

To:	Dr Alison McCarthy, Senior Marine Advisor, MULPA	From:	Dr Ciar O'Toole, Senior Marine Advisor, MULPA
Please see below for AA screening and determination report from external consultant Aisling Hearty of Aquafact, prepared using MARA procedures and templates with my supervision.			

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Determination Report			
To:	MULPA Directorate, MARA	Prepared by (on behalf of MARA):	Aisling Hearty, Principal Ecologist AQUAFAC (APEM Group)
		Reviewed by:	Dr Ciar O'Toole, MARA
Date:	10/09/2026	Maritime Usage Licence Application No:	MUL260005
Applicant:	Wexford County Council County Hall Carricklawn Wexford Y35 WY93		
Type(s) 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 proposed maritime usage:	Lower Slaney Estuary at Ferrycarrig, Co. Wexford, north of the existing Irish National Heritage Park.		
Licence application received:	19/02/2026		

1. Background

Wexford County Council (the applicant) has applied to the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) for a Maritime Usage Licence (MUL) to undertake marine environmental surveys and ground investigation works for the purposes of site investigation, falling under Schedule 7(3) of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 (the MAP Act). The proposed maritime usage is required to inform the design of the proposed Irish National Heritage Park project at Ferrycarrig, Co. Wexford, including three jetties and a man-made beach area on the southern bank of the Lower Slaney Estuary, north of the existing Irish National Heritage Park.

2. Description of maritime usage(s) and local site characteristics

2.1 Brief description of the maritime usage

The proposed maritime usage comprises environmental surveys and ground investigation works within the Lower Slaney Estuary. The environmental surveys include deployment of two Acoustic Doppler Current Profilers to measure tidal flow, speed and direction. The units will be deployed on the riverbed in frames or bottom mounts or may be attached to a floating buoy if site conditions are unsuitable. Bottom mounted units would have an approximate footprint of 1.5 m² each and would be deployed for approximately 29 days. An unmanned surface vessel may also be deployed for a 24-hour period to supplement data collection.

Sediment sampling will be undertaken at five locations using a Van Veen grab or similar method from a small vessel. Two samples of approximately five litres will be collected at each location to a penetration depth of approximately 15 cm, giving a total sample volume of approximately 50 litres. Two samples from each location are taken, one for particle size and the other for benthic sediment quality analysis.

The ground investigation works include five combined cable percussion and rotary core boreholes within the river, undertaken from a low draft/flat bottomed jack up barge. Boreholes are scheduled to extend to approximately 20 to 30 m until they reach rock, and then an additional 5 m into the rock. Each borehole is expected to take up to 3 days to complete. Five additional grab samples for assessment of contamination will be taken to 0.5 m depth.

Geophysical surveys include Multi Beam Echo Sounder, Side Scan Sonar and Sub Bottom Profiling surveys.

Noise-generating equipment includes vessel engines, cable-percussion boring, rotary-core drilling and sub-bottom profiling. The submitted acoustic assessment reports frequencies of <1 kHz, <0.5 kHz, 0.5–5 kHz and 2–15 kHz respectively, which overlap with marine-mammal hearing ranges. On the submitted source-level assumptions, cable percussion and sub-bottom

profiling could exceed cited auditory-injury thresholds close to the source, while lower received levels may cause behavioural disturbance or displacement. The higher-frequency MBES (200–500 kHz) and side-scan sonar (200 – 700 kHz) do not overlap with the stated marine-mammal hearing ranges.

The applicant has requested an overall MUL duration of 1 year to accommodate scheduling, weather and equipment availability. Within this licence period, the ADCP deployment is expected to last approximately 30 days, sediment sampling 1 day, and each of the 5 marine boreholes approximately 3 days, with the overall GI works anticipated to be completed within 3 months of commencement. The proposed works will be undertaken within the tidal reaches of the Lower Slaney Estuary and adjacent to the existing masonry river wall along the old R730 at Ferrycarrig. Indicative sample locations are not confirmed and will depend on riverbed conditions.

