

# MI Observations on MUL260006 - AQUAFACT (APEM Group) on behalf of Uisce Eireann- Liscannor Bay County Clare.

Jonathan White – Marine Institute – Version 1 – 23/03/2026

## Summary

The Seafood Climate Unit of DAFM requested MI observations on possible impacts that Marine Usage Licence ref: MUL260006 may have on the seafood sector, i.e. fish stocks, fisheries, aquaculture, or the environments on which they rely. The application submitted by AQUAFACT (APEM Group) on behalf of Uisce Eireann to undertake marine and intertidal surveys and site investigations in Liscannor Bay, County Clare to inform design and consenting of a Wastewater Treatment Plant to serve Lahinch and Ennistymon.

A licence is sought for a duration of 24 months, with operations anticipated to take place in Quarter 4 2026 and Q1 2027 with extended licencing to allow for weather down time scheduling and unforeseen issues. All operations are stated as being temporary. The application covers two areas, one in Liscannor Bay off Lahinch, of approximately 287.4 hectares and a second in the Inagh river adjacent to Ennistymon (approx. 0.643 ha).

- Considering the short-term nature and small spatial coverage, the proposed survey operations should not interfere with fishing activities (assuming any necessary Marine Notices are made) fish ecology/biology or aquaculture.
- Cumulative impacts should be given consideration with regard to similar activities proposed/planned to take place in close spatial and temporal proximity to the survey area.
- Fishing activities are noted within and in close proximity to Liscannor Bay, including trawl and pot fishing<sup>1</sup>.
- Coastal areas are also noted for commercial fish species spawning and nursery areas<sup>1</sup>.
- There are no aquaculture licences, Fisheries Orders or shellfish Water Directive Areas in close proximity<sup>2</sup>.
- An SAC is located in the northeast area of Liscannor Bay which also encompasses the Inagh river up to Ennistymon<sup>2</sup>.

Survey operations proposed for the area in Liscannor Bay include:

### Bathymetric and Geophysical Surveys

- Multibeam echo-sounder, side-scan sonar, and sub-bottom profiler to map seabed topography and subsurface features.
- Magnetometer surveys may be included to identify any ferrous material or archaeological features of interest.

### Seabed Sampling and Benthic Surveys

- Grab samples and vibrocores to characterise sediment type and benthic fauna.
- Biotope classification of benthic communities to establish ecological baseline conditions.
- Drop-down video and still photography to visually assess seabed habitats and features.

### Geotechnical Investigations

- Boreholes,
- Cone Penetration Tests (CPTs),
- Vibrocores,
- trial pitting in intertidal areas to assess ground conditions along the proposed pipeline and diffuser route.

### Archaeological Survey

- Assessment of the potential for underwater cultural heritage features within the survey area.

Survey operations proposed for the Inagh river:

### Water Quality Sampling

- Kick sampling and water quality surveys.

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<sup>1</sup> 2014 – 2018; Ireland's Marine Atlas: <https://atlas.marine.ie>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://dafm-maps.marine.ie/aquaculture-viewer/>