



Maritime Area Regulatory Authority Stakeholder Forum

Minutes of Meeting 2

Date: Monday 25 May 2026.

Time: 2:00pm to 4:00pm

Location: MARA HQ, 2nd Floor, Menapia House, Drinagh Business Park, Drinagh, Wexford, Y35RF29 and online via Teams meeting.

In attendance, both online and in person, were representatives from the following organisations:

- DCEE
- Marine Ireland Industry Network
- Marine Renewables Industry Association
- Irish Harbourmaster's Group
- Uisce Éireann
- EirGrid
- Irish Environmental Network
- European Subsea Cables Association
- Wind Energy Ireland
- Marine Institute
- ESB
- Irish South and East Fish Producers Organisation
- Iarnród Éireann
- Irish Marine Federation
- South East Technological University
- North Donegal Fisherman's Group
- DCU Water Institute
- INFOMAR (Marine Institute)
- Commissioners of Irish Lights
- BirdWatch Ireland
- Sustainable Water Network

MARA was represented by:

- Laura Brien, CEO MARA
- Padraic Dempsey, Director of Policy, Governance, and External Affairs
- John Evans, Director of MULPA
- Róisín Nolan, Head of Policy
- Jacinta Ponzi, Head of Licensing
- Suzanne Wylde, Senior Marine Advisor
- Dr. Alison McCarthy, Senior Marine Advisor
- Dr. Ciar O'Toole, Senior Marine Advisor
- Brendan Cruise, Policy Analyst

1	Welcome	05 minutes
	Laura Brien, CEO of MARA, welcomed all the stakeholder forum members. There was also a round table of introductions from the representatives.	
2	MUL process	40 minutes
	An overview of the MUL application process was delivered by JP, AMcC, and CO'T. Members of the forum acknowledged the benefit of the presentation made and the comprehensive approach taken. Some members did emphasise the need to process MUL applications in a timely manner. MARA confirmed its commitment to statutory timeframes. Stakeholder members acknowledged that the submission of good quality materials at application stage reduces the need for MARA to request additional information and helps reduce overall processing timelines. There was a question about using data that already exists in processing MUL applications. JE noted that MARA does take that approach and adopts precaution when data is not available. There was a question about seabed usage post cable installation. JE responded that MARA operates within the MAP Act 2021 and also needs to take into consideration policy guidance contained in the NMPF.	
3	Stakeholder Updates	35 minutes

There was a request for MARA to consider having Customer Client Officers for applicants. LB suggested that MARA may need to take a more holistic view around projects where projects are associated with both MAC and MUL applications.

IEN indicated that there were two tenders out in relation to projects focusing on co-location at sea, and roadmap to standardised data repository.

ESCA informed the Forum that it runs data/information sharing groups and that they will be happy to share details with the group. ESCA also shared that they will be present at the European Maritime Spatial Planning Week in Brussels.

UE thanked MARA for the recent MAC outputs and hoped that this would be sustained.

MI updated the forum on its work on the National DMAP, 3 years mapping extension, and a research project on national standard for licences/AA.

SETU highlighted that their Environmental Planning and Legislation course will run again this year, and that it might be of interest to some of the members of the Forum.

4 MARA Updates

35 minutes

Updates were given from MARA on the following topics:

- Explanatory Note on the Legislative Framework for Wild Seaweed Harvesting
- Addressing Barriers to Delivery of Critical Infrastructure
- High Water Mark dataset update
- Overview of consenting and regulatory authorities
- Impacts of Geophysical and Geotechnical surveys on Fish and Shellfish research
- MUL applications in relation to Public Consultation
- GIS Data Delivery Shapefile templates
- S76 and S98 regulations

There was some concern around some language used in S98 regulations but also that members were satisfied with the notification process provided for in the regs.

5 AOB

05 minutes

Nil
