



**Screening for Appropriate Assessment for  
Maritime Usage Licence Application**

**LIC240023**

**From Iarnród Éireann**

For Marine environmental surveys for the purposes of site investigation or in support of an application under Part XXI of the Act of 2000, in Support of the East Coast Rail Infrastructure Protection Projects.

	Name	Role	Date
Prepared by:		Senior Marine Advisor, ARD	31/01/2025
Approved by:		Director, ARD	

## Step 1 - Description of Project/Proposal and local site characteristics

### Application Documents submitted

A number of documents were submitted by the applicant, Irish Rail Ltd., as part of their application for a Maritime Usage Licence (MUL). The documents referred to during this assessment include the MUL application form dated 7 June 2024 and the Supporting Information for Screening of Appropriate Assessment (SISAA) report dated 8 June 2024.

### Brief description of the project

Iarnród Éireann (IÉ) are proposing to conduct geotechnical, geophysical, ecological and marine archaeological site investigations to inform the East Coast Railway Infrastructure Protection Project (ECRIPP) required to defend long sections of the Dublin to Rosslare coastal rail line from coastal erosion and flooding. The proposed survey works, across five site locations along the Dublin and Wicklow coasts (Figure 1), will include upper foreshore intertidal and sub tidal works (Table 1). The activities have been assessed as potentially occurring at any time of year. Table 2 shows the predicted noise levels for the relevant subtidal survey activities.

**Table 1:** Proposed marine environmental surveys and the estimated duration, across all sites.

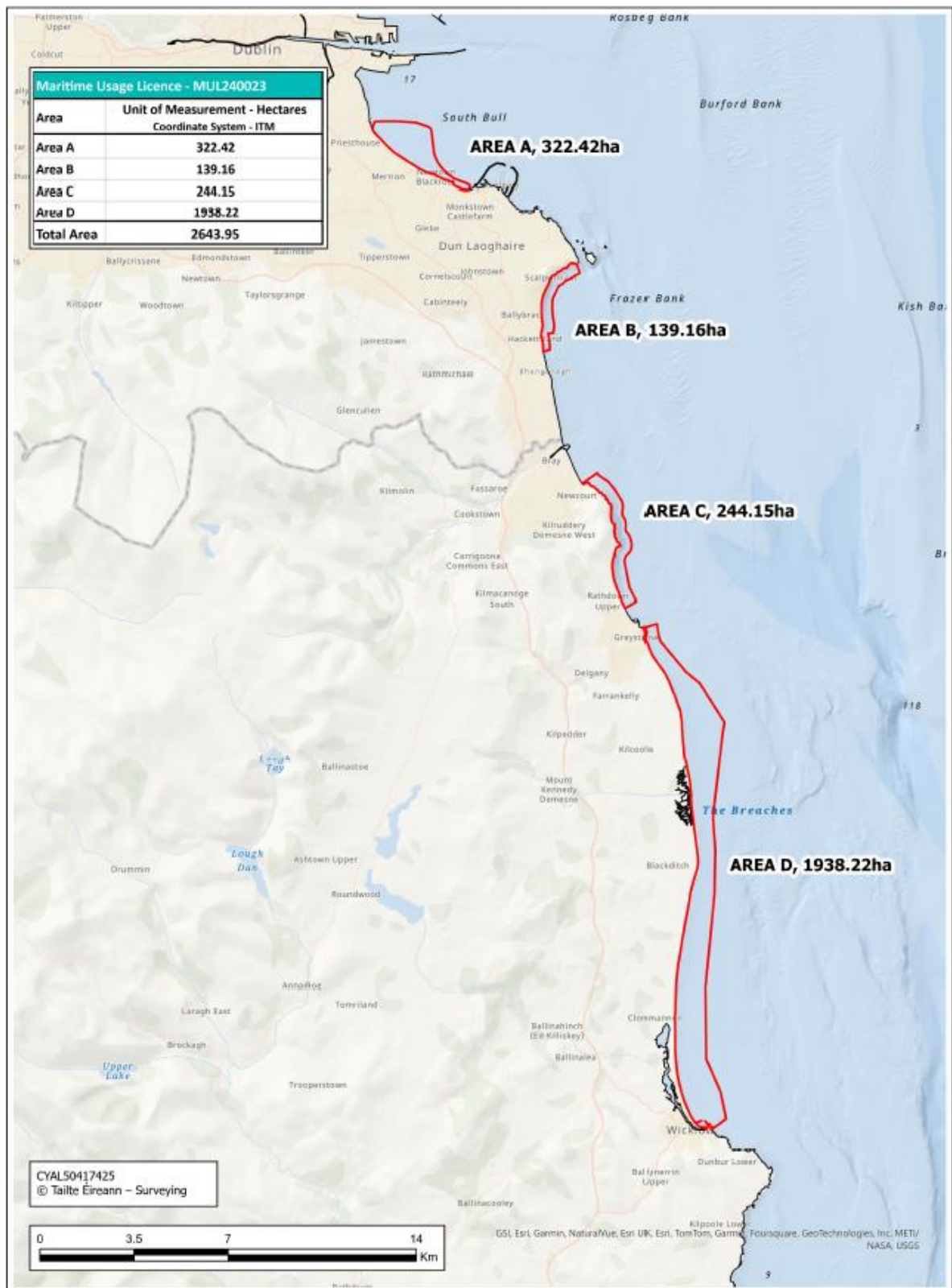
Proposed activity	Estimated duration
Geotechnical surveys – borehole surveys, trial pits, cone penetration tests, sediment sampling	Across the first 12 months
Geophysical– seismic refraction tomography and multichannel analysis of surface waves (land-based), multibeam echo sounder (boat based)	Across the first 12 months
Benthic surveys – intertidal transects, subtidal day grabs	Multiple occasions across licence period
Ecological surveys- breeding birds, bat surveys, day grabs, drop down camera surveys	Multiple occasions across licence period
Metal detector surveys	Multiple occasions across licence period

