

“Navigating the MUL Process”

Welcome

20th May 2026



Agenda

11:00	Introduction	Mr. John Evans, Director of MULPA
11:05	GIS mapping in the maritime area	Ms. Melanie Mageean, GIS Data Manager
11:15	Application process and details	Ms. Jacinta Ponzi, Head of Licensing
11:30	Technical assessment & common pitfalls	Dr. Ciar O' Toole (Senior Marine Advisor) & Dr. Alison McCarthy (Senior Marine Advisor)
11:50	Q & A Session	
12:15	Session Ends	

Housekeeping

- **We are assuming a basic level of knowledge of the current consent regime as set out in the Maritime Area Planning Act 2023 (as amended)**
- **We will not be discussing individual applications**
- **Today's webinar is not:**
 - a substitute for pre-application meetings
 - Legal advice of any kind
- **Please enter your questions into the Q&A channel, and upvote questions that interest you**
- **We will endeavor to answer as many questions as possible today**
- **We will circulate a list of written answers including questions we don't get to today**

Maritime Area Regulatory Authority

GIS Mapping in the Maritime Area

Melanie Mageean

GIS Data Manager

MUL & Planning Advisory Directorate

20th May 2026



The Maritime Area

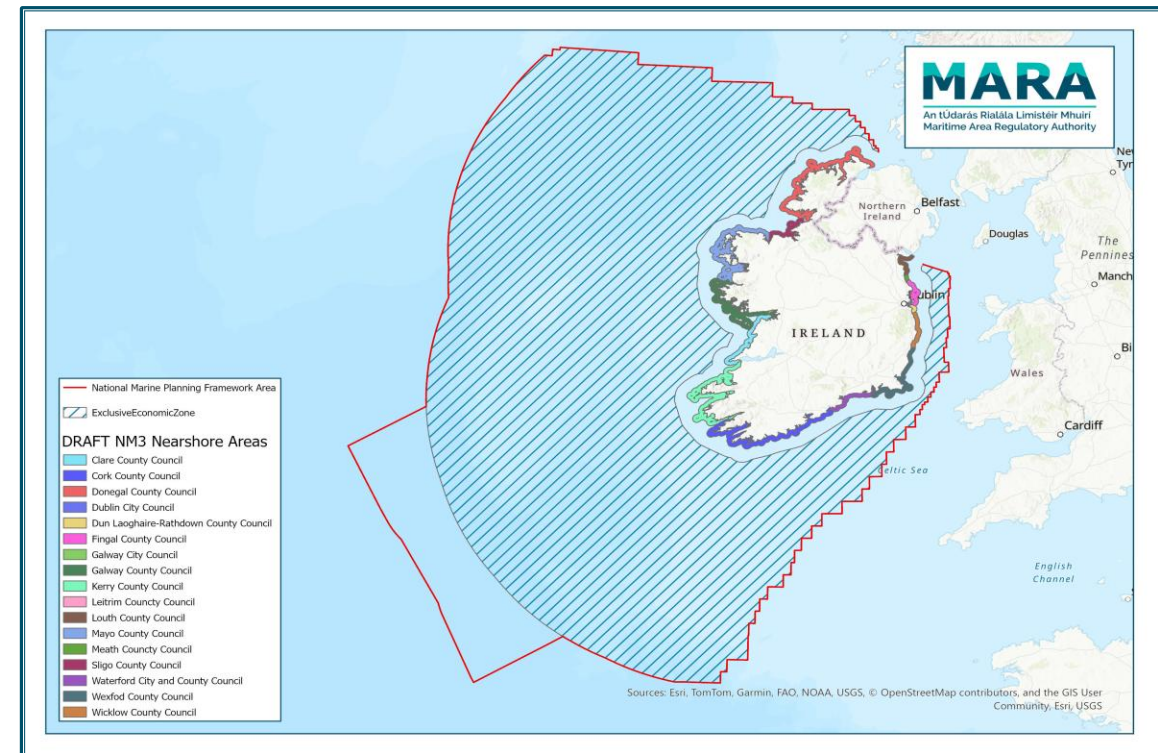
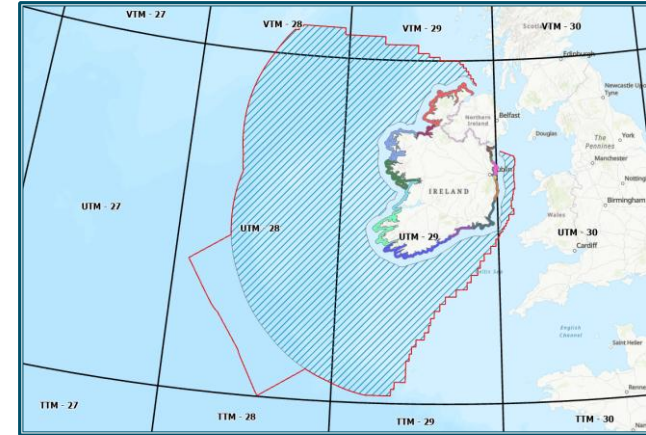
Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 (MAPA)

➤ Section 3 of the MAP Act / Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2021

- Extends from the **High Water Mark** of ordinary or medium tides to the outer limit of the Agreed Continental Shelf
- Includes the Sea and Tidal areas of Internal Waters – **3NM**
- The Territorial Seas of the State – **12NM**
- The Exclusive Economic Zone
- The Agreed Continental Shelf



UTM Zones



MARA Mapping Challenges ...

**GIS MAP &
DATA
Submitted to
MARA**

Map & GIS Data are part of the Application

- **GIS Data Challenges:**
 - Poorly mapped/inaccurate GIS data submitted/no data
- **GIS Requests for Additional Information:**
 - Introduces delays in application processing

New Legislation

- **Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 (MAPA)**
 - The Foreshore Acts 1933 to 2021
 - High Water Mark - Historical vs Digital Representation
- **Planning and Development Acts**

Departments and Agencies

- **Building relationships throughout Ireland's Marine Environment**

A Proactive Approach to mapping at sea...

Tailte Eireann – High Water Mark

Where: Survey Open Data Portal – Tailte Eireann

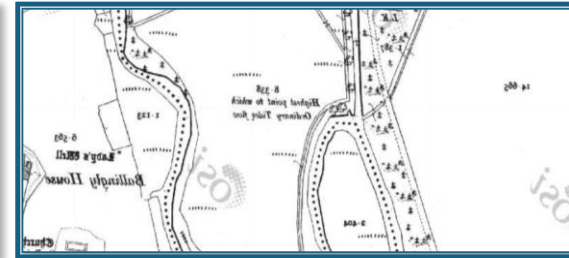
➤ High Water Mark – National Water Marks – Ungeneralised – 2026 >

Download

➤ <https://data-osi.opendata.arcgis.com/>

Challenges: GIS Data Submissions

- Applicant GIS Data Inaccuracies
 - Incorrect HWM dataset used
 - Not clipped to HWM & does not exclude islands
 - Incorrect data schema / coordinate reference / areas
 - Areas are different to Proposed MUL Area maps submitted



MARA Actions: HWM Paper to DCEE

- To facilitate the discussion on the HWM – working towards greater clarity to allow robust decision making within MARA

Mapping Deliverables to MARA

1. Proposed MAC/MUL Map

Map Layout

- **Map Title:**
 - "Proposed MAC/MUL Map"
- **Map Area:**
 - Proposed MAC/MUL area in **Red**
 - Labels: "**Area A, xxha**"
 - Label Multiple areas **Alphabetically**
 - Outer Maritime Area (beyond 3NM):
Centroids
- **Area Calculations:**
 - Appropriate Coordinate System
- **Cartographic Elements**
 - Labelled Coordinate intersects
 - Map projection displayed
 - A3 Map with location relative to land

Projection for Mapping

- **Entirely Nearshore:**
 - Irish Transverse Mercator or
 - ETRS 1989 UTM Zone 28N, 29N or 30N
- **Outer Maritime Area:**
 - ETRS 1989 UTM Zone 28N, 29N, or 30N or
 - ETRS 1989 LAEA (multiple zones)

Background Mapping

- **Entirely Nearshore:**
 - Tailte Eireann Base-mapping with HWM CBS
- **Outer Maritime Area:**
 - Appropriate Navigation Chart

2. GIS Data

Shapefile format

- **Polygon format:**
 - If linear or point feature – **Buffer**
- **Multiple Areas:**
 - Single shapefile with attributed polygon for each area

Coordinate Reference System

- **Entirely Nearshore:**
 - Irish Transverse Mercator
 - ETRS 1989 UTM Zone 28N, 29N or 30N
- **Outer Maritime Area:**
 - ETRS 1989 UTM Zone 28N, 29N, or 30N
 - ETRS 1989 LAEA (multiple zones)

Shapefile File Reference Name

- **File Reference Number assigned by MARA:**
 - MAC270058
 - MUL290147

Shapefile Schema

- **Attribute Field Names**

• FileRecordNumber	- File_R_N
• SiteReference	- Site_Ref
• AreaXX (UoM)	- AreaXX
• Projection	- Projection

Submission Format

- **Zipped Shapefile - .shp, .shx, .dbf, .prj:**
 - GIS_File_MAC#####.zip
 - GIS_File_MUL#####.zip

MARA – Mapping Information

➤ MARA Knowledge Centre > Guidance

➤ **MARA Technical Mapping Guidance** > Download PDF Document

➤ MARA GeoPortal > **GIS Data Delivery Shapefile Template Pack** > Download zip

➤ Surveying Open Data Portal

➤ High Water Mark– National Water Marks – Ungeneralised – 2026

➤ **Download GIS Dataset** - <https://data-osi.opendata.arcgis.com/> (Check Date Updated)