2.2 Brief description of the site characteristics

The proposed maritime usage is located within the Lower Slaney Estuary, Co. Wexford. Land use to the north is predominantly agricultural, while the southern side includes urban development and the existing Irish National Heritage Park. Fossitt habitat mapping indicates that estuary is the dominant habitat within the proposed works footprint, with mud shores, lower salt marsh and reed and large sedge swamps also present. A habitat survey undertaken on 19 April 2024 identified Lower salt marsh (CM1) along the southern boundary of the proposed MUL area, adjacent to the existing stone wall. Species recorded included Common Saltmarsh-grass (*Puccinellia maritima*) and Sea-purslane (*Atriplex portulacoides*). The habitat was limited in extent and species-poor and corresponds to Atlantic salt meadows [1330], a Qualifying Interest of the Slaney River Valley SAC.

The Lower Slaney Estuary is situated within the Slaney River Valley SAC and Wexford Harbour and Slobbs SPA. The wider estuary supports marine mammals, otter, wintering birds and migratory fish. Otter surveys were undertaken in April 2024 and December 2025, with a live otter recorded during the December 2025 survey and additional ad hoc sightings recorded in the River Slaney Estuary during wintering bird surveys. Monthly wintering waterbird surveys were undertaken during the 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2023/24 winter seasons from six vantage points along the Slaney Estuary, with a range of wintering waterbirds, including several Special Conservation Interests of Wexford Harbour and Slobbs SPA, recorded.

The proposed works are within the Lower Slaney Estuary Transitional Waterbody, which was classified as Poor status and At Risk in the 2019 to 2024 WFD assessment.

3. Identification of relevant European sites

The MUL application 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 a European sites, in view of best scientific knowledge and the conservation objectives of the sites. The applicant submitted a Supporting Information for Screening of Appropriate Assessment (SISAA) report in support of the application which was referred to during this assessment

The proposed maritime usage 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, given the nature, scale and Zone of Influence of the maritime usage, 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 and site code	Distance from proposed MUL area (km)	List of Qualifying Interests	Connections (Source pathway receptor)	European Site Screened in	Site specific conservation objectives
Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)					
Slaney River Valley SAC [000781]	0	Estuaries [1130] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330] <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>Alosa fallax fallax</i> (Twaite Shad) [1103] <i>Salmo salar</i> (Salmon) [1106] <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355] <i>Phoca vitulina</i> (Harbour Seal) [1365]	Yes. The proposed surveys overlap the SAC and Annex I Habitat Estuaries [1130]. Atlantic salt meadows [1330] were recorded along the southern boundary of the proposed MUL area and Fossitt mud shores (LS4), potentially corresponding to Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] were recorded along the southwestern boundary during habitat surveys undertaken in April 2024. Possible physical habitat disturbance and/or water quality effects from the borehole and grab samples and from the jack up barge. The SAC is designated for a number of species including fish, mussel, otter and seal. Possible underwater noise disturbance to harbour seal, freshwater pearl mussel, and fish. Possible visual and above water noise disturbance to otter and harbour seal due to bathymetry survey activities and cable percussion and rotary core boreholes and water quality impacts to freshwater pearl mussel and fish and lamprey species.	Yes.	NPWS (2011) Conservation Objectives: Slaney River Valley SAC 000781. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

European site and site code	Distance from proposed MUL area (km)	List of Qualifying Interests	Connections (Source pathway receptor)	European Site Screened in	Site specific conservation objectives
		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] Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0] 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]	No significant S-P-R.		
Raven Point Nature Reserve SAC [000710]	10.1	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae</i>) [1330] Embryonic shifting dunes [2110] Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120] Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130]	No significant S-P-R.	No	NPWS (2011) Conservation Objectives: Raven Point Nature Reserve SAC 000710. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

European site and site code	Distance from proposed MUL area (km)	List of Qualifying Interests	Connections (Source pathway receptor)	European Site Screened in	Site specific conservation objectives
		Dunes with <i>Salix repens</i> ssp. <i>argentea</i> (<i>Salicion arenariae</i>) [2170] Humid dune slacks [2190]			
Long Bank SAC [002161]	15.45	Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time [1110]	No significant S-P-R.	No	NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Long Bank SAC 002161. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
Blackwater Bank SAC [002953]	22.86	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes. Mobile individuals associated with the SAC may occur within the zone of influence of the proposed project and may be exposed to underwater noise.	Yes.	NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Blackwater Bank SAC 002953. Version 3. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
		Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time [1110]	No significant S-P-R.		
Carnsore Point SAC [002269]	27.87	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes. Mobile individuals associated with the SAC may occur within the zone of influence of the proposed project and may be exposed to underwater noise.	Yes.	NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Carnsore Point SAC 002269. Version 2. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
		Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Reefs [1170]	No significant S-P-R.		

