposed maritime usage falls under the remit of another enactment, is navigation or fishing, is a licensable activity under schedule 7 or where the activity is to be undertaken on private land. The proposed maritime usage is not considered to fall under those listed under Schedule 3 or 4 of the Act.

The Applicant has stated that the proposed maritime usage and the subject of this application requires development permission. In accordance with Section 75(1) of the Act, a MAC is required before an application for development permission can be lodged with the relevant consent authority.

Accordingly, the subject of this application is considered to fall under Section 75(1) of the Act.

5.2 Existing Consents & Authorisations

A search of the MARA's GIS database was undertaken on 19 March 2026 for spatial overlap between the proposed MAC areas and existing foreshore authorisations and MARA licences and consents.

The proposed MAC area does not overlap with any existing MACs or MUL or applications for the same. The application overlaps with a foreshore authorisation as detailed in *Table 1* below. The overlap is with an historic (1916) board of trade deed for seaweed harvesting. The deed covers a huge area of the coast. Considering the proposed maritime usage is intended to support traditional seaweed harvesting activities, no conflict is considered to exist between the proposed maritime usage the subject of this application and FS004298.

Table 1: Summary of Overlapping maritime authorisations and foreshore authorisations				
File Reference Number	Applicant/ Holder	Consent Type	Maritime Usage	Status
FS004298	Congested District Board for Ireland	Board of Trade Deed	Seaweed harvesting	unknown

The Marine Institute's Ireland's Marine Atlas database¹ was searched on 19 March 2026 for spatial overlap between the proposed MAC areas and any Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine foreshore authorisations for aquaculture sites.

In summary, no existing MACs, Maritime Usage Licences, foreshore authorisations for aquaculture, or applications for the same were identified as overlapping the proposed MAC application areas which

¹ <https://atlas.marine.ie/>

would impede MARA in granting a MAC for the proposed maritime usage.

5.3 Development Permission

Owing to the nature and scale of the proposed works, it is considered reasonable that the MAC Holder (if successful in obtaining a MAC) should submit a valid application for development consent to the relevant planning authority within 18 months of issuance of a MAC.

The Applicant in their development permission application to the relevant planning authority is required to include a Rehabilitation Schedule detailing how the Applicant proposes to rehabilitate the maritime area in accordance with Part 4, Chapter 8 of the Act.

5.4 Ownership

A search was undertaken of the Tailte Éireann's Land Registry on 19 March 2026 for any document granting or affecting rights to land in order to ensure that there are no conflicts of interest with the MAC area being applied for as outlined in the proposed MAC Map. The search indicated that the MAC area map marginally overlaps with folios GY50819 and GY51472, as detailed in *Table 2* below. Such sliver overlaps are not indicative of a change ownership of maritime area unless accompanied by proof of a purchase or valid claim of adverse possession neither of which were provided here. Tailte Éireann operate a non-conclusive boundary system meaning the boundaries shown are not conclusive as to the boundaries or extent. On detailed review of the folios, it is considered that no overlap exists and that the above folios abut the High Water Mark as mapped by the Chief Boundary Surveyor (HWM) landward, with the proposed MAC area extending seaward from the HWM.

Table 2: Summary of Overlapping maritime area deemed to be privately held			
Foreshore Reference/ Folio Number	Ownership Category/ Details	Holder/ Owner	Overlapping MAC area
GY50819	Land registry folio	Private Individual	Area A
GY51472	Land registry folio	Private Individual	Area A

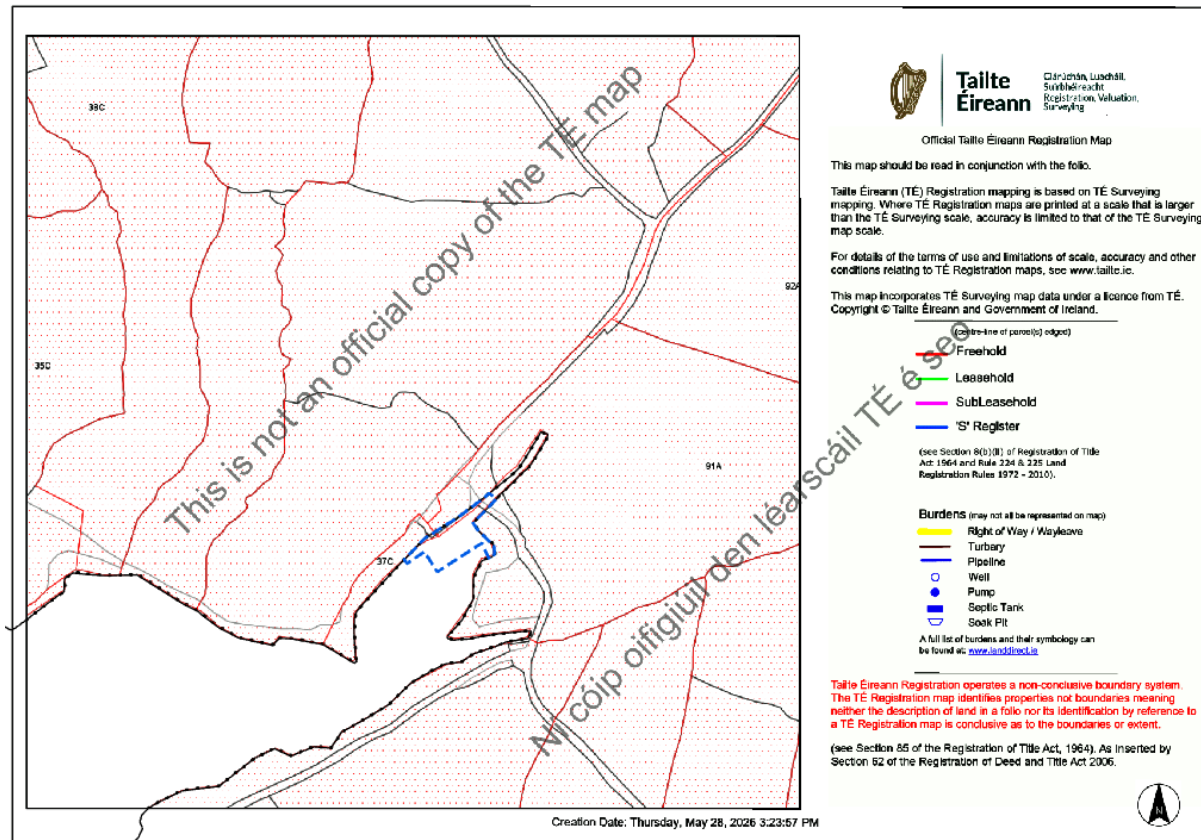


Figure 2 – MAC area as applied for and sliver overlap with land registry folios GY51472 and GY50819.

No conflicts of interest affecting the proposed MAC area were identified.

6. Assessment

6.1 Schedule 5

The MAC application was submitted on 23 July 2025 with the appropriate fee paid on 20 November 2025 and reviewed for completeness on 24 November 2025. An incomplete application notification was issued on 24 November 2025; with supplementary documentation/information received on 28 November 2025 and 16 December 2025. The application was deemed complete by MARA on 17 December 2025.

A number of requests for additional information were issued on 20 March 2026 and 24 April 2026 under Section 79(3) of the Act and associated responses received relating to matters for general and technical assessment on 31 March 2026 and 29 April 2026.

Schedule 5 of the Act sets out the criteria to which MARA must have regard when assessing a MAC application. This report sets out the assessment undertaken pursuant to Section 5 of the Act. The assessment is summarised in *Table 3* below.

Table 3: Synopsis of the assessment of the application with regard to the requirements of Schedule 5			
Schedule 5 Requirements		Synopsis	Assessment
1.	The nature, scope and duration of the occupation of the maritime area concerned for the purposes of the proposed maritime usage.	Details of the proposed maritime usage, including the nature scope and duration are described in Section 3 & 4 above. It is considered that a design life for the structure of circa 100 years, with proper maintenance and repair, should be achievable. Accordingly, a MAC term of 105 years (allowing for planning, construction and rehabilitation/decommissioning phases) is recommended. The proposed maritime usage is considered satisfactory, having regard to the nature, scope and duration of the occupation.	Satisfactory
2.	Whether the proposed maritime usage is in the public interest.	The Applicant has stated that the proposed project aligns with the following policies; <i>“- Brexit Adjustment Local Authority Marine Infrastructure Scheme (BALAMI)</i> <i>- Fishery Harbour & Coastal Infrastructure Development Programme</i> <i>- Maritime Spatial Planning Directive (2014/89/EU)</i> <i>- Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)</i> <i>- Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC)”</i> The Applicant also stated that <i>“The proposed development shall be fully open to the public for recreational and boating activities.”</i> The proposed maritime usage is considered satisfactory, having regard to the public interest.	Satisfactory
3.	The location and spatial extent of the occupation of the maritime area concerned for the purposes of the proposed maritime usage.	The total area proposed to be occupied as applied for by the Applicant by the MAC is 781sqm comprising a single MAC Area A for the proposed permanent works and the temporary works. Details of the location, relevant consents, ownership and development permissions are provided in Sections 2 to 5 above. Based on the searches and site visit undertaken, nothing was identified that would preclude the granting of a MAC in the proposed area. Accordingly, the proposed maritime usage is considered satisfactory, having regard to the location and spatial extent of the occupation.	Satisfactory
4.	Guidelines issued under Section 7 which are relevant to the proposed maritime usage.	No such guidelines have been published to date.	Not applicable

