

MAC Report	
Application for a Maritime Area Consent (MAC) under section 79 of Maritime Area Planning Act 2021, as amended (the Act)	
Application Details	
MAC Applicant:	Cork County Council
MAC Reference No:	MAC260001
Location:	Cloddagh, Finure, County Cork.
Date Application received:	22 January 2026
Proposed Maritime Usage:	Cork County Council has applied for a MAC for the construction of heavy rock armour to protect a public road at Finure, Co. Cork.
Recommendation:	To approve the part granting of the MAC sought with conditions attached.

Document Control			
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1. Overview

On 22 January 2026, MARA received a Maritime Area Consent (MAC) application under section 79 of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021, as amended (the Act) from Cork County Council (the Applicant) for the construction of heavy rock armour to protect an existing public road at Finure, Co. Cork.

2. Background

The site is located in the townland of Finure, Co. Cork, on the south coast approximately 4km east of Roche's Point. The proposed coastal protection works comprise a rock armour revetment to provide protection to the existing public road L-36451-0. The Applicant states that the public road is *"currently very exposed and vulnerable to serious damage"*. The drawings of the site that have been submitted by the Applicant indicate that there has been a soil slippage at the top of the existing cliff, adjacent to the public road. The proposed works include placing rock armour in the area below the High-Water Mark (i.e. the maritime area) and placing additional rock which will be overlain with topsoil and seeded in the area above the High-Water Mark.

3. Proposed Maritime Usage

The proposed works which are the subject of this application comprise the installation of a heavy rock armour revetment in the maritime area. The Applicant proposes to construct the revetment by placing suitable rock on a firm base which will be formed by the strand at the base of the cliff. The Applicant proposes to place materials in the maritime area using a crane which will be located on the public road at the top of the cliff. The Applicant expects that the duration of works will be 2-3 months in a single continuous operation, depending on favourable weather conditions.

The proposed revetment will comprise an underlayer of small rocks (c. 0.6 tonnes) under an armour layer of c. 6 tonne rock, which will be protected by a toe of selected large rock at the base of the revetment. Rock will be placed between the toe at +0.5mOD to approximately +16.0mOD, with the primary rock armour layer being constructed to +7.0mOD. The slope of the revetment is proposed to be 1:1.5 (rise:run).

The Applicant originally sought a MAC area of 115sqm. In their response to a Request for Additional Information dated 04 March 2026 (response received 24 March 2026), the Applicant revised the MAC area sought to 278sqm. The MAC area sought by the Applicant is illustrated in *Figure 1* below. The Applicant has confirmed that this MAC area *"is sufficient for the construction, any future maintenance and rehabilitation/decommissioning of the proposed rock armour structure"*.

The Applicant has requested a MAC term of 100 years. The Applicant envisages a 100-year minimum design life for the proposed infrastructure, however the design criteria applied to the proposed rock armour in support of this MAC term has not been confirmed by the Applicant.

