

# MARA

An tÚdarás Rialála Limistéir Mhuirí  
Maritime Area Regulatory Authority

## Maritime Usage Licence (MUL)

### General Application (Form MUL1)



**Important information:**

Applicants are strongly advised to read the "[Guidance Note for Applicants applying for a Maritime Usage Licence](#)" before completing this application.

The application form and supporting documentation, including confirmation of payment of fee, must be submitted to [licence@mara.gov.ie](mailto:licence@mara.gov.ie).

Complete this form electronically using the free text and tick boxes provided, free text boxes will expand as required. Responses should, in so far as is possible, clearly and concisely address the information requested. Where appropriate, supporting documentation may be submitted for assessment, providing that any information relevant to the application is clearly referenced in the application form.

Before completing this form, the declaration and consent at the end of the application form should be read.

**Application Fee:**

An application fee of EUR €2,000 applies for each Maritime Usage Licence (MUL) application.

This requirement is detailed in legislation:

Section 117(1) of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 and Maritime Area Usage (Licence Fees) Regulations 2023, SI No 402/2003.

The application fee must be paid by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) to the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA). MARA Bank Details are provided upon request by email to [licence@mara.gov.ie](mailto:licence@mara.gov.ie)

Proof of application fee payment /confirmation of funds transfer must be provided with the application documentation.

Should the Maritime Usage Licensing application screen out for Appropriate Assessment, a refund of EUR €1,000 applies.

**Privacy Policy**

MARA may require applicants to provide certain personal data in order to carry out its legislative and administrative functions. MARA will treat all personal data that an applicant provides in accordance with MARA's obligations under data protection legislation, including the Data Protection Act 2018 and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). A Privacy Statement explaining how MARA, as the Data Controller, will process the personal data the applicant provides, how that information will be used and what rights the applicant may exercise in relation to its personal data, is available in this link: [Privacy Policy - MARA - The Maritime Regulator](#).

**Freedom of Information/Access to Information on the Environment**

MARA is a public body for the purposes of the Freedom of Information Act 2014, as amended (the "FOI Act") and is also subject to the European Communities (Access to Information on the Environment) Regulations 2007-2018 (the "AIE Regulations") and MARA may be required to disclose information and records provided by the applicant in response to a request made under the FOI Act and/or the AIE Regulations, subject to applicable exemptions. Where the applicant considers that any information supplied to MARA is commercially sensitive, confidential or otherwise exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act or the AIE Regulations, the applicant must clearly identify such information at the time. Notwithstanding this, the final decision on disclosure rests with MARA, in accordance with the applicable legislation. The applicant must, upon reasonable request and within a reasonable timeframe, provide all necessary assistance and cooperation to MARA in connection with any request for information made under the FOI Act and/or AIE Regulations.

**Confidential/Commercially Sensitive Information**

Applicants are asked to consider if any of the information supplied by them in their application to MARA is commercially sensitive and/or confidential. The applicant should clearly identify and separate the specific sections of their application containing such information. The applicant should specify the reasons for its confidentiality/sensitivity with regard to the FOI Act and/or AIE Regulations.



## Form MUL1 – Application for a Maritime Usage Licence (MUL) for an activity listed in Schedule 7 of the MAP Act

### Part 1 Activity in Schedule 7 and relevant section of the MAP Act

1.1 Part 1 Activity in Schedule 7, for which this MUL application is made.

Tick Maritime Usage applicable to the purpose of the MUL. The Applicant should refer to the MUL Guidance Note for Applicants before completing this section.	
1. Dredging (including dredging involving the use of a device to remove any material, whether or not suspended in water, from one part of the seabed to another part of the seabed) other than— (a) dredging carried out to create a new harbour, berth or waterway, or to deepen existing facilities in order to allow access for larger ships, or (b) dredging ancillary to development authorised under the Act of 2000, whether or not it involves the removal of any material from the sea or seabed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Marine environmental surveys for the purposes of scientific discovery or research.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Marine environmental surveys for the purposes of site investigation or in support of an application under Part XXI of the Act of 2000.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. The installation or placement of navigational markers or aids to navigation, or both, not undertaken or authorised by the Commissioners of Irish Lights.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The installation of non-permanent platforms, pontoons or slipways.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The deposit of any substance or object, either in the sea or on or under the seabed, from— (a) a vehicle, vessel (including a craft capable of travelling on, in or under water, whether or not self-propelled), boat, aircraft or marine structure (other than a pipeline), (b) a container floating in the sea, or (c) a structure on land constructed or adapted wholly or mainly for the purpose of depositing solids in the sea.	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. The use of a vehicle, vessel (including a craft capable of travelling on, in or under water, whether or not self-propelled), boat, aircraft, marine structure (other than a pipeline) or floating container to remove any substance or object from the seabed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. The use of explosives not related to development authorised under the Act of 2000 and not requiring authorisation under any other enactment.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. The maintenance of any cable, pipeline, oil, gas or carbon storage facility structure that does not require an authorisation (whether the authorisation takes the form of the grant of a licence, consent, approval or any other type of authorisation) under any other enactment in order to be undertaken.	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. The harvesting, disturbance or removal of seaweed, whether growing or rooted on the seabed, or deposited in or washed up thereon by the action of any one or more than one of the following: (a) tides; (b) winds; (c) waves.	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. The deposit, construction or removal of any mooring not requiring authorisation under any other enactment.	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. (a) The removal of beach material from, or the disturbance of beach material in, the maritime area otherwise than in the course of the ordinary or reasonable recreational enjoyment of the maritime area. 12 (b) In this paragraph, "beach material" means sand, clay, gravel, shingle, stones, rocks, mineral substances, seashells, coral and maerl and any flora, in or on the surface of the seabed or suspended in the water of the maritime area, and includes outcrops of rock or any other mineral substance above the surface of the seabed.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
13. The laying or installation of telecommunications cables or ducting by or between coastal States where such cables or ducting pass through the exclusive economic zone (as construed in accordance with the Act of 2021) or the continental shelf but do not land in the State.	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. A maritime usage specified, for the purposes of this paragraph, in regulations made under section 113(2)."	<input type="checkbox"/>