5.	Whether the applicant is a fit and proper person (within the meaning of Schedule 2) to be granted a MAC, both at the time the application is made and at the time that the MAC application concerned is determined by the MARA.	In accordance with S.I. No. 467/2025 - <i>Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 (Fit and Proper Person) Order 2025</i> , Galway County Council has been declared as a fit and proper person to be granted and to hold any MAC in accordance with Section 90(1)(b) of the Act.	Satisfactory
6.	Whether the applicant is tax compliant, both at the time the application is made and at the time that the MAC application concerned is determined by the MARA.	The Applicant submitted Tax Registration Number and Tax Clearance Access Number (TCAN) which was used to view the Applicant's tax clearance certificate. Based on the review of the tax clearance certificate, the Applicant is considered tax compliant.	Satisfactory
7.	In the case of any maritime usage relating to offshore renewable energy (within the meaning of section 100), the consistency of the MAC application concerned with the development plans of the transmission system operator (within the meaning of section 100).	Not applicable	Not Applicable

8.	The National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF).	Based on a review of the application, MARA has had regard to the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) and it is considered that the proposed project aligns with the overall objectives of the NMPF, including the tourism, economic and social objectives set out therein. It is considered that the proposed project aligns with the following economic, social and key sectoral policy objectives of the NMPF: - Co-existence Policy 1 - <i>Proposals should demonstrate that they have considered how to optimise the use of space, including through consideration of opportunities for co-existence and co-operation with other activities, enhancing other activities where appropriate.</i> Infrastructure Policy 1 - <i>Appropriate land-based infrastructure which facilitates marine activity (and vice versa) should be supported. Proposals for appropriate infrastructure that facilitates the diversification or regeneration of marine industries should be supported.</i> Access Policy 2 - <i>Proposals demonstrating appropriate enhanced and inclusive public access to and within the maritime area, and that consider the future provision of services for tourism and recreation activities, should be supported, subject to the outcome of statutory environmental assessment processes and subsequent decision by the competent authority, and where they contribute to the policies and objectives of this NMPF.</i> Social Benefits Policy 2 - <i>Proposals that increase the understanding and enjoyment of the marine environment (including its natural, historic and social value), or that promote conservation management and increased education and skills, should be supported.</i> Employment Policy 1 - <i>Proposals should demonstrate contribution to a net increase in marine related employment in Ireland, particularly where the proposals are:</i> <i>• in line with the skills available in Irish coastal communities adjacent to the maritime area,</i> <i>• improve the sustainable use of natural resources,</i> <i>• diversify skills to enable employment in emerging industries.</i> Tourism Policy 1 - <i>Where appropriate, proposals enabling, promoting or facilitating sustainable tourism and recreation activities, particularly where this creates diversification or additional utilisation of related facilities beyond typical usage patterns, should be supported.</i> Tourism Policy 3 - <i>Proposals for tourism development should seek to optimise facilities and use of space by taking a cross-sectoral development approach that provides for multiple activities, whilst minimising the extent to which the proposal is likely to adversely impact on the natural environment.</i> In the application, the Applicant states that the proposed project is consistent with the environmental objectives of the NMPF. The proposed works constitute development which require planning permission and environmental assessment of the proposed maritime	Satisfactory
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		usage, which is undertaken at development permission stage by the relevant planning authority. This above assessment does not prejudice any consideration and determination that the relevant Planning Authority may make in relation to the NMPF when considering the Planning Application for this development. Based on the above, MARA is satisfied that the proposed works align with the above overall objectives and policy objectives of the NMPF.	
9.	The extent and nature of the preparatory work already undertaken by the applicant towards ensuring the efficacious undertaking of the proposed maritime usage the subject of the MAC application concerned should the applicant be granted a MAC in respect of such usage.	The Applicant has evidenced that the following preparatory works have been completed, including the preparation of : • Natura Impact Statement. • AA Screening Report. • Relevant drawings. Having regard to the above, the extent of the preparatory works undertaken are considered acceptable for a project of this scale and nature.	Satisfactory
10.	The extent and nature of stakeholder engagement undertaken by the applicant in respect of the proposed maritime usage.	The Applicant has not provided details of any stakeholder engagement; however, public consultation will be undertaken as part of the planning permission application. Having regard to the above, the nature of stakeholder engagement is therefore considered satisfactory.	Satisfactory
11.	Where a competitive process referred to in section 93 or 103 is used, the outcome of such process.	Not applicable	Not applicable
12.	Any additional criteria specified, for the purposes of this paragraph, in regulations made under section 80(2).	No such regulations have been made to date.	Not applicable