➤ Tailte Eireann 25 Inch map > GeoHive Map Viewer

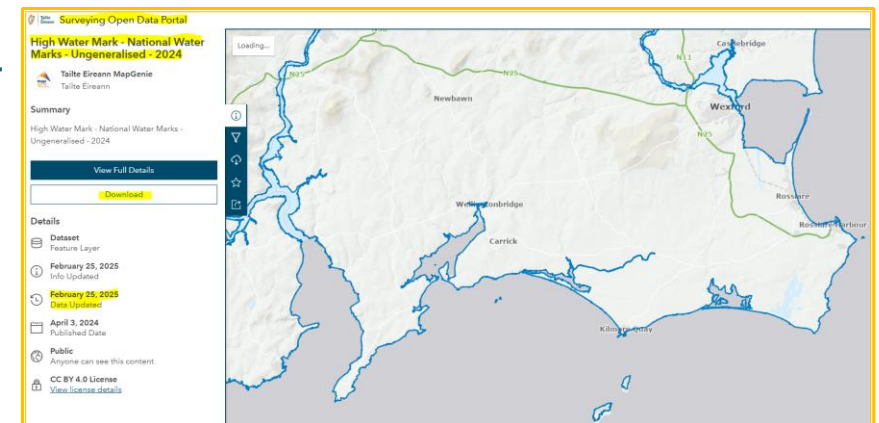
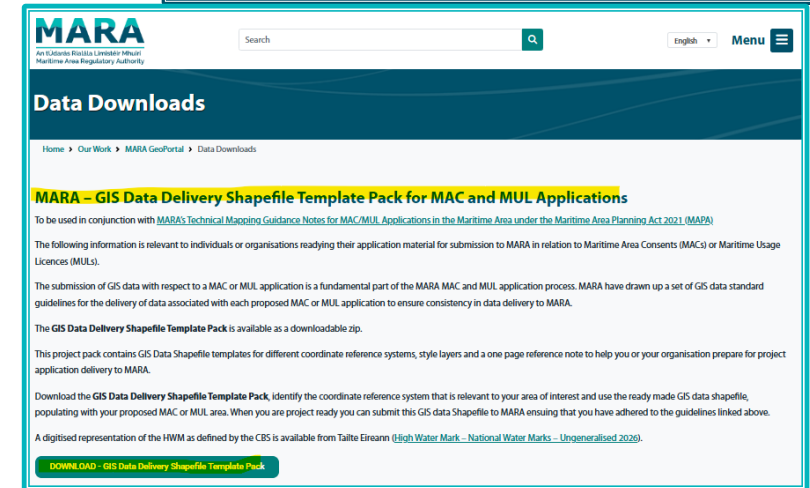
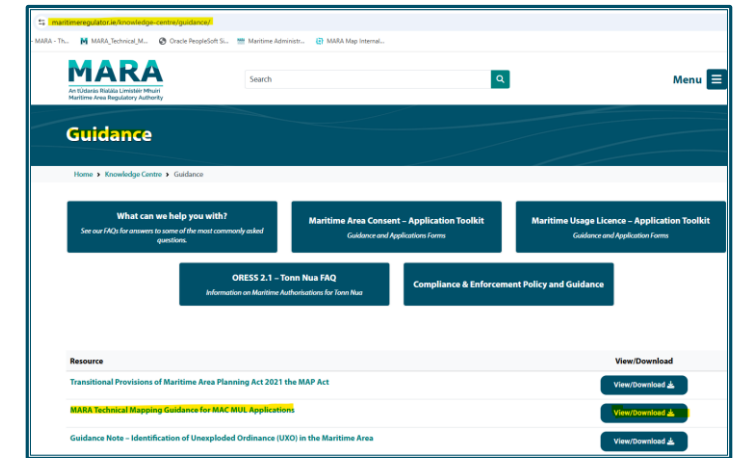
➤ Basemap Gallery > MapGenie 25 Inch

➤ Coastal Planning Authorities – Draft NM3 Nearshore Area

➤ misp@dcee.gov.ie – Marine Spatial Planning (or)

➤ mispdatarequests@marine.ie – Marine Institute (or)

➤ gis@mara.gov.ie - MARA



MARA – Mapping Take home

Two Mapping Deliverables to MARA

1. Proposed MAC/MUL Map
2. GIS Data

MARA Request for Additional Information (RAI)

- **Applicant RAI return to MARA**
 1. Revised Proposed MAC/MUL Map
 2. Revised GIS Data

Mapping Queries to MARA

- **MAC/MUL Case Worker**
 - mac@mara.gov.ie
 - licence@mara.gov.ie

MARA Website > Knowledge Centre > Guidance > MARA Technical Mapping Guidance > **Download**

Maritime Usage Licensing (MUL)

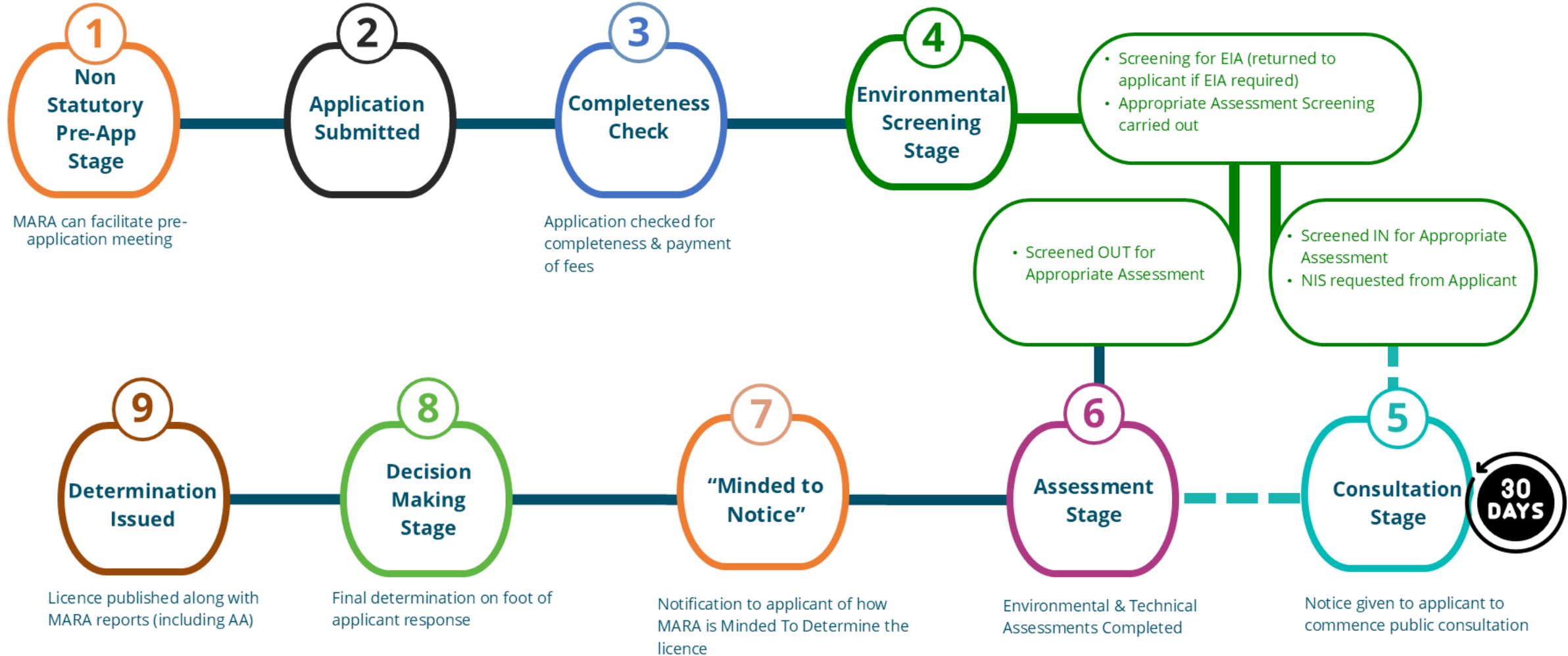
Regulatory Process – Key Items of Interest

Jacinta Ponzi

Head of Maritime Usage Licensing
MUL & Planning Advisory Directorate

20th May 2026

MUL Application Process



MUL Application Toolkit

MUL Application Toolkit

Maritime Usage Licence – Application Toolkit

Pre- Application Consultation

Document

Pre-Application Consultation Request

Guidance – Maritime Usage Licences

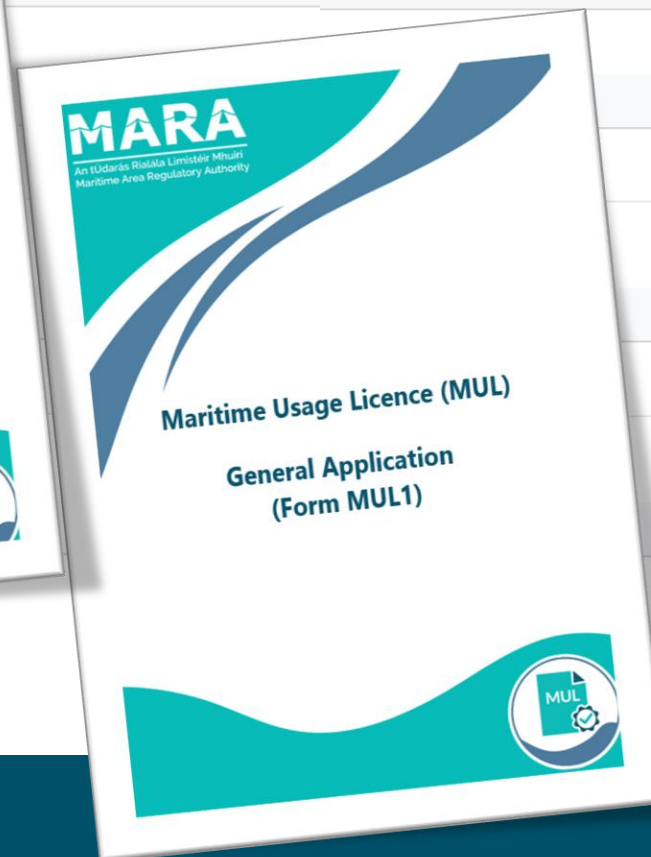
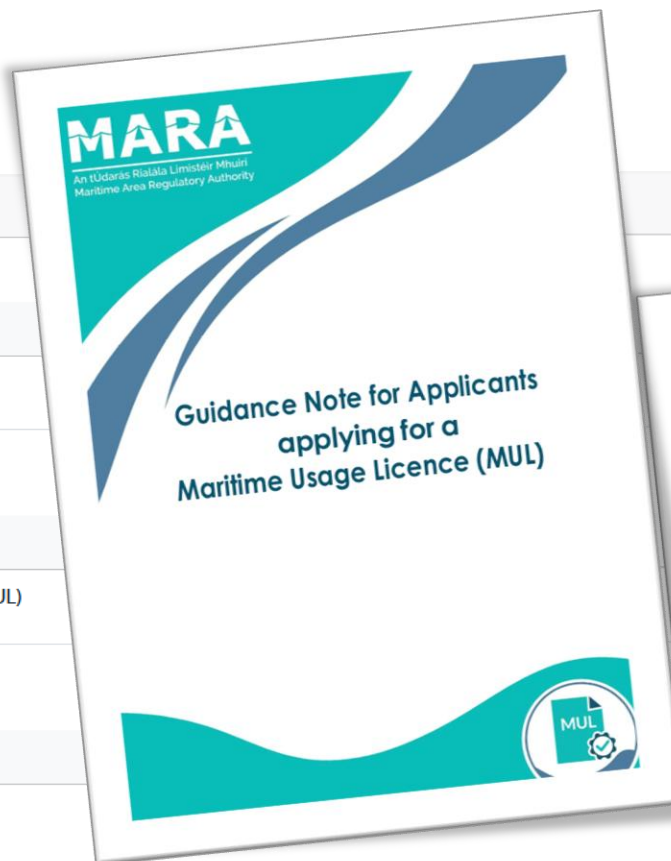
Document

