

Maritime Usage Licence and Planning Advisory Directorate

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Determination Report For a Material Amendment

To:	John Evans, Director	From:	Dr Ciar O'Toole Senior Marine Advisor
Date:	26/03/2026	Material Amendment Application No:	MUL230024MA
Applicant:	Deep Sea Fibre Networks Ltd. 15 The Seapoint Building, Clontarf, Dublin 3.		
Type of maritime usage activity in accordance with Schedule 7 of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021:	<i>3. Marine environmental surveys for the purposes of site investigation or in support of an application under Part XXI of the Act of 2000.</i>		
Location of maritime usage:	Landfall at Ballyloughane County Galway and traversing the Irish Maritime Area to the southwest of Ireland.		
Material Amendment application received:	04/02/2026		

1. Background

The Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) issued a Maritime Usage Licence (MUL) to Deep Sea Fibre Networks Ltd. (the applicant) on 29/05/2025. The MUL granted (ref. MUL230024) was for marine environmental surveys for the purposes of site investigation or in support of an application under Part XXI of the Act of 2000 under Schedule 7(3) of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 (the MAP Act).

The original application made to MARA was for site investigations to inform the feasibility of constructing a new subsea telecoms cable system PISCES which is proposed to link Ireland to EU member states, specifically to inform the location and design of the cable route and landfall site. These activities were licensed by MARA from the landfall location Ballyloughane County Galway, through Galway Bay and traversing the Irish Maritime Area to the southwest of Ireland.

The applicant submitted an application for a Material Amendment to MUL230024 on 04/02/2026, in accordance with section 125 of the MAP Act. This requested the removal of Specific Condition 37 (i) which states: “The Holder shall not undertake the Permitted Maritime Usage between 1st February and 30th June annually, to ensure least disturbance to known fish spawning along the survey route.”

This condition arose from MARA’s analysis of the original application under its obligations under section 121(2)(iii) of the MAP Act relating to Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of the European Union (the Marine Strategy Framework Directive). Notwithstanding this, in the absence of regulations as provided for in Section 125(2) of the MAP Act, MARA must now consider whether there has been any change in circumstances that would materially change the outcome of the AA screening assessment for MUL230024 dated 10/10/24 (“the original AA screening assessment”). That original AA screening assessment has been used to inform this AA screening for the proposed amendment.

2. Description of maritime usage and local site characteristics

The activities granted under MUL230024 remain the same as those outlined in MARA’s original AA screening assessment report and determination of the 10/10/2024, that is: geotechnical surveys and geophysical investigations, including surveys to be undertaken in the intertidal zone, an inshore survey (water depths of 3m chart datum to 15m chart datum) and an offshore survey (water depths greater than 15m chart datum). The landfall site investigations will include bar probes and trial pits, as well as beach walk over surveys for ecological and archaeological purposes. The inshore marine survey will be undertaken using multi-beam echo sounder, side scan sonar, marine magnetometer and sub-bottom profile

equipment. The offshore site surveys will include cone penetration tests, grab samples and gravity cores/vibrocores. The MUL was granted for a two-year period, and a number of survey activities have already taken place in 2025.

Brief description of the site characteristics

The area around the proposed landfall site at Ballyloughane Strand in Co. Galway is a shale, sandy beach. The seabed substrate along the proposed survey corridor consists mainly sand in the intertidal and nearshore areas, Sands and muddy sands are indicated within the survey corridor offshore but the proposed environmental surveys will further determine this information.

3. Identification of relevant European sites

The Material Amendment application (i.e. the proposed removal of Specific Condition 37 which prevents surveys from taking place between 1st February to 30th June annually to minimise impacts on spawning and nursery grounds of commercial fish species) is subject to screening for appropriate assessment in accordance with Regulation 42 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended, to determine if it alone, or in-combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have a significant effect on European sites, in view of best scientific knowledge and the conservation objectives of the sites.

The proposed material amendment is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European site(s).

The European sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs)) listed on Table 1 have been considered for appropriate assessment of the material amendment proposed, given the nature, scale and Zone of Influence of the proposed material amendment, the conservation objectives of the European sites and using the Source-Pathway-Receptor model.

Table 1 - Identification of relevant European sites, their qualifying interests and site-specific conservation objectives. Those Qualifying Interests marked in bold have been screened in for Stage 2 appropriate assessment.