6.2 Rehabilitation Schedule

Under Section 96(1) of the Act, it is required that the holder of a MAC shall, before the expiration of the MAC, rehabilitate that part of the maritime area the subject of the MAC.

In accordance with Section 75(5) of the Act, as for MAC applications made to MARA on the basis of Section 75(1) of the Act, the Applicant is required to attach a Rehabilitation Schedule to their associated application for development permission.

6.3 Section 83 – Nature of Use

Section 83(1) of the Act requires MARA in the granting of a MAC to specify whether the specific part of the maritime area the subject of that MAC is for exclusive use or not. Section 83(1) provides MARA discretion and flexibility to specify the nature of the use (i.e. exclusive, non-exclusive or may/may not be exclusive).

Having regard to the nature and lifecycle of the proposed maritime usage the subject of this application, it is reasonably foreseeable that Galway County Council may be required to exclude access to parts of the MAC area on a temporary basis. For example, during construction, maintenance, decommissioning and rehabilitation phases for health and safety reasons. Such temporary/ short-term exclusions may be mandated by the planning authority or other authorities or legislation for specific purposes and durations. In this instance, it is considered that granting of exclusive use for the full term of the MAC is not merited, particularly having regard to co-existence and co-operation objectives of the NMPF. It is considered that exclusive use should only be permitted where use on an exclusive basis is required and provided for under another authorisation or enactment. Accordingly, it is recommended that the MAC is granted on a “may or may not be exclusive” basis contingent on circumstances that may arise after the granting of the MAC” in accordance with Section 83(1)(c) of the Act.

