

Attachment 4.8

Consistency of the proposed Maritime Usage with the Irish State's obligations under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Maritime Jurisdiction Act

Ireland, as a Member State of the European Union and a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), has binding obligations to manage activities within its maritime area in a manner consistent with the protection and sustainable use of marine resources. These international obligations are given domestic effect through the Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2021, which sets out the spatial limits of Ireland's maritime zones and provides a legal framework for the exercise of State rights and responsibilities within them.

UNCLOS establishes the sovereign rights and jurisdiction of coastal States within their maritime zones, including territorial sea and exclusive economic zone (EEZ), as well as imposing obligations to protect and preserve the marine environment (Part XII). Specifically, Articles 192–194 of UNCLOS require States to take measures to prevent, reduce and control pollution of the marine environment arising from any source including land-based and sea-based activities, including pollution from exploration or exploitation of the natural resources of the seabed and subsoil and from other devices operating in the marine environment. Article 214 (enforcement with respect to pollution from seabed activities) further obliges States to enforce such measures with respect to seabed activities undertaken under their jurisdiction.

The proposed site investigation surveys are regulated in accordance with these UNCLOS principles and Ireland's domestic framework, ensuring that all operations are environmentally responsible and legally compliant. Specifically, the project will:

- Avoid unnecessary seabed disturbance.
- Prevent the release of contaminants into the marine environment.
- Ensure all waste material (sediment, debris, packaging, *etc.*) is handled and disposed of appropriately onshore.
- Be conducted using non-extractive, small-scale survey methods that are fully consistent with Ireland's obligations under UNCLOS and relevant international instruments, including MARPOL.

The Maritime Jurisdiction Act consolidates and modernises Ireland's maritime boundaries, delineating the territorial sea (12 nautical miles), contiguous zone (24 nautical miles), exclusive economic zone (200 nautical miles), and continental shelf rights. It provides the domestic legal framework through which Ireland fulfils its obligations under UNCLOS, including those related to environmental protection, sustainable development, and the orderly management of marine activities.

The proposed MUL survey area is situated within the internal waters of the State, landward of the baseline from which maritime zones are measured. Consequently, the activities fall wholly within Ireland's sovereign territory, where the State exercises full jurisdiction. The project's design, regulatory oversight, and operational controls ensure consistency with Ireland's obligations under UNCLOS and the Maritime Jurisdiction Act, demonstrating the proposed activities are responsible, sustainable and in compliance with international law.