Select activity type from the list below:

Dredging/Deposits	<input type="checkbox"/>
Energy Infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>
ORE Development	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ports	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seaweed	<input type="checkbox"/>
State Infrastructure (Water/Sewage)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
State Infrastructure (Other)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Telecoms	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tourism & Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.2 Select the relevant section(s) of the MAP Act under which this MUL application is made. If more than one section applies, then select all applicable sections.

Section 117 application for a new Schedule 7 usage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Section 129 application to amend an existing foreshore authorisation or continue to occupy that part of the maritime area after the expiration of the authorisation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section 130 application for an existing unauthorised maritime usage	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.3 Provide below details when MUL application is made under Section 129 of the MAP Act.

A. Confirm that you are transitioning from an existing foreshore authorisation to a MUL to continue the previously consented maritime usage, or to amend an existing authorisation.

Yes  No

B. If yes, provide the following details.

i. Foreshore authorisation reference number.

Not applicable.

ii. Date of Issue.

Not applicable.

iii. Expiration date.



Not applicable.

iv. Description of Authorised Usage.

Not applicable.

v. Reason for transition from foreshore authorisation to MUL.

Not applicable.

vi. Confirm that you have attached a copy of the existing foreshore authorisation including foreshore consent map in this MUL application as Attachment 1.3.

Yes  No

1.4 Provide below details when MUL application is made under Section 130 of the MAP Act.

A. Confirm that you are applying for a MUL for an existing unauthorised maritime usage.

Yes  No

B. If yes, provide the following details.

i. Description of existing unauthorised maritime usage.

Not applicable.

ii. Location of unauthorised maritime usage.

Not applicable.



iii. Date of commencement of unauthorised maritime usage.

Not applicable.

**Part 2 Applicant Details**

2.1 Applicant Details

The name and address should be of the legal or natural person that is to be the MUL Holder. This information would be recorded on the MUL.	
Name of Applicant	Uisce Éireann
Company/Organisation (if Applicable)	Uisce Éireann
Applicant Address: Where a legal person would be the Holder of the MUL, these details must be as currently listed in the Companies Registration Office. Where a non-profit entity, which is a registered charity, would be the Holder of the MUL, these details must be as currently listed in the Register of Charitable Organisations.	
Address line 1	Colvill House
Address line 2	24-26 Talbot Street
Address line 3	Mountjoy
City/Town	Dublin
Eircode	D01 NP86
Applicant Email Address	programmemanager@water.ie and foreshore@water.ie
If the Applicant is a legal person, Company Registration Office Number. A copy of the Certificate of Incorporation (certified copy provided by CRO) and a list of Directors must be provided as Attachment 2.1.	CRO Number: 530363  The current Directors of Uisce Éireann are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jerry Grant</li> <li>• Niall Gleeson</li> <li>• Patricia King</li> <li>• John Douglas Millican</li> <li>• Michael Walsh</li> <li>• Michael Nolan</li> <li>• Cathy Mannion</li> <li>• Eileen Maher</li> <li>• Rena O’Sullivan</li> <li>• Orlagh Nevin</li> </ul>
If the Applicant is a non-profit entity, which is a registered charity, the Registered Charity Number	Not Applicable



Attachment 2.1 included (if required).

Yes  No  Not Applicable

## 2.2 Authorised Contact Person for MUL Application.

The Authorised Contact Person for the MUL Application will be the person that MARA will contact in relation to any aspect of the MUL application. The Authorised Contact Person can be a person within the Applicant Organisation or a person (agent) nominated by the Applicant

Authorised Contact Name	Aisling Hearty
Authorised Contact Position	Principal Ecologist
Email	<a href="mailto:aisling@aquafact.ie">aisling@aquafact.ie</a>
Telephone	(091) 756812

## 2.3 If MARA provided a statutory declaration under Section 115 of the MAP Act as to whether or not a MUL was required for the proposed usage, provide the reference number associated with that declaration.

This was not sought by MARA prior to this MUL application.

## 2.4 Existing Foreshore Authorisation

- A. Provide the reference number and title of any existing Foreshore Authorisations you may hold, or have a current application for, within, or otherwise in the vicinity of the proposed Maritime Usage, which you do not wish to transition (refer to 1.3 for Foreshore Authorisations you wish to transition).

FS004510 – this is for the associated outfall pipe for Dundalk WWTP

- B. Do you intend to surrender any existing foreshore consent(s) (Lease/Licence) for any maritime usage other than that granted by the foreshore authorisation?

Yes  No

- C. If yes, provide description of the existing foreshore consent(s) authorised usage. If necessary, provide additional information as Attachment 2.4.

Not applicable.



D. Attachment 2.4 included.

Yes  No  Not Applicable

## 2.5 Other authorisations or consents

A. Provide the reference number, a brief description and the status (e.g. application made or authorisation/consent granted) of any other authorisations or consents in the footprint, or otherwise in the vicinity of the proposed Maritime Usage area, held by the applicant.

If necessary, provide additional information as Attachment 2.5.

Not applicable.

B. Attachment 2.5 included.

Yes  No  Not Applicable



### Part 3 Details of Maritime Usage

#### 3.1 Maritime Usage

- A. Provide a brief description of proposed Maritime Usage.