Guidance Note for Applicants applying for a Maritime Usage Licence (MUL)

Application Forms – Maritime Usage Licences

Document

Maritime Usage Licence (MUL) General Application (MUL1)



Download



Download



Download



✓ Submission by email to licence@mara.gov.ie

✓ Use relevant naming convention for documents or Attachment Numbers as per Application Form.

MUL Applications & Determinations

Applications & Determinations - MARA - Maritime Area Regulatory Authority

Applications & Determinations

[Home](#) > [Our Work](#) > [Maritime Usage Licences](#) > [Applications & Determinations](#)

All Applications

MAC Applications

MUL Applications

Reference Number

e.g., LIC230013

Applicant

All Applicants

County

All Counties

Status

All Statuses

Received Date From

dd/mm/yyyy



Received Date To

dd/mm/yyyy



Received Year

All Years

Search Activity

Search in activity descriptions...

Reset Filters

Identity of the MUL Applicant

S.117 of MAP Act

*.....a **person** may make an application in the specified form, accompanied by the specified fee, to the MARA for the grant of a licence for the Schedule 7 usage the subject of the application.*

**MUL Application Form
Q2.1**

Name and Address of the **Natural** or **Legal Person** who will be the MUL Holder

Natural Person

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	JOHN MURPHY
Company/Organisation (if Applicable)	n/A

Legal Person

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	MURPHY LIMITED
Company/Organisation (if Applicable)	MURPHY LIMITED

MUL Applicant – Legal Person

Legal Entity
Requirements

CRO – Registered Name, Address, Number
Certificate of Incorporation
List of Directors

Verified against CRO



Profile	Previous Names	Events (5)
Reg. Number	678910	
Reg. Name	MURPHY LIMITED	
Type	LTD - Private Company Limited by Shares	
Status	Effective Date	
Normal	22/09/1977	
Registered on	22/09/1977	
Next Annual Return	30/09/2026	
Reg. Address	101 PATRICK STREET, CORK, T12 6789, IRELAND	

MUL Applicant – Authorised Contact

**Authorised
Contact Person
Q2.2 MUL App**

Authorised Contact Person for the MUL Application
Within MUL Applicant Entity or
External Agent nominated by the MUL Applicant

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	
Authorised Contact Position	
Email	
Telephone	

- Updates to contact details of personnel to licence@mara.gov.ie

MUL Application - Signatory

“ *MUL Application must be signed by the **legal or natural person** that is to be MUL Holder*

*For a company, the declaration must be signed by a **Company Director** or the **Company Secretary** as evidenced by current CRO details*

MARA
An tÚdarás Rialála Limistéir Mhuiri
Maritime Area Regulatory Authority

MUL

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:

Position held:

Date:

Signed for and on behalf of the applicant

Wet Ink Signature or Digital Signature
from a recognised digital platform

”

MUL Application Documents & Fee

S.117 of MAP Act

.....a person may make an application in the specified form, **accompanied by the specified fee**, to the MARA for the grant of a licence for the Schedule 7 usage the subject of the application.

Specified Fee – €2000 per MUL application

Maritime Area Usage (Licence Fees) Regulations 2023, SI 402/2023.

Where application Screens OUT for AA = €1000 refund

Payable by EFT

Proof of payment/confirmation of funds transfer

Include with Application Documentation

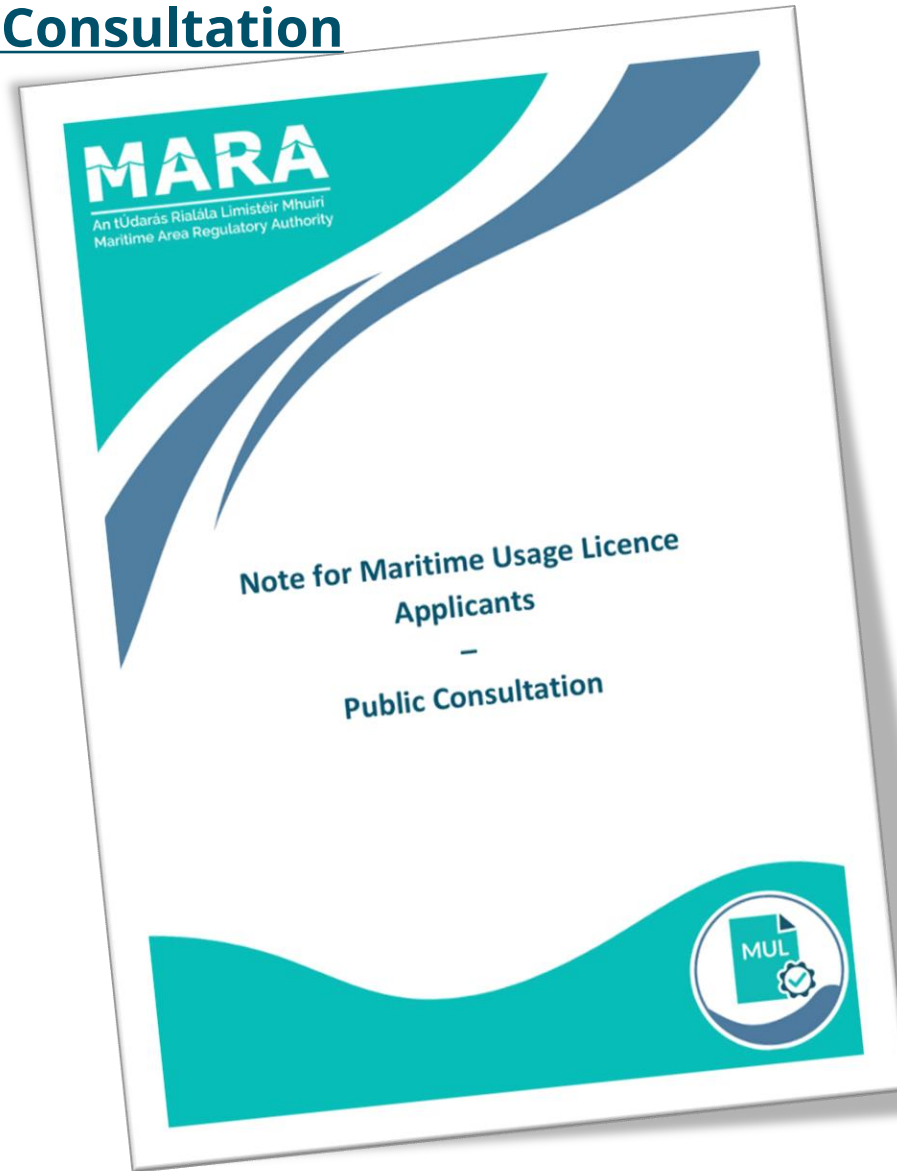
Assessment

Complete application documentation in the specified form

Fee reconciliation by MARA

MUL Public Consultation

MUL Public Consultation



Assistance to MUL
Applicants - Public
Consultation aspect
of the MUL licensing
process

MUL Public Consultation

MARA issues **Section 117(6)(b) Public Consultation Notification** to MUL Applicant – requires the Applicant to give the public *'relevant notice'* regarding the MUL application.

- Publish newspaper notice advising of MUL application;
 - Where the MUL application may be inspected;
 - How the public may make submissions in writing on same;
 - Time period for making such submissions.
- MARA must consider submissions received in the appropriate assessment



Public Consultation Preparation

Publication



Publish Newspaper Notice: at least **one national newspaper** & the **local newspaper(s)** pertinent to the coastline/s that the proposed maritime usage is adjacent to.

Deadline



Publish Newspaper Notice no later than **four weeks** from the date of the *Section 117.6.b Public Consultation Notification* from MARA.

30 Days



Publication dates of national newspapers and local newspapers can differ



Identify the relevant **national** and **local newspaper(s)** relevant to MUL application/s.







Satisfy internal governance and budgetary approval to achieve this publication deadline.







30 Days starts on publication date of the first newspaper notice; 30 day period is counted from the last publication date of any relevant public notice.

Minded To MUL – Section 119.6.b

-  MARA gives notice to MUL Applicant how it is '*minded to*' determine the MUL application - grant/part grant with conditions or refuse.
-  Provides a **Proposed Licence** with reasons for the determination and proposed conditions to the Applicant.
-  Applicant has opportunity (typically 21 days) to submit **Supplementary Material** to MARA in relation to the reasons only.
-  MARA will consider Supplementary Material before making a final determination on the licence application.

Minded To MUL – To Note

-  Read and Consider the *Minded To Notice* & Proposed Licence;
-  Engage as you see fit with your specialist advisers in this consideration;
-  Submit Supplementary Material to MARA within the time period;
-  Where you do not wish to submit Supplementary Material to MARA , confirm to MARA at licence@mara.gov.ie

Minded To MUL – To Note

✔ Option for the MUL Applicant to submit Supplementary Material further to *Minded To* & MARA consideration of same is the regulatory process detailed in the MAP Act.

✔ As a regulator, not appropriate for MARA to engage outside of this legislative process.



