



April 7, 2026

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RE: MUL260002 – University College Cork

A Chara,

The Marine Divisions of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) welcome the opportunity to provide comments on MUL260002, submitted by University College Cork, to conduct marine environmental surveys.

DAFM wishes to stress that commercial sea fishing and aquaculture are long standing, pre-existing and traditional activities in the marine environment. Fishers and aquaculture site holders are primary food producers and are essential to supplying the downstream indigenous seafood processing and export industries and in sustaining the livelihoods of coastal communities. The significance of such food production activity is reflected in the Government's [Food Vision 2030](#) policy.

The importance of the seafood sector to our coastal communities is highlighted in BIM's [Business of Seafood 2024](#) which sets out that the total GDP of the seafood sector was €1.24 billion in 2024, and employment increased to 16,874 (direct and indirect jobs) from 15,673 in 2023.

To inform the DAFM comments, the observations of the Marine Institute (MI) and Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) on the application were requested.

MI advise that given the small size of the proposed structure and the shallow depth at which it will be placed, it is considered unlikely that this proposal will have a negative impact on commercial fisheries.

BIM highlighted that the proposed location overlaps with an existing blue mussel fishery order T05-002OFO and is approx. 2 km away from active aquaculture site T05-522B which is located in Rostellan shellfish waters and intersects with Cork Harbour SPA - 004030 (<https://dafm-maps.marine.ie/aquaculture-viewer/>.) However, BIM note that the proposed area and activity will be small and there is likely to be no significant impact on aquaculture and fishery's activity.

Timely notification to aquaculture producers and fishers on the ground, through direct contact using the Irish Fleet Register [Sea-Fishing Boat Licence Applications, Forms and Conditions](#) should be taken.

DAFM recognises that the developer's aim is to promote co-existence and minimise potential disruption to commercial fishing activities in the area. The evaluation of potential impacts of the surveys on commercial sea fishing activities needs to be given consideration within the context of the requirements set out under the Maritime Area Planning Act and the National

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Marine Planning Framework (NMPF). The principles in the NMPF of avoiding, minimising, or mitigating impacts on access to existing activities (including specific policies on Fisheries and Aquaculture) should be followed and any proposed development activity should incorporate the principle of maximising coexistence with established activities in marine areas.

DAFM notes that pot fishing can take place in the vicinity of the proposed survey works. Such being the case, Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) data regarding fishing in the area may be limited as many of the vessels in the inshore fishing segment (less than 12 metres in length) are not currently required to carry VMS equipment on board.

While this proposal is not anticipated to impact unduly on inshore fishers, relevant local fishing organisations should nevertheless be included on the provision of any Notices to Mariners in this respect and be made aware of proposed survey works at the earliest opportunity. This is particularly important as there are already a number of other applications for Maritime Usage Licences (MULs) in the area.

Please also find attached documents from the MI and BIM which provide further comments for consideration.

Yours sincerely,

**Marine Divisions**  
**An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara**  
*Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine*