

Attachment 2.2

MUL Amendment Details

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1 Introduction

EirGrid is seeking a material amendment to Specific Condition 32 of the Powering Up Offshore South Coast (PUOSC) Project's existing Maritime Usage Licence (MUL240036). The proposed Material Amendment seeks to (only) amend Specific Condition 32 (relating to in-combination underwater noise effects). Specifically, the proposed Material Amendment seeks to amend Condition 32 as follows:

- a) Refine the coordination distance applied under Condition 32 (from 10km to 6km) for specified marine survey activities.

The MUL relates to EirGrid's Powering Up Offshore South Coast (PUOSC) project, which comprises the development of offshore transmission infrastructure, including offshore substations, export cables and associated onshore infrastructure. The Maritime Usage Licence (MUL) was granted for site investigation works to inform the engineering design of the project and to provide baseline data for subsequent environmental assessment.

Condition 32 applies a uniform 10 km vessel-to-vessel restriction with other operators across all survey activities, and is currently set out in the Licence as follows:

32. In-combination effects

- (iv) Prior to the commencement of the Permitted Maritime Usage, the Holder shall coordinate with other authorisation holders carrying out geophysical, seismic and geotechnical activities within a 10 km radius of the Licensed Area.*
- (iv) Where a vessel to vessel distance of greater than 10 km cannot be maintained with respect to geophysical, seismic and geotechnical activities, the Holder shall co-ordinate with other authorisation holders to prevent temporal overlap of the activities. Where the Holder can submit evidence that there is a vessel to vessel distance of greater than 10 km, no temporal co-ordination of activities is required.*
- (iv) Where the Holder becomes aware of temporal overlap that cannot be resolved within the prescribed distance, the Holder shall notify the Grantor who shall determine the timing of activities.*
- (iv) Records of all engagements held and agreements reached, if any, shall be maintained by the Holder and made available to the Grantor if requested.*

EirGrid is seeking an amendment to Specific Condition 32 only and is not proposing any material changes to the proposed Maritime Usage. The proposed amendment does not involve any change to:

- the nature or extent of the permitted maritime usage,
- the survey methodologies or equipment,
- the location or duration of activities, or,
- the project description previously considered within the existing assessment framework for MUL240036.

The amendment relates to the spatial trigger for coordination under Condition 32.

The Project Description submitted as part of the MUL240036 application therefore remains unchanged, as there is no proposed change to the location, duration or specific activities to be carried out.

2 Rationale for Material Amendment

The proposed amendment seeks to ensure that restrictions for the PUOSC marine surveys are:

- Aligned with the latest best available scientific evidence (JNCC, 2025¹), as required by the Appropriate Assessment process which identified the need for Condition 32;
- Aligned with similar restrictions being applied to ‘other authorisation holders’ within and adjacent to the PUOSC MUL boundary, and to;
- Ensure efficient coordination of marine survey activities with ‘other authorisation holders’ thus avoiding any conflicts with differing vessel to vessel coordination requirements.

Aligned separation distances between ‘other authorisation holders’ survey vessels will offer more flexibility in the coordination of marine survey operations within the South Coast DMAP area, facilitating accelerated delivery, whilst not compromising on environmental protection.

The alignment of restrictions across Maritime Usage Licences is an important consideration for surveys within the South Coast DMAP. EirGrid is aware that recent licence determinations have resulted in reduced vessel to vessel distances being imposed to address in-combination effects (it is our understanding that this is based on the recent updated evidence from JNCC). Determined MULs where the vessel coordination distance is 6km include Helvick Head Offshore Wind Designated Activity Company (MUL250019). Other MULs in the region which are yet to be determined, including the Department of the Climate, Energy & Environment (DCEE)’s application to conduct site investigations (MUL260021), may also receive a vessel coordination distance of 6km. This is of relevance to the PUOSC Project as a situation could arise during the surveys whereby a survey vessel operating under a different MUL restriction could approach within 6km of an EirGrid survey vessel and be fully compliant with their MUL, but this action could potentially force a shutdown of EirGrid’s survey operations due to placing us in a non-compliant position. This has the consequential effect of delays to the programme and the potential extensive standby costs.

EirGrid’s position is that ‘Condition 32 -In combination Effects’ should be amended in line with MARA’s rationale for the change in vessel to vessel distances of other authorisation holder’s in recent licence determinations.

Further details are contained in Attachment 3.3 Screening Information for Appropriate Assessment.

3 Specific Amendment Sought

The proposed Material Amendment seeks to (only) amend Specific Condition 32 (relating to in-combination underwater noise effects). Specifically, the proposed Material Amendment seeks to refine the coordination distance applied under Condition 32 (**from 10km to 6km**) for specified marine survey activities.

The below revised wording is proposed (in red) for Condition 32 should the material amendment be acceptable to MARA. The proposed amendment reduces the 10 km restriction to a 6 km restriction (see **bold** text).

Condition 32 In-combination Effects

¹ [JNCC Report 803. Updated Effective Deterrent Ranges \(EDRs\) for assessing the significance of noise disturbance in harbour porpoise Special Areas of Conservation \(SACs\) \(England, Wales & Northern Ireland\)](#)

“(i) Prior to the commencement of the Permitted Maritime Usage, the Holder shall coordinate with other authorisation holders carrying out geophysical surveys, and seismic and geotechnical activities within a **6km** radius of the Licensed Area.

(ii) Where a vessel to vessel distance of greater than ~~10km~~ **6 km** cannot be maintained with respect to geophysical, and seismic and geotechnical activities, the Holder shall co-ordinate with other authorisation holders to prevent temporal overlap of the activities. Where the Holder can submit evidence that there is a vessel to vessel distance of greater than 6 km, no temporal co-ordination of activities is required.”

(iii) wording to remain unchanged

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