The applicant has stated that the geophysical and geotechnical works will occur in the first 12 months of receiving the licence and that the other works listed in Table 1 will occur multiple times over the licence duration. The applicant has requested a licence duration of 10 years.

There are four distinct areas of the proposed maritime usage licence, as shown in Figure 1; A: Merrion Gates to Dun Laoghaire, B: Dalkey Tunnel to Killiney South, C: Bray Head to Greystone North Beach and D: Greystones South to Wicklow.

**Table 2** Summary of the noise sources from geophysical and geotechnical surveys.

Noise Source	Frequency	Sound Pressure Level (dB re 1 $\mu$ Pa @ 1m)
Multi beam Echo sounder	200 - 700 kHz	200-228 dB
Shipping Noise	50 - 300 kHz	160-175 dB



**Figure 1:** Proposed Maritime usage licence Areas A to D. Map created by MARA.

Brief description of the site characteristics

The proposed maritime usage area runs adjacent to the coastline of counties Dublin and Wicklow. It is comprised of a number of marine habitats. These habitats include mudflats and sandflats not

covered by seawater at low tide, annual vegetation of drift lines, salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand, embryonic shifting dunes, European dry heaths, reefs, vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts, perennial vegetation of stony banks, Atlantic salt meadows, Mediterranean salt meadows, calcareous fens and alkaline fens.

**Step 2 - Identification of relevant Natura 2000 sites using Source-Pathway-Receptor Model and compilation of information on qualifying interests and conservation objectives.**

This project is subject to screening for Appropriate Assessment to determine if it alone, or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to cause significant effects to a European site. A European site is only at risk of likely significant effects where the Source-Pathway-Receptor link exists between the proposed development and the European site (OPR, 2021). This includes direct, indirect and in-combination effects.

Table 3 outlines the Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protected Areas (SPA) considered and their related Qualifying Interests (QI) and Special Conservation Interests (SCI). This project is being undertaken exclusively in the marine environment and therefore only marine and coastal Natura 2000 sites were considered in this screening process. For international Natura 2000 sites, only Qualifying Interest species that are screened in for Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment have been listed in the table below. QIs and SCIs marked in bold in Table 3 have been screened in for Stage 2 appropriate Assessment.

For the relevant QI and SCIs from Natura 2000 sites, the spatial range for identified Source-Pathway-Receptors (Table 3) were considered as follows in this assessment:

- Seabird species: taken as their mean max foraging range from Woodward et al, 2024
- Waders and other bird species from British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), 2024
- Pinnipeds: maximum foraging ranges from Carter et al, 2022
- Cetaceans: from their JNCC Management units for the relevant species (JNCC, 2023).
- Habitats were assessed in the proposed MUL area only due to the nature of the activities undertaken.

**Table 3** showing Natura 2000 sites, distances from MUL area, qualifying interests and if screened in for Stage 2 assessment

European Site Code	Distance from the MUL area (km) or other unit used	List of Qualifying Interests	Connections (Source-Pathway Receptors)	Qualifying Interests considered further in Screening Y/N	European site Screened In for Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment
South Dublin Bay SAC (Site Code IE000210)	Within site boundary	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by sea-water at low tide [1140] Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Embryonic shifting dunes [2110]	Yes	Yes	Yes – temporary habitat loss, disturbance. Potential degradation, invasive species risk
Bray Head SAC ( Site Code IE 000714)	Within site boundary	Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] European dry heaths [4030]	Yes	Yes	Yes – possible disturbance and habitat degradation, invasive species risk
The Murrrough Wetlands SAC (Site Code IE 002249)	Within site boundary	Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] Atlantic salt meadows ( <i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i> ) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows ( <i>Juncetalia maritimi</i> ) [1410] Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davalliana</i> [7210] Alkaline fens [7230]	Yes	Yes	Yes – possible disturbance and habitat degradation, invasive species risk

Wicklow Reef SAC	Approx 5 km	Reefs [1170]	No	No	No
Rockabill to Dalkey SAC (Site Code IE003000 )	Less than 1 km	Reefs [1170] <b>Phocoena phocoena (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]</b>	<b>Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes - possible visual &amp; above water noise disturbance, below water noise disturbance</b>
North Dublin Bay SAC (Site Code IE000206)	Approx 5 km	<b>Phocoena phocoena (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]</b>	<b>Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species</b>	<b>Yes – possible disturbance from underwater noise</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Ireland's Eye SAC ( Site Code IE002193)	10-15 km	Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]	No	No	No
Rogerstown Estuary SAC (Site code IE000208)	Approx.15 km	Estuaries [1130] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [1410] Shifting dunes along the shoreline with Ammophila arenaria (white dunes) [2120] Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130]	No	No	No

Howth Head SAC (Site Code IE000202)	Approx.15 km	Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] European dry heaths [4030]	No	No	No
Malahide estuary SAC (Site Code IE 000205)	Approx. 20 km	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [1410] Shifting dunes along the shoreline with Ammophila arenaria (white dunes) [2120] Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130]	No	No	No
Baldoyle Bay SAC (Site Code IE000199)	Approx. 20 km	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [1410]	No	No	No
Codling Fault Zone SAC (Site code IE003015)	Approx. 20 km	Submarine structures made by leaking gases [1180]	No  <b>Yes - within JNCC Cetacean</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes - possible visual &amp; above water noise disturbance, below water noise disturbance</b>





		<p>Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno-Padion, Alnionincanae, Salicionalbae)[91E0]  <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029]  <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> (Sea Lamprey) [1095]  <i>Lampetra planeri</i> (Brook Lamprey) [1096]  <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> (River Lamprey) [1099]  <i>Salmo salar</i> (Salmon) [1106]  <i>Alosa fallax fallax</i> (Twaité Shad) [1103]  <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]</p> <p><b><i>Phoca vitulina</i> (Harbour Seal) [1365]</b></p>			
Hook Head SAC [Site code IE000764]	> 100 km	<p>Large shallow inlets and bays [1160]  Reefs [1170]  Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]</p> <p><b><i>Tursiops truncatus</i> (Common Bottlenose Dolphin) [1349]</b>  <b><i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]</b></p>	<p>No</p> <p><b>Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species</b></p>	Yes	<b>Yes - possible visual &amp; above water noise disturbance, below water noise disturbance</b>
Saltee Islands SAC [Site code IE0007071]	> 100 km	<p>Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]  Large shallow inlets and bays [1160]  Reefs [1170]  Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]</p>	<b>Yes – within foraging range for Grey Seal</b>	Yes	<b>Yes – potential disturbance from above and underwater noise</b>

		Submerged or partially submerged sea caves [8330] <b><i>Halichoerus grypus</i> (Grey Seal) [1364]</b>			
Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC [Site code IE000101]	> 100 km	Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] Reefs [1170] Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] European dry heaths [4030] Submerged or partially submerged sea caves [8330] <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355] <i>Halichoerus grypus</i> (Grey Seal) [1364] <b><i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]</b>	No  <b>Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species</b>	Yes	<b>Yes - possible visual &amp; above water noise disturbance, below water noise disturbance</b>
Blasket Islands SAC [Site code IE002172]	> 100 km	Reefs [1170] Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] European dry heaths [4030] Submerged or partially submerged sea caves [8330] <i>Halichoerus grypus</i> (Grey Seal) [1364] <b><i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]</b>	No  <b>Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species</b>	Yes	<b>Yes - possible visual &amp; above water noise disturbance, below water noise disturbance</b>
Kenmare River SAC [Site code IE002158]	> 100 km	Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] Reefs [1170] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220]	No	Yes	<b>Yes - possible visual &amp; above water noise disturbance, below</b>

