



IRISH NATIONAL HERITAGE PARK MARITIME USAGE LICENCE APPLICATION (MUL260005)



Attachment 4.5 Water Framework Directive Compliance



Final | February 2026



Irish National Heritage Park Maritime Usage Licence Application

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Roughan & O'Donovan (ROD) was appointed by Wexford County Council to undertake, on its behalf, the preparation of a Maritime Usage Licence (MUL) Application in support of environmental surveys and ground investigation works proposed within the River Slaney at Ferrycarrig, Wexford ('the proposed works' hereafter).

The proposed works are required in support of the proposed development of a new Viking village "Vykingar" incorporating a new interactive visitor experience into the overall visitor offering at the Irish National Heritage Park (INHP). The proposed development includes permanent structures in the maritime area within the River Slaney adjacent to the existing INHP site including three jetties and an artificial beach area.

The proposed works subject to this MUL application are required to inform the design, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) which will be undertaken for proposed development at the INHP.

This MUL Application and all associated attachments (including this document) will be submitted to the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) seeking authorisation under Part 5 of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 for the maritime usage associated with the proposed works. The proposed development of a Viking Village at the INHP will be subject to a separate marine area consent application to be lodged with MARA.

1.2 Purpose of this report

This document has been prepared to support the MUL application for the proposed works and is referred to as Attachment 4.5 Water Framework Directive Compliance. Part 4 of the MUL application form relates to 'Marine Planning and Environmental Considerations'. Specifically, Section 4.5 relates to the Water Framework Directive (WFD) objectives with the following requirement:

Provide sufficient information addressing the consistency of the proposed Maritime Usage with the objectives of the Water Framework Directive.

An assessment of the proposed works for consistency with the objectives of the WFD is provided below.

1.3 Preparation of this report

This report has been prepared by Laura Lynch, Senior Environmental Scientist with Roughan & O'Donovan (ROD). Laura holds a bachelor's degree in Environmental Management from the Dublin Institute of Technology. She has over 10 years' experience in environmental consulting including Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) across a range of infrastructure projects. Laura is an Associate member of the Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals.

This assessment has been informed by other supporting assessments included as part of this MUL application including:

- Attachment 4.3.1 Supporting Information to Support Appropriate Assessment Screening (SISAA) report
- Attachment 4.3.2 Natura Impact Statement (NIS)
- Attachment 4.4 Risk Assessment for Annex IV Species report.

Further reference to these reports is made within this assessment.

2. WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE (WFD)

The EU Water framework Directive (2000/60/EC) (WFD) establishes a framework for the protection and improvement of inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters, and groundwater. The Directive requires that management plans be prepared on a river basin basis and specifies a structured method for developing these plans. The key objective of the WFD is to achieve 'Good Status' for all water bodies by 2027 at the latest, including both good chemical and good ecological status.

The WFD was given legal effect in Ireland by the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (S.I. No. 722 of 2003) and further implemented through the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (S.I. 272 of 2009, as amended).

The WFD is implemented through River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) in six-year cycles. Each cycle provides an opportunity to assess water conditions at different stages and set out actions to achieve water quality objectives. We are currently in the 3rd cycle River Basin Management Plan 2022 – 2027. The overall aim of the plan is to ensure that our natural waters are sustainably managed and that freshwater resources are protected so as to maintain and improve Ireland's water environment.

2.1 Aquatic Environment

The environmental surveys and GI works are proposed to take place entirely within the Lower Slaney Estuary Transitional Waterbody, which extends as far north as Enniscorthy and ends in Wexford Harbour.

2.2 Water Quality

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the competent authority responsible for monitoring, protecting and improving the water environment in the Republic of Ireland. The EPA runs a national monitoring programme to check water quality under the WFD. It covers rivers, lakes, coastal waters, and groundwater using long-term checks and targeted surveys where problems are likely. This data tracks progress toward environmental goals and informs River Basin Management Plans.

In accordance with WFD guidelines, water quality 'Status' is assigned using a variety of available data on aquatic flora and fauna (including fish), the availability of nutrients, and aspects like salinity, temperature and pollution by chemical pollutants. Morphological features, such as quantity, water flow, water depths and structures of the riverbeds, are also taken into account.

The current water quality status for the Lower Slaney Estuary Transitional Waterbody is presented in **Error! Reference source not found.** below.

Table 2-1 EPA Water Quality Results

WFD Waterbody	Transitional Waterbody WFD Status 2019-2024	Transitional Waterbody WFD Status 2016-2021	Transitional Waterbody WFD Status 2016-2021	Waterbodies Risk
Lower Slaney Estuary Transitional Waterbody	Poor	Poor	Poor	At Risk

2.3 Zone of Influence

The “Zone of Influence” of a project is the geographic extent over which significant ecological effects are likely to occur. The Zone of Influence for the proposed works was defined in the SISAA and NIS as:

- The Lower Slaney Estuary Transitional Waterbody

This area encompasses the maximum distance at which potential likely significant effects could occur via hydrological connections.

It was determined through the SISAA and NIS that two European sites, namely the Slaney River Valley Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Wexford Harbour and Slobbs Special Protection Area (SPA) occur within the Zone of Influence. A figure showing the Zone of Influence is presented in the SISAA and NIS. These reports also include an assessment of effects against the Conservation Objectives of these European sites.

2.4 Impacts to water quality

Threats to watercourses and associated habitats potentially include the mobilisation of sediment within the estuary during the environmental surveys and GI works as well as the release of pollutants such as fuels and hydrocarbons from the boat. The environmental surveys and GI works are of a nature and scale that any water quality impacts would be very localized and will dissipate in a very short time. The risk of pollution to the aquatic environment from such sources, particularly into the Slaney Estuary, arising from the proposed works is minimal. Owing to the nature, scale and location of the works, it is not considered to provide for any significant effects on the natural environment.

2.5 Conclusion

Based on these findings, it has been determined that due to the nature and scale of the proposed works, no significant adverse effects on water quality are likely. There will be no deterioration in ecological or chemical status, and the works will not hinder the ability of any water body to achieve good status by 2027. Therefore, the works are determined to be compliant with the objectives of the WFD.