

Project:	Port of Cork Enhancement Works						
Client	Port of Cork Company						
Subject	Marine Usage Licence Application – National or European strategic or policy objectives Compliance						
Appendix	4.11						
Orig. by	DM	Appr. by	AA	Date	31/03/2026	Doc. Ref:	CORE1-AYE-RE-XX-TN-MA0215

4.11 National or European Strategic or Policy Objectives Compliance

4.11.1 Ireland 2040 Plan: National Planning Framework

In 2019, the Department of Housing, Planning, and Local Government is published the Ireland 2040 Plan: National Planning Framework (NPF), replacing the National Spatial Strategy. It is intended that the NPF will focus on integrating Ireland’s economic development, spatial planning, infrastructure planning and social considerations. It promotes environmentally focused planning at local level to tackle climate change and the implementation of appropriate measures to mitigate existing issues, guiding regional and local development plans

The Port of Cork is outlined as a ‘key growth enabler’ for the Cork City and Metropolitan Area.

It also underscores the strategic importance of ports in facilitating international trade and enabling economic growth. It emphasises the evolution of ports from facilitators of goods transportation to critical enablers of new industries, such as ORE. The proposed maritime usage aligns with the NPF by providing Site Investigations (SI) works that will inform the enhancement of port facilities for ORE in an environmentally sustainable manner.

4.11.2 National Ports Policy 2013

The core objective of the National Ports Policy (NPP) is to facilitate a competitive market for maritime transport services. The policy identifies that the long-term international trend in ports and shipping is toward increased consolidation of resources to achieve optimum efficiencies of scale.

The NPP introduces a clear categorisation of ports, namely: Ports of National Significance (Tier 1), Ports of National Significance (Tier 2) and Ports of Regional Significance. The Port of Cork is one of three ports identified as at Tier 1 ‘Port of National Significance (along with Dublin Port Company and Shannon Foynes Port Company).

The NPP sets a clear policy context for the future expansion of Port of Cork activities, emphasising the crucial role to be played in facilitating national economic growth. The proposed maritime usages represent a critical step in enabling the expansion of the Port of Cork’s activities aligning with the NPP 2013.

4.11.3 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES) 2019–2031

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region is a strategic plan which identifies regional assets, opportunities and pressures and provides appropriate policy responses in the form of Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs).

RSES identifies the Port of Cork as strategic Tier 1 ports and calls for strengthening and developing these ports. RPO's 142, 146, 147 support the continued development of the Port of Cork, the development and operation for ORE and sustainable development of the Tier 1 ports. The proposed maritime usage is therefore considered in alignment with the RSES.

4.11.4 Cork Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP)

Cork Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) is detailed within the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region which provides a vision and strategy for the development of the Cork City Region up to 2020. MASP identified the Port of Cork to be of strategic location of natural amenities, port activities, tourism, heritage and harbour settlements.

It also considers the key economic role of the Tier 1 Port of Cork. Cork MASP policy Objective 13 supports the sustainable development and investment in the Port of Cork. The proposed maritime usage complies with the MASP by undertaking environmentally cognisant site investigations that will inform the development and investment in the Port of Cork.

4.11.5 EU Habitats Directive and Birds Directive

EU Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna (known as the 'Habitats Directive') protects habitats and species of European nature conservation importance. Together with Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (the 'Birds Directive'), the Habitats Directive establishes a network of nationally important sites designated for their ecological status. These include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Internationally important wetlands designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention are also afforded the same protection as SPAs and SACs.

The Project is subject to Appropriate Assessment (AA) in accordance with the EU Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna (known as the 'Habitats Directive'), given the proximity to European Sites and the nature of the work resulting in potentially significant effects on these.

The AA has been prepared as well as a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) for the proposed maritime usages and accompanies this license application. Therefore, the proposed maritime usages are compliant with the EU habitats and Birds Directive.

4.11.6 Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T)

The EU's trans-European transport network policy, the TEN-T policy, is a key instrument for the development high-quality transport infrastructure across the EU. It comprises railways, inland waterways, short sea shipping routes and roads linking urban nodes, maritime and inland ports, airports and terminals.

The TEN-T policy is based on Regulation (EU) No 2024/1679.

The trans-European transport network is designed according to an objective methodology. As set out in the current regulation, it consists of two layers, the core and the comprehensive network. The core network includes the most important connections linking major cities and nodes and must be completed by 2030. The extended core network connects all regions of the EU to the core network and needs to be completed by 2040. With the revision of the TEN-T Regulation, a third layer – the extended core network – should be added as an intermediate milestone, to be completed by 2040.

The trans-European transport network should be a Europe-wide network ensuring the accessibility and connectivity of all regions in the Union, including the outermost regions and other remote rural, insular, peripheral and mountainous regions as well as sparsely populated areas. The requirements for the infrastructure of the trans-European transport network should be set to promote the development of a high-quality network throughout the Union.

The Port of Cork is designated to be part of the core network. Previous and current developments at the applicants’ facilities at Ringaskiddy have been recipients of EU grant aid through the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF).