



MED Foreshore Comments

MARINE USAGE LICENCE FOR SEAWEED HARVESTING BY ARRAMARA TEORANTA, CO. GALWAY. REF: MUL240049, MUL250014, MUL250015, MUL250016 AND MUL250017,

BACKGROUND

MUL250014- The proposed licence area encroaches on Ros an Mhíl FHC, and a foreshore licence will be required.

MUL240049- While aquaculture facilities do not occur within the requested MUL area, licenced aquaculture areas are in proximity to the adjoining bays to the west and north.

MUL250015, MUL250016 and MUL250017

Arramara Teoranta has submitted five applications to the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) for 10 year Maritime Usage Licences under Section 117 of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 (the MAP Act) to undertake the hand and dredge harvest of seaweed, *Ascophyllum Nodosum* and *Fucus vesiculosus*, from the intertidal foreshore in sustainable quantities across five distinct locations in County Galway including Greatmans Bay (272ha), Mace Head (343ha), Bertraghboy Bay(417ha) and Kilkieran Bay(787ha)

The maritime usage of wild harvesting of seaweed as provided for in Schedule 7 of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 as amended and involves commercial use. The seaweed species *Ascophyllum Nodosum* and *Fucus vesiculosus* is harvested by hand and by dredge, brought to a landing site where it is loaded on a truck and transported to the factory premises at Cill Chiaráin where it is processed into finished products for sale as Animal feed, Soil Enhancement Products and Bio stimulants.

Arramara Teo hold foreshore licenses within the application areas.

Reference Number FS003958 Title: 8 Slipways in Connemara

Reference Number FS003955 Title: Construction of Roadway at Factory at Cill Chiaráin

Reference Number FS003956 Title: 8 Roads in Connemara; RosMuc, Ros a Mhíl, An Cheathrú Rua, Leitir Mór, Garumna, Leitir Mealáin, Dún Manus.

Reference Number FS006108: was published on gov.ie and submitted to the DECLG on 19/3/2014 but did not proceed because the Department suspended the licence application process in April 2015 pending consultation with the Attorney General on the status of seaweed appurtenant rights and other rights that would impact on the licencing process.

SEA FISHING

Sea fishing does occur in proximity to this area; however, any impact on sea-fishing is not a matter for this office.



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FISHERY HARBOURS

The nearest Fishery Harbour Centre is Ros an Mhil Fishery Harbour Centre. Due to the distance separating them and the proposed area as indicated on maps, the proposal is unlikely to have any impact on this or any other FHC.

Any application is to exclude the jurisdictional area for Ros an Mhil Fishery Harbour Centre (FHC) as it services the Irish and European fishing vessels, daily passenger ferries, and cargo vessels to and from the Aran Islands. Other marine activities include inshore fishing vessels and marine small craft leisure activities. All navigation and approach channels are to be excluded from any of the licensed area. All seaweed harvesting activities are not to interfere with fishing activities.

An investigation is to be conducted of the appropriateness of MARA having the appropriate authority to grant any licenses within a Fishery Harbour Centre jurisdictional area. The FHC jurisdictional areas should be excluded until an outcome of such an investigation.

AQUACULTURE

Aquaculture installations are located throughout the proposed MUL area, including shellfish, finfish, and seaweed cultivation. Sites are present within the foreshore, intertidal zone, and sublittoral zone.

Aquaculture licensing is a live process and the most up to date license information should be consulted prior to the commencement of harvesting activities. All Efforts should be made to consult with aquaculture operators in the vicinity of proposed harvesting activities.

The impact on aquaculture operations is expected to be minor and short-term with no significant adverse effects anticipated. Potential impacts on water quality are considered negligible, as these activities have been undertaken simultaneously throughout the region.

To minimise any potential disturbance, a buffer zone of 200m is to be established around all aquaculture installations. Care is to be taken within shared access routes to all sites. These measures ensure a precautionary approach to safeguarding water quality and operational space.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Commentary on the cumulative impact of these types of developments in conjunction with this application, on a Natura 2000 site, is not a matter for this office.

Cumulative impacts of similar activities being undertaken in similar time and spatial ranges should be considered.

The associated post harvesting and transport logistics associated with the activity and the potential effects on other marine users of piers and access roads should be considered due



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to the remote locations of the harvest sites. Shared access routes and infrastructure are to be respected by all users.

Sustainable Harvesting practices should be carefully managed to preserve the ecological integrity and function of this habitat. Harvesting should leave sufficient biomass to support associated flora and fauna while allowing natural regrowth through rotation practices.

As the applicant is the receiving party and not the harvester, demonstrating compliance with sustainable management and best practice is considered important and should be closely monitored.

CONCLUSION

MED has no objections to the application as set out in the documents provided. As with all marine applications, appropriate monitoring and measures and best practice must be followed for the duration of the license to ensure that the seaweed harvesting operations proposed do not cause any direct or cumulative negative impacts as detailed above on environmental sites, aquaculture licenses, and Fishery Harbour Centre operations.