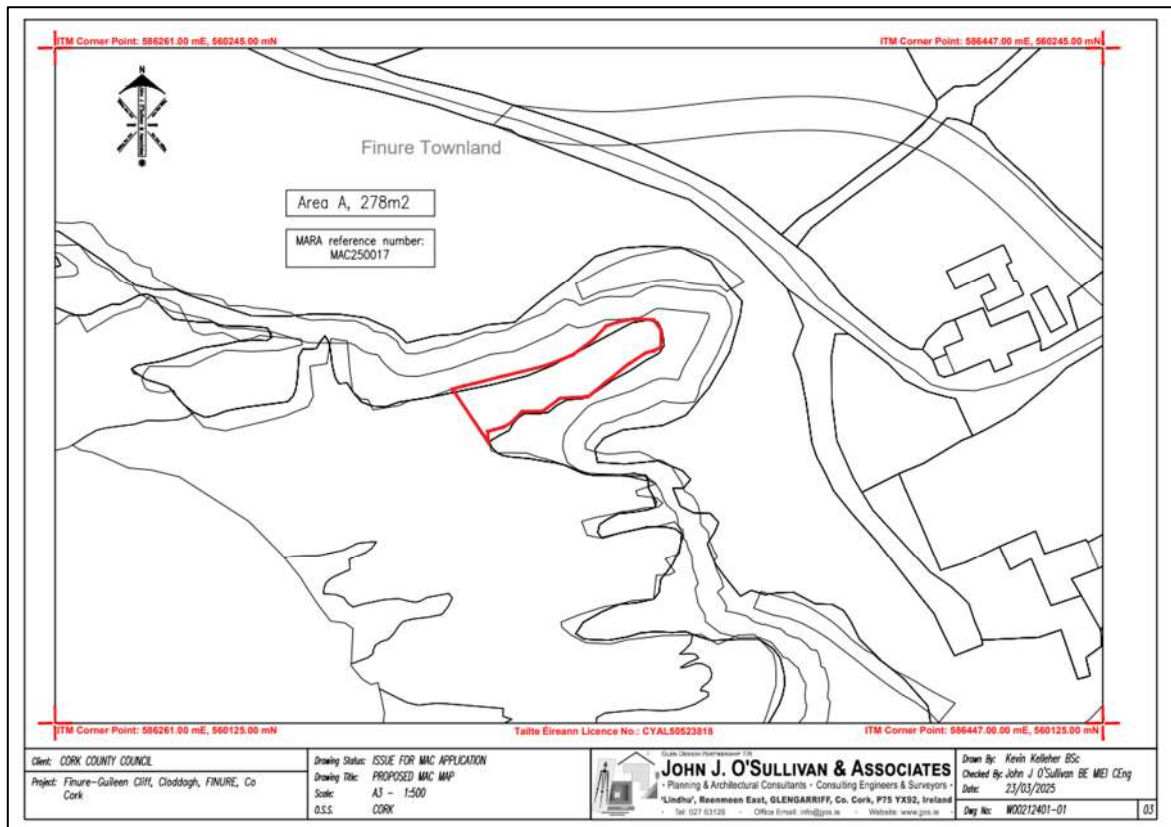


Figure 1: Applicant map of proposed layout of MAC area at Finure, Co. Cork

4. Site Visit

Richard Brown, Chartered Engineer and Director at McCarthy Browne visited the site on behalf of MARA on 16th March 2026.

The location was accessible from the public road, however the shoreline at the base of the proposed rock revetment was inaccessible due to unsafe access down the existing steep cliff face. It was evident that there has been a slippage of the embankment in recent years. There were temporary barriers in place at the road edge adjacent to the proposed MAC area which were in a dilapidated state. There was evidence of further erosion affecting the adjacent shoreline.

The application noted that all access for the works would be from the public road. It was not clear from the initial application how the Applicant proposes to prepare the existing base for rock armour placement without direct access to the foreshore, which is below the public road. There are utilities overhead crossing the subject area above the High-Water Mark and these will need to be considered as part of the proposed construction methodology. The proposal includes working from the L3645 road which will likely result in vehicular access restrictions on this road during the works.

No existing infrastructure or occupation, which would materially conflict with the proposed maritime usage, was noted during the site inspection.

Photographs 1 to 4 details the character of the site in the vicinity of the proposed works.



Picture 1: View East of site looking toward Gyleen & slipway [RB: 16/03/2026]



Picture 2: View from public road of subject area [RB: 16/03/2026]



Picture 3: View West, subject area to left, barriers in place [RB: 16/03/2026]



Picture 4: View of subject area [RB: 16/03/2026]

5. Review of Legislation & Associated Consents

5.1 Applicable Provisions of the Maritime Area Planning Act, 2021 as amended (the Act)

Under the Act, MARA has responsibility for granting MACs.

Schedule 3 and Schedule 4 of the Act specifies maritime usages for which a MAC is not required, including where the proposed maritime usage falls under the remit of another enactment, is navigation or fishing, is a licensable activity under Schedule 7 or where the activity is to be undertaken on private land. The proposed maritime usage is not considered to fall under those listed under Schedule 3 or 4 of the Act.

The Applicant has stated that the proposed maritime usage and the subject of this application requires development permission. In accordance with section 75(1) of the Act, a MAC is required before an application for development permission can be lodged with the relevant consent authority.

Accordingly, the subject of this application is considered to fall under section 75(1) of the Act.

5.2 Ownership

A search was undertaken of the Land Registry on 26 March 2026 for any document granting or affecting rights to land in order to ensure that there are no conflicts of interest with the MAC area being applied for as outlined in the proposed MAC Map.

