Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Draft South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan for Offshore Renewable Energy

3 May 2024

Prepared by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications

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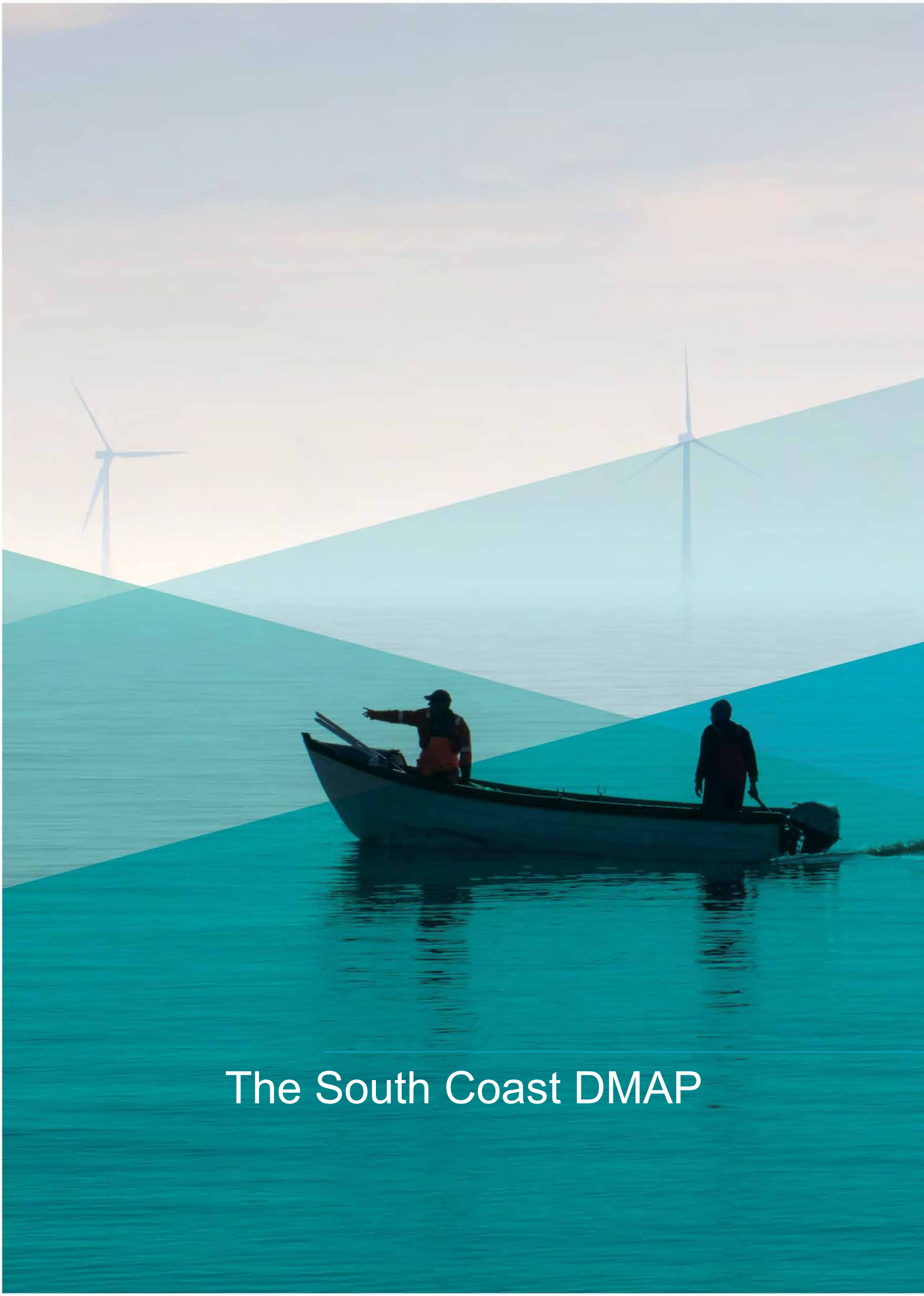


The South Coast DMAP

Preamble

In 2021, Ireland legislated for a plan-led approach to positively change the management of our sea areas. In 2023, a decision was taken by the Government and supported by both Houses of the Oireachtas that the designation of maritime areas for future developments of offshore renewable energy (ORE) should be determined by the State.

The South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan for offshore renewable energy (hereafter referred to as the draft Plan or draft SC-DMAP) represents the first sub-national, forward maritime spatial plan for ORE in Ireland. In fact, it is the first time the State has prepared a forward spatial plan for renewable energy on land or sea. The preparation of this draft Plan has taken place pursuant to the legislative provisions of the Maritime Area Planning Act, 2021 (MAP Act), and is consistent with Ireland's National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF).

The publication of this draft Plan and accompanying Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) starts a six-week statutory public consultation period, which will inform possible revisions to the draft Plan, prior to the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications (MECC), in his role as DMAP Competent Authority, seeking the approval of both Houses of the Oireachtas for its formal establishment.

This draft Plan has already been shaped by a nine-and-a-half-week non-statutory public consultation which took place last year on the South Coast DMAP Proposal during August to October 2023. Hundreds of people participated, sharing their expertise, experience, and wisdom to inform and guide the development of the DMAP. Over a thousand written submissions were received.

The draft Plan is consistent with the SC-DMAP Proposal, and its preparation has been further informed by additional non-statutory consultation, stakeholder engagement, environmental analysis, and assessment of best available data. It is a key core objective to avoid and minimise possible adverse impacts from ORE projects and associated transmission infrastructure.

The SC-DMAP Proposal and this draft Plan have been prepared by the MECC in his role as a designated Competent Authority (D). The MECC was designated in this role under Section 20(1)(c) of the MAP Act, 2021 by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage (MHLGH), as the competent authority responsible for all offshore renewable energy plans (sectoral area) in the Irish maritime area, as defined in Section 3 of the MAP Act. After the President has signed the Gas (Amendment) and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill 2023, Part 4 is commenced and Vesting Day Order under section 23 is completed, Section 27 of that Act will provide that, this designation as Competent Authority (D) will cease and the MECC will take on the role of Competent Authority (M). The work done to date on the SC-DMAP will be preserved and will be progressed by the MECC as Competent Authority (M) under Section 29 of the MAP Act, 2021. Figure 2 outlines the iterative process for the SC-DMAP.

Maritime Areas

The draft SC-DMAP identifies four Maritime Areas within the wider geographical area, which is the subject of the draft Plan, and within which proposed future deployments of ORE may proceed for further project level assessment, in accordance with the plan-led approach envisaged by the EU Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) Directive and required by the draft Plan. Further, the draft SC-DMAP includes a suite of associated policy objectives which will collectively support and guide the implementation of the Plan. Regarding development timelines, the draft Plan envisions, subject to obtaining the necessary project level consents, the future deployment of a single ORE project by 2030, or as soon as feasible thereafter, and further subsequent deployments for the post 2030 period, which will take place in an orderly and strategically managed basis.

For the avoidance of doubt, any project seeking to develop in one of the four Maritime Areas identified in the SC-DMAP, will be required to obtain a Maritime Area Consent (MAC) from the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) and, subsequently, to go through the development permission application and assessment process. The establishment of the SC-DMAP is not a shortcut in the consenting process. Individuals and communities will still be in a position to fully participate in the planning process and to scrutinise and make submissions on any proposed ORE development in the SC-DMAP area as part of that process.

Through the identification of four Maritime Areas, the draft Plan aims to provide clarity to local communities, existing marine users including the fishing community, the ORE industry and other stakeholders regarding the location of prospective future ORE development within the SC-DMAP area. It provides further clarity regarding policy objectives which must be adhered to by prospective developers of ORE and transmission infrastructure within the draft SC-DMAP area. These policy objectives include, but are not limited to, provisions regarding the protection of biodiversity and the marine environment, as well as the promotion of co-existence between ORE and other marine activities.

A further objective in the preparation of the draft SC-DMAP, has been to avoid potential adverse impacts on biodiversity, EU protected sites, and future national protected site designations. In addition to the identification of the four Maritime Areas and policy objectives of the draft SC-DMAP, this is reflected in a suite of policy objectives and associated measures, which will inform the scale, precise location, and timing of future ORE developments within the SC-DMAP area. Crucially, avoiding and minimising potential future adverse impacts will be further provided for through the implementation and monitoring of the Plan, to ensure that the scale, location and timing of future offshore wind developments will continue to be informed by best available data.

What is a plan-led system?

The vision set out in the NMPF was that Ireland's seas and oceans must be managed strategically. This means that, where appropriate, plans should be established for activities to take place in a manner that supports and enables broader maritime activities and the needs of the Public.

In 2023, a decision was taken that the State should begin managing where and when ORE should be developed. Fundamental to this decision was an unsustainable acceleration in ORE applications, which created an environment of concern and in some instances confusion amongst local coastal communities.

Under the new plan-led approach, Government, supported by other public sector bodies, can identify the most appropriate maritime areas for future ORE development, through analysis of the local marine environment and engagement with local coastal communities.

How should this document be used?

The SC-DMAP will inform future decision-making processes and assessments by relevant competent authorities regarding the award of MACs and development permissions for proposed ORE projects. Building upon the NMPF, it will further inform decisions by competent authorities regarding the development of enabling infrastructure required to implement the objectives of the SC-DMAP, including offshore electricity transmission system infrastructure. It also supports the coordination of land and sea interactions and the alignment of terrestrial plans and policy at national, regional, and local level that deliver sustainable onshore infrastructure to enable ORE projects in the four Maritime Areas described later in this document.

The draft SC-DMAP does not seek to pre-determine the outcome of any project level applications for ORE or associated independent assessments and decision-making processes. Alongside the NMPF, it provides a framework for these decisions and fully recognises the need for further project and site-specific environmental assessments to take place at project level for proposed ORE development and associated transmission infrastructure, including environmental impact assessment (EIA) and appropriate assessment (AA) as required.

It does not preclude other activities from taking place in the four maritime areas identified for ORE development; successful co-existence is a core objective of the draft Plan. However, no activity should take place within these areas that might be in direct conflict with ORE. Similarly, no fixed offshore wind development, or other ORE developments, should be permitted within the SC-DMAP area beyond the four designated areas.

Vision

Central to the development of this Plan is that Ireland's security of supply needs to be addressed quickly, but there is also potential for renewable energy to drive local and regional development.

Ireland has abundant wind resources, particularly in our sea areas. ORE uses the power of the wind to produce clean, renewable electricity. Wind turbines installed in the waters off our coasts can harness powerful wind speeds and create electricity. These natural resources will play a vital role in phasing out fossil fuels, and delivering a reliable supply of safe, secure and clean energy.

The SC-DMAP is being established as part of the new plan-led approach to the sustainable future management of Ireland's seas and oceans, including with regard to the development of ORE that will address the challenges of energy security, climate change, and biodiversity loss. What this means is that Government, on behalf of Irish citizens and through cooperation with other State bodies, local communities and existing marine users, will determine the appropriate locations for future ORE developments.

The SC-DMAP will directly contribute to the achievement of Government objectives to deliver installed offshore wind capacities of 5 GW by 2030, 20 GW by 2040, and 37 GW by 2050. It will also contribute to achievement of Ireland's wider legally binding decarbonisation targets, to ensure a 51% reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by the end of this decade and a climate neutral economy by no later than 2050.

Central to Ireland's new plan-led regime for ORE, the establishment of the SC-DMAP is taking place in consultation with local coastal communities along the South Coast, by providing regular opportunities for public and stakeholder engagement. This is reflected in the breadth and depth of engagement since summer 2023, which has helped to inform the preparation of this draft Plan.

Protecting and enhancing our coastal communities and marine environment, while at the same time providing a long-term source of secure renewable energy, is central to the sustainable forward planning process in the marine area and on land for enabling onshore infrastructure. This fundamental principle of engagement will continue to apply in the implementation and monitoring of the SC-DMAP, and in the aligned land-based plans that support it. This means that Government will engage with communities regularly throughout the lifetime of the DMAP to ensure citizens have access to information should it be required and to listen to their ongoing needs and comments.

Through providing a pipeline of potential future ORE deployments that are both connected to Ireland's onshore transmission system, and otherwise, the draft SC-DMAP seeks to fully utilise the available offshore wind resource, accelerate the green transition and bolster energy security. This approach will further enable the South Coast region to maximise and capture the full potential of the economic opportunities associated with implementing the SC-DMAP

when established. As well as seeking to address the energy security of supply and climate crises, the establishment of the SC-DMAP, and similar future plans in Ireland's coastal regions, will spur positive societal change through harnessing green energy to drive sustainable local and regional development. This is the South Coast's opportunity.

Beyond the SC-DMAP

The SC-DMAP is our first DMAP for ORE, and there will be more. As further DMAPs are established, additional considerations and debate will be required regarding regional balance so as to ensure better integration and coherence between maritime and land use planning. This includes the balance of grid and infrastructure, including large energy users, with societal needs and environmental carrying capacity.

The Department of Enterprise and Trade and Employment's recent publication *Powering Prosperity Offshore Wind Industrial Strategy* points in the direction of the potential for driving regional development, and DETE, the IDA and Enterprise Ireland are committed to supporting initiatives in this space. In this context, local authorities and others responsible for local and regional development could capitalise on this opportunity by identifying areas suitable for large energy users and ancillary businesses. For instance, the South Coast will have ample opportunity to align the development of offshore wind energy with large energy users in the pharmaceutical, technology and data industries.

Central to the ambition demonstrated by this draft Plan is the requirement to introduce predictability to what is a complicated system. In simple terms, that means ensuring an alignment of generation capacity with the appropriate transmission and demand use, all coming together at the same time. To this end, DECC will develop those appropriate mechanisms, structures and governance to ensure alignment of energy generation, transmission and uses to be applied to this and future DMAP areas.

This will necessitate DETE and the IDA working to ensure sufficient uses are in place to meet the level of generation and that this aligns with and responds to EirGrid's work on introducing solutions to the challenge of transmission. It is a triple alignment of generation, transmission, and demand. Another key element of that use will be long duration storage. EirGrid and ESB Networks have already completed significant work on this issue and will continue to lead on this important challenge.

Local authorities are well-placed to consider, take part and where necessary lead in the debate on how this potential extra renewable energy may be used. There are many options, and one exercise may be to bring a focus on identifying areas suitable for the development of energy parks. The Offshore Renewable Energy Task Force will give consideration for the requirement for a national energy park strategy to support this initiative.

1. The draft South Coast DMAP

The maritime usage which is the subject of this draft SC- DMAP exclusively relates to fixed offshore wind technology (referred to as ORE in the draft Plan) and the draft Plan includes the following information:

- The NMPF objectives which the Plan seeks to attain or assist in the attainment thereof.
- The geographical area the subject of the SC-DMAP.
- The proposed extent of the SC-DMAP area proposed to be utilised by future ORE (Maritime Areas A to D) and selection methodology.
- Particulars of the ORE provided for under the SC-DMAP (fixed offshore wind).
- Policy Objectives incorporating measures in the draft Plan to avoid, minimise and/or mitigate potential adverse impacts.
- Co-existence Provisions.
- Land-Sea Interactions.
- Governance, Implementation and Monitoring.

South Coast DMAP for Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE)

Explore

- Determine the areas most suitable for ORE
- Use marine data and stakeholder input

Propose

- Publish a DMAP Proposal
- Publish a Public Participation Statement
- Refine the area through stakeholder engagement and expert analysis

Analyse

- Environmental Constraints Analysis
- Technical Analysis
- Initial maritime areas for ORE

Assess

- Environmental Assessment Scoping
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
- Appropriate Assessment (AA)

Draft

- Publish:
  - Draft DMAP
  - SEA Environmental Report
  - Natura Impact Statement (AA)

Consult

- Conduct public consultation and outreach
- Engage with the public and other stakeholders

Refine

- Review the Draft DMAP
- Incorporate outcomes from consultation

Make DMAP

- Present the Draft DMAP to the Houses of the Oireachtas
- Publish the Final DMAP

The DMAP sequencing visualised here is based on the process currently underway for the South Coast DMAP, Ireland's first DMAP for ORE.

2. NMPF Objectives

The draft Plan sets out programmes of deployment of ORE which will take place within the SC-DMAP area over the next approximate ten-year period through an orderly, strategic and managed process of development. This will include an initial development of approximately 900 megawatt (MW) offshore wind capacity that will aim to contribute to achieving the Government objective of 5 gigawatts (GW) of grid connected offshore wind by 2030, and subsequent future development stages that will contribute to Ireland's longer term energy and climate objectives. The Minister therefore considers that the preparation of this draft SC-DMAP has taken place with consideration for the following associated objectives of the NMPF in respect of ORE (Chapter 13), which are to:

- Support the development of ORE in Ireland as a driver to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and accelerate the move to cleaner energy in line with national and EU policy.
- Increase the sustainable ORE use of our extensive marine resource in an efficient and co-ordinated manner identifying, where possible, potential for synergies and opportunities for multi-use of our shared maritime area.
- Support Ireland's decarbonisation journey through increased use of ORE while delivering significant and sustained benefits, import substitution, fiscal return, national and local economic development and technology learning.
- Support the strategic growth of the ORE industry recognising the potential to derive benefits particularly for Ireland's coastal communities.
- Provide enhanced security of energy supply for Ireland in the short and medium term, in accordance with the Climate Action Plan.
- Develop a robust, effective transparent consenting process to ensure appropriate environmental protections are built-in, while enabling sustainable ORE developments to progress.
- Ensure good regulatory practices in ORE installation and generation, including decommissioning of existing facilities, at end of life, according to international best practice.