European site and site code	Distance from proposed MUL area (km)	List of Qualifying Interests	Connections (Source pathway receptor)	European Site Screened in	Site specific conservation objectives
Saltee Islands SAC [000707]	48.24	<i>Halichoerus grypus</i> (Grey Seal) [1364]	Yes. Mobile individuals associated with the SAC may occur within the zone of influence of the proposed project and may be exposed to underwater noise and visual and above water noise disturbance.	Yes.	NPWS (2011) Conservation Objectives: Saltee Islands SAC 000707. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
		Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] Reefs [1170] Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] Submerged or partially submerged sea caves [8330]	No significant S-P-R.		
Hook Head SAC [000764]	67.81	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i> (Common Bottlenose Dolphin) [1349] <i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes. Mobile individuals associated with the SAC may occur within the zone of influence of the proposed project and may be exposed to underwater noise disturbance.	Yes.	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives: Hook Head SAC 000764. Version 2. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
		Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] Reefs [1170] Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]	No significant S-P-R.		
Special Protection Areas (SPAs)					
Wexford Harbour and Slob SPA [004076]	0	Little Grebe (<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>) [A004] Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) [A005]	Yes. The proposed surveys overlap the SPA and supporting estuarine habitat. Possible visual and above water noise disturbance from vessel, barge and survey activities, underwater noise disturbance to diving birds.	Yes.	NPWS (2012) Conservation Objectives: Wexford Harbour and Slob SPA 004076. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife

European site and site code	Distance from proposed MUL area (km)	List of Qualifying Interests	Connections (Source pathway receptor)	European Site Screened in	Site specific conservation objectives
		Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] Grey Heron (<i>Ardea cinerea</i>) [A028] Bewick's Swan (<i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>) [A037] Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038] Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>) [A053] Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054] Scaup (<i>Aythya marila</i>) [A062] Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>) [A067] Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [A069] Hen Harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>) [A082] Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>) [A125] Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140]			Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

European site and site code	Distance from proposed MUL area (km)	List of Qualifying Interests	Connections (Source pathway receptor)	European Site Screened in	Site specific conservation objectives
		Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143] Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) [A144] 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] Black-headed Gull (<i>Larus ridibundus</i>) [A179] Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [A183] Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395] Wigeon (<i>Mareca penelope</i>) [A855] Little Tern (<i>Sternula albifrons</i>) [A885] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]			

European site and site code	Distance from proposed MUL area (km)	List of Qualifying Interests	Connections (Source pathway receptor)	European Site Screened in	Site specific conservation objectives
The Raven SPA [004019]	8.6	Red-throated Diver (<i>Gavia stellata</i>) [A001] Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A065] Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) [A144] Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395]	Yes. The proposed surveys are within the foraging ranges of these SCIs. Possible visual and above water noise disturbance from vessel and survey activities and underwater noise disturbance to diving seabirds.	Yes	NPWS (2012) Conservation Objectives: The Raven SPA 004019. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
		Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	No significant S-P-R.		

European site and site code	Distance from proposed MUL area (km)	List of Qualifying Interests	Connections (Source pathway receptor)	European Site Screened in	Site specific conservation objectives
Seas off Wexford SPA [004237]	9.7	Red-throated Diver (<i>Gavia stellata</i>) [A001] Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>) [A018] Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A065] Mediterranean Gull (<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>) [A176] Black-headed Gull (<i>Larus ridibundus</i>) [A179] Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [A183] Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184] Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>) [A192] Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A194] Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) [A199] Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>) [A200] Sandwich Tern (<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>) [A863]	Yes. The proposed surveys are within the foraging ranges of these functionally linked SCIs. Possible visual and above water noise disturbance from vessel and survey activities and underwater noise disturbance to diving seabirds.	Yes.	NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Seas off Wexford SPA 004237. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

European site and site code	Distance from proposed MUL area (km)	List of Qualifying Interests	Connections (Source pathway receptor)	European Site Screened in	Site specific conservation objectives
		Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A009] Manx Shearwater (<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>) [A013] Gannet (<i>Morus bassanus</i>) [A016] Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188] Puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>) [A204] Little Tern (<i>Sternula albifrons</i>) [A885]	No significant S-P-R.		
Tacumshin Lake SPA [004092]	15.53	Little Grebe (<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>) [A004] Bewick's Swan (<i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>) [A037] Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038] Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054] Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) [A061] Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>) [A125] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142]	No significant S-P-R.	No	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives: Tacumshin Lake SPA 004092. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

European site and site code	Distance from proposed MUL area (km)	List of Qualifying Interests	Connections (Source pathway receptor)	European Site Screened in	Site specific conservation objectives
		Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] Wigeon (<i>Mareca penelope</i>) [A855] Shoveler (<i>Spatula clypeata</i>) [A857] Gadwall (<i>Mareca strepera</i>) [A889] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]			
Ballyteige Burrow SPA [004020]	17.07	Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	No significant S-P-R.	No	NPWS (2014) Conservation Objectives: Ballyteige Burrow SPA 004020. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Lady's Island Lake SPA [004009]	17.29	Black-headed Gull (<i>Larus ridibundus</i>) [A179] Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>) [A192]	No significant S-P-R.	No	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives: Lady's Island Lake SPA 004009. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service,

European site and site code	Distance from proposed MUL area (km)	List of Qualifying Interests	Connections (Source pathway receptor)	European Site Screened in	Site specific conservation objectives
		Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A194] Sandwich Tern (<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>) [A863] Gadwall (<i>Mareca strepera</i>) [A889] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]			Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Bannow Bay SPA [004033]	19.08	Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054] Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130] 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]	No significant S-P-R.	No	NPWS (2012) Conservation Objectives: Bannow Bay SPA 004033. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

European site and site code	Distance from proposed MUL area (km)	List of Qualifying Interests	Connections (Source pathway receptor)	European Site Screened in	Site specific conservation objectives
		Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160] Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]			
Keeragh Islands SPA [004118]	22.32	Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017]	No significant S-P-R.	No	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives: Keeragh Islands SPA 004118. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
Saltee Islands SPA [004002]	22.99	Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [A183] Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) [A199] Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>) [A200]	Yes. The proposed surveys are within the published foraging ranges of the identified functionally linked SCI seabirds. Possible visual and above water noise disturbance from vessel and survey activities and underwater noise disturbance to diving seabirds.	Yes.	NPWS (2011) Conservation Objectives: Saltee Islands SPA 004002. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
		Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A009] Gannet (<i>Morus bassanus</i>) [A016] Puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>) [A204] Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188] Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>) [A018]	No significant S-P-R.		

European site and site code	Distance from proposed MUL area (km)	List of Qualifying Interests	Connections (Source pathway receptor)	European Site Screened in	Site specific conservation objectives
		Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184]			
Cahore Marshes SPA [004143]	27.73	Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395] Wigeon (<i>Mareca penelope</i>) [A855] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	No significant S-P-R.	No	NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives: Cahore Marshes SPA 004143. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
River Nore SPA [004233]	37.16	Kingfisher (<i>Alcedo atthis</i>) [A229]	No significant S-P-R.	No	NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: River Nore SPA 004233. 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 maritime usage.

Potential impacts	Possible significance of potential impacts (duration, magnitude, etc.)
Disturbance from underwater noise	Cable Percussion boring, Rotary Core drilling, Sub Bottom Profiling and vessel activity will generate underwater noise at frequencies that may overlap with the hearing ranges of marine mammals and fish. The assessment identifies potential temporary disturbance and displacement, while higher intensity sources may also present a risk of auditory injury.
Visual and airborne noise disturbance	Vessels, barge operations, survey activities and personnel may cause temporary airborne noise and visual disturbance to seals, birds and otter using the estuary and adjacent intertidal habitats.
Physical habitat disturbance	ADCP frames, jack-up barge operations, grab sampling and boreholes will directly disturb the riverbed, potentially resuspending sediment, displacing benthic fauna and altering estuarine habitat communities. Given the direct overlap with Estuaries [1130], the presence of Atlantic salt meadows [1330] along the southern boundary of the MUL area, and uncertainty regarding the final locations of the proposed intrusive works, likely significant effects cannot be excluded.
Water quality effects	Borehole and sediment sampling may remobilise suspended sediment and contaminants. Vessel and barge operations also present an accidental pollution pathway from fuels or hydrocarbons. Effects are expected to be localised and short term given the scale of the works.

