MARA
An tÚdarás Rialála Limistéir Mhuirí
Maritime Area Regulatory Authority

Wexford County Council
Carricklawn
Wexford
Y35 WY93

By email only specialprojects@wexfordcoco.ie; Laura.Lynch@rod.ie

27/10/2026

Request for revised Natura Impact Statement under section 117(6)(a) of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021

Re: Wexford County Council
Maritime Usage Licence Application Reference: MUL260005

Dear applicant,

I refer to the above referenced Maritime Usage Licence (MUL) received by the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA), which included a Natura Impact Statement.

Following screening pursuant to Regulation 42 of the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477 of 2011),* MARA made a determination on 18/09/2026 that an appropriate assessment is required to be carried out in respect of the proposed maritime usage which is the subject of this MUL application.

The Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination is available on the MARA website at the following link: MUL260005 - MARA - Maritime Area Regulatory Authority

For the purposes of the Appropriate Assessment, you are required to prepare a revised **Natura Impact Statement (NIS)** in relation to the proposed maritime usage, in view of MARA's Appropriate Assessment Screening and Determination Report.

The revised Natura Impact Statement is to address the following matters:

The most recent NIS submitted was not sufficient as it did not consider all Qualifying Interests and Protected sites which were screened in as part of the AA screening report issued by MARA for MUL260005, as well as not including all projects included in the in-combination portion of the AA screening report for MUL26005.

Please resubmit making sure this version of your NIS aligns with the MARA AA screening report for MUL26005.

In particular, issues highlighted were:

- The screening scopes do not align. The revised NIS includes 44 additional SACs and 7 additional SPAs. It also does not assess sites that the MARA determination considered and subsequently screened out.
- For several SPAs, the screening refers broadly to 'non-breeding birds' or 'breeding seabirds' rather than listing the relevant species. This does not clearly identify which SCIs are being brought forward for assessment.
- Saltee Islands SPA, which the MARA determination screened in for Lesser Black-backed Gull, Guillemot and Razorbill, is entirely absent from the revised NIS report. Also, five species screened out for Seas off Wexford SPA in the MARA determination are brought forward in the revised NIS: Fulmar, Manx Shearwater, Gannet, Kittiwake and Puffin.
- The additional SPA's included in the revised NIS are either outside the mean-max foraging range for that species or include offshore species, however the applicant states they are within the mean-max.
- There are inconsistencies in the Conservation Features identified for assessment. For Slaney River Valley SAC, the NIS refers broadly to “Estuarine habitats” without explicitly identifying the three habitats screened in by MARA. Some SPA entries similarly refer to broad bird groups without confirming the individual SCIs brought forward, as mentioned above.
- Conservation objectives from individual sites are presented as applicable across multiple SACs or SPAs (e.g., for cormorant, this is from Seas off Wexford SPA however these are Site-Specific and should not be considered applicable to all SAC/SPA - this does not affect screening exercise, just noted overall).
- The in-combination assessment does not align with the MARA determination and omits five plans/projects.

This requested information should be submitted to MARA (by email to licence@mara.gov.ie) within 2 weeks of the date of this notice i.e. by 06/11/2026.

MARA would like to advise that you should review the public consultation guidance on our website as we may require you to go to public consultation quite quickly after you submit your updated NIS and therefore it would be beneficial for you to be prepared for this step.

address:
An tÚdarás Rialála Limistéir Mhuirí / Maritime Area Regulatory Authority
2ú hUrlár, Teach Menapia, Páirc Ghnó Dhraighní Draighneach Loch Garman, Y35RF29.
2nd Floor, Menapia House, Drinagh Business Park, Drinagh, Wexford, Y35RF29.

email:
licence@mara.gov.ie

website:
www.maritimeregulator.ie

Failure to submit the revised Natura Impact Statement by this date (or any extension to this date permitted by MARA for good and sufficient reason) will result in the subject MUL application being deemed to be withdrawn in accordance with Section 117(8) of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021. Should you require an extension, please contact us at your earliest possible opportunity.

If you have any queries in relation to this matter, please do not hesitate to contact the Maritime Usage Licensing Team at licence@mara.gov.ie.

Yours faithfully,

Paula O' Toole
Maritime Usage Licensing Team
MARA

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