



MERC Consultants  
environmental and conservation services

## Statement of Compliance with the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF)

**Applicant:** Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment (DCEE)

**MUL application for:** South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan (SCDMAP) Geophysical reconnaissance, metocean, geotechnical, benthic and passive acoustic surveys.

**Document reference:** Attachment 4.1

**Date:** 16/03/2026

The NMPF sets out objectives for key sectoral and activity policies. Of relevance to the proposed project is sectoral policy number 13 on Offshore renewable Energy (ORE). A review of the key objectives of this policy is given in Table 1.

The NMPF sets out Overarching Marine Planning Policies (OMPPs) that will apply to all marine activities or development. These include policies in relation to, *inter alia*, co-existence with biodiversity, coastal and island communities, and infrastructure. A review of the key objectives of this policy is given in Table 2.

The proposed project is consistent with key sectoral policy on ORE in Ireland. It is also compliant with the overarching marine planning policies of the NMPF. The conclusion of which is that the proposed project is fully compliant with the overall objectives and policies of the NMPF. No element of the proposed project is considered contrary to these policies.

**Table 1.** Assessment of compliance with the National Marine Planning Framework sectoral policy on ORE

| Objective  | Compliance  |
|--|---|
| Support the development of ORE in Ireland as a driver to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and accelerate the move to cleaner energy in line with national and EU policy.                                      | The aim of the proposed project is to gather baseline data to support the development of ORE in Ireland.  |
| Increase the sustainable ORE use of our extensive marine resource in an efficient and coordinated manner identifying, where possible, potential for synergies and opportunities for multi-use of our shared maritime area. | The aim of the proposed project is to gather baseline data to support the development of ORE in Ireland. As a developer-led approach it will aid the potential for synergies and opportunities for multi-use of our shared maritime area. |
| Support Irelands decarbonisation journey through increased use of ORE while delivering significant and sustained benefits, import substitution, fiscal return, national and local  | The proposed project will ultimately support decarbonisation through increased use of ORE and its associated benefits.  |

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| economic development and technology learning.   |   |
| Support the strategic growth of the ORE industry recognising the potential to derive benefits particularly for Ireland's coastal communities.                                     | The proposed project will ultimately support strategic growth of the ORE industry in Ireland. |
| Provide enhanced security of energy supply for Ireland in the short and medium term, in accordance with the Climate Action Plan.  | The proposed project will ultimately support enhanced security of energy supply for Ireland.  |
| Develop a robust, effective transparent consenting process to ensure appropriate environmental protections are built-in, while enabling sustainable ORE developments to progress. | N/A. The proposed project is subject to the current consenting process                        |
| Ensure good regulatory practices in ORE installation and generation, including decommissioning of existing facilities, at end of life, according to international best practice.  | N/A. Outside of the scope of the proposed project.  |

**Table 2.** Assessment of compliance with the National Marine Planning Framework on Environmental-Ocean Health

| <b>Environmental-Ocean Health</b>                |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Biodiversity &amp; Protected Marine Sites</b> |  |
| Biodiversity                                     | <p>The project is supported by the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment (SISAA)</li> <li>• Natura Impact Statement</li> <li>• Annex IV Risk Assessment</li> <li>• Supporting Information for Screening for EIA (SISEIA)</li> </ul> <p>The conclusion of the SISAA, NIS, Annex IV Risk Assessment and SISEIA is that, with mitigation, no significant impact on any habitat or species will occur. Furthermore, the scale and scope of the project is considered too small to lead to any adverse effects on either the local or wider marine environment.</p> |
| Protected Marine Sites                           | The SISAA identified the potential for impacts on several European sites without mitigation. The project NIS, Annex IV risk assessment and SISEIA proposed mitigation to eliminate impacts on European sites. It is considered that provided the proposed mitigation is implemented no impacts on biodiversity and protected marine sites will occur.  |
| Non-indigenous Species                           | The SISAA and SISEIA did not identify any potential for the introduction of non-indigenous species.  |
| Water Quality                                    | The SISAA and SISEIA did not identify potential for impacts on water quality.  |
| Seafloor and Water Column Integrity              | The scale and scope of the project do not have the potential to impact Sea-floor and Water Column Integrity as documented in the SISEIA.   |
| Marine Litter                                    | The scale and scope of the project do not have the potential to intentionally or accidentally contribute to the impacts on marine litter policy as documented in the SISEIA.   |

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| Underwater Noise                            | The SISEIA and Annex IV risk assessment identified the potential for the introduction of underwater noise with potential for adverse effects on several cetacean, pinniped and seabird species in the absence of mitigation. Mitigation was proposed to eliminate this potential for impact. Provided the mitigation proposed is adhered to, no potential for impact related to underwater noise is considered possible.  |
| Air quality                                 | Not relevant: The project does not have the potential to impact air quality.  |
| Climate Change                              | Not relevant: The project does not have the potential to impact climate change. Furthermore, the project is designed to inform future planning for offshore Marine Renewable Energy Projects which, in time, are likely to have a positive impact on climate change   |
| <b>Economic – Thriving Maritime Economy</b> |   |
| Co-existence                                | No potential for significant impact. The proposed works are temporary in nature spread over a four-year period. While temporary disturbance to other users, navigating through the area of the MUL, may occur, no other significant effects have been identified. The survey programme may also temporarily interact with existing fishing activity, particularly static gear fisheries such as brown crab and whelk potting. These interactions are expected to be short-term and localised, and will be managed through fisheries liaison, stakeholder engagement, the timing of activities and standard offshore survey communication procedures.  |
| Infrastructure                              | No potential for impact on the infrastructure policy. No permanent infrastructure is proposed.  |
| <b>Social – Engagement with the sea</b>     |   |
| Access                                      | No significant access issues have been identified.  |
| Employment                                  | Not applicable. It is considered the Employment Policy 1 is not relevant to the proposed project.   |
| Heritage assets                             | A review of the National Monuments Service Historic Environment viewer and Wreck viewer and INFOMAR wreck data has been carried out. The review indicates over 250 recorded wreck sites within the proposed project area. There is no data associated with most of these wrecks. Where data is available, it is generally for wrecks in the period of 1915 to 1918, indicating that these were wartime wrecks. The INFOMAR database holds records of all these wrecks, and the locations will be avoided during the deployment of intrusive sampling equipment. Geotechnical works will occur after geophysical survey coverage. Therefore, no potential impacts on any historic wreck sites are considered possible. |
| Rural Coast and Island Communities          | This policy is not considered relevant to the proposed project.   |
| Seascape and Landscape                      | No impact possible.   |
| Social Benefits                             | The proposed project will provide social benefits in the medium to long term by facilitating the provision of offshore renewable energy.  |
| Transboundary                               | No transboundary effects are possible.  |