

Application for a Maritime Usage Licence under the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021

Important Information

Before completing this form please read the declaration and consent at the end of the application form

It is important to note that a change in applicant name will require a new application.

This application and supporting documentation should be submitted by email to licence@mara.gov.ie

Please complete the form electronically. Type details in the boxes provided, space will expand as you type. Please complete form to a high level, i.e. give comprehensive answers to questions, answers which only reference supporting documentation are not sufficient.

Maritime Usage Licence:

Part 5 (sections 110 to 133) of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 (MAPA) provides for the granting of maritime usage licences.

Section 112 of the Act states that the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) is the competent authority for the purposes of Part 5 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) regulations 2011 ([S.I No. 477 of 2011](#)) and appropriate assessments to which that Part applies.

Section 114 of the Act states that the Minister may by regulations provide for class of Schedule 7 usage to be exempted usage for the purposes of this Part.

[Schedule 7](#) of the Act lists the Maritime Usages that may be undertaken in the maritime area pursuant to licence.

[Schedule 8](#) of the Act lists the types of conditions that MARA may attach to a licence.

Privacy Policy:

MARA may require you to provide certain personal data in order to carry out our legislative and administrative functions. MARA will treat all personal data that you provide as confidential and will process your details in accordance with its obligations under data protection legislation, including the Data Protection Act 2018 and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

A Privacy Statement explaining how MARA, as the Data Controller, will process the personal data you provide, how that information will be used and what rights you may exercise in relation to your personal data, is available in this link: [Privacy Statement](#).

Freedom of Information (FOI)/ Access to Information on the Environment (AIE)

Applicants should be aware that under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 and the European Communities (Access to Information on the Environment) Regulations 2007 to 2018, information provided by them to MARA may be liable to be disclosed.

Applicants are asked to consider if any of the information supplied by them in their application should not be disclosed and clearly identify the specific sections of their application containing such information, specifying the reasons for its confidentiality/sensitivity. MARA will consult with applicants about this information before making a decision on any Freedom of Information/Access to Information on the Environment request received.

MARA
2nd Floor, Menapia House,
Drinagh Business Park,
Drinagh,
Wexford,
Y35RF29

www.maritimeregulator.ie

Part 1: Applicant Information	
1.1 Applicant Details	
Name of Applicant (the name that will appear on the licence)	Gas Networks Ireland
Company/Organisation (if applicable)	Gas Networks Ireland
Address/Company Address	Gasworks Road, Cork, Ireland
Eircode/Postcode	T12 RX96
Contact Name within Company/Organisation	Debbie Keilthy
Contact Phone No.	[REDACTED]
Contact Email Address	[REDACTED]
Is the company registered in Ireland for tax purposes?	Yes

1.2 Contact Details (if different from above)	
Full Name	Not Applicable
Address	Not Applicable
Eircode/Postcode	Not Applicable
Contact Name	Not Applicable
Contact Phone No.	Not Applicable
Contact Email Address	Not Applicable

1.3 Agent Representing Applicant (if applicable)	
Person/Agency acting on behalf of Applicant	Nicholas O'Dwyer Ltd
Address	Unit 4E, Nutgrove Office Park, Churchtown Upper, Dublin, Ireland
Eircode/Postcode	D14 V3F6
Contact Name (if applicable)	Robbie Clarke
Contact Phone No.	[REDACTED]
Contact Email address	[REDACTED]

1.4 Applicant's Legal Advisor (if applicable)	
Name/Company Name	A&L Goodbody LLP
Address	International Financial Services Centre, 3 Dublin Landings, North Wall Quay, Dublin 1
Eircode/Postcode	D01 C4E0
Contact Name (if applicable)	N/A
Contact Phone No.	[REDACTED]
Contact Email address	[REDACTED]

Part 2: Proposal Details (Attach additional documents as required)

2.1 In relation to this application, have you previously applied for a declaration as to whether or not a licence was required for this usage? If so, please provide the reference number associated with that application.

No

2.2 Description of proposed Maritime Usage.

Gas Networks Ireland (GNI) intends to apply to MARA for a maritime usage license to conduct marine surveys within two areas of the Shannon Estuary adjacent to the townlands of Cahiracon and Tarbert. The objective of the proposed surveys is to provide high-quality baseline data that can contribute to a reliable basis for site selection and any subsequent Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) for the Strategic Gas Emergency Reserve, should the development be taken forward to the planning/consenting stage.

