



An tÚdarás Rialála Limistéir Mhuiri
Maritime Area Regulatory Authority

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

Date	18 June 2026
Venue	MS Teams
Time	11.30 – 14.00
Chair	Mark Mellett Vice Admiral DSM (Rtd), Phd (MM)
Board Members Present	Mr. Patrick Gibbons (PG) Ms. Niamh Kenny (NK) Dr. James Massey (JM) Mr. Brendan McGrath (BMCG) – joined meeting at 13.18 Mr. Patrick Moran (PM) Ms. Alma Walsh (AW) Ms. Karen Banks (KB)
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), Noelle Brett (NB) agenda item 6.

1. Non- Executive session

2. Welcome

The Chair welcomed board members with apologies from Mr. Paul O'Neill, Mr. Philip Daly and Mr. Brendan McGrath who will be joining the meeting late.

The Chair informed the Board that Dr. Ruth Brennan is stepping down from the Board with immediate effect.

Quorum in place.

3. Declarations of Interest

None declared.

4. Minutes

Board Minutes – The Board approved the following resolution:

The Board adopted the minutes of the MARA board meeting of 12 June 2026 attached at agenda item 4, subject to amendments, including more detail on the discussion regarding legal costs

5. Matters Arising

5.1 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.

The Board was advised that the contract for the external Board Effectiveness Review will be in place shortly, the Business case was only approved by the Department in May.

The Chair advised the Board that both he and the CEO continue to advocate for MARA to remain with the NSSO.

The CEO supported this statement and advised the Board that, notwithstanding the desire to remain with the NSSO, MARA needs to progress an alternative, and the executive is progressing the tender for services, and a business case to come to them in the coming months to approve to appoint a contractor for a service to replace the NSSO.

6. Annual Report and Annual Financial Statements

The Board reviewed the 2025 Annual Report, the Chairpersons Comprehensive report and the Annual Financial Statements.

6.1 At its meeting on 18 June 2026, the Board approved the 2025 Annual Report subject to the amendments raised.

- Chair foreword to include additional line
- Graphic design changes required and text to be aligned to read better
- Full edit of content for flow and completeness
- Review Board member details to ensure all Board members captured
- Expand on risk wording
- Ensure flow of text

6.2 At its meeting on 18 June 2026, the Board approved the Chairpersons Comprehensive report.

6.3 At its meeting on 18 June 2026, the Board approved the Annual Financial statement and Letter of Representations.

6.4 Q3 Management Accounts: The Board was presented with the Q3 Management Accounts.

The Board discussed the deferral of recognition of some invoiced income in the quarterly management accounts pending clarification, as the Senior Management Team considered that there was sufficient uncertainty around the ongoing annual obligation to pay MAC levies at this level for works by a State Body with resources challenges. There was a realistic possibility that the applicant will seek an amendment to significantly reduce the footprint of the MAC. If the income is subsequently clarified as fully recoverable MARA will recognise the income at that stage.

The Board stressed that all MAC holders should be treated the same with regards to payment of levies and any deferral of recognition of income should not be done based on some potential change in legislation at a future date. The executive confirmed that the matter has been raised with MARA's parent department and it is a prudent position to take now.

Agenda items requiring Board approval were moved up the agenda.

12. Corporate Affairs.

12.1 Internal Auditors Appointment

Frank Ronan, Director of Corporate Affairs, presented a memo on the outcome of the tender evaluation panel for the recruitment of internal auditors

At its meeting on 18 June 2026, the Board approved entering contract with Appold Ireland Limited T/a Moore Charter Accountants for the provision of Internal Audit Services for a period of 4 years.

12.2 Approval to Award FCA Contract

Dr. Karen Creed Director of Authorisations presented a memo on the outcome of the tender evaluation panel for the financial advisory services and services relating to the financial assessment of Maritime Area.

At its meeting on 18 June 2026, the Board approved awarding the contract to Ernest and Young.

7. Legal Update

7.1 Update on Judicial Review Litigation.

Alan Harte, Director of Legal Affairs, presented the Board with an update on the current Judicial Review cases and informed them that MARA has been made aware via the Courts service website that one more JR has been lodged however MARA has yet to be served notice for this case.

7.2 MARAs external Legal Panel – One Year Extension.

At its meeting on the 18 June 2026 the Board approved the 12-month extension of MARAs legal panel

Action: Review of external legal panel to be added to Board agenda in Q1 2027.

8. ARC Annual Report

Niamh Kenny Chair of the ARC provided the Board with an update on the work of the ARC. The Annual Report of the ARC was presented to the Board for their review.

8.1 ARC Memo Internal Procedures for implementation of the Public Spending Code.

Frank Ronan, Director of Corporate Affairs presented the memo to the Board.

At its meeting on the 18 June 2026, the Board approved the Internal Procedures for Implementation of the Public Spending Code.

9. Performance

The CEO presented the MAC and MUL stats to the Board. The Board were told that all actions set out at the start of 2026 have now been implemented. Ecology Consultants have been brought in to help clear the backlog of applications.

The Board has been advised that DCEE have sent revised KPIs to MARA in a draft PDA and these do differ in the KPIs MARA previously committed to in its letter to the Minister of April 2026. More on DCEE's KPIs as part of the PDA will be known at the September Board meeting, and any differences to that previously committed to by MARA.

The Board raises concerns that this may cause some issues as the KPIs appear to be different to those agreed in the letter sent to the Minister.

10. PPC Report

Patrick Gibbons, on behalf of the Chair, provided the Board with an update on the PPC.

11. June Stats

June Stats were taken as read by the Board

12. Risk Management

Frank Ronan, Director of Corporate Affairs, presented the current risk register to the Board.
This Board noted the contents.

13. AOB

It was noted that the Board may be required to meet prior to September to approve business cases for ICT project and NSSO. MARA will be in touch with Board members when a date is confirmed, the meeting will be held online.

Both the Chair and the Chief Executive extended their warm regards and thanks to outgoing members of the Board of MARA.