

ATTACHMENT 4.9 NATIONAL CLIMATE OBJECTIVE COMPLIANCE DETAILS

Oriel Wind Farm Project

Oriel Windfarm Limited



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1.0 Statement of Authority

The technical competence of the authors is outlined below.

Aoife Edgely is an Associate Marine Scientist in the Environmental Services Business Unit in Tetra Tech. She has over 15 years' experience in the marine science field and is a Chartered Environmentalist and a Full Member of the Institute of Environmental Sciences. Aoife holds an Honours degree in Environmental Science from Trinity College Dublin and a Master's in Marine Environmental Protection from Bangor University, Wales. Aoife has delivered the environmental assessments for a wide range of marine and coastal projects, including environmental impact assessment, appropriate assessment and Annex IV species reports.

Rachael Shaw is a Project Scientist in the Environmental Services Business Unit in Tetra Tech. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Marine Science from the University of Galway and Master's Degree in Climate Change and Managing the Marine Environment from Heriot-Watt University Edinburgh. She has five years' experience working in consultancy, assisting on a wide range of projects from offshore renewable energy projects to flood relief schemes, including marine and terrestrial surveys. She is a full member with Institute of Environmental Sciences (IES).

Róisín Murphy is a Scientist in the Environmental Services Business Unit in Tetra Tech. She holds an Honours degree in Zoology (B.Sc.) and Master's degree in Marine Biology, both from University College Cork. She has two years' experience as a Project Manager at Cork Nature Network, responsible for marine and river surveys, and one years' experience in marine licensing and flood relief projects within Tetra Tech. She is a qualifying member with IES.

2.0 Consistency of the SI Works in Furtherance of the National Climate Objective

The SI works are enabling activities that provide the essential data to investigate the stability of the soil (seabed sediments) for the design of foundations and the detailed routing of the inter array and offshore cable corridor. The proposed SI works will support the Oriel Wind Farm Project to contribute towards Ireland's net-zero emissions targets and our transition to a low carbon and climate-resilient, biodiversity-rich, environmentally sustainable and climate-neutral economy as underpinned by the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended. These SI works will directly support the development of an offshore renewable energy development. Offshore wind is recognised as a cornerstone of Ireland's pathway to achieving the National Climate Objective, and the SI works will play a key role in facilitating this transition. The relevance of offshore wind to the National Climate Objective is reflected in Ireland's statutory and policy targets for renewable energy, which are summarised in Table 2-1 below.

Table 2-1 Offshore wind targets relevant to the National Climate Objective

Policy/ Strategy	Target	Relevance of SI Works
Climate Action Plan 2025	At least 5 GW of offshore wind operational by 2030	The SI works provide the detailed information required to construct the Oriel Wind Farm Project to support meeting the 2030 target.
National Energy Security Framework (2022)	Expansion of offshore renewables to reduce reliance on imported fossil fuels	The SI works enable delivery of offshore wind projects that diversify Ireland's energy mix.

Policy/ Strategy	Target	Relevance of SI Works
Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 (as amended)	National Climate Objective: transition to a climate-neutral economy by 2050, with legally binding carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings.	The SI works are a prerequisite for offshore renewable energy deployment, which is central to achieving emissions reductions in the electricity sector and meeting carbon budgets under the Act.
Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 (as amended)	Up to 20+ GW offshore wind by 2040–2050	The SI works ensure future project pipelines are developed in line with longer-term decarbonisation goals.
EU Green Deal / REPowerEU	Accelerated rollout of offshore wind across Europe to ensure energy security and climate neutrality by 2050	The SI works are a key enabling step for the Oriel Wind Farm Project that will contribute to Ireland's share of EU offshore wind capacity, thereby supporting collective EU climate and energy objectives.

Accordingly, the SI works are a key enabler for the delivery of these national and European climate and energy targets, and therefore directly support the achievement of the National Climate Objective

3.0 Protection of the Marine Environment

The SI works are temporary, small-scale, and proportionate, designed to minimise environmental impacts while enabling renewable energy development. As set out in Attachments 4.3 (AA Screening Report), 4.3 (NIS), 4.4 (Annex IV RA) and 4.5 (WFD Assessment), mitigation measures and standard procedures for vessels operating in the marine environment will ensure that the works will not hinder biodiversity or water quality objectives. This alignment of climate action with environmental protection is consistent with the Act's requirement to deliver the National Climate Objective in a way that safeguards ecosystems and natural resources. Full details are provided in the specific assessments, and their conclusions are summarised below:

3.1 Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (Attachment 4.3)

Screening for Appropriate Assessment identified that likely significant effects could not be excluded for 13 SPAs and SACs in the absence of further detailed assessment against conservation objectives and/or mitigation, requiring preparation of a Natura Impact Statement.

3.2 Natura Impact Statement (Attachment 4.3)

With application of proposed mitigation, the SI works, either alone or in combination with other projects, will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site.

3.3 Annex IV Species Risk Assessment (Attachment 4.4)

Potential effects on strictly protected marine species were assessed. With the implementation of mitigation measures it was concluded that the proposed SI works comply with the system of strict protections afforded by Article 12 of the Habitats Directive and Regulations 51 and 52 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended, and that a derogation is not required.

This applies to the following Annex IV species:

- All bat species;
- Otter;
- All cetacean species; and
- All turtle species.

3.4 Consistency with Objectives of the WFD (Attachment 4.5)

There will be no long term or significant negative impacts on water aspects (water quality and hydrology) of the receiving environment as a result of the SI works proposed in this MULA. GES will be maintained and supported through the implementation of the proposed mitigation and adherence with standard procedures for vessels operating in the marine environment. No deterioration in ecological or chemical status of relevant water bodies is predicted, and therefore no breach of the Water Framework Directive will occur. Taken together, these assessments confirm that the SI works will not compromise the protection of biodiversity, water quality, or marine ecosystem integrity. This alignment of climate action with environmental protection is consistent with the Climate Act's requirement to deliver the National Climate Objective in a way that safeguards ecosystems and natural resources.

4.0 Conclusion

The proposed SI works are consistent with the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 (as amended) and contribute directly to the furtherance of the National Climate Objective. They are essential preparatory steps to enable offshore wind deployment at scale, thereby supporting Ireland's legally binding climate commitments while being delivered in a manner that protects the marine environment.