Determined MUL

Compliance Point of Contact

Provide point of contact details for MUL Compliance to
compliance@MARA.gov.ie

Plan for MUL Compliance

Read & Consider MUL and all Conditions
Pre-commencement Conditions
Notification of Commencement of PMU to MARA –
min.14 days advance notice

MARA Website

MUL Applications & Determinations on MARA
Website

MUL Licensing – Useful Resources

MUL Licensing Queries?

- Email Maritime Usage Licensing Team at licence@mara.gov.ie
- **MARA website** <https://maritimeregulator.ie>

Maritime Usage Licensing (MUL)

Assessment - Technical

Dr Ciar O'Toole

Senior Marine Advisor

MUL & Planning Advisory Directorate

20th May 2026

Complexity



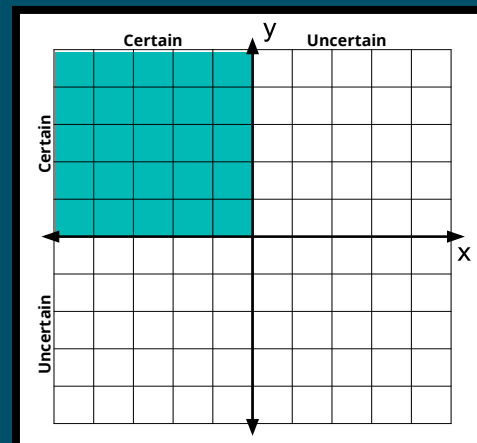
Scientific certainty in the marine environment is different than in the terrestrial environment.



The “source, path, receptor” model is much more difficult to model in the marine environment



An ecologist must err on the side of caution –
Precautionary Principle



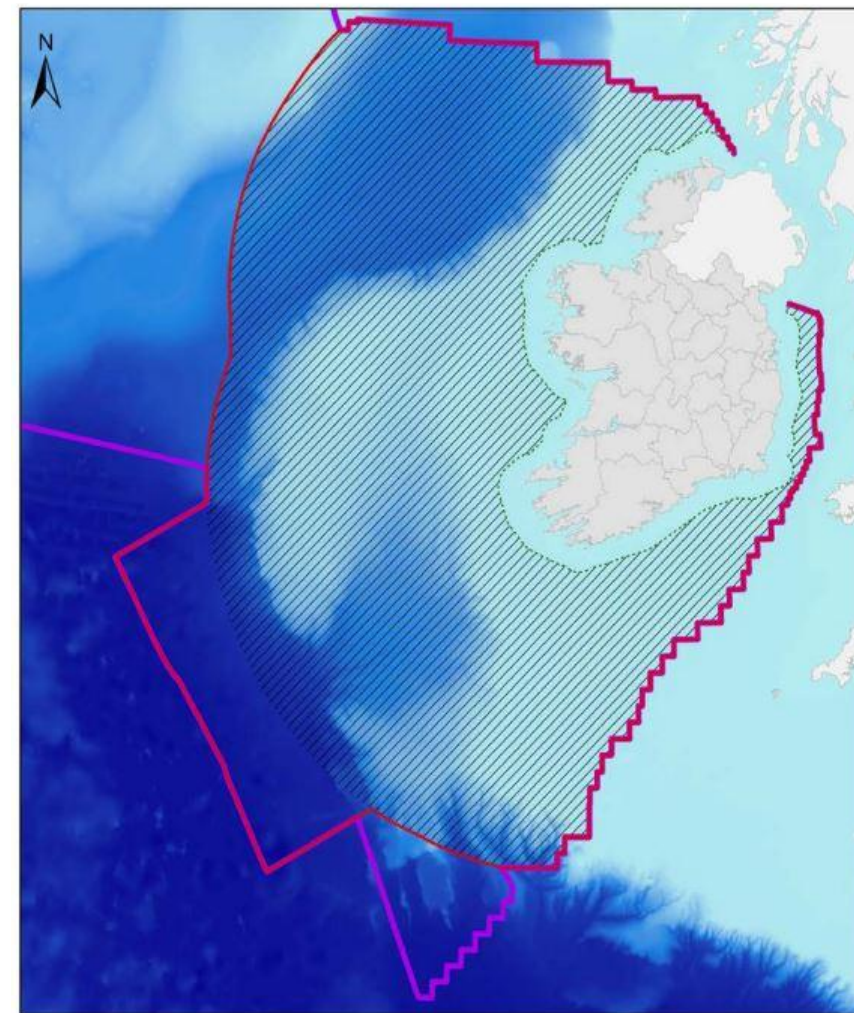
What is reasonable in terms of the relevant directives/legislation and the precautionary principal must be linked to what is practicable – and this is clearly different in a maritime setting.

Legal restrictions also apply.

How does MARA address this complexity?

Legally compliant assessments which:

- Avoid and/or minimise impact of activity on marine environment where possible
- Fulfil our requirements to provide enough information to show how our assessment was carried out
- Limit the identified impact through mitigations, reflected in licence conditions
- *Licence conditions must be written in a way that allows MARA to assess compliance*



Maritime Usage Licence Assessment – Relevant Legislation

MAP Act

Environmental Impact
Assessment Directive

Birds and Habitats
Directives

Marine Strategy
Framework Directive

Water Framework
Directive Assessment

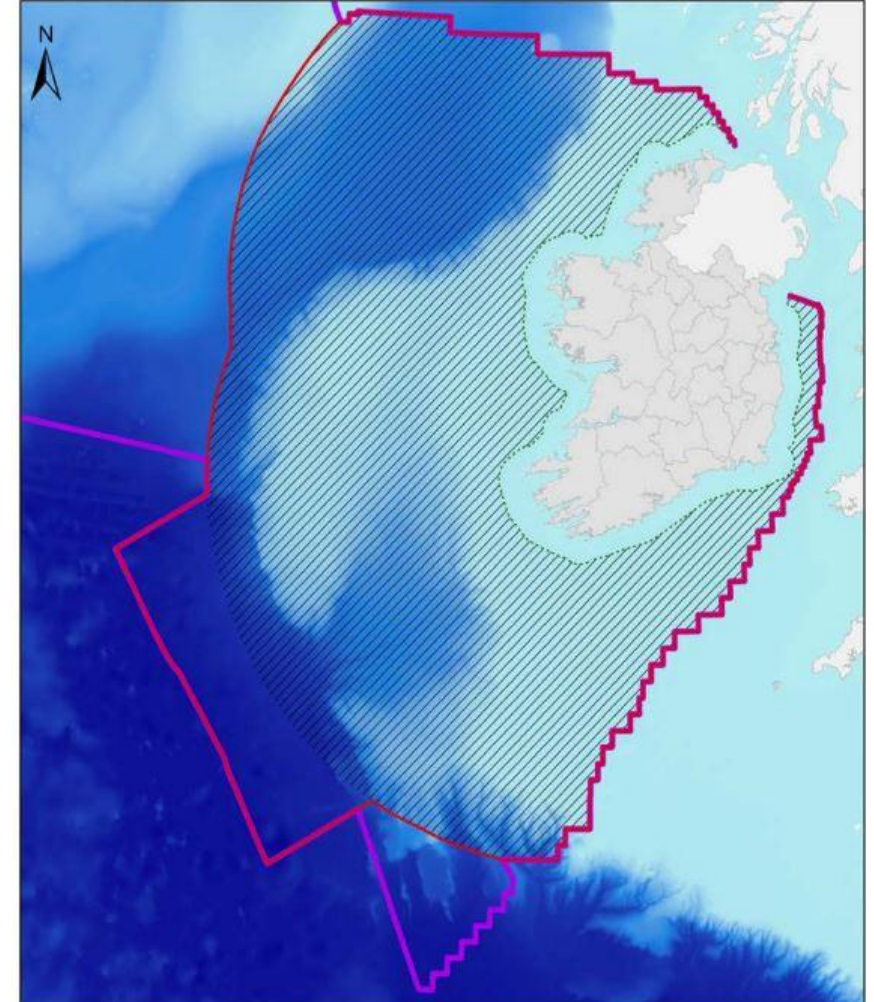
Climate Act

Key national and
regional plans

- NMPS, MMPS, County Development Plans, DMAPs

Other users –
navigation,
recreation, fishing,
aquaculture

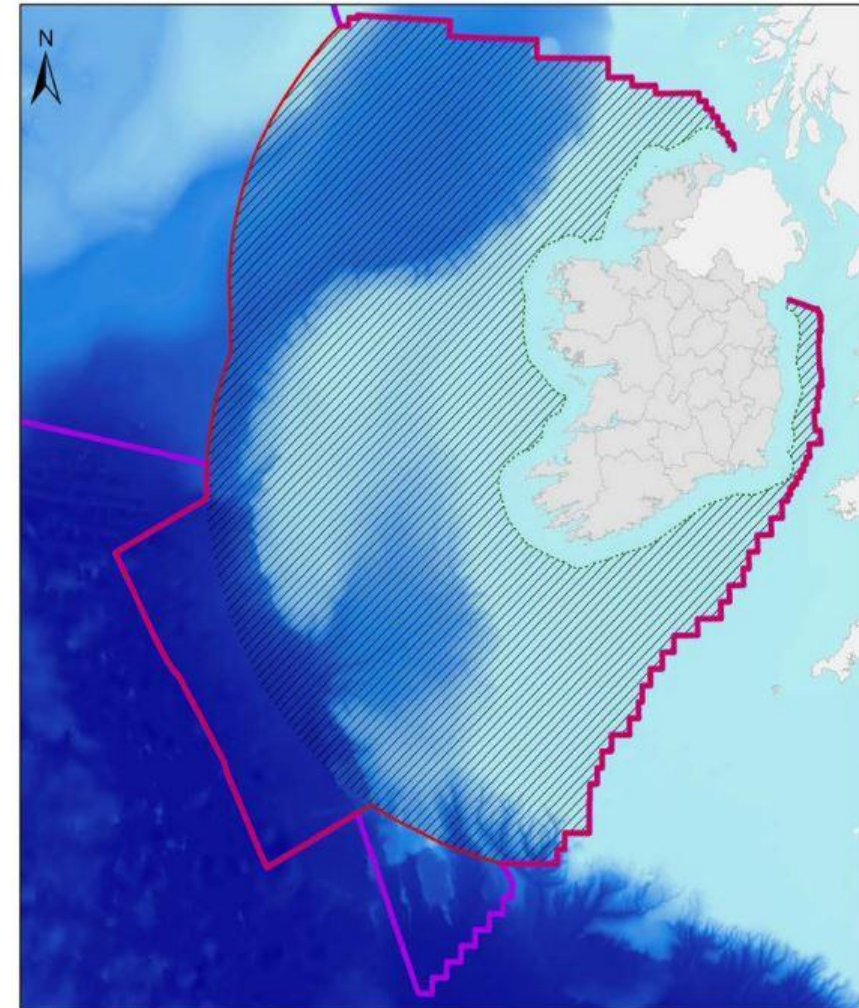
International
Conventions:
UNCLOS, Aarhus