In-combination effects

The potential impacts of the proposed site investigations 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 application, 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 comprises the Lower Slaney Estuary and connected Wexford Harbour and is based on the spatial extent of the site investigations and the potential range of underwater noise, visual and above water noise disturbance, sediment mobilisation and water quality effects arising from the proposed activities. The temporal scope of the in-combination assessment is based on the period over which the activities are proposed. The temporal scope for the ground investigation works is three months, however the MUL duration of one year is requested to allow for flexibility to account for survey conditions, availability, *etc.* so the full MUL duration has been assessed.

A search of relevant databases, including the MARA MAC and MUL Applications and Determinations database, Wexford County Council, An Coimisiún Pleanála, and Discover Ireland and Fáilte Ireland websites was undertaken on the 22/07/2026. Table 3 below outlines those activities which are considered to have the potential to act in combination with the proposed maritime usage.

Table 3: List of projects which were considered to have potential in-combination impacts on European sites.

Application Ref.	Project description	Distance from proposed MUL area (km)	Project Status
MUL240026	Strategic modelling study of water currents and bathymetry along the southeast coast of Ireland between Dungarvan, Co. Waterford and Greystones, Co. Wicklow.	Overlap	Granted. 08/04/2026
MUL260047	To facilitate site investigation surveys associated with the proposed N11/N25 Oilgate to Rosslare Harbour Scheme	Overlap	Applied.
MAC260007	The construction, operation and maintenance of 3 jetties in the River Slaney including a proposed new longboat experience and an artificial beach area as part of the proposed new Viking Village.	Overlap	Granted (partially) 01/07/2026

Application Ref.	Project description	Distance from proposed MUL area (km)	Project Status
FS005195	Extension to an existing patio & retention of floating pontoon	0.05 km	Consented
FS005390	BRIDGE- foreshore to be occupied by pillars and supports.	0.1 km	Consented
20150540	Permission for the erection of a bar and restaurant and all associated site works, including car parking facilities, connection to mains sewerage, and road junction improvement works to the national primary route N11. The proposed development represents the substantial replacement of the former “Oak Tavern” building (previously permitted under planning permission no. 20100345).	0.05 km	Granted

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

- Climate Action Plan
- River Basin Management Plan
- National Marine Planning Framework
- Wexford County Development Plan

Likely significant in combination effects between this application and the plans listed above and projects listed in Table 3 on the conservation objectives of the European sites considered in this report cannot be excluded at this stage. This is due to the spatial overlap with other proposed maritime activities and the potential for temporal overlap, which may result in additive underwater noise, visual and above water noise disturbance, physical disturbance and water quality effects on the same qualifying interests and special conservation interests, which requires consideration under the precautionary principle.

Were mitigation measures considered during the screening process?

No

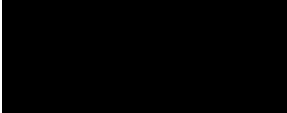
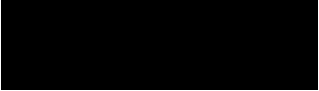
5. Screening Determination Statement

The assessment of significant effects

Having considered the legal framework applicable to appropriate assessment, the information on file, and having regard to:

- The nature and scale of the proposed maritime usage;
- The location of the proposed works within the Lower Slaney Estuary and within the Slaney River Valley SAC and Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA;
- The potential for in combination effects with other plans and projects;
- Potential underwater noise disturbance from cable percussion boring, rotary core boreholes and sub-bottom profiling;
- Potential visual and above-water noise disturbance from vessels, barge operations, survey activities and personnel;
- Potential localised physical disturbance of the riverbed, and
- Potential for water quality effects arising from ground investigation and sediment sampling activities,

it was concluded that the proposed maritime usage by Wexford County Council, County Hall, Carricklawn, Wexford, Y35 WY93, to carry out marine environmental surveys for the purposes of site investigation or in support of an application under Part XXI of the Act of 2000 (Schedule 7(3)) at the Lower Slaney Estuary, Ferrycarrig, Co. Wexford (MUL260005), will require Stage 2 appropriate assessment. It cannot 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 AQUAFACT staff member who prepared the report on behalf of MARA	 Aisling Hearty Principal Ecologist - AQUAFACT	10/09/2026
Signature and Date of Decision Maker	 Dr. Alison McCarthy Senior Marine Advisor Maritime Usage Licensing and Planning Advisory Directorate	18/09/2026