		<p>Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]                  Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) [1330]                  Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410]                  Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120]                  Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130]                  European dry heaths [4030]  <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130]                  Calaminarian grasslands of the <i>Violetalia calaminariae</i> [6130]                  Submerged or partially submerged sea caves [8330]  <i>Vertigo angustior</i> (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) [1014]  <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303]  <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]  <i>Phoca vitulina</i> (Harbour Seal) [1365]  <b><i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]</b></p>	<p><b>Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species</b></p>		<p><b>water noise disturbance</b></p>
<p>Belgica Mound Province SAC [Site code IE002327]</p>	<p>&gt; 100 km</p>	<p>Reefs [1170]  <i>Tursiops truncatus</i> (Common Bottlenose Dolphin) [1349]</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p><b>Yes - possible visual &amp; above water noise disturbance, below</b></p>

		<b><i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise)</b> <b>[1351]</b>	<b>Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species</b>		<b>water noise disturbance</b>
Inishmore Island SAC [Site code IE000213]	> 100 km	Coastal lagoons [1150] Reefs [1170] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] Embryonic shifting dunes [2110] Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120] Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130] Dunes with <i>Salix repens</i> ssp. <i>argentea</i> ( <i>Salicion arenariae</i> ) [2170] Humid dune slacks [2190] Machairs (* in Ireland) [21A0] European dry heaths [4030] Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates ( <i>Festuco- Brometalia</i> ) (* important orchid sites) [6210] Lowland hay meadows ( <i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> , <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i> ) [6510] Limestone pavements [8240] Submerged or partially submerged sea caves [8330]	No  <b>Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes - possible visual &amp; above water noise disturbance, below water noise disturbance</b>

		<p><i>Vertigo angustior</i> (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) [1014]</p> <p><b><i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]</b></p>			
Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC [Site code IE002111]	> 100 km	<p>Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]</p> <p>Coastal lagoons [1150]</p> <p>Large shallow inlets and bays [1160]</p> <p>Reefs [1170]</p> <p>Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) [1330]</p> <p>Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410]</p> <p>Machairs (* in Ireland) [21A0]</p> <p>Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and/or <i>Isoeto-Nanojuncetea</i> [3130]</p> <p>Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) [6510]</p> <p><i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]</p> <p><i>Phoca vitulina</i> (Harbour Seal) [1365]</p> <p><i>Najas flexilis</i> (Slender Naiad) [1833]</p> <p><b><i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]</b></p>	<p>No</p> <p><b>Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species</b></p>	Yes	<b>Yes - possible visual &amp; above water noise disturbance, below water noise disturbance</b>
West Connacht Coast SAC [Site code IE002998]	> 100 km	<p><i>Tursiops truncatus</i> (Common Bottlenose Dolphin) [1349]</p> <p><b><i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]</b></p>	<p>No</p> <p><b>Yes - within JNCC Cetacean</b></p>	Yes	<b>Yes - possible visual &amp; above water noise disturbance, below water noise disturbance</b>

			Management Unit for species		
Bunduff Lough and Machair/Trawalua/Mullaghmore SAC [000625]	> 100 km	<p>Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]</p> <p>Large shallow inlets and bays [1160]</p> <p>Reefs [1170]</p> <p>Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120]</p> <p>Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130]</p> <p>Humid dune slacks [2190]</p> <p>Machairs (* in Ireland) [21A0]</p> <p><i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130]</p> <p>Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210]</p> <p>Alkaline fens [7230]</p> <p><i>Euphydryas aurinia</i> (Marsh Fritillary) [1065]</p> <p><i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i> (Petalwort) [1395]</p> <p><b><i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]</b></p>	<p>No</p> <p><b>Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species</b></p>	Yes	<b>Yes - possible visual &amp; above water noise disturbance, below water noise disturbance</b>
Lley Peninsula and the Sarnau SAC [Site code UK0013117 ]	>100km	<p><b><i>Tursiops truncatus</i> (Common Bottlenose Dolphin) [1349]</b></p> <p><b><i>Halichoerus grypus</i> (Grey Seal) [1364]</b></p>	<b>Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species and</b>	Yes	<b>Yes– possible disturbance from above and underwater noise</b>

			within foraging range for Grey Seal		
The Maidens [Site code UK0030384]	>100km	<i>Halichoerus grypus</i> (Grey Seal) [1364]	Yes – within foraging range for Grey Seal	Yes	Yes – possible disturbance from above and underwater noise
The Murlough SAC [Site code UK0016612]	>100km	<i>Phoca vitulina</i> (Harbour seal) [1365]	Yes – within foraging range for Harbour Seal	Yes	Yes– possible disturbance from above and underwater noise
Strangford Lough SAC [Site code UK0016608]	>100km	<i>Phoca vitulina</i> (Harbour seal) [1365]	Yes – within foraging range for Harbour Seal	Yes	Yes– possible disturbance from above and underwater noise
The North Channel SAC [Site code UK0030399]	>100km	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species	Yes	Yes– possible disturbance from above and underwater noise
Cardigan Bay SAC [Site code UK0012712]	>100km	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i> (Common Bottlenose Dolphin) [1349] <i>Halichoerus grypus</i> (Grey Seal) [1364]	Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species and within foraging range for Grey Seal	Yes	Yes– possible disturbance from above and underwater noise

North Anglesey Marine SAC [Site code UK0030398]	75 – 100 km	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species	Yes	Yes– possible disturbance from above and underwater noise
West Wales Marine SAC [Site code UK0030397 ]	>100km	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species	Yes	Yes– possible disturbance from above and underwater noise
Bristol Channel Approaches SAC [Site code UK003039]	>100km	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species	Yes	Yes– possible disturbance from above and underwater noise
Récifs et landes de la Hague SAC [Site code FR2500084]	>100km	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species	Yes	Yes– possible disturbance from above and underwater noise
Anse de Vauville SAC [Site code FR2502019]	>100km	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species	Yes	Yes– possible disturbance from above and underwater noise
Banc et récifs de Surtainville SAC [Site code FR2502018]	>100km	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species	Yes	Yes– possible disturbance from above and underwater noise



Chausey [Site code FR2500079]	>100km	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species	Yes	Yes– possible disturbance from above and underwater noise
Baie du Mont Saint-Michel [Site code FR2500077]	>100km	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species	Yes	Yes– possible disturbance from above and underwater noise
Estuaire de la Rance SAC [Site code FR5300061]	>100km	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species	Yes	Yes– possible disturbance from above and underwater noise
Baie de Lancieux, Baie de l'Arguenon, Archipel de Saint Malo et Dinard [Site code FR5300012]	>100km	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species	Yes	Yes– possible disturbance from above and underwater noise
Cap d'Erquy-Cap Fréhel [Site code FR5300011]	>100km	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species	Yes	Yes– possible disturbance from above and underwater noise
Baie de Saint-Brieuc [Site code FR5300066]	>100km	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species	Yes	Yes– possible disturbance from above and underwater noise

Tregor Goëlo [Site code FR5310070]	>100km	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species	Yes	Yes– possible disturbance from above and underwater noise
Côte de Granit rose-Sept-Iles [Site code FR5300009]	>100km	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species	Yes	Yes– possible disturbance from above and underwater noise
Nord Bretagne DH [Site code FR2502022]	>100km	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species	Yes	Yes– possible disturbance from above and underwater noise
Baie de Morlaix SAC [Site code FR5300015]	>100km	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species	Yes	Yes– possible disturbance from above and underwater noise
Abers - Côte des legends [Site code FR5300017]	>100km	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species	Yes	Yes– possible disturbance from above and underwater noise
Ouessant-Molène [Site code FR5300018]	>100km	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species	Yes	Yes– possible disturbance from above and underwater noise

Côtes de Crozon [Site code FR5302006]	>100km	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species	Yes	Yes– possible disturbance from above and underwater noise
Mers Celtiques – Talus du golfe de Gascogne [Site code FR5302015]	>100km	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species	Yes	Yes– possible disturbance from above and underwater noise
Rivière Leguer, forêts de Beffou, Coat an Noz et Coat an Hay [Site code FR5300008]	>100km	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species	Yes	Yes– possible disturbance from above and underwater noise
Estuaire de la Rance [Site code FR53000061]	>100km	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species	Yes	Yes– possible disturbance from above and underwater noise
Chaussée de Sein [Site code FR5302007]	>100km	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species	Yes	Yes– possible disturbance from above and underwater noise
Récifs du talus du golfe de Gascogne [Site code FR5302016]	>100km	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]	Yes - within JNCC Cetacean Management Unit for species	Yes	Yes– possible disturbance from above and underwater noise

South Dublin Bay and River Tolka SPA (Site IE004024)	Within site boundary	<p>Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046]  Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130]  Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137]  Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141]  Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143]  Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) [A144]  Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149]  Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157]  Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162]  Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179]  Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>) [A192]  Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193]  Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A194]  Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</p>	Yes	Yes	Yes– possible visual & above water noise disturbance, intertidal disturbance
The Murrrough SPA (Site Code IE004186)	Within site boundary	<p>Red-throated Diver (<i>Gavia stellata</i>) [A001]  Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) [A043]  Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046]  Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050]  Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052]  Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179]  Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184]  Little Tern (<i>Sterna albifrons</i>) [A195]  Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</p>	Yes	Yes	Yes– possible visual & above water noise disturbance, intertidal disturbance
Dalkey Island SPA (Site Code IE004172)	Approx 1km	<p>Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>) [A192]  Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193]  Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A194]</p>	Yes	Yes	Yes– possible visual & above water noise disturbance, intertidal disturbance

Wicklow Head SPA ( Site Code 004127)	Approx 2km	Kittiwake ( <i>Rissa tridactyla</i> ) [A188]	Yes	Yes	Yes– possible visual & above water noise disturbance, intertidal disturbance
North Bull Island SPA (Site Code IE004006)	Approx 7km	Light-bellied Brent Goose ( <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> ) [A046] Shelduck ( <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> ) [A048] Teal ( <i>Anas crecca</i> ) [A052] Pintail ( <i>Anas acuta</i> ) [A054] Shoveler ( <i>Anas clypeata</i> ) [A056] Oystercatcher ( <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> ) [A130] Golden Plover ( <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> ) [A140] Grey Plover ( <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> ) [A141] Knot ( <i>Calidris canutus</i> ) [A143] Sanderling ( <i>Calidris alba</i> ) [A144] Dunlin ( <i>Calidris alpina</i> ) [A149] Black-tailed Godwit ( <i>Limosa limosa</i> ) [A156] Bar-tailed Godwit ( <i>Limosa lapponica</i> ) [A157] Curlew ( <i>Numenius arquata</i> ) [A160] Redshank ( <i>Tringa totanus</i> ) [A162] Turnstone ( <i>Arenaria interpres</i> ) [A169] Black-headed Gull ( <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> ) [A179] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	Yes	Yes	Yes– possible visual & above water noise disturbance, intertidal disturbance
North West Irish Sea SPA ( Site Code IE004236)	Approx 10-15km	Red-throated Diver ( <i>Gavia stellata</i> ) [A001] Great Northern Diver ( <i>Gavia immer</i> ) [A003] Fulmar ( <i>Fulmarus glacialis</i> ) [A009] Manx Shearwater ( <i>Puffinus puffinus</i> ) [A013] Cormorant ( <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> ) [A017] Shag ( <i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i> ) [A018] Common Scoter ( <i>Melanitta nigra</i> ) [A065]	Yes	Yes	Yes– possible visual & above water noise disturbance, intertidal disturbance

		<b>Little Gull (Larus minutus) [A177]</b> <b>Black-headed Gull (Chroicocephalus ridibundus) [A179]</b> <b>Common Gull (Larus canus) [A182]</b> <b>Lesser Black-backed Gull (Larus fuscus) [A183]</b> <b>Herring Gull (Larus argentatus) [A184]</b> <b>Great Black-backed Gull (Larus marinus) [A187]</b> <b>Kittiwake (Rissa tridactyla) [A188]</b> <b>Roseate Tern (Sterna dougallii) [A192]</b> <b>Common Tern (Sterna hirundo) [A193]</b> <b>Arctic Tern (Sterna paradisaea) [A194]</b> <b>Little Tern (Sterna albifrons) [A195]</b> <b>Guillemot (Uria aalge) [A199]</b> <b>Razorbill (Alca torda) [A200]</b> <b>Puffin (Fratercula arctica) [A204]</b>			
Howth Head Coast SPA (Site Code IE004113)	Approx 15km	Kittiwake (Rissa tridactyla) [A188]	No	No	No
Ireland's Eye SPA (Site Code IE004117)	Approx 15km	Herring Gull (Larus argentatus) [A184] Kittiwake (Rissa tridactyla) [A188] Cormorant (Phalacrocorax carbo) [A017] Guillemot (Uria aalge) [A199] Razorbill (Alca torda) [A200]	No	No	No
Wicklow Mountains SPA	Approx 25km	Merlin (Falco columbarius) [A098], Peregrine (Falco peregrinus) [A103]	Yes	Yes	Yes– possible intertidal disturbance
Baldoyle Bay SPA ( Site Code IE	Approx 20km	<b>Light-bellied Brent Goose (Branta bernicla hrota) [A046]</b> Shelduck (Tadorna tadorna) [A048]	Yes	Yes	Yes– possible visual & above water noise disturbance

