

Assessment, Research and Data Unit, Environmental Report			
To:	Maritime Authorisations Unit	From:	██████████ Marine Advisor Environment
Date	26 September 2024	Maritime Usage Licence Application No:	MUL230039
Applicant:	University College Cork		
Type of maritime usage activity in accordance with Schedule 7 of the Maritime Area Planning Act, 2021 (as amended):	<i>2. Marine environmental surveys for the purposes of scientific discovery or research.</i>		
Location of proposed Maritime Usage:	Courtmacsherry Bay, Co. Cork.		

Background

University College Cork (UCC) are seeking a Maritime Usage Licence (MUL) to deploy 22 temporary moorings equipped with acoustic receivers in Courtmacsherry Bay, Co. Cork to assess the seasonal residency, site fidelity and potential dispersal of flapper skate. The moorings are proposed to be in place for up to 3 years and each mooring will be recovered every 6-12 months for maintenance and redeployment.

The overall area subject to this licence application is 69.7km².

Assessment of Impacts of the Maritime Usage (AIMU) Report

The applicants AIMU report provided a comprehensive project description, programme of works and assessed the impacts of the project on the receiving marine environment. Specifically, the AIMU Report considered:

- Land & Soils
- Water
- Biodiversity
- Fisheries and Aquaculture
- Air Quality
- Noise & Vibration
- Landscape/Seascape
- Traffic and Transport (including navigation)
- Cultural Heritage (including underwater archaeology)
- Population & Human Health
- Major Accidents & Disasters
- Climate
- Waste
- Material Assets
- Interactions
- Summary of Mitigations

Having considered the nature, duration and location of the 22 mooring deployments, I conclude that there is no likelihood of significant effects on the receiving marine environment subject to the recommended licence conditions.

National Policy and EU Directives

The following European legislative instruments have been considered in the assessment of this licence application:

- i. *Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC)*

Having reviewed and assessed the information submitted for this application, I am satisfied that the overall objective of this project does not contravene the objectives of the MSFD. Furthermore, I am satisfied that no implications shall arise from this project which would adversely affect MARAs obligations under the MSFD.

ii. Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)

Having reviewed and assessed the information submitted for this application, I am satisfied that the overall objective of this project does not contravene the objectives of the WFD. Furthermore, I am satisfied that no implications shall arise from this project which would adversely affect MARAs obligations under the WFD.

iii. Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (2014/52/EU)

On the 6th of September 2024, the ARD unit had regard to Schedules 5 and 7 to the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as required under section 117 of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 as amended, and concluded that it was not necessary to carry out screening for environmental impact assessment in respect of the proposed maritime usage.

iv. Bird Directive ((79/409/EC) and Habitats Directives (92/43/EEC)

The ARD undertook a Screening for Appropriate Assessment in respect to this project. Having considered the legal framework applicable to Appropriate Assessment, it is concluded that the proposed maritime usage by University College Cork to carry out the Courtmacsherry Skate Tracking Project Array (MUL230039) in Courtmacsherry Bay, County Cork will not require Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment. It is concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt, on the basis of objective scientific information following screening, that the proposed project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on a European site.

In addition, the applicant submitted an Annex IV Risk Assessment as part of their licence application. Having reviewed the risk assessment, I am satisfied that there is no significant risk of potential impact on cetaceans, turtles or otters from the proposed maritime usage activity.

National Marine Planning Framework

The National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) sets the framework for the forward planning component of our marine planning system. I am satisfied that this project, when undertaken in accordance with the recommended licence conditions will be consistent with the objectives of the NMPF.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Having considered the information submitted in support of the application, I have no objection to the granting of a Maritime Usage Licence under Section 119 of the MAP Act for this application subject to inclusion of the following conditions:

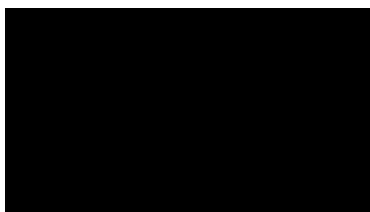
1. The Permitted Maritime Usage shall be carried out in accordance with the plans and particulars submitted by the Holder in support of the application for this Licence.
Reason: *In the interest of clarity and to ensure the protection of the marine environment.*
2. This licence is for the purposes of licensing under the Act and nothing in this licence shall be construed as negating the Holder's statutory obligations or requirements under any other Law.
3. **Reason:** *To clarify the scope of this licence.*

4. The Holder shall ensure that all vessels engaged in this Permitted Maritime Usage conform to Irish Certification standards for vessels, as required by the Marine Survey Office.
Reason: *To ensure protection of the marine environment.*

5. The Holder shall ensure that all vessels used in this Permitted Maritime Usage are free of invasive marine species on their hulls and in their ballast water.
Reason: *To ensure the protection of the marine environment.*

6. The Holder shall keep the following documents together and available for inspection by the Grantor:
 - i. a copy of the licence related to this Permitted Maritime Usage;
 - ii. all correspondence with the Grantor;
 - iii. up to date drawings, plans and maps relating to the Permitted Maritime Usage;
 - iv. Such records and/or photographs required to demonstrate compliance by the Holder with the Specific Conditions
 - v. marine positional log; to demonstrate compliance with the terms of the licence, including ensuring that the activity occurs within the licensed area; and
 - vi. any elements of the licence application and associated documentation referenced in this licence.**Reason:** *To provide appropriate controls on the Permitted Maritime Usage to ensure protection of the marine environment.*

7. Accidental events
The Holder shall ensure that there is an oil pollution emergency plan on-board any survey vessels. This plan should specify:
 - i. Information on the location and detail of spill response resources on-board;
 - ii. Information on crew training in relation to oil pollution response;
 - iii. How crew will interface with other site investigation operators, where applicable.**Reason:** *To provide appropriate controls on the Permitted Maritime Usage to ensure protection of the marine environment.*



Marine Advisor Environment