Application form - sections

- Part 3 – What information is required
- Part 4.1 – National Marine Planning Framework
- Part 4.2 – Designated Maritime Area Plan
- Part 4.3 – AA screening and AA
- Part 4.4 – Annex IV Risk Assessment

- Part 4.5 – Water Framework Directive
- Part 4.6 – Marine Strategy Framework Directive
- Part 4.7 – EIA Screening
- Part 4.8 – UNCLOS/other users
- Part 4.9 – Climate Act
- Part 4.10 – National Biodiversity Action Plan

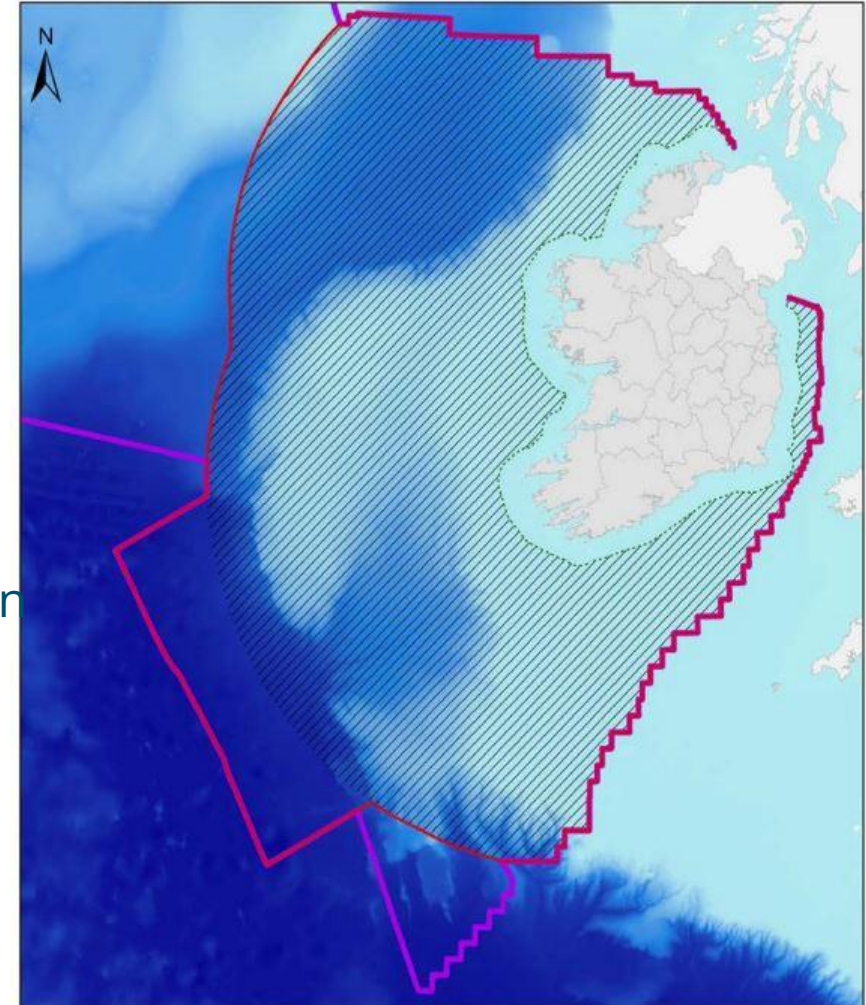


Application form – Part 3

- Description of maritime usage – what is it you are doing?
- Purpose and duration (overall and activity specific)
- Schedule of works if available
- Details of equipment, vessel types
- Indicative locations, number of samples - mapping

We need these details to assess impact

- Things that come back via RAI tend to be often on the description of the maritime usage and the equipment.
- Each RAI usually adds a month to assessment time.
- Please come in for a pre-app.



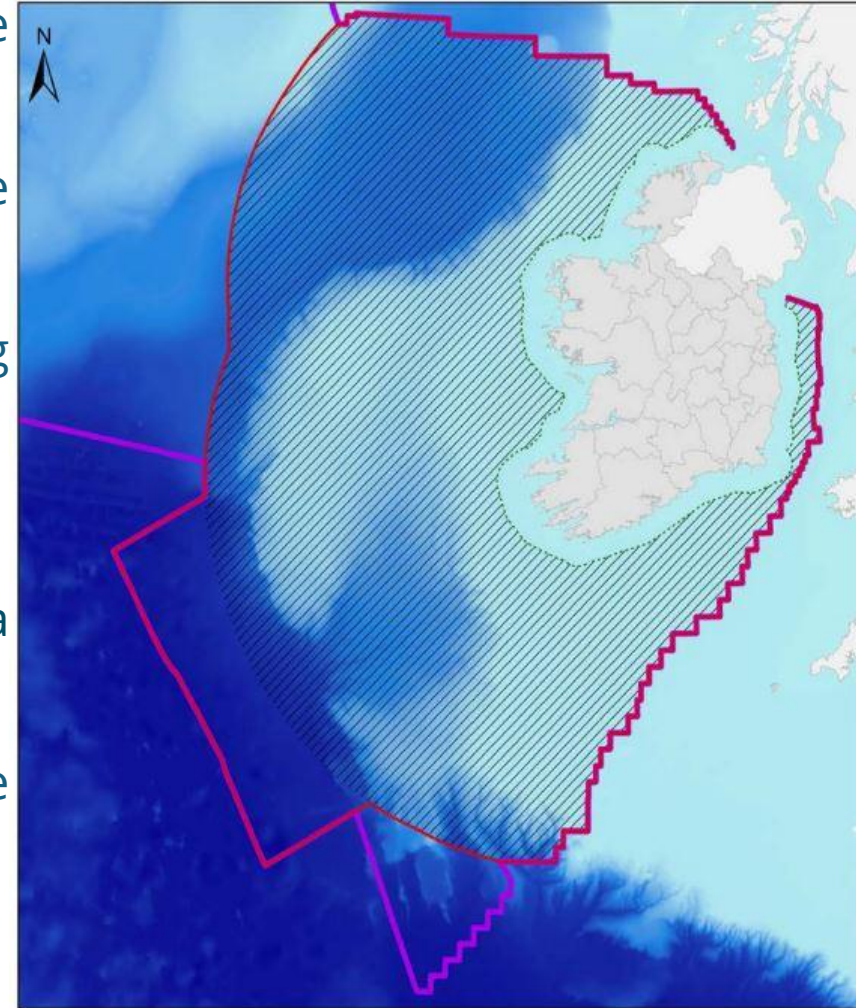
Application form – Part 4.1 & 4.2

National Marine Planning Framework

- 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.
- What does this look like? Working through the NMPF highlighting potential links

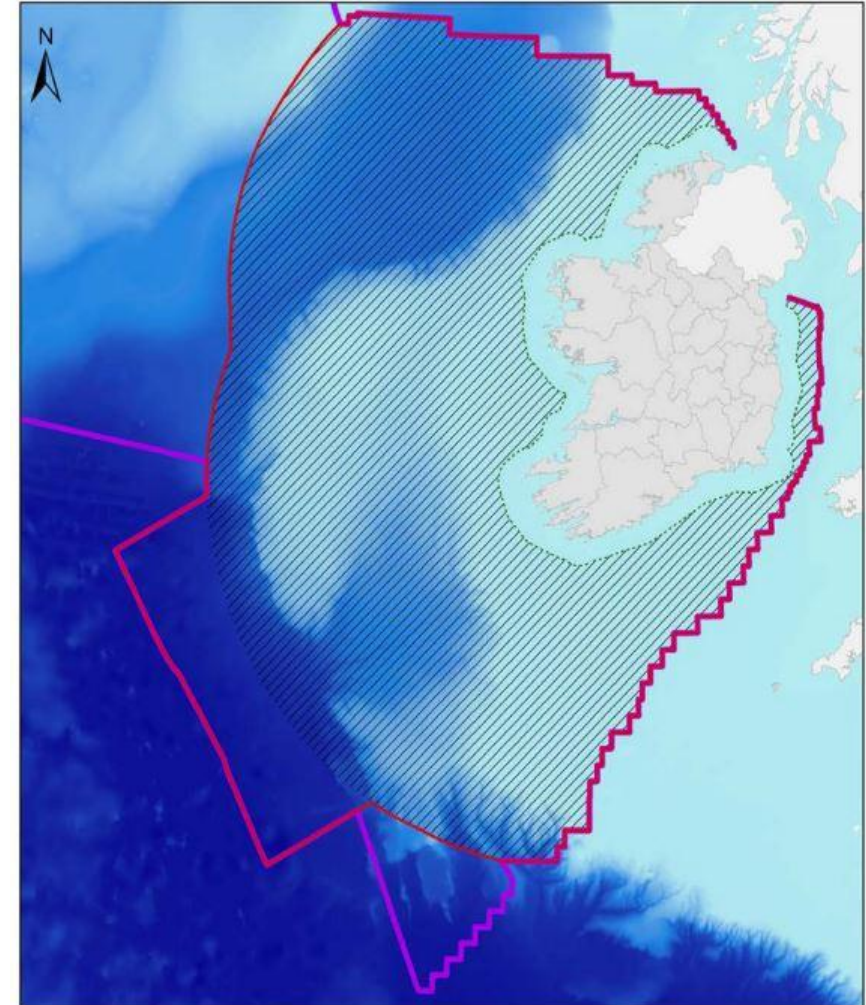
Designated Maritime Area Plan

- Is the proposed Maritime Usage located in an area for which a Designated Marine Area Plan has been published?
- If yes, indicate if the proposed Usage is consistent with the Designated Marine Area Plan and fulfils requirements.
- National – in development
- South Coast DMAP