Additional information can be provided as Attachment 3.1.

AQUAFAC has been appointed by eGIS on behalf of EPS Group (on behalf of Uisce Éireann) to deliver subtidal and intertidal marine ecology surveys for the Dundalk WWTP Capacity Upgrade Project, located at Soldiers Point on the southern side of the Castletown Estuary in County Louth. The surveys will inform the marine biodiversity chapter of a future Environmental Impact Assessment Report associated with a planning application to upgrade wastewater infrastructure under the Planning and Development Act 2000. The surveys are required to characterise existing ecological conditions, establish a robust environmental baseline, and support Appropriate Assessment screening and impact evaluation for Dundalk Bay Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area, Ramsar site, and proposed Natural Heritage Area. The proposed maritime usage is strictly limited to marine survey work, including vessel-based sampling and foreshore assessments, for the purposes of scientific discovery, research, and site investigation in the receiving environment surrounding the existing treated effluent outfall at the mouth of the Castletown Estuary, and across relevant areas of Inner Dundalk Bay. Dundalk Bay SAC is designated for its extensive intertidal and subtidal mudflat and sandflat habitats, which are a Qualifying Interest under Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive. These habitats support rich benthic faunal communities that are integral to the ecological function of the bay and serve as critical foraging grounds for protected bird species.

An intertidal walkover survey will be carried out along an approximately 500-metre stretch of coastline at four separate locations (as shown in Attachment 3.5 - MUL260007\_SiteInvestigationSurveys). The survey will follow the Marine Nature Conservation Review (MNCR) Phase I methodology and will be undertaken during mean low water spring (MLWS) tidal conditions to ensure optimal exposure of the lower shore and full coverage of intertidal habitats. The survey will be guided by established best practice, including the Common Standards Monitoring Guidance for Intertidal Habitats (JNCC, 2004), Littoral Sediments Habitats Procedural Guidance (Version 4, August 2004), the CCW Handbook for Marine Intertidal Phase I Survey and Mapping (Wyn *et al.*, 2000), and the Guidelines for the Conduct of Benthic Studies at Marine Aggregate Extraction Sites (Ware and Kenny, 2011). Field teams will identify and classify intertidal biotopes in accordance with the EUNIS and JNCC Marine Habitat Classification systems, recording key attributes such as dominant species, substrate type, exposure, sediment characteristics, and anthropogenic influences.

Observations will be georeferenced using handheld GPS and supported by high-resolution photographs and field notes. Biotopes and habitat boundaries will be mapped in the field and subsequently digitised using GIS to produce detailed habitat maps. Particular attention will be paid to identifying any features of conservation interest (e.g., eelgrass beds, blue mussel beds, *Sabellaria* spp. reefs), with any such features mapped and documented in detail. The output will include a comprehensive report describing the survey methods, biotope classifications, ecological observations, and mapped outputs, along with GIS files and metadata. All work will be undertaken by experienced marine ecologists, with internal quality assurance to ensure data integrity and alignment with relevant statutory guidance.

A Phase II Quantitative Intertidal survey will be conducted within the survey area along four transects (as shown in Attachment 3.5 - MUL260007\_SiteInvestigationSurveys). The methodology will follow that set out within the Marine Monitoring Handbook Procedural Guidance No's 3-1 (Intertidal Biotope



Recording) (Wyn & Brazier, 2001) and 3-6 (Intertidal Core Sampling) (Dalkin and Barnett, 2001). Photographic records during surveying will be taken as appropriate for recording and reporting purposes.

A grab survey will be necessary to carry out the intertidal survey as the substrate in places is fine soft mudflat. It will not be possible or safe to stand on the substrate at low water. Instead, at high water, a 0.025 m<sup>2</sup> Van Veen grab will be deployed from a RIB in the Upper Shore, Middle Shore and Lower Shore of each transect. Triplicate grabs will be collected at each station for macrofaunal analysis and an additional sample will be taken for Particle Size Analysis and Total Organic carbon. This approach ensures that the required sediment and faunal samples can still be obtained safely and in accordance with health and safety protocols. The vessel will be operated by qualified personnel and will follow all relevant marine safety regulations. Sample locations will be targeted using GPS to maintain alignment with the planned survey design, and the use of the vessel will be limited to areas where shore-based sampling is deemed unfeasible due to risk or access limitations.

Salient features will be noted as encountered along each transect and additional notes, supplemental photographs and level readings made where appropriate. Rocks and stones will be overturned, and the algal canopy cover (if present) will be partially removed at each station (where applicable) to investigate for the presence of any faunal species. Quadrats will also be used to calculate the abundance of lug worms (*Arenicola marina*). *In situ* digovers of each quadrat following initial analysis will be conducted. Where any features of conservation interest are identified (for example seagrass, mussel beds or geogenic reef), the boundaries of these will be mapped using GPS in order to provide information on their spatial extent.

Station locations will be recorded on a hand-held GPS unit (accuracy 3-5m) and recorded in the survey notebook. A photograph will be taken of each sampling station in order to help visually characterise the sediments and notes will be taken. In summary, a total of 4 shorelines will be surveyed, 4 transects perpendicular to each shoreline and 12 grab samples taken along each transect for the intertidal survey.

A subtidal benthic survey, including faunal grab sampling, PSA, and organic carbon content analysis, is needed to characterise the sedimentary habitats and associated infauna within the subtidal zone that may be impacted by offshore elements of the WWTP upgrade (e.g., pipelines, discharge points). This survey will establish a robust ecological baseline, against which direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts can be assessed.

