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

**Attachment 4.9 - Climate Action and Low Carbon
Development (Amendment) Act 2021**

June 2026

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1 Introduction

Mott MacDonald Ireland Limited, on behalf of Wexford County Council (WCC) ('the Applicant'), are submitting a Maritime Usage Licence (MUL) application for site investigation surveys at the River Slaney, northwest of Wexford town. The MUL is being sought solely to facilitate site investigation surveys associated with the proposed N11/N25 Oilgate to Rosslare Harbour Scheme.

The N11/N25 Oilgate to Rosslare Harbour Road 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 road. The proposed scheme will include works in/near the crossing of the River Slaney.

This report refers to Attachment 3.1 Description of the Proposed Maritime Usage in relation to the description of the surveys proposed.

This report sets out how the proposed surveys are consistent with achieving the National Climate Objectives as defined in the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, in line with Question 4.9 of the Maritime Usage Licence (MUL) General Application Form (MUL1).

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 supports Ireland's transition to Net Zero and achieve a climate neutral economy by no later than 2050. It sets out measures to be taken to reach national climate targets in each sector of the economy.¹

¹ [Climate Action and Low Carbon Act 2015](#)

2 Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021

The 2021 Amendment Act defines the National Climate Objective as the State's legally binding goal to "*pursue and achieve, by no later than the end of 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy.*" To achieve this, all public bodies - including those promoting infrastructure or conducting surveys - must act in ways consistent with:

- Environmental sustainability and biodiversity protection
- Climate resilience and adaptation
- Emission reduction and avoidance (including carbon budgets)
- Best available science and technical advice
- Climate justice and just transition

2.1 Project Response

The proposed surveys which are the subject of this maritime usage licence application are sought in order to inform the design for the development of a bridge crossing of the River Slaney. Three survey types are proposed within a defined area within the Slaney Estuary:

- Hydrographic survey (bathymetry, currents, turbidity, temperature).
- Archaeological waste and metal-detection survey (low tide, nonintrusive).
- Subtidal and intertidal benthic ecological surveys.

All are non-intrusive, temporary, and designed to inform design of the proposed bridge crossing for the N11/N25 scheme.

The proposed bridge crossing forms part of the proposed development of the final 31km section of the N11 and N25 on approach to Rosslare Europort, and the provision of a road network to a standard which befits this critical land-sea corridor which comprises part of the TEN-T European Transport Network.

2.1.1 Environmental Sustainability and Biodiversity Protection

The benthic surveys provide updated information on estuarine habitats and species, enabling biodiversity sensitive design and mitigation strategies.

The application already includes a Natura Impact Statement, Appropriate Assessment screening, and an Annex IV species assessment, concluding no adverse effects with mitigation. Non-intrusive methods prevent disturbance of protected habitats and species while still gathering essential ecological data.

The surveys use best scientific practice and comply with guidance from the National Biodiversity Data Centre (e.g., Check Clean Dry procedures to prevent invasive species spread).

The proposed surveys are thus fully consistent with the biodiversity-protection elements of the National Climate Objective.

2.1.2 Climate Resilience and Adaptation

Hydrographic data (currents, bathymetry, riverbed profiles) directly support hydraulic modelling of the River Slaney. This is crucial for understanding flood risk, a key climate change driven impact.

This upstream understanding informs resilient bridge and infrastructure design that can withstand sea-level rise, increased storm surges, and extreme rainfall events - all central to adaptation under the Act.

By gathering detailed baseline data, the surveys help ensure that the future bridge design aligns with the State's obligations for climate resilient infrastructure. The surveys thus contribute positively to climate resilience by generating baseline evidence needed for adaptive design.

2.1.3 Emissions

The Act emphasises that all State activities should support the transition to a climate-neutral, environmentally sustainable economy.

The survey works are low intensity with negligible emissions, given their short duration and small spatial footprint. In addition, no land use change, no seabed disturbance, and no air quality deterioration is expected.

Survey vessels produce only normal operational emissions, and the work does not hinder or compromise any carbon sinks or habitats important for sequestration.

The temporary and non-intrusive nature of the surveys ensures no material greenhouse gas impact, aligning with the emission reduction ethos of the Act.

2.1.4 Best Available Science and Technical Advice

The Act requires decision-making to be grounded in scientific and technical advice, with public bodies using up-to-date data to inform climate aligned planning.

All three surveys - hydrographic, archaeological, and benthic - generate essential environmental and technical data to inform evidence-based design. Collecting these datasets reduces uncertainty and allows future decisions on the N11/N25 scheme to comply with statutory requirements on environmental sustainability and climate adaptation.

The proposed surveys clearly advance the scientific evidence base required under the Act.

2.1.5 Climate Justice and Just Transition

While the proposed surveys are technical and ecological in nature, the Act still requires consideration of broader climate justice principles.

The surveys do not restrict public access, displace existing maritime users, or adversely affect local communities. In addition, the minimal impact ensures that no unfair burdens fall on local residents or marine users.

Although limited in social scope, the surveys do not conflict with climate justice or just transition principles.

2.2 Overall Conclusion

As has been outlined above, the proposed surveys (Maritime Usage):

- Provide critical data for climate resilient infrastructure design (hydraulic, ecological, archaeological baselines).

- Protect biodiversity through non-intrusive methodologies and compliance with Natura 2000 obligations.
- Avoid greenhouse gas impacts due to their minimal footprint and short duration.
- Support evidence-based planning, a core component of the Act's requirements.
- Uphold climate justice principles through non disruption of communities and existing marine users.

The proposed maritime usage is thus fully consistent with, and supportive of, achieving the National Climate Objective, as defined in the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act of 2021.

