



National Climate Objective Compliance Details

MUL application - Tonn Nua

ESB

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Glossary

Term	Definition
Annex IV Species	Species strictly protected under the EU Habitats Directive, including certain marine mammals.
Annex IV Risk Assessment (Annex IV RA)	An assessment of potential risks and impacts of a project on Annex IV protected species.
Baseline Data / Baseline Surveys	Initial environmental, physical, and ecological information collected to inform project design, assessment, and consenting.
Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended	Ireland's primary legislative framework for climate action, setting legally binding carbon budgets and establishing the National Climate Objective of achieving a climate-neutral economy by 2050.
Climate Action Plan 2024	The Irish Government's strategy outlining sectoral pathways and actions to meet national climate targets, including offshore wind deployment.
DMAP (Designated Maritime Area Plan)	A plan-led framework established under Ireland's marine spatial planning system to identify and prioritise suitable areas for offshore renewable energy development.
EU Green Deal	The European Union's overarching growth strategy to achieve climate neutrality by 2050, with wide-ranging environmental, social, and energy initiatives.
Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA)	The Irish authority responsible for regulating, licensing, and managing activities in the maritime area.
Mitigation Measures	Actions integrated into project design and execution to avoid, reduce, or offset adverse environmental impacts.
Natura Impact Statement (NIS)	A detailed report prepared as part of the Appropriate Assessment process, assessing the implications of a project for Natura 2000 sites.
National Climate Objective	The statutory target, under the Act, to transition Ireland to a climate-resilient, biodiversity-rich, environmentally sustainable, and climate-neutral economy by 2050.
National Energy Security Framework (2022)	Ireland's policy framework to secure energy supply and reduce reliance on imported fossil fuels, emphasising renewable energy development.
Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE)	Energy derived from renewable sources such as offshore wind, wave, or tidal energy.
Offshore Wind Delivery Taskforce	An Irish Government initiative to accelerate delivery of offshore wind projects and meet long-term renewable energy targets.
REPowerEU	An EU plan, complementing the Green Deal, to rapidly reduce reliance on fossil fuel imports and expand renewable energy capacity.
Site Investigation (SI) Works	Surveys and studies undertaken to gather essential data on seabed conditions, marine ecology, and physical environment, used to support offshore renewable project design and consenting.
Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)	Natura 2000 sites designated under the Habitats Directive to protect particular habitats and species.

Term	Definition
Special Protection Areas (SPAs)	Natura 2000 sites designated under the Birds Directive to protect wild bird species and their habitats.
Supporting Information to Support Appropriate Assessment (SISAA)	An EU directive requiring protection and enhancement of inland and coastal waters, aiming to achieve good ecological and chemical status.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviation or Acronym	Meaning
DMAP	Designated Maritime Area Plan
EU	European Union
GW	Gigawatt
MARA	Maritime Area Regulatory Authority
MUL	Marine Usage Licence
NIS	Natura Impact Statement
ORE	Offshore Renewable Energy
RA	Risk Assessment
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SI	Site Investigation
SISAA	Supporting Information to Support Appropriate Assessment
SPA	Special Protection Area
WFD	Water Framework Directive

1. Introduction

This statement addresses the consistency of the proposed site investigation (SI) works at the Tonn Nua site with the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 (as amended) (hereafter referred to as 'the Act'), as required under Question 4.9 of the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) Guidance Note for Applicants (August 2025).

Section 3 of the Act establishes the National Climate Objective, which commits Ireland to transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity-rich, environmentally sustainable and climate-neutral economy by 2050. MARA, as a "relevant body" under the Act, must perform its functions in furtherance of this objective.

2. Consistency of the SI Works in Furtherance of the National Climate Objective

The SI works are enabling activities that provide the essential baseline data to inform the design, environmental assessment and consenting of offshore renewable energy projects within the South Coast (SC) DMAP. The DMAP is the State's plan-led framework that identifies, assesses, and prioritises areas for offshore renewable energy development, ensuring alignment with environmental protection, marine spatial planning, and national energy policy. These SI works will support the development of an offshore renewable energy development within the SC- DMAP, and these works directly support a structured and strategic approach to ORE development, reducing spatial conflicts and ensuring compliance with national and EU obligations.

