



An tÚdarás Rialála Limistéir Mhuiri
Maritime Area Regulatory Authority

Minutes of the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) Board Meeting

Date	10 February 2026
Venue	Buswell Hotel, Molesworth St, Dublin 2.
Time	10.30 – 14.00
Chair	Mark Mellett Vice Admiral DSM (Rtd), Phd (MM)
Board Members Present	Ms. Karen Banks (KB) Dr. Ruth Brennan (RB) Mr. Patrick Gibbons (PG) (online) Ms. Niamh Kenny (NK) Dr. James Massey (JM) Ms. Alma Walsh (AW) Mr. Brendan McGrath (BMCG) Mr. Patrick Moran (PM) MR. Paul O’Neill (PON)
In attendance	MARA Executive – Ms. Laura Brien (CEO), Ms. Aisling Murray (Secretariat), Mr. Frank Ronan (FR), Mr. Eoin Leahy (EL), Dr Aine Louw (AL). Suzanne Wylde (SW) (online) agenda 12.0, Dr Karen Creed (KC) (online) agenda 10.0, Mr John Evans (JE) (online) agenda 10.0.

Agenda Items

1. Non-Executive and Board Evaluation Session

The Board discussed the results of the Board Evaluation and noted the following

- An external evaluation process is to take place in 2026
- There is a gap in the technical knowledge of the Board, this to be addressed through continued professional development.

Additional matters raised during the non-executive session for discussion will be raised at the appropriate agenda items.

2. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed board members with apologies from Philip Daly.

The Chair welcomed and introduced Áine Louw as the new Head of Governance and Board Secretariat.

Quorum in place.

3. Declarations of Interest

None declared.

4. Minutes

4.1 **Board Minutes** – The Board approved the following resolution:

At its meeting on 10 February 2026, the Board adopted the minutes of the MARA board meeting of 09 December 2025 attached at agenda item 4.1.

4.2 ARC Minutes – The Board approved the following resolution:

At its meeting on 10 February 2026, the Board adopted the minutes of the MARA Audit and Risk Committee meeting of 14 November 2025 attached at agenda item 4.2.

4.3 PPC Minutes – The Board approved the following resolution:

At its meeting on 10 February 2026, the Board adopted the minutes of the MARA Planning and Performance Committee meeting of 18 December 2025 attached at agenda item 4.3.

5. Matters Arising

5.1 Action Log –

The Board reviewed outstanding actions from previous meetings noting that any outstanding actions are being progressed.

It was noted that while we await clarification from DCEE regarding provision of a stipend for external members to the PPC, it is paramount that an external member is co-opted without delay and that this is made clear to those wishing to join the committee.

Additional actions to be added to the Action Log:

Action: At the March Board, Karen Creed and John Evans to present a case study on 2 MACs and 2 MULs, one representing a straightforward application and the other a more complex one.

Action: Executive to bring recruitment process for external PPC member with the note that there is currently no fee allocation.

5.2 SoS Tracker –

The Board noted the memo accompanying the quarter 4, 2025 implementation tracker for the statement of strategy.

6. ICT Strategy

Presentation by Dera McLoughlin from Mazars.

Mazars, represented by Dera McLoughlin, presented an overview of the proposed ICT strategy to support digitalisation of MARA's business operations. It was noted that further development of the digitalisation plan is in progress and any decision/action will be brought to the attention of the Board when appropriate.

The feedback from the Board addressed the scope of the planned systems, costs, benefits of the proposed digital platform for MARA stakeholders and the wider public, how quickly MARA will see results from the implementation, the role of the OGCIO, risks and project governance.

7. CEO Report

The CEO advised the Board that the report was also accompanied by a briefing that was provided to the Senior Officials Group on the 2025 Q4 MAC and MUL campaign.

The CEO brought the Board through the report highlighting the update on the surrender of the FST Phase 1 MAC.

The CEO provided an overview of the provided stats for Q4 2025 and highlighted the progress being made. The CEO advised the Board that work is being done on the presentation of data and will be made available to the Board when finalised.

Action: Stats to include a breakdown of determinations made by sector going forward.

8. PPC Report

PON, updated the Board on the work of the PPC to date. Engagement from the executive was commended and assists the PPC greatly.

9. Break

10. Corporate Affairs Matters

10.1 Budget 2026

The Board noted the memo accompanying agenda item 10.1.

10.2 Business Case for the Provision of financial advisory services and services relating to the financial assessment of Maritime Area Consent (MAC) applications

The Board approved the following resolution: That at its meeting on 10 February 2026, the Board approved the Business case to procure provision of financial advisory services and services related to the financial assessment of Maritime Area Consent (MAC) applications, appended to agenda item 10.2.

10.3 Business Case Business Case HR and Payroll services

The Board approved the following resolution: That at its meeting on 10 February 2026, the Board approved the business case to procure HR and Payroll services for MARA, subject to withdrawal from NSSO, appended to agenda item 10.3.

It is noted that the Board would like for MARA to be retained under the NSSO and that MARA does not currently have the staffing manage the transition to alternative HR and payroll systems. Delivering this project will impact the service and outputs of other business areas.

The situation is to be escalated through DCEE by the CEO, in the context of submitting the business case for approval to DCEE.

Action: CEO to draft a letter outlining the concerns of the Board and the potential impacts on the work of MARA. This letter is to be brought to DCEE.

EL left the meeting

11 Risk Register

The Board noted the risk register presented at agenda item 11.0. The executive would welcome observations of the Board.

12 Accelerating Infrastructure Taskforce Report.

The Board discussed the document appended to agenda item 12.0

The Board believes the document is not fit for purpose and needs to be improved upon. The Board suggests the documents are reworked to better align with MARAs business plan taking into account the Taskforce Report.

Action: The documents relating to the Accelerating Infrastructure Taskforce Report is to be updated taking into account the Boards feedback and recirculated to the Board.

13 AOB.

13.1: It was brought to the attention of the Board that guidance and templates for Travel and Subsistence have been updated and are available in the resource section of OneAdvanced.

13.2 Board has asked if a list of events related to the business of MARA could be circulated to the Board on a regular basis.

13.3 Board members were reminded of the obligation to declare conflicts of interests, as communicated by the Board secretariat.

Action: Secretariat to organise for the Board to receive a regular update on events relating to the industry and work of MARA.