No conflicts of interest affecting the proposed MAC area were identified.

5.3 Existing Consents & Authorisations

A search of the MARA's GIS database was undertaken on 13 April 2026 for spatial overlap between the proposed MAC areas and existing foreshore authorisations and MARA licences and consents. The proposed MAC area does not overlap with any existing MACs, or any existing MAC or Maritime Usage Licence (MUL) applications. The application overlaps with one consented MUL as detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Summary of Overlapping maritime authorisations and foreshore authorisations				
File Reference Number	Applicant/ Holder	Consent Type	Maritime Usage	Status
MUL240036	EirGrid plc	MUL	Marine environmental surveys for the purposes of site investigation	Active Expiry date: 10/07/2030

Maritime Usage Licence MUL240036, granted by MARA, authorises EirGrid plc to conduct site investigations in the maritime area to inform the engineering design and environmental assessments for two offshore substations (OSS) in the Tonn Nua Area A (as identified in the South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan), potential offshore transmission cable corridors, approaches to seven potential landfall zones, and seven landfall zones. As Maritime Usage Licences are issued on a non-exclusive basis, co-existence with the proposed maritime usage the subject of this application is considered possible, therefore no conflict is considered to exist.

The Marine Institute's Ireland's Marine Atlas database¹ was searched on 13 April 2026 for spatial overlap between the proposed MAC areas and any Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine (DAFM) foreshore authorisations for aquaculture sites. There are no licenced aquaculture operations overlapping with or in close proximity to the proposed MAC area.

In summary, no existing MACs, MULs, foreshore authorisations (including those for aquaculture) or applications for the same were identified as overlapping the proposed MAC application area which would impede MARA in granting a MAC for the proposed maritime usage.

5.4 Development Permission

The Applicant has stated that development permission under Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations will be required for this project. Owing to the nature and scale of the proposed works, it is

¹ <https://atlas.marine.ie/>

considered reasonable that the MAC Holder (if successful in obtaining a MAC) should submit a valid application for development consent to the relevant planning authority within 18 months of issuance of a MAC.

The Applicant in their development permission application to the relevant planning authority is required to include a Rehabilitation Schedule detailing how the Applicant proposes to rehabilitate the maritime area in accordance with Part 4, Chapter 8 of the Act.

6. Assessment

6.1 Schedule 5

The MAC application was submitted on 31 December 2025 with the appropriate fee paid on 22 January 2026 and reviewed for completeness on 04 February 2026. An incomplete application notification was issued on 04 February 2026; with supplementary documentation/information received on 04 February 2026. The application was deemed complete by MARA on 10 February 2026.

A number of requests for additional information were issued on 04 March, 30 March and 01 May 2026 under section 79(3) of the Act and associated responses received relating to matters for general, technical and financial assessment on 24 March, 15 April and 22 May 2026.

Schedule 5 of the Act sets out the criteria to which MARA must have regard when assessing a MAC application. This report sets out the assessment undertaken pursuant to section 5 of the Act. The assessment is summarised in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Synopsis of the assessment of the application with regard to the requirements of Schedule 5			
Schedule 5 Requirements		Synopsis	Assessment
1.	The nature, scope and duration of the occupation of the maritime area concerned for the purposes of the proposed maritime usage.	Details of the proposed maritime usage, including the nature scope and duration are described in Section 3 & 4 above. The Applicant has sought a MAC term of 100 years for the proposed rock armour. The Applicant has not confirmed the criteria applied to the design of the proposed rock armour. Rock armour is typically designed for a design life of 50 years based on BS 6349 (Maritime Works) and the CIRIA Rock Manual, therefore it is considered that a design life for the structure of circa 50 years, with proper maintenance and repair, is realistic and should be achievable. Accordingly, a MAC term of 50 years is recommended. The proposed maritime usage is considered satisfactory, having regard to the nature and scope of the proposed maritime usage. The proposed maritime usage is considered partially satisfactory, having regard to the duration of the proposed maritime usage.	Partially Satisfied
2.	Whether the proposed maritime usage is in the public interest.	The Applicant stated that the proposed maritime usage will allow the <i>"Protection of Coastal Communities and preservation of vital infrastructure"</i> .	Satisfactory

		The Applicant also stated that the proposed maritime usage contributes to the sustainable economic development of the local area through the <i>“Protection of vital infrastructure serving a coastal community thereby enhancing the socio-economic fabric”</i> and that the <i>“Continued safe access to local properties is a fundamental right of the local population”</i>. The proposed maritime usage is considered satisfactory, having regard to the public interest.	
3.	The location and spatial extent of the occupation of the maritime area concerned for the purposes of the proposed maritime usage.	The total area MAC area sought by the Applicant is 278sqm, comprising MAC Area A, as illustrated in Figure 2 : Proposed MAC Map in Section 7. Details of the location, relevant consents, ownership and development permissions are provided in Sections 2 to 5 above. Based on the searches and site visit undertaken, nothing was identified that would preclude the granting of a MAC in the proposed area. Accordingly, the proposed maritime usage is considered satisfactory, having regard to the location and spatial extent of the occupation.	Satisfactory
4.	Guidelines issued under section 7 which are relevant to the proposed maritime usage.	No such guidelines have been published to date.	Not applicable
5.	Whether the Applicant is a fit and proper person (within the meaning of Schedule 2) to be granted a MAC, both at the time the application is made and at the time that the MAC application concerned is determined by the MARA.	In accordance with <i>S.I. No. 467/2025 - Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 (Fit and Proper Person) Order 2025</i> Cork County Council has been declared as a fit and proper person to be granted and to hold any MAC in accordance with section 90(1)(b) of the Act.	Satisfactory
6.	Whether the Applicant is tax compliant, both at the time the application is made and at the time that the MAC application concerned is determined by the MARA.	The Applicant submitted Tax Registration Number and Tax Clearance Access Number (TCAN) which was used to view the Applicant's tax clearance certificate. Based on the review of the tax clearance certificate, the Applicant is considered tax compliant.	Satisfactory

7.	In the case of any maritime usage relating to offshore renewable energy (within the meaning of section 100), the consistency of the MAC application concerned with the development plans of the transmission system operator (within the meaning of section 100).	Not applicable	Not Applicable
8.	The National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF).	Based on a review of the application, MARA has had regard to the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) and it is considered that the proposed project aligns with the overall objectives of the NMPF, including the economic and social objectives set out therein. It is considered that the proposed project aligns with the following economic, social and key sectoral policy objectives of the NMPF: - • Social Benefits Policy 1 - <i>Proposals that enhance or promote social benefits should be supported.</i> • Co-existence Policy 1 - <i>Proposals should demonstrate that they have considered how to optimise the use of space, including through consideration of opportunities for co-existence and co-operation with other activities, enhancing other activities where appropriate.</i> • Rural Coastal and Island Communities Policy 1 - <i>Proposals contributing to access, communications, energy self-sufficiency or sustainability of rural coastal and / or island communities should be supported. Proposals should ideally be inclusive of continual education, skills development and training in marine sectors, thus improving the sustainability, social benefits and economic resilience of rural and island communities.</i> In the application, the Applicant states that the proposed project is consistent with the environmental objectives of the NMPF. The proposed works constitute development which require planning permission and environmental assessment of the proposed maritime usage, which is undertaken at development permission stage by the relevant planning authority. This above assessment does not prejudice any consideration and determination that the relevant Planning Authority may make in relation to the NMPF when considering the Planning Application for this development.	Satisfactory

		Based on the above, MARA is satisfied that the proposed works align with the above overall objectives and policy objectives of the NMPF.	
9.	The extent and nature of the preparatory work already undertaken by the Applicant towards ensuring the efficacious undertaking of the proposed maritime usage the subject of the MAC application concerned should the Applicant be granted a MAC in respect of such usage.	The Applicant states that a topographical survey has been undertaken of the site. Having regard to the above, the extent of the preparatory works undertaken are considered acceptable for a project of this scale and nature.	Satisfactory
10.	The extent and nature of stakeholder engagement undertaken by the Applicant in respect of the proposed maritime usage.	The Applicant stated <i>"Rock revetment to be placed in very inaccessible beach at base of steep cliff. No impact on Marine Users."</i>. Statutory public consultation will be undertaken as part of any future planning permission application. Having regard to the above, the extent and nature of the stakeholder engagement undertaken is therefore considered acceptable for a project of this scale and nature.	Satisfactory
11.	Where a competitive process referred to in section 93 or 103 is used, the outcome of such process.	Not applicable	Satisfactory
12.	Any additional criteria specified, for the purposes of this paragraph, in regulations made under section 80(2).	No such regulations have been made to date.	Not applicable

6.2 Rehabilitation Schedule

Under section 96(1) of the Act, it is required that the holder of a MAC shall, before the expiration of the MAC, rehabilitate that part of the maritime area the subject of the MAC.

