



August 6, 2026

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RE: MUL260045 – Arramara Teoranta

A Chara,

The Marine Divisions of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) welcome the opportunity to provide comments on the application submitted by Arramara Teoranta, to harvest *Ascophyllum Nodosum* and *Fucus vesiculosus* from the intertidal shores of Inner Galway Bay South.

It is essential that the sea-fishing and aquaculture sectors are fully recognised and given a high priority as a long-standing, pre-existing, and traditional activity in the marine environment as the proposed seaweed harvesting is being evaluated.

Fishers and aquaculture site holders are primary food producers dependent upon certain marine areas which are particularly important for food production. This primary production is critical to supplying the downstream indigenous seafood processing and export industries and in sustaining the livelihoods of coastal communities. The importance of these primary and secondary food production activities is reflected in the Government's Food Vision 2030 policy.

To inform the DAFM comments, the observations of the Marine Institute (MI) and Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) the application were requested.

The MI note that due to the littoral distribution of *A. nodosum* and *Fucus* spp. the impact on fish ecology, fishing activities and aquaculture is likely to be minimal. However, the individual and cumulative effect of the three applications should be considered in combination with other activities in the area.

BIM advise that the proposed hand harvesting seaweed activity would need to demonstrate that it is compatible with existing active licensed aquaculture and inshore fisheries activities within the application area. Any potential overlap would need to be considered, as well as in-combination and cumulative effects.

The seafood sector, including fishing, aquaculture, processing and ancillary support services, is an important source of employment in rural and coastal areas. BIM's [Business of Seafood 2025](#) report outlines that approximately 15,894 jobs (direct and indirect employment) are reliant on the seafood sector. In 2025, Irish vessels landed 1,278 tonnes of seafood into Ros a Mhíl, with these landings valued at €12 million, highlighting such economic activity for local coastal communities.

As set out in the Marine Institute observations, several key fisheries take place adjacent to the MUL area in Galway Bay. These include pot fishing (targeting lobster, velvet crab, and shrimp), net fishing (primarily for bait) and dredge fishing (surf clam).

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Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) data regarding fishing in, and around, the licence application area may be limited as many of the vessels in the inshore fishing fleet (less than 12 metres in length) are not currently required to carry VMS on board. This means their activities are less visible in official data, and the true scale and patterns of inshore fishing are not fully captured.

While the proposed activity is not anticipated to impact unduly on inshore fishers, relevant local fishing organisations should nevertheless be engaged with at the earliest opportunity, to avoid disruption and potential displacement. Organisations representing inshore vessels include:

- The National Inshore Fisheries Forum (NIFF): <https://inshoreforums.ie/niff/>
- West Regional Inshore Fisheries Forum (WRIFF): <https://inshoreforums.ie/west-overview/>
- The Irish Islands Marine Resource Organisation (IIMRO): <https://www.iimro.org/>
- The National Inshore Fisherman's Association (NIFA): <https://inshore.ie/>

DAFM recognises that the developer's aim is to promote co-existence and minimise potential disruption to commercial fishing activities in the area. The evaluation of potential impacts of seaweed harvesting on commercial sea fishing activities needs to be given consideration within the context of the requirements set out under the Maritime Area Planning Act and the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF).

The principles in the NMPF of avoiding, minimising, or mitigating impacts on access to existing activities (including specific policies on Fisheries and Aquaculture) should be followed and any proposed development activity should incorporate the principle of maximising coexistence with established activities in marine areas.

Any relevant fishing organisations should receive any applicable Marine Notice/s, and be made aware of any proposed works, at the earliest opportunity to ensure the optimum coordination of activities and to limit potential disturbances to fishing activities to the greatest extent possible.

Please also find attached documents from the MI and BIM which provide further comments for consideration.

Yours sincerely,

#### **Marine Divisions**

**An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara**

*Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine*

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