The marine study area consists of two zones, Study Area A and Study Area B. Study Area A extends the width of the Shannon Estuary from the townland of Ralappane to the townland Tarbert Island and covers an area of 1661.356ha. Study Area B extends across the Shannon Estuary from the townland of Foynes Island to the townland of Ballynacragga, covering an area of 787.526ha (see Area A – Proposed Licence Area Map and Area B – Proposed Licence Area Map). The surveys require the deployment and retrieval of up to 3 static acoustic monitoring (SAM) devices per study area and up to two acoustic doppler current profilers (ADCP) per study area.

ADCPs

An ADCP is a hydroacoustic current meter used to measure water current velocities over a depth range using the doppler effect of sound waves scattered back from particles within the water column. In the present case ADCPs operating in the range of 600 Khz or 1 Mhz will be used. The instrument emits “pings” of sound at a sampling rate of 1-minute average every 10 minutes. These pings will be emitted in a narrow sound beam (typically a few degrees in width) with a typical echo intensity profile of 80 dB (+/- 1.5 dB).

SAMs

SAM devices (CPODS or FPODs) are non-invasive underwater sound recorders used to detect the presence/absence of cetacean species (dolphins, whales, and porpoises). The acoustic signature of dolphins can be distinguished from that of harbour porpoise, the two species most likely to be recorded in the study area. An optional SoundTrap device may be deployed to measure overall background noise levels within the study area.

2.3 Describe the nature and scale of any structure to be erected in the maritime area.

There will be no permanent structures placed in the maritime area. There will be temporary deployments of metocean devices (ADCPs) and SAMs and their associated mooring infrastructure. These represent the only temporary deployments.

Each moored device is likely to consist of:

- two mooring weights (circa 20 kg each)
- an acoustic release system
- one or two hydrophones (SAM devices) / one ADCP
- multiple subsurface buoys

<p>The survey equipment will have a minimal footprint and will be installed in compliance with environmental and safety standards to ensure minimal disruption to maritime activities and the surrounding ecosystem. The exact technical specification of the equipment to be used will not be confirmed until the survey contract has been awarded. Devices will be deployed, maintained in-situ, and recovered from a singular vessel. Devices will be retrieved using an acoustic release, eliminating the requirement for a surface buoy during deployment.</p>
<p>2.4 Proposed licence duration</p>
<p>2.5 Years. This will allow for time to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilise equipment; • Collect up to 2 years' worth of survey data; • Recover the survey equipment.
<p>2.5 Indicative timing of the works/activity: (i) Start date (ii) Duration (iii) Any other information relevant to timing.</p>
<p>Metocean devices (ADCPs) and ecological devices (CPODS or FPODs) will be deployed as soon as is feasible following licence execution taking-into-account suitable weather windows for deployment and availability of deployment vessels. The ADCPs will be left in place for up to one year and the SAM devices left in place for up to two years. It is anticipated that deployment, maintenance, and retrieval will each take one day.</p>
<p>2.6 Do the proposed maritime usages provide for public use, commercial use or private use? Provide details.</p>
<p>The proposed works will gather information on wave and current conditions and baseline data on cetaceans (dolphins, whales and porpoises) within the study areas and their adjoining waters. This data is required by GNI to inform the site-selection process of the Strategic Gas Emergency Reserve (SGER) and will provide baseline data for any subsequent Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Appropriate Assessment, should the development be taken forward to the planning/consenting stage.</p>
<p>2.7 Could the proposed works restrict public use/enjoyment of the nearshore e.g. fishing, sailing, surfing, swimming, walking or other activities? Provide details.</p>
<p>The works will be temporary and will only take up a very small area of the foreshore at a time for a matter of hours in any one location. Any restriction will be minor and temporary. A notice to mariners will be issued in advance of any marine survey activities. In addition, there will be ongoing stakeholder engagement with other marine users throughout the period of marine surveys.</p>
<p>2.8 Please outline any engagements that have taken place with marine users or other stakeholders in the proposed area that may be affected by the proposal and attach supporting documentation where relevant.</p>
<p>No consultations have taken place with any other relevant authorities.</p>
<p>2.9 Describe briefly any consultations undertaken with other relevant authorities (e.g. Local Authority, Port/Harbour authority etc.) or State Agencies. e.g. National Parks & Wildlife Service, National Monuments Service of Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.</p>
<p>None to date.</p>

2.10	Please provide the reference number and title of any existing Foreshore licence you may hold within the footprint, or otherwise in the vicinity of the proposed Maritime Usage area.
	None Identified.
2.11	Please provide the reference number of any current application for a Foreshore Licence to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Does this application for a foreshore licence relate to or impact any part of the maritime area the subject of this licence application? If so, please provide details of the foreshore licence application.
	Not Applicable.
2.12	What environmental reports, if any, have you submitted with this application? (Supporting information for screening for Appropriate Assessment/ Natura Impact Statement/ Risk Assessment for Annex IV Species/ Assessment of Impact on the Maritime Usage Report)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supporting information for screening for Appropriate Assessment• Assessment of Impact on the Maritime Usage Report• Annex IV Species Risk Assessment

Part 3: Location and Spatial Extent of Proposed Maritime Area
(Attach additional documents as required)

3.1 Location of proposed Maritime Usage

The marine study area consists of two zones, Study Area A and Study Area B. Study Area A extends the width of the Shannon Estuary between the western edge of Moneypoint Power Station to the Tarbert Ferry pier. Study Area B extends across the Shannon Estuary from Cahiracon to Foynes Island and north to headland of Ballynacragga.

