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N11/N25 Oilgate to Rosslare Harbour Scheme River Slaney MUL Application

**Attachment 4.1 - Compliance with National
Marine Planning Framework Objectives**

June 2026

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1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Mott MacDonald Ireland Limited have prepared this National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) consistency statement, on behalf of Wexford County Council (WCC), ('the Applicant'), to accompany a Maritime Usage Licence (MUL) application for site investigations at the River Slaney, northwest of Wexford town.

1.2 Survey Location

The site investigation surveys proposed by the Applicant, will be undertaken at the River Slaney, west of Wexford town, Co. Wexford. The MUL application area is approximately 2.49km², as shown in Figure 1.1.

The western extent of the MUL area is approximately 4.8km west of the existing Ferrycarrig bridge (along the river), near the townlands of Carigmannon and Newtown Lower. The eastern extent of the MUL area is approximately 3km east of the Ferrycarrig bridge (along the river), near the townlands of Park and Crosstown. The Ferrycarrig bridge carries the existing N11 over the River Slaney.

Figure 1.1: Proposed Maritime Usage Licence Area



Source: Mott MacDonald, 2026

1.3 Project Overview

The N11/N25 Oilgate to Rosslare Harbour scheme (hereafter referred to as the 'proposed scheme'), is approximately 31km in length and will utilise a mix of both the existing road corridor, which will be upgraded, and a new corridor that will bypass significant constraints and deficiencies on sections of the existing corridor. The proposed scheme will include works in/near the crossing of the River Slaney.

To inform the design of the proposed scheme, specifically works in/near the crossing of the River Slaney, surveys (hereafter referred to as 'proposed surveys') as outlined in Attachment 3.1 Description of the Proposed Maritime Usage are required.

This report sets out how the proposed surveys are consistent with the objectives and policies of the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF), in line with Question 4.1 of the Maritime Usage Licence (MUL) General Application Form (MUL1).

The NMPF, published in 2021, brings together all marine-based human activities for the first time, outlining the government's vision, objectives and marine planning policies for each marine activity.¹

¹ National Marine Planning Framework (Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment, 2021)

2 National Marine Planning Framework Objectives

2.1 Introduction

The following section outlines how the proposed maritime usage (proposed surveys) is consistent with the overarching aims of the NMPF. The responses to the NMPF Objectives have been categorised under the overarching marine planning policies high-level objectives – Environmental, Economic and Social.

The proposed maritime usage is for a time-limited duration and is of a small-scale and low-impact nature, due to non-permanent instrumentation deployment. It is therefore reversible in relation to potential impacts.

Due to the nature and scale of the proposed works, not all policies and objectives are applicable to the subject maritime usage, with no specific sectoral policies relating to the proposed maritime usage. In this regard, responses provided in this attachment have been tailored to demonstrate compliance with the NMPF's planning policies headings, rather than each/all the individual policies under such policy headings. This accords with the proportionality principle embedded in the NMPF and also aligns with NMPF expectations for temporary, small-scale marine investigate works.