In accordance with section 75(5) of the Act, as for MAC applications made to MARA on the basis of section 75(1) of the Act, the Applicant is required to attach a Rehabilitation Schedule to their associated application for development permission.

6.3 Section 83 – Nature of Use

Section 83(1) of the Act requires MARA in the granting of a MAC to specify whether the specific part of the maritime area the subject of that MAC is for exclusive use or not. Section 83(1) provides MARA discretion and flexibility to specify the nature of the use (i.e. exclusive, non-exclusive or may/may not be exclusive).

The Applicant has sought that the MAC be granted on a non-exclusive basis. Accordingly, it is recommended that the MAC is granted on a “non-exclusive” basis in accordance with section 83(1)(b) of the Act.

7. Proposed MAC Map (for illustration purposes only)

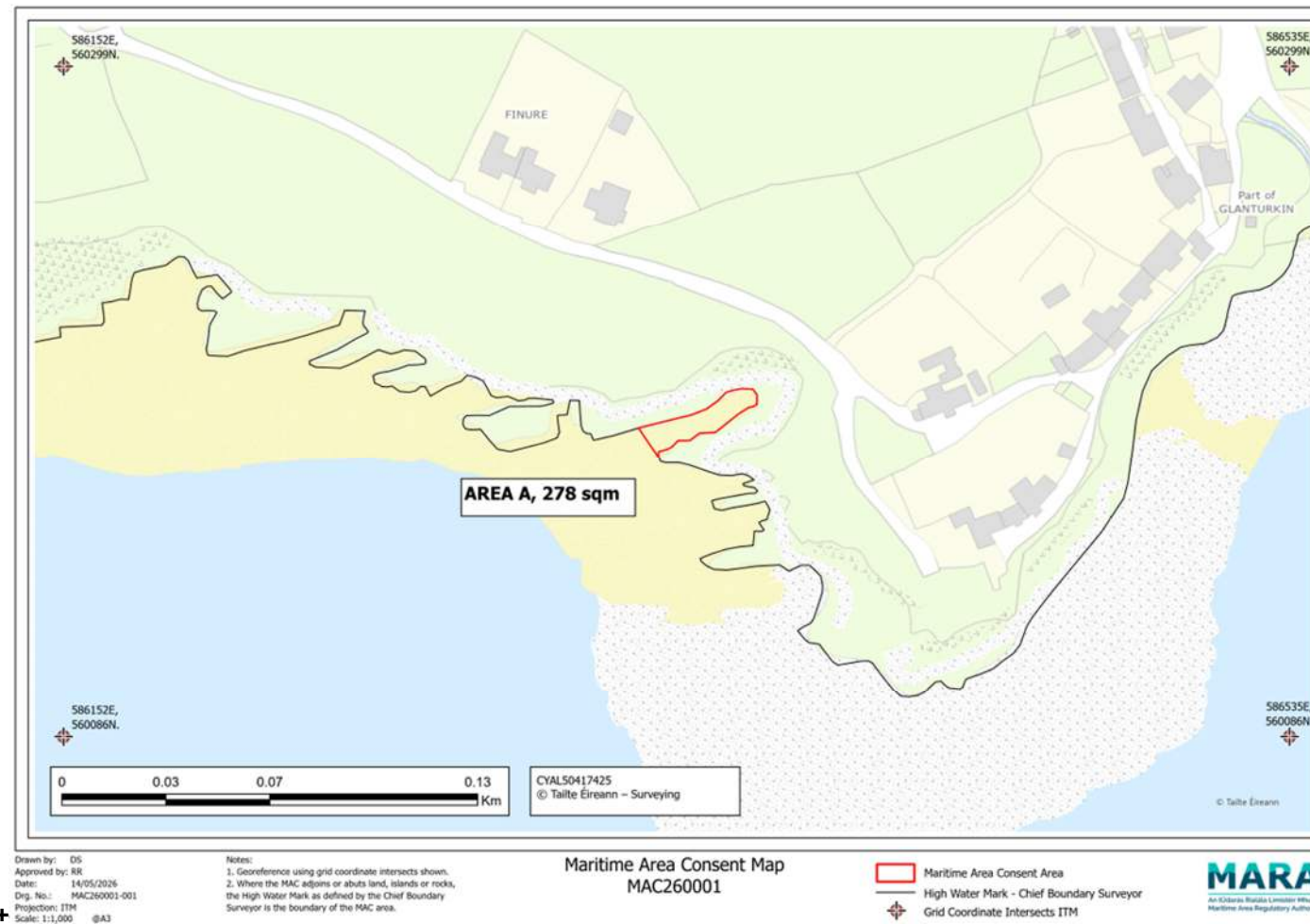


Figure 2: Proposed MAC Map

8. Levy

An annual MAC levy has been calculated based on the project type and proposed MAC area in accordance with MARA's MAC levy framework, as set out below.

MAPA Levy Framework Part:	Part A: Nearshore
Category/Class:	Development (non-commercial)
Tier:	Tier 3
Applicable Rate:	Base Annual Charge of €214.09 plus an add on of 0.40 per sq.m for areas in excess of 100 sq.m
Area:	278 sqm
Calculation:	$€214.09 + (€0.40 * (278.00 - 100.00))$
Levy due:	€285.29

The MAC levy has been calculated as €285.29 per annum. All levies are indexed to the Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP), applied on an annual basis.

9. Discussion

Based on the assessments undertaken contained herein, it is considered that the proposed MAC application complies with all the necessary requirements of Schedule 5 of the Act, where relevant and appropriate, subject to the following recommended terms and conditions:

The Applicant requested a MAC term of 100 years. Having regard to the nature and lifecycle of the proposed maritime usage, it is considered that the granting of 100 years is not merited. Accordingly, it is recommended that the MAC is part granted for a term of 50 years.

a. Terms

MAC Term:	50 years
Consent Area:	That part of the maritime area marked red on the MAC Map.