		<p>Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137]                  Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140]                  Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141]                  Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157]                  Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</p>			
Lambay Island SPA (Site Code IE004069)	Approx 20km	<p>Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A009]                  Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) [A043]                  Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [A183]                  Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184]                  Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188]                  Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017]                  Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>) [A018]                  Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) [A199]                  Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>) [A200]                  Puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>) [A204]</p>	No	No	No
Malahide Estuary SPA (Site Code IE004025)	Approx 20km	<p>Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) [A005]  <b>Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046]</b>                  Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048]                  Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054]                  Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>) [A067]                  Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [A069]                  Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130]                  Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140]                  Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141]                  Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143]                  Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149]                  Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156]                  Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157]                  Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162]                  Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</p>	Yes	Yes	<b>Yes– possible visual &amp; above water noise disturbance</b>

<p>Rogerstown Estuary SPA (Site Code IE004015)</p>	<p>Approx 20-25 km</p>	<p>Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) [A043]  <b>Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046]</b>                  Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048]                  Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056]                  Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130]                  Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137]                  Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141]                  Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143]                  Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149]                  Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156]                  Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162]                  Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p><b>Yes– possible visual &amp; above water noise disturbance</b></p>
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**Step 3 Assessment of likely significant effects**

(a) Identify all potential direct and indirect impacts that may have an effect on the conservation objectives of a European site, taking into account the size and scale of the project

Potential impacts	Possible significance of impacts (duration, magnitude, etc.)
Disturbance from above ground/water and underwater noise, intertidal disturbance	Possible temporary disturbance to birds foraging in the intertidal and coastal areas, and for nesting bird species. A number of bird species listed as SCI's could potentially be temporarily be disturbed and displaced by the proposed works as they are all either breeding or feeding in the SAC at various times of year. Breeding Roseate tern and Little tern would be of particular concern Potential disturbance to marine mammal species. Possible temporary disturbance and displacement for seal species potentially using area for haul out
Habitat disturbance	Temporary disturbance to habitats with SACs from proposed activities
Habitat loss	Temporary habitat loss
Habitat degradation	Temporary degradation of habitats
Introduction of invasive species	Introduction to the intertidal of staff and heavy machinery across multiple sites introduces a risk of introducing invasive species. Survey vessels also have a risk of introducing marine invasive species.

**In-combination effects**

MARA has developed a stepwise approach for identifying other In-Combination plans and projects.

Using professional and scientific judgement, the key steps for assessing cumulative effects are as follows:

1. Defining the Cumulative Effects Spatial Scope (CESS)
2. Defining the Cumulative Effects Temporal Scope (CETS)
3. Impact identification
4. Pathway identification
5. Prediction
6. Identification of Plans or Projects that could act in combination
7. Screening Stage Cumulative Effects Assessment conclusion
8. Managing cumulative impacts - to be carried out as part of Stage 2 AA process

Given the type of works being undertaken and the location of these works, the CESS has been defined as 5km and the CETS as 3 years for geophysical and geotechnical works. The applicant plans to complete these works within one year. For all other surveys, the CESS has been defined as the specified MUL area applied for and the CETS as 10 years, the full MUL application period. Potential impacts are assessed across all seasons, which allows for potential delays in the MUL activity being undertaken which may occur.

Using the above 8 step approach, and following a search of relevant databases undertaken on 15 January 2025, and again on 31 January 2025 the below projects in Table 4 have been identified as potential in-combination projects:

**Table 4:** Projects that could have potential in-combination effects when combined with assessed project

Application reference no.	Project	Approximate Distance from MUL Area	Project Status	Cumulative Effects
FS007367	Greystones (OWL) Windfarm Ltd. proposing to develop windfarm off Dublin/Wicklow	Overlaps with IÉ MUL application area	Proposed – application submitted 29/06/22	Possible temporal overlap in terms of disturbance and displacement
FS007472	LIR Offshore Array Ltd Site Investigations for proposed offshore windfarm	Overlaps with MUL application area	Proposed – application submitted 22/09/22	Possible temporal overlap in terms of disturbance and displacement
FS007546	Site Investigations for proposed Offshore Wind Farm, off counties Wicklow and Dublin	Overlaps with IÉ MUL application area	Approved but not completed - licence granted 19/05/2022	Possible temporal overlap in terms of disturbance and displacement
FS007162	Leinster Offshore Wind Array Site investigations for proposed offshore wind farm off Dublin.	Overlaps with IÉ MUL application area	Approved but not completed - licence granted 19/05/2022	Possible temporal overlap in terms of disturbance and displacement
FS007330	Realt na Mara Site Investigations off the coasts of Wicklow and Dublin	Overlaps with IÉ MUL application area	Proposed – application submitted 21/03/21	Possible temporal overlap in terms of disturbance and displacement
FS007151	Proposed Sunrise Offshore Wind Farm, off Counties Dublin and Wicklow	Overlaps with IÉ MUL application area	Proposed–Foreshore licence submitted 23/12/21	Possible temporal overlap in terms of disturbance and displacement
FS007188	RWE Dublin Array Offshore Windfarm	Overlaps with IÉ MUL application area	Proposed–Foreshore licence submitted 01/10/21	Possible temporal overlap in terms of disturbance and displacement

FS007546	Codling Wind Park Ltd. Site Investigations for proposed Offshore Wind Farm, off counties Wicklow and Dublin	Overlaps with IÉ MUL application area	Approved but not completed - licence granted 19/05/2022	Possible temporal overlap in terms of disturbance and displacement
2022-MAC-006	Codling Offshore Windfarm	Overlaps with IÉ MUL application area	Proposed–MAC granted 23/12/2022, currently in consultation with An Bord Pleanala	Possible temporal overlap in terms of disturbance and displacement
MUL230034	Codling Offshore Windfarm	Overlaps with IÉ MUL application area	Proposed – MUL under assessment	Possible temporal overlap in terms of disturbance and displacement
2022-MAC-003 and 004	Bray Offshore Windfarm and Kish Offshore Windfarm	Overlaps with IÉ MUL application area	Proposed–MAC granted 23/12/2022, currently in consultation with An Bord Pleanala	Possible temporal overlap in terms of disturbance and displacement

The following plans, related to the development of the maritime environment were also identified:

- The Climate Action Plan 2024
- The National Water Action Plan
- The National Marine Planning Framework

Likely significant in-combination effects between this project and the above listed projects and plans on the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites considered in this report cannot be excluded at this stage.

(b) Describe any likely changes to the European site:

Reduction or Fragmentation of habitat area	Possible
Disturbance to QI species	Disturbance to birds, cetaceans and seals cannot be excluded at this stage.
Changes in key indicators of conservation status value	Possible
Changes to a reason of sensitivity or threats to QI	Disturbance to bird, cetaceans and seals cannot be excluded at this stage.

**Were mitigation measures considered during the screening process?**

No.

**Step 4 Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination Statement**

On the basis of the information on file, and having regard to:

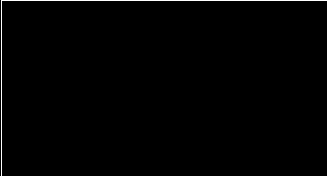
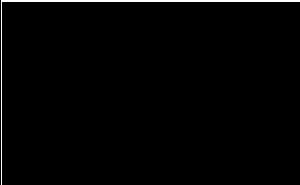
- The nature and scale of the proposed developments
- The overlap with and distance to Natura 2000 sites
- The potential for in-combination effects with other plans and projects
- Possible visual, above and below water and intertidal noise disturbance to bird species and seal species
- Possible habitat degradation, disturbance and temporary loss
- Possible introduction of invasive species

Having considered the legal framework applicable to Appropriate Assessment, it was concluded that the proposed maritime usage by Irish Rail to carry out marine environmental surveys for the purposes of site investigation or in support of an application under Part XXI of the Act of 2000, in Support of the East Coast Rail Infrastructure Protection Projects at various locations along the coastline of Co.'s Dublin and Wicklow.(MUL240023) will require Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment.

It cannot be excluded on the basis of objective scientific information, that the proposed project, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European Site.

**Therefore it is determined that the applicant is required to submit a Natura Impact Statement.**

**Conclusion**

	Tick as appropriate	Recommendation
(i) It is clear that there is no likelihood of significant/possible effects on a European site		
(ii) It is uncertain whether the proposal will have a significant/possible effect on a European site	X	Proceed to Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment
(iii) Significant effects are likely		
Signature and Date of Recommending Officer	 31/01/2025 Senior Marine Advisor	
Signature and Date of Decision Maker	 05/02/2025 Director, ARD	