European site & site code	Distance from MUL area (km)	List of Special Conservation Interests/Qualifying Interests	Connection (Source-pathway-receptor)	European Site Screened in	Site-specific conservation objectives
Galway Bay Complex SAC [Site code IE000268]	Within MUL area	<p>Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410] Turloughs [3180] <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210] Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davalliana</i> [7210] Alkaline fens [7230] Limestone pavements [8240] <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355] <i>Phoca vitulina</i> (Harbour Seal) [1365]</p>	No -no S-P-R link identified for Material Amendment (MA)	No	NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Galway Bay Complex SAC 000268. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex SAC [Site code IE0000020]	15-20km	<p>Reefs [1170] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130] Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260] Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060] <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210]</p>	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2026) Conservation Objectives: Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex SAC 000020. Version 2. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

		Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> , <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) [6510] Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) [7220] Limestone pavements [8240] Submerged or partially submerged sea caves [8330] <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i> (Petalwort) [1395]			
Inisheer Island SAC [Site code IE0001275]	<10km	Coastal lagoons [1150] Reefs [1170] European dry heaths [4030] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210] Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> , <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) [6510] Limestone pavements [8240]	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2014) Conservation Objectives: Inisheer Island SAC 001275. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
Inishmaan Island SAC [Site code IE0000212]	10-15km	Reefs [1170] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] Embryonic shifting dunes [2110] Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120] Machairs (* in Ireland) [21A0] European dry heaths [4030] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210] Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> , <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) [6510] Limestone pavements [8240]	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2014) Conservation Objectives: Inishmaan Island SAC 000212. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
Inishmore Island SAC [Site code IE0000213]	15-20km	Coastal lagoons [1150] Reefs [1170] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] Embryonic shifting dunes [2110] Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120]	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Inishmore Island SAC 000213. Version 2. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

		<p>Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130] Dunes with <i>Salix repens</i> ssp. <i>argentea</i> (<i>Salicion arenariae</i>) [2170] Humid dune slacks [2190] Machairs (* in Ireland) [21A0] European dry heaths [4030] Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210] Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) [6510] Limestone pavements [8240] Submerged or partially submerged sea caves [8330] <i>Vertigo angustior</i> (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) [1014] <i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]</p>			
Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC [Site code IE002111]	15-25km	<p>Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Coastal lagoons [1150] Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] Reefs [1170] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410] Machairs (* in Ireland) [21A0] Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and/or <i>Isoeto-Nanojuncetea</i> [3130] Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) [6510] <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355] <i>Najas flexilis</i> (Slender Naiad) [1833] <i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351] <i>Phoca vitulina</i> (Harbour Seal) [1365]</p>	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2026) Conservation Objectives: Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC 002111. Version 2. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Lower River Shannon SAC [Site Code IE002165]	15-25km	<p>Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time [1110] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Coastal lagoons [1150]</p>	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2012) Conservation Objectives: Lower River Shannon SAC 002165. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service,

		<p>Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410] Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260] Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) [6410] Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0] Estuaries [1130] Reefs [1170] <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029] <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> (Sea Lamprey) [1095] <i>Lampetra planeri</i> (Brook Lamprey) [1096] <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> (River Lamprey) [1099] <i>Salmo salar</i> (Salmon) [1106] <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355] <i>Tursiops truncatus</i> (Common Bottle-nose Dolphin) [1349] <i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351] <i>Halichoerus grypus</i> (Grey Seal) [1364]</p>			Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
Blasket Islands SAC [Site code IE002172]	50-75km	<p>Reefs [1170] Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] European dry heaths [4030] Submerged or partially submerged sea caves [8330] <i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351] <i>Halichoerus grypus</i> (Grey Seal) [1364]</p>	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2014) Conservation Objectives: Blasket Islands SAC 002172. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
Slyne Head Islands SAC [Site code IE000328]	50-75km	<p>Reefs [1170] <i>Tursiops truncatus</i> (Common Bottlenose Dolphin) [1349] <i>Halichoerus grypus</i> (Grey Seal) [1364]</p>	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Slyne Head Islands SAC 000328. Version 2. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