7. Proposed MAC Map (for Illustration purposes only)

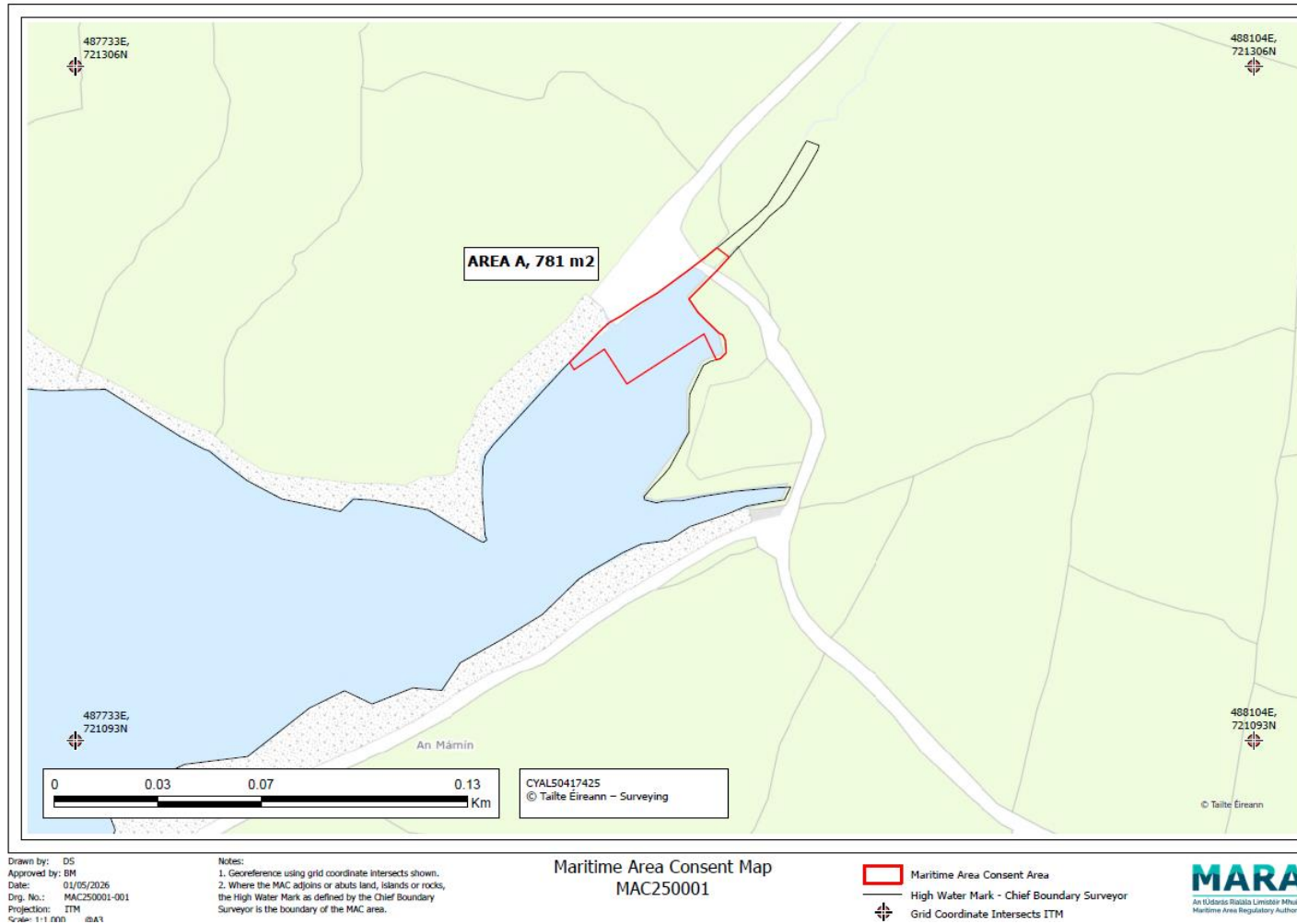


Figure 2 – Proposed MAC Map

8. Levy

An annual MAC levy has been calculated based on the project type and proposed MAC area in accordance with MARA's MAC levy framework, as set out below.

MAPA Levy Framework Part:	A: Nearshore
Category/Class:	Development (commercial)
Tier:	Tier 5
Applicable Rate:	Base Annual Charge of €428.19 plus an add on of 0.2007 per sq.m for areas in excess of 100 sq.m
Length or Area:	781 sq.m
Calculation:	$€428.19 + (€0.2007 * (781.00 - 100.00))$
Levy due:	€564.87

The MAC levy has been calculated as €564.87 per annum. All levies are indexed to the Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP), applied on an annual basis.

9. Discussion

Based on the assessments undertaken contained herein, it is considered that the proposed MAC application complies with all the necessary requirements of Schedule 5 of the Act, where relevant and appropriate, subject to the following recommended terms and conditions:

a. Terms

MAC Term:	105 years
Consent Area:	That part of the maritime area marked red on the MAC Map.
MAC Map Title:	Maritime Area Consent Map MAC250001; Drawing Number: MAC250001-001; Date: 01/05/2026
Permitted Maritime Usage:	The construction, use, operation and maintenance of a pier, bridge, slipway and a hardstanding/parking area including all associated decommissioning, demolition, rehabilitation, and any other works

	required on foot of any development permission relating to the infrastructure.
Nature of Usage:	May/May Not be Exclusive
Date by which application for Development Permission must be submitted:	18 months from date of grant of MAC.
The minimum number of days in which the MAC Holder shall provide the Grantor advance notice in writing of the Holder's intention to commence the Permitted Maritime Usage.	14 Days

b. Conditions and Reasons for Conditions

Section 82 of the Act specifies that MARA may attach to a MAC one or more conditions which fall within the types of conditions specified in Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Act. All conditions contained in Schedule 6; Part 2 are deemed to be attached to a MAC.

The standard suite of MARA conditions reflecting the contractual and statutory relationship that will exist with a grant of consent are also recommended. Reasons for these conditions are set out in the enclosed Section 81(7)(b) Minded to Notice.

It is considered that the application for a MAC complies with all the requirements of Part 4 of the Act, with particular regard to Schedule 5 criteria. Accordingly, it is recommended that the proposed MAC is granted with conditions.

10. Conclusion & Recommendation

Following a detailed assessment of all information on file, it is considered that the proposal complies with all the necessary requirements. Accordingly, it is recommended to issue a Section 81(7)(b) Minded to Notice, as enclosed, informing the Applicant that MARA is minded to grant a Maritime Area Consent subject to the proposed conditions attached to the MAC. It is recommended to allow the Applicant 21 days from the date of issue of the Minded to Notice to submit supplementary material in relation to the reasons for the conditions as per Section 81(7)(b)(ii).

Once a final determination is made by MARA, the Applicant will be notified and MARA will publish a notice on its website as soon as practicable thereafter.

Signed: Karen McCuskey Position: Analyst, MAC Directorate

Signed: Barry McDonald Position: Senior Engineer, MAC Directorate