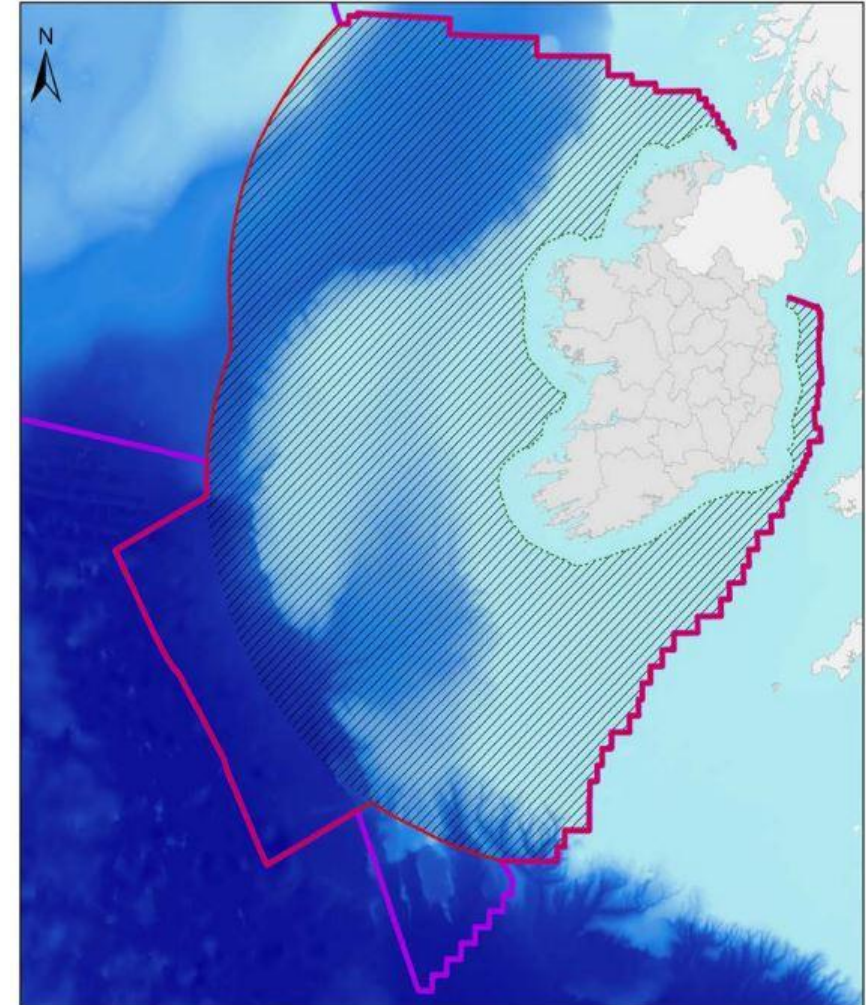
Application form – Part 4.3

- **Habitats and Birds Directives - AA Screening and AA Stage 2**
- MARA carry out our own assessment, informed by applicants documents.
- Report for AA Screening (formally SISAA) – look at website for examples of MARAs AA reports – can inform assessment.
 - [MARA MUL applications](#)
- Research/desktop studies to inform assessments ongoing – keep an eye on website.
 - [Fish and shellfish - impacts of noise report](#)
- Use EU Guidance:
 - [EU Methodology for assessing Natura 2000 sites 2021](#)
 - [EU Managing and Protecting Natura 2000 sites](#)



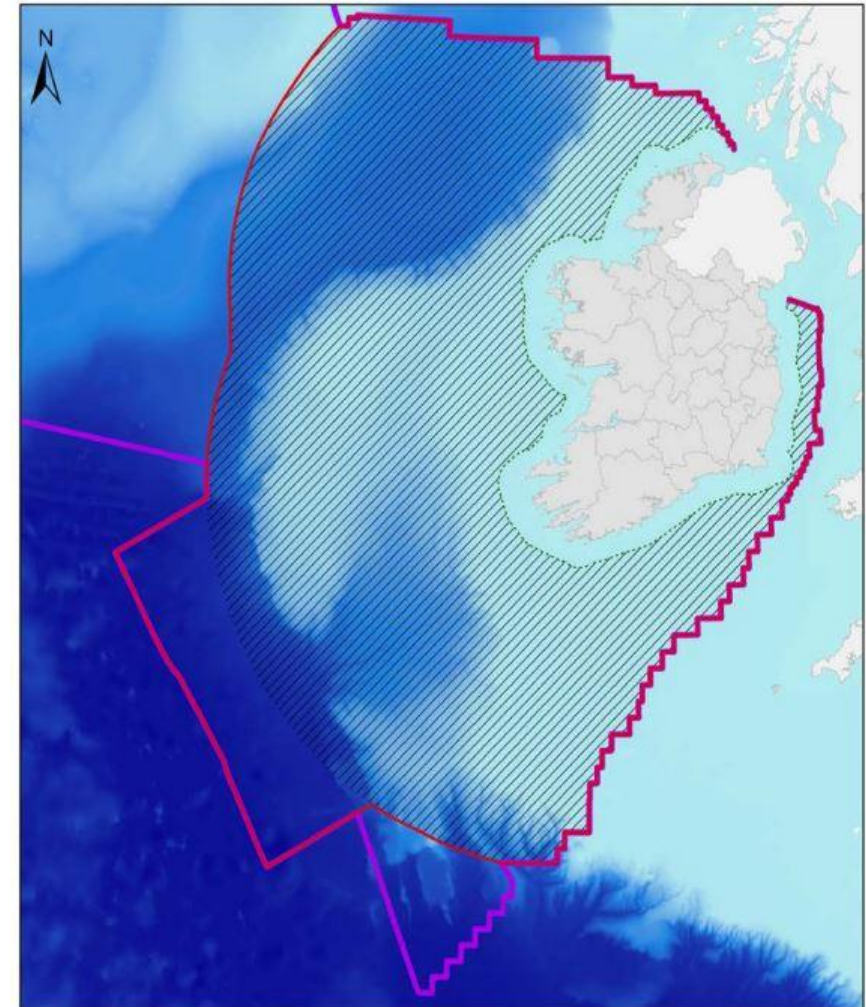
Application form – Part 4.3

- **Habitats and Birds Directives - AA Screening and AA Stage 2**
- We won't usually ask for an updated AA screening report, but will request RAIs to fill in gaps – each RAI adds a month to assessment.
- Applicant can also choose to submit Natura Impact Statement at application stage
 - Can be effective time-wise
 - May be asked to update this NIS at later stage.
- If application screens in for AA – we need an NIS of sufficient standard before triggering public consultation.
- Public consultation - 30 days – applicant places ad in national and local newspaper.
- Last time we can ask you for additional info/RAI!



Application form – Part 4.4

- **Habitats and Birds Directives - Risk Assessment for Annex IV species**
- Strict protection for relevant Annex IV species - cetaceans, turtles, otter. Prohibits:
 - Deliberately capture, kill, or **disturb** these species, especially during breeding, rearing, hibernation, and migration periods.
 - Deliberately destroy or damage their breeding sites or resting places.
- Derogation – Are you required to apply for a derogation licence under Regulation 54 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011? **Yes or No**
- Self assessed on NPWS website - [NPWS Application for Derogations](#)
- Guidance for applicants – July 2025: [NPWS Guidance for applicants July 2025](#)



Maritime Usage Licensing (MUL)

Technical aspects of the MUL assessment

Dr Alison McCarthy

Senior Marine Advisor

MUL & Planning Advisory Directorate

20th May 2026

Water Framework Directive

- **Part 5, S. 121(2) of MAP Act:**

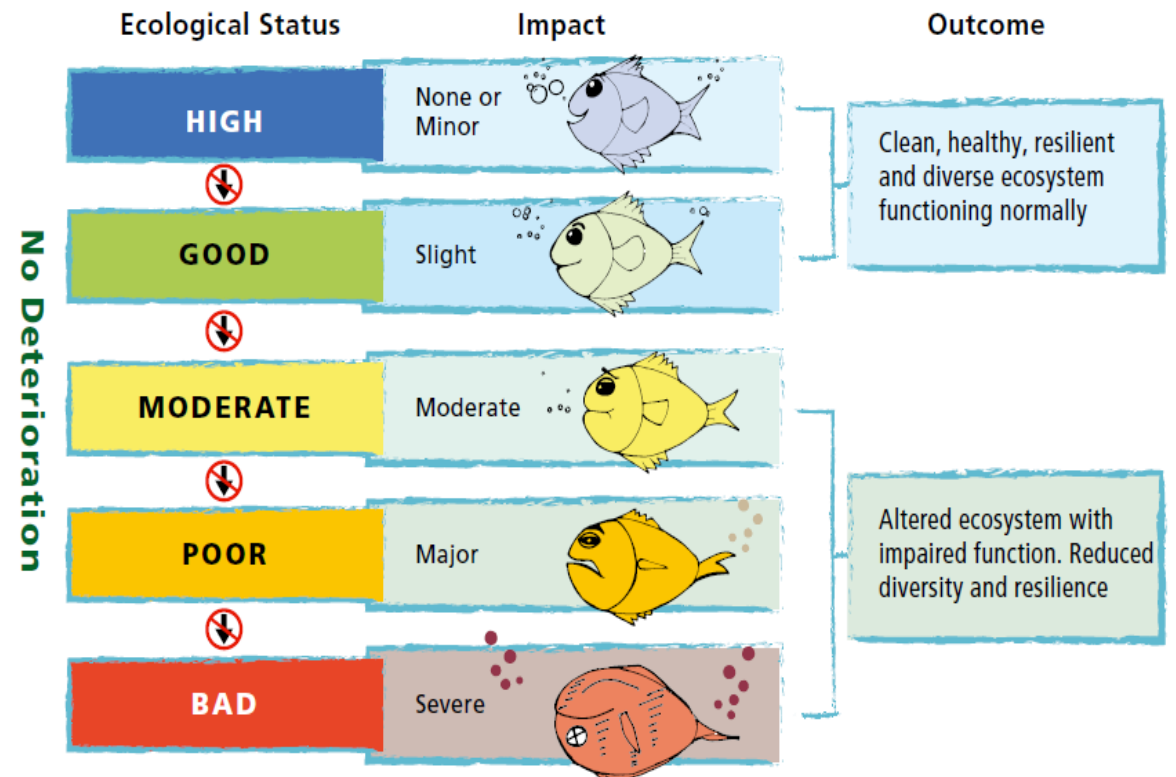
“The MARA shall, before granting a licence, have regard to —” “the State’s obligations under Directive 2000/60/EC” or the Water Framework Directive (WFD)