3.2 Total size of the proposed Maritime Area (in m², ha² or km², as appropriate).

Area A = 1661.356ha

Area B = 787.526ha

Total Area = 2,448.882ha

3.3 Please provide the distance of the main body of the proposed maritime area from the shore at its closest point in km.

<50m from the shore at its closest point

3.4 Is any of the maritime area in the proposed site in private ownership? If yes please provide documentary evidence of same (e.g. folio).

No.

3.5 Any other site details considered relevant:

Not applicable.

Part 4: Maps and Drawings.

Please refer to [Technical Guidance](#) on map and drawing requirements.

4.1 Please draft a map, titled “Licence Map”, outlining the proposed Maritime Area in accordance with the Technical Guidance for Maritime Area Licence Applications and submit same with this application.

4.2 Please submit GIS Shapefiles, in accordance with the Applicant Technical Guidance Note and submit same with this application.

4.3 Please list any Admiralty Charts, Maps, GIS Shapefiles and/or other Drawings submitted with this application.

- Proposed Licence Area Map
- Overall Site Location Map
- Area A – Proposed Licence Area Map
- Area A – Site Location Map
- Area B – Proposed Licence Area Map
- Area B – Site Location Map
- Shapefile – Proposed MUL Application Areas

Part 5: Fishing/Aquaculture Considerations:

5.1 Is the proposal located in proximity to any of the following:

- aquaculture operation
- designated Shellfish Growing Waters
- fish spawning ground
- other sensitive fisheries location

Please Illustrate on appropriate chart including distance in Km.

Fishing

No survey equipment is proposed to be deployed within aquaculture licence areas. Minor inconvenience may be encountered by fishing vessel operators due to location of the ADCP on the seabed within close proximity to fishing areas, but this will be temporary and for a short time period. A notice to mariners will be published in advance of any ADCP/SAM deployments to alert mariners of their location.

Aquaculture

Area A

Aquaculture (oysters) takes place in the Shannon Estuary to the east (Oysters) and to the west (Blue Mussel). No ADCPs are proposed to be deployed within the aquaculture licence areas. The West Shannon Ballylongford Shellfish Waters are adjacent to the Study Area A to the west.

Area B

Aquaculture (oysters) takes place in the Shannon Estuary to the west of the proposed Study Area B and a small area to the south east of Area B adjacent to Herring Rock (Pacific Oyster & Blue Mussel). No ADCPs are proposed to be deployed within the aquaculture licence areas.

5.2 Are there other potential impacts of the proposal on fishing/aquaculture in the area? If yes, please describe.

No.

5.3 Are there any measures proposed to mitigate potential impacts on fisheries or aquaculture? If yes, please describe.

No.

Declaration and Consent:

The details provided here are correct to the best of my knowledge.

I understand that no works will be commenced, by the applicant or the applicant's agents on the proposed site, without a valid licence from MARA. The granting of any Maritime Usage Licence will not give rise on the part of the applicant to any expectation whatsoever for, right or entitlement to a grant of any future licence in respect of all or any part of any area of the Maritime Area.

By submitting this application form, the applicant agrees that the details provided (with personal contact details redacted) are to be published on MARA's website and also that the full information provided including contact details are to be processed and retained by MARA and shared with all relevant public authorities in furtherance of consideration for a Maritime Usage Licence under the MAPA.

I give consent to MARA and its agents to copy this application and to make (a redacted) copy available for inspection and copying by the public. This consent relates to this application, to any further information, or submission provided by the applicant or on the applicant's behalf and to the publication of the licence document.

Signed for and on behalf of the applicant:

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Name of Signatory (block letters):

ROBBIE CLARKE

Position Held:

Senior Environmental Consultant

Date:

06/09/2024

Applicant Checklist	
Document	Included
Application Form (Parts 2 to 5 inclusive)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Supporting Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment (SISAA) Report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Risk Assessment for Annex IV Species Report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Natura Impact Statement (NIS), if initially included	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assessment of Impact of the Maritime Usage (AIMU) Report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Schedule of Works	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Licence Mapping (including GIS Shapefiles)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please list below)	

Other