MAC Map Title:	Title: Maritime Area Consent Map MAC260001 Drawing No: MAC260001-001 Date: 14/05/2026
Permitted Maritime Usage:	The construction, use, operation and maintenance of coastal protection works, including all associated decommissioning, demolition,

	rehabilitation and any other works required on foot of any development permission relating to the infrastructure.
Nature of Usage:	Non-Exclusive
Date by which application for Development Permission must be submitted:	18 months from date of grant of MAC.
The minimum number of days in which the MAC Holder shall provide the Grantor advance notice in writing of the Holder's intention to commence the Permitted Maritime Usage.	14 Days
Date by which Financial Close is to be achieved:	Not applicable

b. Conditions and Reasons for Conditions

Section 82 of the Act specifies that MARA may attach to a MAC one or more conditions which fall within the types of conditions specified in Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Act. All conditions contained in Schedule 6; Part 2 are deemed to be attached to a MAC.

The standard suite of MARA conditions reflecting the contractual and statutory relationship that will exist with a grant of consent are also recommended. Reasons for these conditions are set out in the enclosed section 81(7)(b) Minded to Notice.

10. Conclusion & Recommendation

Following a detailed assessment of all information on file, it is considered that the proposal complies with all the necessary requirements subject to the part granting of a MAC term of 50 years. Accordingly, it is recommended to issue a section 81(7)(b) Minded to Notice, as enclosed, informing the Applicant that MARA is minded to part grant a Maritime Area Consent subject to the proposed conditions attached to the MAC. It is recommended to allow the Applicant 21 days from the date of issue of the Minded to Notice to submit supplementary material in relation to the reasons for the conditions as per section 81(7)(b)(ii).

Once a final determination is made by MARA, the Applicant will be notified and MARA will publish a notice on its website as soon as practicable thereafter.

Signed: Paul Brennan Position: Manager, MAC Directorate

Signed: Robert Roche Position: Marine Analyst, MAC Directorate