Table 2.1: NMPF Policies and Objectives Compliance

Policy Grouping	Compliance commentary
Overarching Marine Planning Policies	
High Level Objective: Environmental – Ocean Health Planning Policy Headings: Environmental – Ocean Health Biodiversity Protected Marine Sites Non-indigenous Species Water Quality Sea-flood and Water Column Integrity Marine Litter Underwater Noise Air Quality Policy Climate Change Policy	The MUL Application for the proposed works is accompanied by a Natura Impact Statement which considered potential effects to three European Sites and / or on the conservation objectives of their QIs/SCIs through surface water, air, and/or land pathways. Appropriate Assessment Screening and subsequent Natura Impact (NIS) has been undertaken in respect to the proposed works and concluded that “<i>based on the assessment of the proposed survey works alone and in-combination with other projects and plans, including the implementation of mitigation measures, it can be concluded that no adverse effects on any European site’s integrity will arise, in view of the site’s conservation objectives.</i>”. This NIS includes for protection measures, which have been designed in line with Best Practice and constitute the Best Available techniques following scientific literature and field baseline verification. As such there is a very high degree of confidence in their likely success. The proposed works include non-invasive surveys and will as such avoid significant disturbance to, or displacement of, highly mobile species. A Risk Assessment for Annex IV species was prepared and notes that in respect of marine mammals, the proposed survey works would generate low-intensity, intermittent underwater noise mainly from vessel and survey equipment. This noise is considerably below levels that could harm marine mammals and is similar to routine vessel activity in the area. Any behavioural changes in marine mammals are expected to be brief and non-harmful, with no significant impact on their foraging success, habitat use, or overall populations due to the limited scope and short duration of the works. In respect of Otter, the risk assessment notes that “<i>Significant impacts are not considered possible due to the short duration of the proposed survey works along with the wide availability of alternative suitable foraging and commuting habitat in the area along the riverine corridor</i>”. This Risk Assessment is included as part of the application documentation and provide an overview of the applicable standards and methodology used. The proposed works will only include for non-intrusive surveys and as such will avoid significant adverse impacts upon water quality and will not result in any changes to the sea floor or water columns. The risk of non-indigenous species will be managed through the adherence to all good practice Check Clean Dry procedures from the National Biodiversity Data Centre (available via https://invasives.ie/). With regards to air quality and climate change, the nature and scale of the proposed works is such that they will not contribute significantly to air pollution, and carbon emissions. The proposed maritime usage is therefore aligned with the Overarching Marine Planning Policies for Environmental – Ocean Health.
High Level Objective: Economic – Thriving Maritime Economy Planning Policy Headings: Co-existence Infrastructure	The proposed maritime usage will be of a limited duration and scale, including limited surveying and will have no permanent/ lasting use of space which may be taken up by other marine activities/uses. As such, they have limited spatial and temporal overlap with other marine users. No aquaculture sites, port operations, or energy infrastructure overlap with the survey area. Standard Notices to Mariners and appropriate charting information will be issued, where required. The proposed maritime usage will not entail/provide land-based infrastructure which facilitates marine activity. Existing infrastructure will be utilised at harbours to deploy survey boats. This policy is therefore not applicable.

Policy Grouping	Compliance commentary
	The proposed maritime usage is therefore aligned with the Overarching Marine Planning Policies for Access and it is regarded that Infrastructure Policy 1 is not applicable to the maritime usage.
High Level Objective: Social – Engagement with the Sea Planning Policy Headings: Access Employment Heritage Assets Rural Coastal and Island Communities Seascape and Landscape Social Benefits Transboundary	The proposed surveys will not in themselves result in an increase, or enhance public access to, the maritime area, and will not result in any restriction of access. The proposed surveys are thus consistent with Access Policy 1 and 2. The proposed works will have no effect on marine related employment; only direct employment for the completion of the proposed surveys will be generated. The proposed archaeological wade and metal detector survey will help to identify archaeological potential and inform any archaeological mitigation required within the design of the proposed road bridge. The maritime usage will positively contribute to knowledge of underwater archaeology area within the extent of the survey area. Due to the location and limited nature of the proposed surveys, there is no impact on any coastal or island communities. The proposed surveys will have no permanent impact on seascape and landscape due to the limited nature, scale, and intensity of the surveys. The use and deployment of survey instrumentation will have negligible impact on seascape and landscape. The transient presence of survey vessels will not materially alter seascape character, given the scale and duration of the surveys. The proposed surveys do not result in the displacement of other existing or authorised activities that generate social benefits. The execution of the proposed scheme which the proposed maritime surveys will assist to develop, will support employment, if consented. Due to the localised extent and nature of the proposed surveys, there are no transboundary effects. The proposed maritime usage is aligned with the Overarching Marine Planning Policies – Social – Engagement with the Sea. There is no specific mitigation required, as no significant and/or adverse impacts will result from the proposed maritime usage.
Sectoral / Activity Policies	
Ports, Harbours and Shipping Ports, Harbours and Shipping Policy 1 to 9	The proposed maritime surveys will inform the design for the road bridge crossing of the Slaney Estuary and will help to support the operation of Rosslare Europort and its continued growth and development. The proposed maritime usage in and of itself has no interaction with ports, harbours or shipping activities. As such, the proposed maritime usage has no impact to any sectoral activities.

2.2 Conclusion

The proposed maritime usage is of a small scale and low-intensity nature and comprises activities which are undertaken on a frequent basis for development proposals across multiple sectors.

The maritime usage is therefore fully aligned with NMPF objectives, having demonstrated:

- No adverse effects in relation to underwater noise, water quality, biodiversity, air quality climate change due to the small scale and nature of the proposed survey activities.
- The Natura Impact Statement which accompanies the subject Maritime Usage Licence application, prescribes the necessary mitigation measures required to protect marine species and habitats.
- The proposed surveys will be undertaken in a safe, efficient and co-ordinated use of the marine area, with limited interaction with existing maritime users.