The subtidal benthic survey will be undertaken using a 0.025 m<sup>2</sup> Van Veen grab sampler deployed over the vessel side at designated benthic survey stations. Grab samples will be collected in duplicate at each of five stations (as shown in Attachment 3.5 - MUL260007\_SiteInvestigationSurveys). Each grab sample will be divided over a 1 mm sieve, preserved in 4% buffered formalin, and sealed in labelled containers for laboratory processing and benthic faunal identification. One additional sample will be taken at each of the five benthic survey stations for sediment characterisation including Particle Size Analysis and Total Organic Carbon.

NMBAQC 'Guidelines for processing marine microbenthic invertebrate samples' (Worsfold, T. and Hall, D., 2010) will be adhered to. In addition, all staff will be certified in personal sea survival techniques issued by BIM and First Aid Responder issued by PHECC. All survey staff will also have ENG11 seafarer's medicals prior to surveys.

The proposed intertidal and subtidal survey stations / transect locations are provided in Attachment 3.1. The proposed survey footprint extends from the foreshore adjacent to Soldiers Point into the nearshore marine environment of Inner Dundalk Bay and the Castletown Estuary, covering both transitional and



coastal water habitats within Inner Dundalk Bay. Further drawings are provided in this application as Attachment 3.4 and Attachment 3.5.

B. Attachment 3.1 included.

Yes  No  Not Applicable

3.2 Describe the purpose of the proposed Maritime Usage, with reference to the classes of usage in Schedule 7 of the MAP Act.

The purpose of these works falls under the activity as listed in Schedule 7 of the Map Act Marine environmental surveys for the purposes of site investigation or in support of an application under Part XXI of the Act of 2000.

The proposed MUL activity also falls under Schedule 7, Activity 12 (a) and (b) where benthic or sediment grab samples may be collected for analysis.

The following text defines the importance of the surveys.

#### **Introduction**

The marine environmental surveys proposed within the Castletown Estuary and Inner Dundalk Bay will indirectly support the objectives of both the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) by strengthening the environmental evidence base required to appraise existing benthic and sedimentary conditions in the WWTP receiving environment and to underpin defensible impact evaluation within the EIAR marine biodiversity chapter. By characterising sediment condition and infaunal assemblages across transitional and coastal waters, the surveys will inform future design, avoidance, and mitigation planning for upgraded wastewater treatment and discharge infrastructure, ensuring that decisions are grounded in robust understanding of receiving-environment condition and ecological sensitivity.

While the surveys themselves are temporary and spatially minimal, their purpose is to enable evidence-led planning for improved wastewater treatment performance in Dundalk, a recognised EPA Priority Area (Authorisation D0053-01; action plan completion 2030), where significant pressure on coastal waters at risk of pollution and improvement to protect shellfish waters and designated ecological assets have been identified as priority issues requiring resolution. In this context, the surveys will underpin the assessment of nutrient-related pressures, sediment condition, and habitat function within the Castletown Estuary and Inner Dundalk Bay waterbodies, directly supporting subsequent WFD and MSFD-aligned evaluations by enabling avoidance of sensitive benthic features (if present) and informing mitigation strategies that contribute to improved long-term wastewater discharge design and environmental performance.

#### **Environmental Benefits**

By informing the design and environmental appraisal of upgraded WWTP discharge, the maritime usage supports the WFD objective to achieve and maintain good ecological and chemical status in transitional and coastal waterbodies by enabling decisions that minimise risks to benthic habitats, nutrient cycling, and ecosystem functioning in the receiving environment. The surveys also indirectly support MSFD descriptors for biodiversity and food-web stability by providing baseline benthic evidence needed to appraise ecosystem condition and to inform future pollution-pressure reduction planning, consistent with Good Environmental Status ambitions. Upgrading wastewater services in Dundalk will reduce nutrient and organic loading pressures that currently pose risks to water quality and benthic communities, supporting long-term compliance pathways under both Directives.



### Social Benefits

Improved wastewater treatment outcomes sequenced through this evidence-led approach will support public health, coastal amenity, and the reasonable enjoyment of the marine surrounds of Dundalk Bay. Cleaner coastal and estuarine waters underpin recreational use, tourism appeal, and community well-being, particularly in areas designated as ecologically sensitive providers of natural capital and coastal access. Evidence-led planning supports statutory environmental assessment pathways that help protect foraging resources for wintering and protected birds, safeguard coastal access, and support nature-based benefits relied upon by communities.

### Economic Benefits

The surveys indirectly support the NMPF objective to invest in resilient wastewater infrastructure that enables sustainable agglomeration growth over a 25-year design horizon (71,000 PE to 122,400 PE), protecting economic activities that depend on good water quality in the bay and estuary. Cleaner waters support co-existence with commercial fisheries, shellfish waters, tourism, recreation, and foreshore or port-related activity. Reducing pollution pressures will safeguard the ecological function of the receiving environment that underpins wider economic well-being, including tourism along the eastern seaboard, recreational use, and sustainable marine-resource enjoyment. Upgraded wastewater services also strengthen infrastructure resilience, enabling sustainable regional growth in line with the Eastern and Midland RSES and the Louth County Development Plan.

### Overall

The proposed maritime usage indirectly supports pollution-pressure reduction targets and evidence-led decision-making consistent with WFD and MSFD objectives. These outcomes will contribute to water quality improvements, nutrient cycling, ecosystem health, public health protection, tourism appeal, recreational amenity, and the safeguarding of nature's contribution to people in the receiving environment of Inner Dundalk Bay and the Castletown Estuary.

### 3.3 Duration

- A. Indicate the overall MUL duration requested. Indicate the duration of any individual activities included in the overall activity. Give reasons for the proposed durations. Indicate any seasonal, vessel or other schedule constraints.