- European framework to assess water quality and results can be compared across EU member states

- WFD waterbodies:

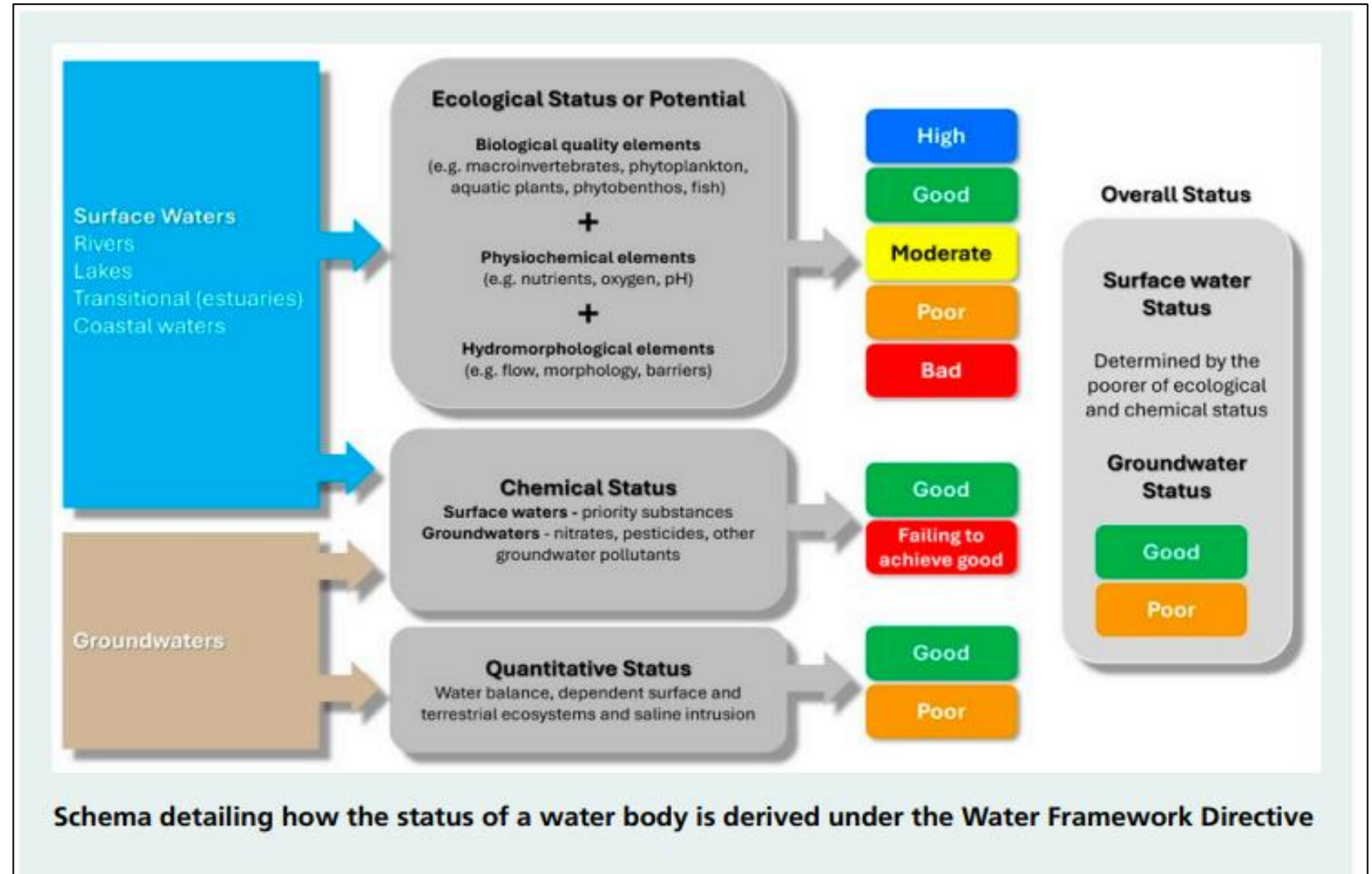
- inland surface waters (rivers & lakes)
- groundwater
- **transitional waters (estuaries & coastal lagoons)**
- **coastal waters**

- **Objectives:** to protect and, where necessary, restore waterbodies in order to reach good status and to prevent further deterioration. Maintain high status where it exists.



Water Framework Directive

- The Environmental Protection Agency monitors and reports on waterbody status.
- Marine Institute (nutrients, benthic invertebrates), Inland Fisheries Ireland (fish), NPWS (lagoon and saltmarsh), Waterways Ireland and local authorities monitor in inland surface waters.



Water Framework Directive

QUESTION: Will the proposed maritime usage have an effect on the current status of the relevant waterbodies? or will it cause a deterioration in current status?

- MUL Application Form

“Provide sufficient information addressing the consistency of the proposed Maritime Usage with the objectives of the Water Framework Directive”

- Further details in ‘Guidance note for applicants applying for a MUL’

Shannon estuary – spans WFD transitional and coastal waters



Water Framework Directive

Data on current waterbody 'status' and 'risk' and pressures via gis.epa.ie/EPAMAPs/ and catchments.ie

The screenshot displays the MARA Water Framework Directive GIS interface. The top navigation bar includes 'Water', 'WATER, LAND & SOIL', 'PROTECTED AREAS', 'MONITORING & FLOW', 'STATUS & RISK', and 'PRESSURES & ACTIVITIES'. The main map shows the Cork Harbour area with various waterbodies highlighted in red and green. The results panel on the left shows two entries for 'Transitional Waterbodies Risk'. The first entry is for IE_SW_060_0700. The second entry is for IE_SW_060_0750, with details: Code: IE_SW_060_0750, Name: Lough Mahon, URL: [View the Data Page](#) (circled in red), and Projection: At risk. An 'EXPORT' button is located at the bottom left of the results panel. The right panel shows a list of waterbodies and their status for 2019-2024, with toggle switches for each category.

Waterbody	Risk	Status 2019-2024
River Waterbodies	Risk	River Waterbody WFD Status 2019-2024
Lake Waterbodies	Risk	Lake Waterbody WFD Status 2019-2024
Transitional Waterbodies	Risk	Transitional Waterbody WFD Status 2019-2024
Coastal Waterbodies	Risk	
Canal Waterbodies	Risk	
Ground Waterbodies	Risk	

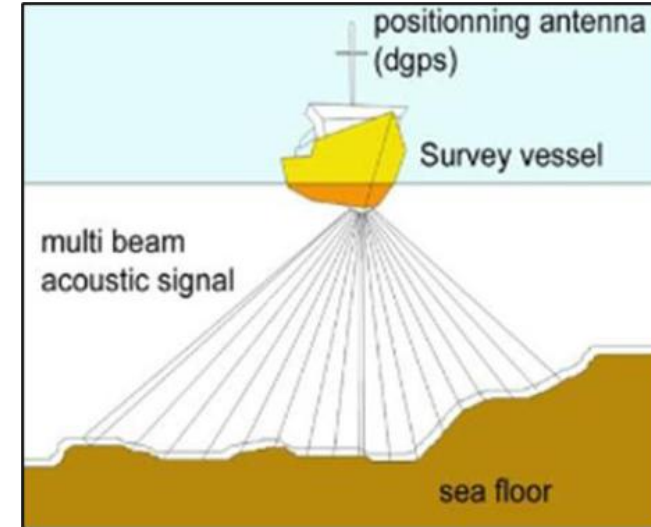
- The potential impact **depends on the nature, scale and location** of the proposed maritime usage.



consider impacts on benthic macroinvertebrates from borehole surveys and platforms



Impacts on fish in transitional waters from underwater noise (Aquafact/APEM report)



e.g. Potential impacts on hydromorphology (bed, disturbance, turbidity) or benthic invertebrates



Dredging v grab sampling

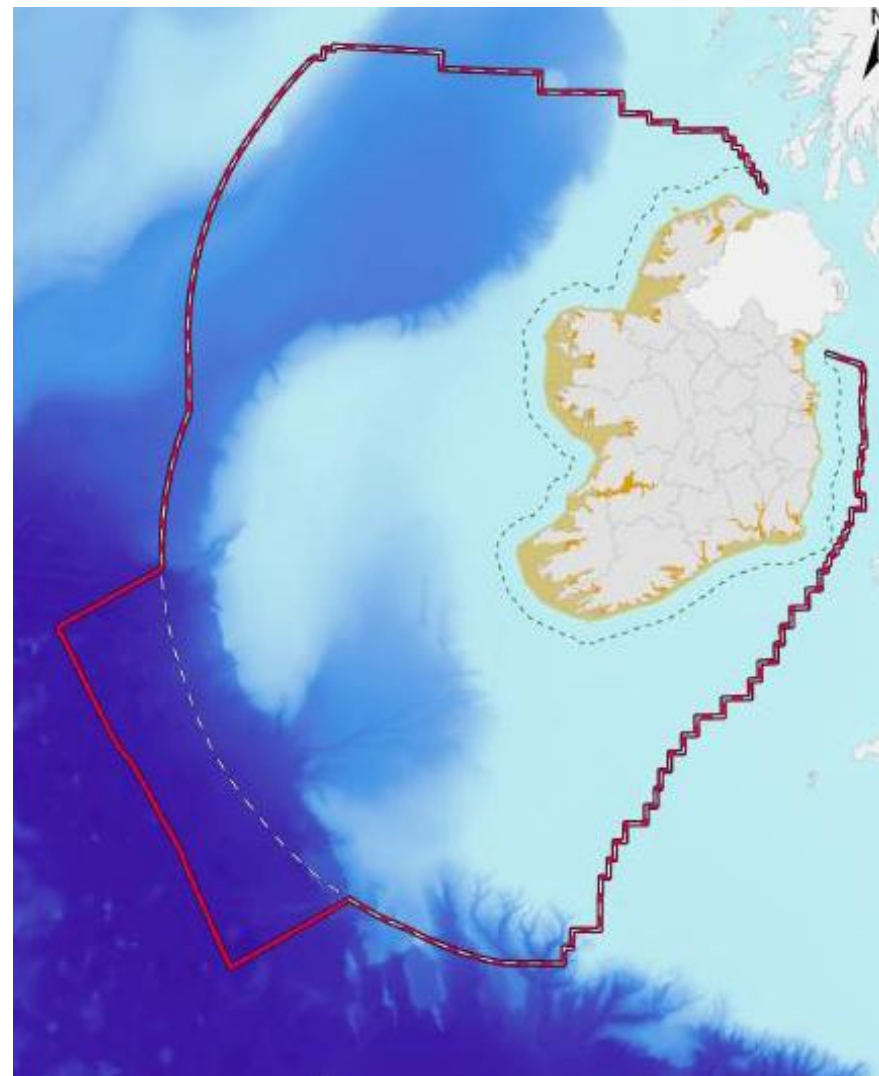


Marine Strategy Framework Directive

- **Part 5, S. 121(2)(b) of MAP Act:**

“The MARA shall, before granting a licence, have regard to —” “the State’s obligations under Directive 2008/56/EC” or the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (WFD)

- European legislation which aims to achieve Good Environmental Status (GES) for all marine waters in Europe and protect the resource base for marine related economic and social activities.
- The concept of GES is defined by the Directive through 11 descriptors
- **‘marine waters’** in MSFD means Ireland’s coastal and outer marine areas (out to Ireland’s EEZ), the seabed and subsoil (thus not including WFD transitional waters).