<p>Slyne Head Peninsula SAC [Site code IE002074]</p>	<p>50-75km</p>	<p>Coastal lagoons [1150] Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] Reefs [1170] Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410] Embryonic shifting dunes [2110] Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120] Machairs (* in Ireland) [21A0] Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) [3110] Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and/or <i>Isoeto-Nanojuncetea</i> [3130] Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp. [3140] European dry heaths [4030] <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210] Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) [6410] Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) [6510] Alkaline fens [7230] <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i> (Petalwort) [1395] <i>Najas flexilis</i> (Slender Naiad) [1833] <i>Tursiops truncatus</i> (Common Bottlenose Dolphin) [1349]</p>	<p>No -no S-P-R link identified for MA</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>NPWS (2015) Conservation Objectives: Slyne Head Peninsula SAC 002074. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.</p>
<p>West Connacht Coast SAC [Site code IE002998]</p>	<p>50-75km</p>	<p><i>Tursiops truncatus</i> (Common Bottlenose Dolphin) [1349] <i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]</p>	<p>No -no S-P-R link identified for MA</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives: West Connacht Coast SAC 002998. Version 2. National Parks and Wildlife Service,</p>

					Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Duvillaun Islands SAC [Site code IE000495]	>100km	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i> (Common Bottlenose Dolphin) [1349] <i>Halichoerus grypus</i> (Grey Seal) [1364]	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Duvillaun Islands SAC 000495. Version 2. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC [Site code IE000101]	>100km	Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] Reefs [1170] Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] European dry heaths [4030] Submerged or partially submerged sea caves [8330] <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355] <i>Halichoerus grypus</i> (Grey Seal) [1364] <i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2011) Conservation Objectives: Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC 000101. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
Kenmare River SAC [IE002158]	>100km	Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] Reefs [1170] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410] Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120] Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130] European dry heaths [4030] <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130] Calaminarian grasslands of the <i>Violetalia calaminariae</i> [6130] Submerged or partially submerged sea caves [8330] <i>Vertigo angustior</i> (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) [1014] <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303] <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355] <i>Phoca vitulina</i> (Harbour Seal) [1365]	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2026) Conservation Objectives: Kenmare River SAC 002158. Version 2. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

		<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]			
Belgica Mound Province SAC [Site code: IE002327]	25-50km	Reefs [1170] <i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351] <i>Tursiops truncatus</i> (Common Bottlenose Dolphin) [1349]	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives: Belgica Mound Province SAC 002327. Version 2. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Bunduff Lough and Machair/Trawalua/Mullaghmore SAC [000625]	>200km	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] Reefs [1170] Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120] Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130] Humid dune slacks [2190] Machairs (* in Ireland) [21A0] <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210] Alkaline fens [7230] <i>Euphydryas aurinia</i> (Marsh Fritillary) [1065] <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i> (Petalwort) [1395] <i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2016) Conservation Objectives: Bunduff Lough and Machair/Trawalua/Mullaghmore SAC 000625. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
St Johns Point SAC [IE000191]	>200km	Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] Reefs [1170] Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210] Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) [6410] Alkaline fens [7230] Limestone pavements [8240] Submerged or partially submerged sea caves [8330] <i>Euphydryas aurinia</i> (Marsh Fritillary) [1065]	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2015) Conservation Objectives: St. John's Point SAC 000191. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

		<i>Tursiops truncatus</i> (Common Bottlenose Dolphin) [1349]			
Porcupine Bank Canyon SAC [Site code: IE003001]	>100km	Reefs [1170] <i>Tursiops truncatus</i> (Common Bottlenose Dolphin) [1349]	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Porcupine Bank Canyon SAC 003001. Version 2. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
South-west Porcupine Bank SAC [Site code: IE002329]	>100km	Reefs [1170] <i>Tursiops truncatus</i> (Common Bottlenose Dolphin) [1349]	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: South-west Porcupine Bank SAC 002329. Version 2. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Hovland Mound Province SAC [Site code: IE002328]	25-50km	Reefs [1170]	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2022) Conservation Objectives: Hovland Mound Province SAC 002328. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Southern Canyons SAC [Site code: IE002278]	<100km	Reefs [1170]	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2026) Conservation Objectives: Southern Canyons SAC 002278. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Inner Galway Bay SPA [Site code: IE0004031]	Within MUL area	Black-throated Diver (<i>Gavia arctica</i>) [A002] Great Northern Diver (<i>Gavia immer</i>) [A003] Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] Grey Heron (<i>Ardea cinerea</i>) [A028] Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050] Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [A069] Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157]	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Inner Galway Bay SPA 004031. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

