



An tÚdarás Rialála Limistéir Mhuirí
Maritime Area Regulatory Authority

Minutes of the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) Board Meeting

Date	12 May 2026
Venue	MARA HQ, Wexford
Time	10.00 – 13.00
Chair	Mark Mellett Vice Admiral DSM (Rtd), Phd (MM)
Board Members Present	Dr. Ruth Brennan (RB) Mr. Patrick Gibbons (PG) Ms. Niamh Kenny (NK) Dr. James Massey (JM) Mr. Brendan McGrath (BMCG) (online) Mr. Patrick Moran (PM) (online) Mr. Philip Daly (PD) (online) Ms. Alma Walsh (AW) (online)
In attendance	MARA Executive – Ms. Laura Brien (CEO), Dr. Áine Louw (AL) (Secretariat), Ms. Aisling Murray (AM), Mr. Padraic Dempsey (PD), Mr. Alan Harte (AH) agenda item 7, Mr Frank Ronan (FR) agenda item 12 and 13.

Agenda Items

The Board received training from Convene on the new governance management system prior to the meeting commencing at 10.45am. All members of the Board have been provided with login details to the platform. Documents for Board meetings will be shared through the confidential and secure platform.

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed board members with apologies from Mr. Paul O'Neill.

Quorum in place.

2. Declarations of Interest

None declared.

3. Minutes

Board Minutes – The Board approved the following resolution:

The Board adopted the minutes of the MARA board meeting of 24 March 2026 attached at agenda item 3.

4. Matters Arising

4.1 Action Log –

The Board reviewed outstanding actions from previous meetings noting that any outstanding actions are being progressed or will be discussed during the meeting. Agreed that PPC would remain and a review of committee at end of year. Recruitment for an external member to PPC to cease.

Action: Notes on RED III planning presentation to be provided to the Board.

Action: Slides from Slides from Board workshop MAC & MUL to be shared with Board

5. Annual Report

The Board was advised that the completed annual report will be circulated to them in June for their approval. The Board were advised that they will be asked to approve the Annual Report in the context of compliance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.

The Board was presented with the Chairpersons Comprehensive Report, in advance of the Annual Report.

At its meeting on 12 May 2026, the Board approved the Chairpersons Comprehensive report, subject to the discussed amendments.

6. Code of Compliance 2025.

The Board reviewed and discussed the Code of Compliance 2025. Where a No or N/A exist, the comply or explain principle is applied, with commentary and supporting documentation provided.

At its meeting on 12 May 2026, the Board approved the Code of Compliance Checklist, subject to the discussed minor amendments.

7. Legal Update

7.1 Litigation Policy.

Alan Harte, Director of Legal Affairs, presented the MARA Litigation Policy to the Board for approval. A discussion took place regarding the policy, noting that it was principles-based and delegated the decision making regarding the actual day-to-day execution of the policy to the Senior Management Team, with the Chief Executive Officer involved in material decision making. It was noted that the policy was heavily based on the State Litigation Principles as enunciated by the Attorney General. Subject to some minor amendments suggested by the Board, the policy was approved.

At its meeting on 12 May 2026, the Board approved the MARA Litigation Policy, subject to the discussed minor amendments, change or wording from “unlawful” to “improper” and inclusion of “where possible” under principle 5.

7.2 Judicial Review Cases.

Alan Harte, Director of Legal Affairs, provided the Board with background on the three upcoming Judicial Review and their potential cost. It was confirmed that the cost estimate provided was not a quote but reflective of a ‘worst case scenario’ situation, all solicitor fees are vouched expenses,

and interim invoices have been asked to be provided. The selection of Barristers available with expertise in these cases is limited.

The Board acknowledged the information provided by Legal Affairs in relation to the Judicial Reviews and their cost. The Board acknowledges that the Legal Affairs Team have the freedom to manage this process.

Action: Litigation updates to be a standing item on the Board agenda going forward.

Action: Fee update on legal costs brought to Board at next meeting

8. Performance

The CEO presented the Board with a current stats and brought them through the agreed KPIs and the response to the Minister.

The Board highlighted their continued support of the staff and recognise their duty of care to the staff.

9. CEO Report

CEO presented the CEO report and took questions from the Board.

10.ARC Report

Niamh Kenny, Chair of the ARC, provided the Board with a verbal update on the previous ARC meeting. The Board was advised that the procurement process for the Internal Audit function has been completed and will be appointed shortly, and an audit of risk management processes is to commence shortly.

11.Risk Management

Frank Ronan, Director of Corporate Affairs, presented the Board with the risk register. Attention was drawn to risk 5 in the register as there is currently no capacity in MARA for this.

12.Provision of HR & Payroll Services

Frank Ronan, Director of Corporate Affairs, advised the Board that work must commence on the provision of HR and Payroll Services in order to ensure continuity of service to the staff of MARA. The Board were reassured that talks with the NSSO can continue. While MARA awaits for the business case to be approved by DCEE it was proposed that the procurement of HR and Payroll Services commence, to ensure that a supplier is in place should exiting the NSSO come to fruition.

The Board agreed to begin the process for the provision of HR and Payroll Services.

13.AOB

The Travel and Subsistence policy was shared with the Board, and the Board was reminded of their responsibilities under the policy.

James Massey informed the Board that the minutes from the STRC will be presented at the next Board meeting.

The Chair reminded the Board that the work of the Board and its papers are to remain confidential and should not be shared or discussed with anyone outside of the Board.