Additional information can be provided as Attachment 3.3.

The overall Maritime Usage Licence duration requested is 6 months. This duration is necessary to provide sufficient temporal flexibility to complete all marine environmental surveys required.

The field surveys are expected to take under 1 week to complete. However, intertidal access is constrained by tidal windows, with surveys required during Mean Low Water Springs (MLWS) for lower-shore exposure and at high water for sampling of soft mud substrates where safe access on foot is not feasible. Survey timing must therefore remain adaptive to daily tidal cycles, suitable weather, and safe sea-state conditions for RIB operations.

Additional schedule contingency is required to accommodate potential remobilisation or splitting of survey effort arising from unforeseen circumstances such as temporary equipment failure, personnel illness or injury, or adverse weather windows preventing safe sampling. A 6-month licence period ensures the survey scope can be delivered safely and to completion without repeated MUL applications,



providing the flexibility needed to overcome any logistical obstacles. The proposed durations are reasonable and proportionate to the scale of the proposed Maritime Usage.

B. Attachment 3.3 included.

Yes  No  Not Applicable

### 3.4 Describe the area of proposed Maritime Usage

A. State the total size of the Maritime Area (in m<sup>2</sup>, ha or km<sup>2</sup>, as appropriate), which is the subject of the application.

90.02 ha

B. Attach map, titled 'Proposed MUL Map' and GIS Shapefiles outlining the proposed Maritime Area(s). If the application relates to more than one area, each area should be labelled on the accompanying maps/drawings and its area provided. The map(s)/drawing(s) should be included as Attachment 3.4. List the attached map/drawing number(s) and map/drawing name(s) in the space below.

Map(s)/GIS Shapefiles must comply with 'MARA Technical Mapping Guidance Notes for MAC/MUL Applications in the Maritime Area under the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 (MAPA)'.

MUL260007 - Attachment 3.4 – 'MUL26007 Proposed MUL Map'  
MUL260007 – Attachment 3.4 – 'MUL\_Area\_Boundary\_GIS'  
MUL260007 – Attachment 3.4 – 'Survey\_GIS'

C. Attachment 3.4 included.

Yes  No

### 3.5 Describe the location of proposed Maritime Usage

A. Provide the distance in kilometres and direction of the main body of the proposed Maritime Usage area from the shore at its closest point.

The proposed Maritime Usage area is located within Inner Dundalk Bay and the Castletown Estuary, County Louth, Ireland. The survey footprint directly abuts the high-water mark on the southern side of the Castletown Estuary at Soldiers Point. The closest point of the licensed area is therefore 0 km from the shore, in a northern direction from the shoreline into the Estuary and Inner Dundalk Bay.

B. Attach map(s)/drawing(s) showing the location of the proposed Maritime Usage. The attached map/drawing number(s) and map/drawing name(s) should also be listed in the space below. The map(s)/drawing(s) should be included as Attachment 3.5.



Map(s)/GIS Shapefiles must comply with 'MARA Technical Mapping Guidance Notes for MAC/MUL Applications in the Maritime Area under the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 (MAPA)'.

MUL260007 – Attachment 3.5 – 'MUL260007\_SiteInvestigationSurvey'  
 MUL260007 – Attachment 3.5 – 'MUL260007\_SiteInvestigationSurveys\_withInsertMap'  
 MUL260007 – Attachment 3.5 – 'MUL260007\_SiteInvestigationSurveys\_Habitat\_zoom'

C. Attachment 3.5 included.

Yes  No

3.6 Ownership

A. Is any part of the Maritime Area within the proposed site in private ownership?

Yes  No

B. If yes, indicate on a drawing/map the area concerned in relation to the proposed maritime usage area and provide a letter confirming that the Applicant has obtained all necessary consents from the relevant owner(s).

C. Is the Applicant aware of any actual or claimed legal rights or interests held by third parties in the proposed site that may be affected by the proposed Maritime Activity?

Yes  No

D. If yes, indicate on a drawing/map the area concerned in relation to the proposed maritime usage area and provide a letter confirming that the Applicant has obtained all necessary consents from the relevant owner(s) of such legal rights or interests.

E. The letter(s) and drawing(s)/map(s) referred to in B and D above should be included as Attachment 3.6. List the attached letters, map/drawing number(s) and map/drawing name(s) in the space below.

Not applicable.

F. Attachment 3.6 included.

Yes  No  Not Applicable

3.7 Planning permission and/or other authorisation(s)

A. Does the proposed Usage require planning permission and/or other authorisation(s), or is it ancillary to or part of to a proposed development which requires planning permission and/or other authorisation(s)?



Yes  No

- B. If yes, what is the status of the planning and/or other authorisation(s)? If applicable, provide a brief description of the proposed development, to which the proposed Maritime Usage is ancillary.

Provide the file reference number(s) and link(s) to the websites where information on the planning and/or other authorisation application(s) and/or planning permission/ authorisation(s) can be obtained.

The proposed maritime usage (marine environmental surveys in Inner Dundalk Bay and the Castletown Estuary) is to inform the EIA for a future capacity upgrade of Dundalk WWTP at Soldiers Point, County Louth, under Uisce Éireann's national wastewater capital investment programme.

At the time of this MUL submission, no planning application has yet been lodged for the WWTP upgrade. The project is at pre-planning and baseline data-collection stage, and no other marine or foreshore authorisations have been granted to date.

Further planning-portal links will be inserted by the Applicant when a planning application is made.



## Part 4 Marine Planning and Environmental Considerations

### National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF)

#### 4.1 NMPF Objectives

- A. Describe how the proposed Maritime Usage is consistent with the objectives of the NMPF. Provide sufficient information addressing the consistency of the proposed Maritime Usage with the objectives of the NMPF. This information should be provided as Attachment 4.1.

- B. Attachment 4.1 included.

Yes  No

#### 4.2 Designated Marine Area Plan

- A. Is the proposed Maritime Usage located in an area for which a Designated Marine Area Plan has been published?

Yes  No

- B. If yes, indicate if the proposed Usage is consistent with the Designated Marine Area Plan. Additional information can be provided as Attachment 4.2.

Not applicable.

- C. Attachment 4.2 included.

Yes  No  Not Applicable

### Habitats and Birds Directives

#### 4.3 Report for Appropriate Assessment Screening

- A. Is the proposed Maritime Usage directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site?

Yes  No

- B. If not, provide an Appropriate Assessment screening report to provide sufficient information for MARA to undertake screening to determine if an Appropriate Assessment is required of the implications of the proposed Maritime Usage alone, or in combination with other plans or projects, for any relevant European site, in view of the site's conservation objectives.



If the Applicant has already determined that it is likely that an Appropriate Assessment will be required and have prepared an NIS, it may be submitted.

The Appropriate Assessment screening report and/or NIS must be prepared by a suitably qualified person, and a summary of the person's qualifications and experience must be included in the report/NIS.

The Appropriate Assessment screening report and/or NIS should be provided as Attachment 4.3.

Attachment 4.3 included.

Yes  No

#### 4.4 Risk Assessment for Annex IV Species

- A. Is there potential for Annex IV species to be impacted by the proposed Maritime Usage?

Yes  No

- B. If yes, the Applicant should provide an assessment of the risk posed to such species by the proposed Maritime Usage, in accordance with national guidance. The Risk Assessment for Annex IV Species report must be prepared by a suitably qualified person, and a summary of the person's qualifications and experience must be included in the report.

The Risk Assessment for Annex IV Species report should be provided as Attachment 4.4.

Attachment 4.4 included.

Yes  No

- C. Are you required to apply for a derogation licence under Regulation 54 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended?

Yes  No

If yes, provide NPWS application reference number or derogation number:

Not applicable.

#### Water Framework Directive

- 4.5 Provide sufficient information addressing the consistency of the proposed Maritime Usage with the objectives of the Water Framework Directive. This information should be provided as Attachment 4.5.

Attachment 4.5 included.

Yes  No



**Marine Strategy Framework Directive**

4.6 Provide sufficient information addressing the consistency of the proposed Maritime Usage with the objectives of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and Ireland’s Marine Strategy under the Directive. This information should be provided as Attachment 4.6.

Attachment 4.6 included.

Yes  No

**Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive**

4.7 EIA Screening

A. With reference to Parts 1 and 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, S.I. 600 of 2001, as amended confirm that the activity:

- i. Is not of a class listed, where no quantity, area or other limit is specified in that Part, or
- ii. Does not either equal or exceed, any relevant quantity, area or other limit specified for a class listed in that Part.

Yes – is not of a class/does not equal or exceed a threshold	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No – is of a class/equals or exceeds a threshold	<input type="checkbox"/>

B. If yes, confirm if the activity is of a class listed in Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, S.I. 600 of 2001, as amended, but does not equal or exceed the relevant quantity.

Yes  No

C. If yes to ‘4.7 B’, provide the information for EIA screening specified in Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations, S.I. 600 of 2001, as amended. The information specified in Schedule 7A should be provided as Attachment 4.7.

Attachment 4.7 included.

Yes  No  Not Applicable

**UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Maritime Jurisdiction Act**

4.8 Provide sufficient information addressing the consistency of the proposed Maritime Usage with the Irish State’s obligations under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Maritime Jurisdiction Act.

Additional information can be provided as Attachment 4.8.



Ireland, as a Member State of the European Union and a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), has binding obligations to manage activities within its maritime area in a manner consistent with the protection and sustainable use of marine resources. These international obligations are given domestic effect through the Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2021, which sets out the spatial limits of Ireland's maritime zones and provides a legal framework for the exercise of State rights and responsibilities within them.

UNCLOS establishes the sovereign rights and jurisdiction of coastal States within their maritime zones, including territorial sea and exclusive economic zone (EEZ), as well as imposing obligations to protect and preserve the marine environment (Part XII). Specifically, Articles 192-194 of UNCLOS require States to take measures to prevent, reduce and control pollution of the marine environment arising from any source including land-based and sea-based activities, including pollution from exploration or exploitation of the natural resources of the seabed and subsoil and from other devices operating in the marine environment. Article 214 (enforcement with respect to pollution from seabed activities) further obliges States to enforce such measures with respect to seabed activities undertaken under their jurisdiction.

The proposed marine environmental surveys are regulated in accordance with these UNCLOS principles and Ireland's domestic framework, ensuring that all operations are environmentally responsible and legally compliant. Specifically, the Proposed Maritime Usage will:

- Avoid unnecessary seabed disturbance.
- Prevent the release of contaminants into the marine environment.
- Ensure all waste material is handled and disposed of appropriately onshore.
- Be conducted using small-scale survey methods that are fully consistent with Ireland's obligations under UNCLOS and relevant international instruments, including MARPOL.

The Maritime Jurisdiction Act consolidates and modernises Ireland's maritime boundaries, delineating the territorial sea (12 nautical miles), contiguous zone (24 nautical miles), exclusive economic zone (200 nautical miles), and continental shelf rights. It provides the domestic legal framework through which Ireland fulfils its obligations under UNCLOS, including those related to environmental protection, sustainable development, and the orderly management of marine activities.

The proposed MUL survey area is situated within the internal waters of the State, landward of the baseline from which maritime zones are measured. Consequently, the activities fall wholly within Ireland's sovereign territory, where the State exercises full jurisdiction. The survey's design, regulatory oversight, and operational controls ensure consistency with Ireland's obligations under UNCLOS and the Maritime Jurisdiction Act, demonstrating the proposed activities are responsible, sustainable and in compliance with international law.

Attachment 4.8 included.

Yes  No  Not Applicable

#### **Climate Action and Low Carbon Act of 2015, as amended**

4.9 Provide sufficient information addressing the consistency of the proposed Maritime Usage with achieving the National Climate Objective, as defined in the Climate Action and Low Carbon Act of 2015, as amended.

Additional information can be provided as Attachment 4.9.

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended by the 2021 Act, establishes the National Climate Objective (NCO): *to pursue and achieve by no later than 2050 a climate-resilient,*



*biodiversity-rich, environmentally sustainable and climate-neutral economy.* It sets a national goal of a 51% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and net zero by 2050. To support this, local authorities and public bodies must prepare Climate Action Plans and long-term strategies, and ensure their decisions align with these objectives.

The marine environmental surveys proposed in Castletown Estuary and Inner Dundalk Bay (as outlined in Attachment 3.1 Description of the Proposed Maritime Usage) is consistent with achieving the National Climate Objective.

The marine environmental surveys are proportionate, temporary and local in scale, relying on a single small RIB and manual scientific equipment. This minimises the overall energy demand and associated greenhouse gas emissions of the activity. The marine environmental surveys represent the least intrusive and most fuel-efficient means of establishing the environmental baseline data required. By avoiding unnecessary or poorly targeted investigations, the marine environmental surveys ensure that emissions from vessel operations are kept to a minimum.

The purpose of the marine environmental survey is to inform the future design of a modern wastewater treatment plant that will significantly improve water quality, safeguard sensitive habitats, and ensure compliance with the Water Framework Directive. The marine environmental surveys will therefore reduce the risk of environmental degradation, support biodiversity protection, and safeguard ecosystem services that underpin climate resilience.

Attachment 4.9 included.

Yes  No  Not Applicable

#### 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023 – 2030

4.10 Provide sufficient information addressing the consistency of the proposed Maritime Usage with the 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023 – 2030.

Additional information can be provided as Attachment 4.10.

The proposed Maritime Usage (temporary marine environmental surveys in Castletown Estuary and Inner Dundalk Bay) is ancillary to the future upgrade of Dundalk WWTP at Soldiers Point under Uisce Éireann's national wastewater capital investment programme. Although the surveys do not directly improve water quality, they indirectly support WFD and MSFD objectives by establishing the marine environmental baseline required to assess current ecological condition and to inform the EIAR Marine Biodiversity chapter, enabling evidence-led design and mitigation planning for upgraded treatment and discharge infrastructure. This aligns with national environmental priorities for Dundalk, which is an EPA Priority Area (D0053-01; action plan completion 2030) as a significant pressure on waters at risk of pollution.

The survey design mainstreams biodiversity into decision-making by ensuring early integration of marine ecological evidence in a receiving environment that supports Annex I mudflat and sandflat habitats within the Dundalk Bay SAC/SPA complex. Sampling is spatially minimal (0.025 m<sup>2</sup> per replicate) across 17 defined stations. Seabed recovery at sampling points is expected within less than 12 months, ensuring no long-term alteration to habitat extent, morphology, or ecological function. The surveys therefore underpin statutory assessments that will ultimately guide reduction of pollution pressures, supporting progress toward Good Ecological Status (WFD) and Good Environmental Status (MSFD) through improved long-term wastewater design.

The marine environmental surveys also indirectly secure nature's contribution to people by safeguarding ecosystem services in the Castletown Estuary and Inner Dundalk Bay, including nutrient cycling, benthic



productivity, water-quality regulation, shellfish-water protection, recreation, tourism, and coastal resilience. The surveys exemplify Ireland’s commitment to evidence-led biodiversity governance and pollution-pressure reduction in a nationally prioritised wastewater agglomeration.

Overall, the Proposed Maritime Usage is consistent with the NBAP 2023-2030 in the following ways:

- Supports conservation and protection of important marine habitats and species via collection of robust baseline ecological information
- Mainstreams biodiversity into critical water-infrastructure planning and future design decisions
- Indirectly supports pollution-pressure reduction, ecosystem health, public amenity, and shellfish-water protection
- Is temporary and spatially minimal in the scale of its impact

Attachment 4.10 included.

Yes  No  Not Applicable

**National or European Strategic or Policy Objectives**

4.11 Provide any additional relevant information with regard to the overall purpose of the proposed maritime usage, with reference to, e.g. National or European strategic or policy objectives and national targets, and strategic research objectives.

Additional information can be included as Attachment 4.11.

The proposed maritime usage will generate essential marine environmental baseline data through intertidal and subtidal sediment and macrofaunal grab sampling (0.025 m<sup>2</sup> Van Veen deployments from a RIB) and qualitative walkover surveys within Inner Dundalk Bay and the Castletown Estuary. These surveys will inform the Environmental Impact Assessment for the capacity upgrade of the existing Dundalk WWTP, located at Soldiers Point, County Louth. The usage is strictly limited to short-duration, spatially minimal baseline sampling to characterise intertidal/subtidal habitat and associated infaunal assemblages in the receiving environment surrounding the existing treated effluent outfall and across relevant transitional and coastal habitats in Inner Dundalk Bay.

At a national level, the surveys align with Project Ireland 2040 and the National Development Plan 2021–2030, which prioritise investment in critical wastewater infrastructure to safeguard public health, enable sustainable regional growth, and meet statutory environmental obligations. The Dundalk WWTP capacity upgrade from 71,000 PE to 122,400 PE is explicitly sequenced within County Louth on the EPA Priority Areas list (Authorisation D0053-01, action plan completion 2030) due to significant pressure on coastal waters at risk of pollution.

The survey programme supports Ireland’s obligations under key EU marine and water directives, including the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive, the Water Framework Directive, and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, by providing the baseline data required to appraise receiving-environment condition and to underpin impact avoidance, minimisation, and mitigation planning as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment process.

The surveys actively support multiple national, regional, and local development frameworks by enabling



evidence-led design and environmental appraisal for upgraded wastewater infrastructure in Dundalk. Specifically, the upgraded WWTP supports:

- The Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) 2020–2032, which identifies Dundalk as a Regional Growth Centre, prioritising infrastructure capacity to support compact, sustainable urban expansion, economic competitiveness, and environmental protection.
- The Louth County Development Plan 2021–2027, which designates Dundalk as the principal driver of population and economic growth in County Louth, emphasising the need for resilient wastewater treatment to support future development, protect coastal water quality, and safeguard designated ecological assets in the estuarine and bay receiving environment.
- The Castletown Estuary and Dundalk Bay catchment management objectives under Ireland’s River Basin Management Plan 2022–2027, which seek to protect and improve waterbody status through reduction of nutrient and pollution pressures, ensuring future wastewater infrastructure is underpinned by independent monitoring, baseline characterisation, and best-available environmental evidence.
- Local coastal amenity and marine-use objectives associated with Dundalk Bay SAC/SPA, Ramsar, and proposed NHA designations, where ecological condition and coastal water quality underpin recreation, tourism, shellfish waters, and sustainable marine-resource use.

In conclusion, the proposed maritime usage will:

- Improve the evidence base for marine biodiversity assessment in a nationally prioritised WWTP upgrade project;
- Reinforces alignment with national and EU marine-environmental protection targets; and
- Underpins sustainable co-existence planning with existing marine users in Inner Dundalk Bay and the Castletown Estuary.

Attachment 4.11 included.

Yes  No  Not Applicable



### Declaration and Consent

I declare that all information provided with this application, including this completed form and all attachments confirmed as included in the application checklist, is correct at the time of submission and that I will notify MARA of any changes to this information that may arise during the application process. MARA may, by notice in writing given to the applicant, require the applicant to provide in the specified form, by affidavit or otherwise, such additional information in relation to any matter to which the application relates as MARA reasonably considers necessary to assist it to determine the application.

By submitting this application form, I agree that certain details provided may be published on MARA's website and that the information provided in this form will be processed and retained by MARA and may be shared with bodies appropriate to assessing aspects of this application in furtherance of consideration of the granting of a MUL in accordance with the MAP Act.

This consent relates to this application and to any further information provided by me, or on my behalf, for the purposes of this application.

Name of Signatory:

Esther White

Position held:

Programme Manager

Date:

20/4/2026

Signed for and on behalf of the applicant:

Signed by:

*Esther White*

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### Application Checklist

Complete the below application checklist

Section No.	Document	Required	Submitted
<b>Application Form</b>			
<b>Part 1</b>	Activity in Schedule 7	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Part 2</b>	Applicant Details	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Part 3</b>	Details of Maritime Usage	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Part 4</b>	Marine Planning and Environmental Considerations	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Declaration and Consent</b>	Signed Declaration and Consent	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Application Checklist</b>	Application Checklist	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Supporting Documentation</b>			
<b>1.3</b>	Attachment 1.3 – Existing Foreshore Authorisation(s) wish to transition	Yes (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.1</b>	Attachment 2.1 – List of Directors	Yes (if applicable)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.4</b>	Attachment 2.4 – Details of Foreshore Authorisation(s)	Yes (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.5</b>	Attachment 2.5 – Details of Other Authorisation(s)	Yes (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.1</b>	Attachment 3.1 – Proposed Maritime Usage	Yes (if applicable)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.3</b>	Attachment 3.3 – MUL Duration	Yes (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.4</b>	Attachment 3.4 – MUL Map and GIS Shapefiles	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.5</b>	Attachment 3.5 – Other Maps and Drawings	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.6</b>	Attachment 3.6 – Private Ownership Details	Yes (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4.1</b>	Attachment 4.1 – Compliance with Objectives of NMPF	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>4.2</b>	Attachment 4.2 – Designated Marine Area Plan Compliance Details	Yes (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4.3</b>	Attachment 4.3 – Appropriate Assessment Screening Report	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>4.3</b>	Attachment 4.3 – NIS	Yes (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4.4</b>	Attachment 4.4 – Risk Assessment for Annex IV Species report	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	NPWS application or derogation reference number entered on form	Yes (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4.5</b>	Attachment 4.5 – Compliance with Objectives of the Water Framework Directive	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>4.6</b>	Attachment 4.6 – Compliance with Objectives of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>4.7</b>	Attachment 4.7 – Information for EIA screening	Yes (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>



<b>4.8</b>	Attachment 4.8 – UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Maritime Jurisdiction Act Compliance Details	Yes (if applicable)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>4.9</b>	Attachment 4.9 – National Climate Objective Compliance Details	Yes (if applicable)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>4.10</b>	Attachment 4.10 – National Biodiversity Action Plan Compliance Details	Yes (if applicable)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>4.11</b>	Attachment 4.11 – National or European strategic or policy objectives Compliance Details	Yes (if applicable)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>0.0</b>	Confirmation of Payment of Fee	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Please return completed applications, by email, to: [licence@mara.gov.ie](mailto:licence@mara.gov.ie)