The proposed works are an important enabling step that will provide the data necessary to support the efficient and timely progression of future offshore wind development at Tonn Nua. Offshore wind is recognised as a cornerstone of Ireland's pathway to achieving the National Climate Objective, and the SI works will play a key role in facilitating this transition. The relevance of offshore wind to the National Climate Objective is reflected in Ireland's statutory and policy targets for renewable energy, which are summarised in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Offshore wind targets relevant to the National Climate Objective:

Policy / Strategy	Target	Relevance of SI Works
Climate Action Plan 2024	At least 5 GW of offshore wind operational by 2030	SI works provide the baseline information required to consent and construct Tonn Nua offshore wind farm to support meeting the 2030 target.
National Energy Security Framework (2022)	Expansion of offshore renewables to reduce reliance on imported fossil fuels	SI works enable delivery of offshore wind projects that diversify Ireland's energy mix.
Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 (as amended)	National Climate Objective: transition to a climate-neutral economy by 2050, with legally binding carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings.	SI works are a prerequisite for offshore renewable energy deployment, which is central to achieving emissions reductions in the electricity sector and meeting carbon budgets under the Act.
Ireland's Offshore Wind Delivery Taskforce / long-term ambitions	Up to 20+ GW offshore wind by 2040–2050	SI works ensure future project pipelines are developed in line with longer-term decarbonisation goals.

Policy / Strategy	Target	Relevance of SI Works
EU Green Deal / REPowerEU	Accelerated rollout of offshore wind across Europe to ensure energy security and climate neutrality by 2050	The SI works are a key enabling step for Tonn Nua offshore wind farm that will contribute to Ireland's share of EU offshore wind capacity, thereby supporting collective EU climate and energy objectives.

Accordingly, the SI works are a key enabler for the delivery of these national and European climate and energy targets, and therefore directly support the achievement of the National Climate Objective.

3. Protection of the Marine Environment

The SI works are temporary, small-scale, and proportionate, designed to minimise environmental impacts while enabling renewable energy development. As set out in Section 5 of Attachment 4.0 Marine Planning and Environmental Considerations document and in Attachments 4.3.1 (SISAA), 4.3.2 (NIS), 4.4 (Annex IV RA) and 4.5 (WFD Assessment), embedded mitigation measures ensure that the works will not hinder biodiversity or water quality objectives.

This alignment of climate action with environmental protection is consistent with the Act's requirement to deliver the National Climate Objective in a way that safeguards ecosystems and natural resources.

Full details are provided in the specific assessments; their conclusions are summarised below:

SISAA (Attachment 4.3.1):

Screening identified that likely significant effects could not be excluded for a number of SPAs and SACs in the absence of mitigation, requiring preparation of a Natura Impact Statement.

NIS (Attachment 4.3.2):

With application of embedded mitigation, the SI works, either alone or in combination with other projects, will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site.

Annex IV Species Risk Assessment (Attachment 4.4):

Potential effects on strictly protected marine species were assessed. With mitigation:

- negligible risk of auditory injury or disturbance,
- Potential for disturbance considered negligible, and
- Potential for collision risk considered negligible.

The SI works will not significantly affect the favourable conservation status of Annex IV species.

Compliance with Objectives of the WFD (Attachment 4.5):

Temporary and localised effects on turbidity and seabed disturbance are fully reversible. No deterioration in ecological or chemical status of relevant water bodies is predicted, and therefore no breach of the Water Framework Directive will occur.

Taken together, these assessments confirm that the SI works will not compromise the protection of biodiversity, water quality, or marine ecosystem integrity. This alignment of climate action with environmental protection is consistent with the Climate Act's requirement to deliver the National Climate Objective in a way that safeguards ecosystems and natural resources.

4. Conclusion

The proposed SI works are consistent with the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 (as amended) and contribute directly to the furtherance of the National Climate Objective. They are essential preparatory steps to enable offshore wind deployment at scale, thereby supporting Ireland's legally binding climate commitments while being delivered in a manner that protects the marine environment.



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