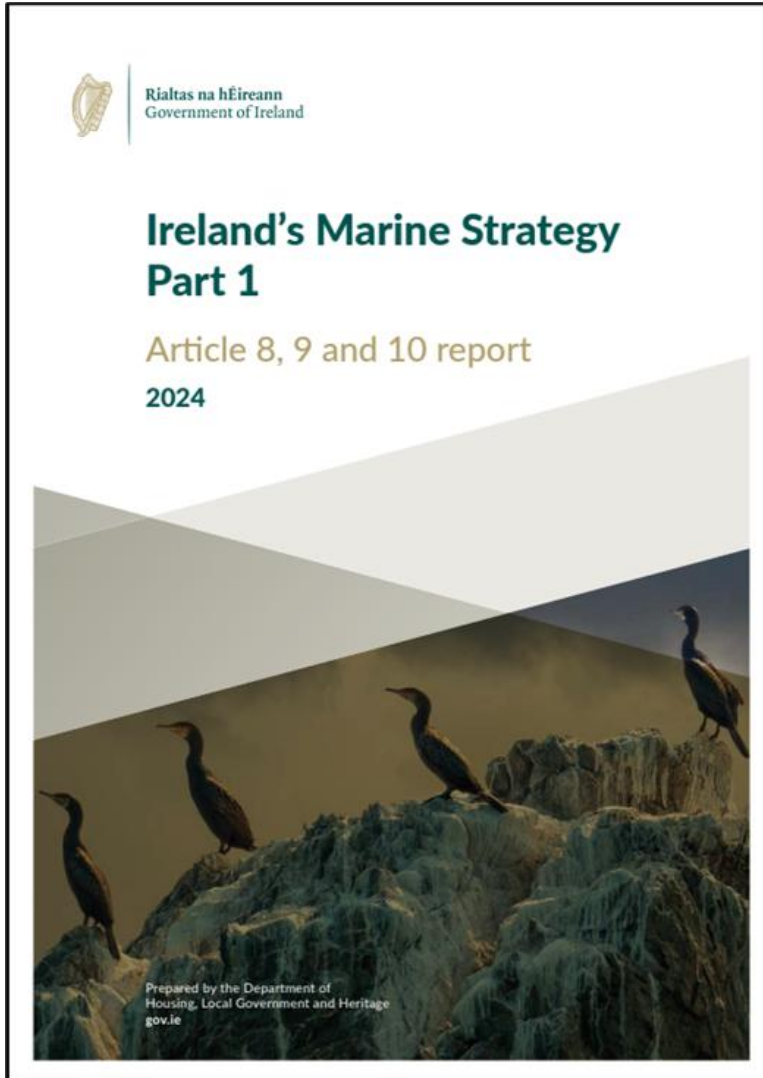


Marine Strategy Framework Directive

Aim: Clean, healthy, biologically diverse and sustainably used marine environment

1. Biological diversity 	2. Non-indigenous species 	3. Population of commercial fish/shellfish 	4. Elements of marine food webs 
5. Eutrophication 	6. Sea floor integrity 	7. Alteration of hydrographical conditions 	8. Concentrations of contaminants 
Good Environmental Status	9. Contaminants in fish/seafood for human consumption 	10. Marine litter 	11. Introduction of energy including underwater noise 

Marine Strategy Framework Directive



- **DHLGH 2024 Report:** Ireland's MSFD Marine Strategy Part 1: Assessment of Good Environmental Status (Article 9) and Environmental Targets (Article 10)

- Gives an update on the determination of Good Environmental Status & describes how status is assessed



- Further information and reports on DCEE website



The image is a screenshot of a webpage from gov.ie. The page title is "The Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)". It is a publication from the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment, published on 31 October 2016 and last updated on 11 July 2025. The page contains a list of nine links related to the MSFD, arranged in two columns. The first column contains links 1 through 4, and the second column contains links 5 through 9. Below the list, there is a section titled "What is the Marine Strategy Framework Directive" with a short paragraph explaining the directive's purpose.

gov.ie News Departments Services

Publication

The Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)

From: [Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment](#)
Published on: 31 October 2016
Last updated on: 11 July 2025

1. [What is the Marine Strategy Framework Directive](#)
2. [Why is the Marine Strategy Framework Directive important](#)
3. [What is Good Environmental Status \(GES\)?](#)
4. [Who is working on this](#)
5. [Ireland's Marine Strategy](#)
6. [Ireland's Marine Strategy Part 3: Programme of Measures](#)
7. [Ireland an Island State](#)
8. [MSFD Ireland – Development and Participation](#)
9. [Further information](#)

What is the Marine Strategy Framework Directive

The Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) is European legislation which aims to achieve Good Environment Status (GES) for all marine waters in Europe and protect the resource base for marine related economic and social activities.

Marine Strategy Framework Directive

QUESTION: Will the proposed maritime usage have an impact on Ireland maintaining GES or achieving GES for relevant descriptors?

- The potential impact depends on the nature, scale and location of the proposed maritime usage.
- MUL Application Form and Guidance note for Applicants
“Provide sufficient information addressing the consistency of the proposed Maritime Usage with the objectives of the MSFD”

Descriptor	GES achieved	Impact of MUL?	Assessment
Population of commercial fish/shellfish	Partially	MUL activity lies within spawning and nursery grounds and spawning stocks could be impacted by geotechnical and geophysical seismic surveys	Mitigation could be proposed to avoid sensitive spawning or nursery areas, or to avoid peak spawning periods for particular fish species.
Non-indigenous species	Yes	Invasive species on equipment or on hulls of vessels	Mitigation to ensure appropriate measures are taken to ensure vessels and equipment are free of invasive species
Seafloor integrity	Yes	Broad habitat type – will there be physical loss, physical disturbance?	What is the footprint of the activity? What are the habitats types in the MUL area and could they recover from short term disturbance? Resilience and sensitivity of habitats (MarLIN website).

Other Assessment Obligations

- **S. 117(5)(a) of MAP Act - Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening**

As soon as practicable after receiving MUL application – having regard to Schedules 5 and 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001.

- **S. 3(3)(a) & 44(b) of MAP Act - United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the Maritime Jurisdiction Act.**

- E.g. All states enjoy the right of innocent passage through the Irish territorial Sea.
- Ensure no danger to navigation – condition may be attached to MUL re publication of marine notices. Promotes co-existence with other users.

- **Consistency with the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended and Ireland's climate targets.**

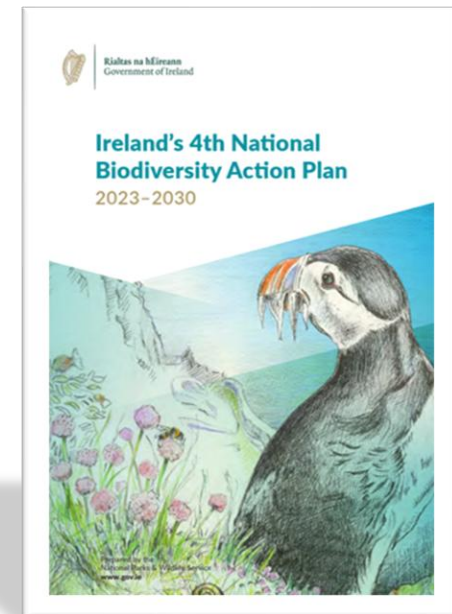
- What is the significance of the carbon emissions from the proposed maritime usage?
- Can survey effort be reduced by utilising existing data, where available?
- Has low carbon technology been incorporated into the survey design?



- **National Biodiversity Action Plan (4th NBAP published)**

NBAP sets the national biodiversity agenda for the period 2023-2030.

Implements actions via strategic objectives



Resources

- European Union Water Framework Directive: [Directive - 2000/60 - EN - Water Framework Directive - EUR-Lex](#)
- European Union Marine Strategy Framework Directive: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2008/56/oj/eng>
- A new index for the assessment of hydromorphology in transitional and coastal waters around Ireland. Keogh, Wilkes & O'Boyle, 2020. Marine Pollution Bulletin, 151.
- Review of Impacts of Geophysical and Geotechnical surveys on marine fish and shellfish in Irish waters. Desktop review by Aquafact (APEM Group) – on [MARA website](#)
- The Marine Life Information Network – habitats and species sensitivity. <https://www.marlin.ac.uk/>
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage WFD webpage: <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-housing-local-government-and-heritage/publications/water-framework-directive/>
- Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment MSFD webpage: <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-climate-energy-and-the-environment/publications/the-marine-strategy-framework-directive-msfd/#further-information>
- [Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023–2030](#). Prepared by NPWS.
- [South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan for Offshore Renewable Energy](#) – Prepared by DCEE. October 2024
- [Project Ireland 2040. National Marine Planning Framework](#). Prepared by DHLGH, 2021.





www.maritimeregulator.ie