		<p>Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160] Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) [A169] Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182] Sandwich Tern (<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>) [A191] Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</p>			
Inishmore SPA [Site code: 0004152]	15-20km	<p>Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188] Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A194] Little Tern (<i>Sterna albifrons</i>) [A195] Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) [A199]</p>	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives: Inishmore SPA 004152. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Cliffs of Moher SPA [Site code: 0004005]	10-15km	<p>Chough (<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>) [A346] Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A009] Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188] Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) [A199] Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>) [A200] Puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>) [A204]</p>	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives: Cliffs of Moher SPA 004005. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Mid Clare Coast SPA [Site code: IE0004182]	10-15km	<p>Barnacle Goose (<i>Branta leucopsis</i>) [A045] Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137] Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) [A144] Purple Sandpiper (<i>Calidris maritima</i>) [A148] Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) [A169] Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</p>	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2014) Conservation Objectives: Mid-Clare Coast SPA 004182. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
Illaunonearaun SPA [Site code: IE0004114]	20-25km	<p>Barnacle Goose (<i>Branta leucopsis</i>) [A045]</p>	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Illaunonearaun SPA 004114. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Loop Head SPA [Site code: IE0004119]	20-25km	Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188] Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) [A199]	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives: Loop Head SPA 004119. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Kerry Head SPA [Site code: IE004189]	50-75km	Chough (<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>) [A346] Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A009]	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives: Kerry Head SPA 004189. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Dingle Peninsula SPA [Site code: IE004153]	75-100km	Peregrine (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>) [A103] Chough (<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>) [A346] Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A009]	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives: Dingle Peninsula SPA 004153. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Blasket Islands SPA [Site code: IE004008]	75-100km	Storm Petrel (<i>Hydrobates pelagicus</i>) [A014] Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>) [A018] Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [A183] Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184] Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188] Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A194] Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>) [A200] Puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>) [A204] Chough (<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>) [A346] Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A009] Manx Shearwater (<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>) [A013]	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives: Blasket Islands SPA 004008. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA [Site code IE004077]	25-50km	Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038] Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050] Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054] Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056]	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2012) Conservation Objectives: River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA 004077. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

		Scaup (<i>Aythya marila</i>) [A062] Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143] Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160] Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] Greenshank (<i>Tringa nebularia</i>) [A164] Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]			
Iveragh Peninsula SPA [Site code: IE004154]	>100km	Peregrine (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>) [A103] Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188] Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) [A199] Chough (<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>) [A346] Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A009]	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives: Iveragh Peninsula SPA 004154. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Skelligs SPA [Site code: IE004007]	>100km	Storm Petrel (<i>Hydrobates pelagicus</i>) [A014] Gannet (<i>Morus bassanus</i>) [A016] Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188] Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) [A199] Puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>) [A204] Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A009] Manx Shearwater (<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>) [A013]	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives: Skelligs SPA 004007. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Deenish Island and Scariff Island SPA [Site code: IE004175]	>100km	Storm Petrel (<i>Hydrobates pelagicus</i>) [A014] Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [A183] Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A194] Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A009] Manx Shearwater (<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>) [A013]	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives: Deenish Island and Scariff Island SPA 004175. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Beara Peninsula SPA [Site code: IE004155]	>100km	Chough (<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>) [A346] Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A009]	No -no S-P-R link	No	NPWS (2022) Conservation Objectives: Beara Peninsula SPA 004155. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service,

			identified for MA		Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Cruagh Island SPA [Site code: IE004170]	75-100km	Barnacle Goose (<i>Branta leucopsis</i>) [A045] Manx Shearwater (<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>) [A013]	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives: Cruagh Island SPA 004170. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
High Island, Inishark and Davillaun SPA [Site code: IE004144]	75-100km	Barnacle Goose (<i>Branta leucopsis</i>) [A045] Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A194] Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A009]	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives: High Island, Inishark and Davillaun SPA 004144. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Clare Island SPA [Site code: IE004136]	>100km	Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A009] Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>) [A018] Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182] Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188] Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) [A199] Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>) [A200] Chough (<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>) [A346] Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A009]	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives: Clare Island SPA 004136. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Duvillaun Islands SPA [Site code: IE004111]	>100km	Storm Petrel (<i>Hydrobates pelagicus</i>) [A014] Barnacle Goose (<i>Branta leucopsis</i>) [A045] Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A009]	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives: Duvillaun Islands SPA 004111. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Connemara islands cSPA (Site code: 004159)	15km	Barnacle Goose (<i>Branta leucopsis</i>) [A045] Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A194] Sandwich Tern (<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>) [A863] Little Tern (<i>Sternula albifrons</i>) [A885] Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193]	No -no S-P-R link identified for MA	No	NPWS (2026) Conservation Objectives: Connemara Islands SPA 004159. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

4. Assessment of likely significant effects

Table 2 identification of potential direct and indirect impacts that may have an effect on the conservation objectives of European sites, taking into account the nature and scale of the proposed material amendment.

Table 2: Likely significant effects

Potential Impacts	Possible significance of Potential impacts (duration, magnitude, etc.)
Disturbance from underwater noise	No impact of proposed material amendment identified
Visual and above water noise disturbance	No impact of proposed material amendment identified
Physical disturbance and habitat loss	No impact of proposed material amendment identified

The likely significant effects shown on Table 2 reflect the potential impacts identified in MARA's original AA screening assessment undertaken for the original MUL application, which screened in the MUL application for appropriate assessment. The proposed material amendment, that the licence condition restricting the permitted maritime usage occurring between 1st February and 30th June annually, be removed, will not result in any changes to the activities assessed under the original AA screening assessment and will not result in a significant negative impact on any European site. The condition requested to be removed was not a mitigation measure required under the subsequent Appropriate Assessment of the MUL undertaken by MARA.

In-combination effects

The potential impacts of the proposed material amendment must be considered individually and also in combination with other plans or projects. All types of plans or projects that could, in combination with this MA, have a significant effect, have been considered. This in-combination assessment has been undertaken using professional and scientific judgement and is assessed primarily in terms of potential spatial and temporal impacts.

The spatial scope of the in-combination assessment is the MUL area licenced. The temporal scope of the in-combination assessment is based on the period over which the activities are proposed, which is two years.

A search of relevant databases was undertaken on the 26/03/2026. Table 3 below outlines those activities which are considered to have the potential to act in combination with the proposed maritime usage.

Relevant projects within the spatial and temporal scope were considered. Particular attention was given to the projects shown on Table 3 which have the potential to act in combination with the proposed MA.

Table 3: Projects with the potential to act in combination with the MA.

Application reference	Project description	Approximate distance from MUL area	Project Status	Possible in-combination effects
UE MUL Galway Clare	Bathymetric investigations to support future WWTP applications	Within MUL area	Applied for in 2024	Possible temporal and spatial overlap with MUL activity
FS007426	IRIS sub-sea fibre optic cable (main lay and construction)	Within MUL area	Approved – foreshore licence granted 2022	Spatial and temporal overlap with Deep Sea Fibre Networks Maritime Usage Area

The following plans, related to the development of the maritime environment were also considered:

- The Climate Action Plan 2025,
- River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) 2022-2027,
- Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028.

These plans promote sustainable development in the maritime environment and particularly Ireland’s Climate Action Plan’s renewable electricity target of 80% of energy generated from renewable electricity sources by 2030.

Likely significant in-combination effects between this project, the projects listed in Table 3 and two plans on the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites considered in this report can be excluded at this stage.

Were mitigation measures considered during the screening process?

No

5. Screening Determination Statement



The assessment of significant effects:

On the basis of the information on file, and having regard to:

- The nature and scale of the proposed material amendment
- The distance to the nearest European sites
- The lack of a potential for in-combination effects with other plans and projects
- The fact that the material amendment will result in no change to the activities proposed as part of the original MUL application and that the condition requested to be removed was not a mitigation measure required under the Appropriate Assessment of the MUL

Having considered the legal framework applicable to appropriate assessment, it was concluded that the proposed material amendment by Deep Sea Fibre Networks Ltd of their existing Maritime Usage Licence MUL230024 (MUL230024MA) will not require Stage 2 appropriate assessment.

It can be excluded on the basis of objective scientific information, that the proposed project, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site.

Signature and Date of Recommending Officer	 Dr Ciar O'Toole Senior Marine Advisor	31/03/2026
Signature and Date of Decision Maker	 John Evans Director of Maritime Usage Licensing	31/03/2026