In addition to ORE, the geographical area of the SC-DMAP will incorporate the offshore transmission system infrastructure, where required, to connect future ORE projects to the onshore transmission system or to alternative end-users. In this regard, the preparation of the draft SC-DMAP has also taken place with consideration for the following NMPF objective in respect of Energy Transmission (Chapter 15), which is to:

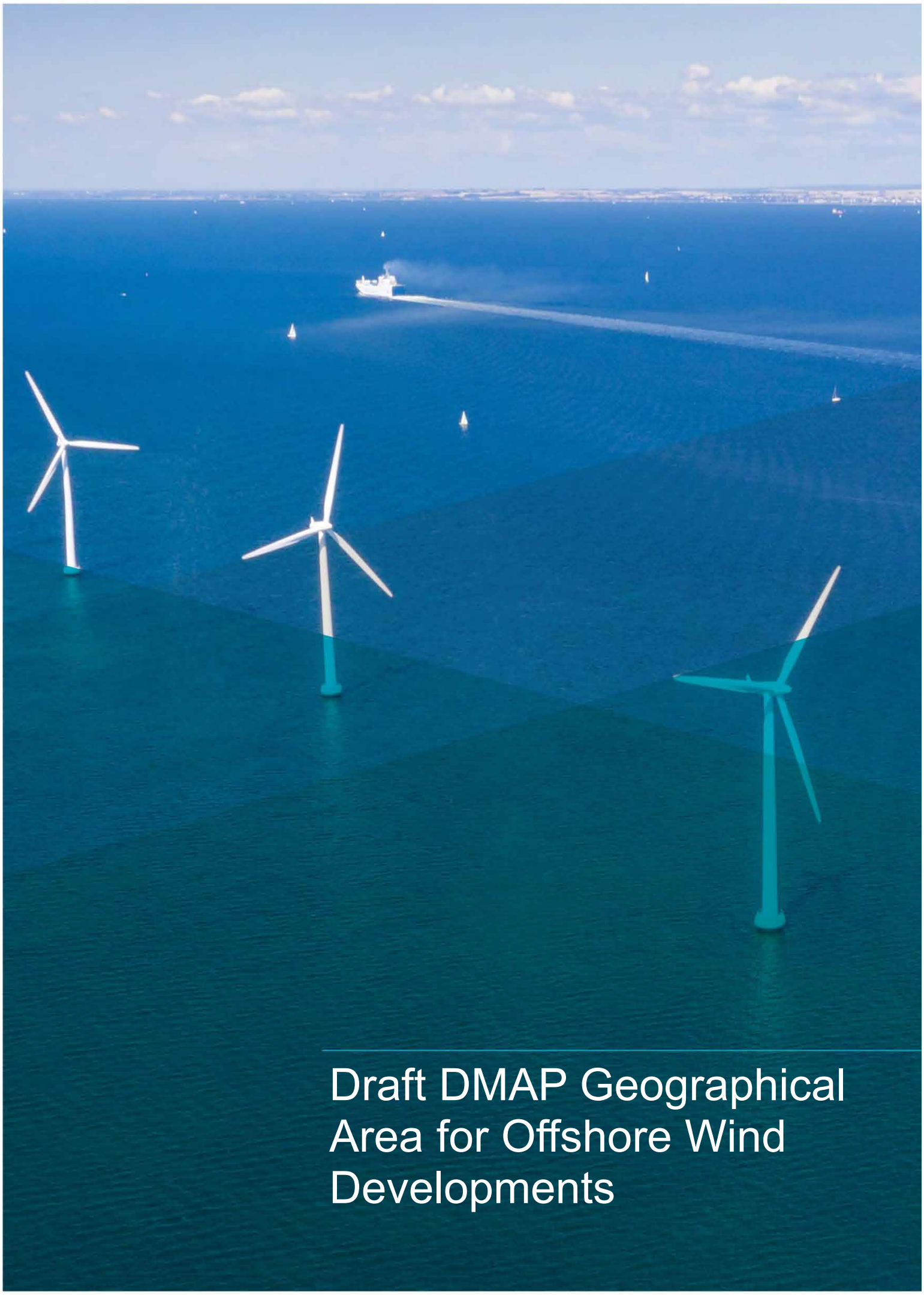
- Develop the offshore electricity transmission system, and connection between the offshore and onshore electricity grids, which is necessary for wider development of Ireland's offshore renewable energy sector.

In addition to the above, the draft SC-DMAP is consistent with the NMPF and has had specific regard to the Overarching Marine Planning Policies outlined in Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the NMPF, including environmental, economic and social objectives and policies. A Table of Consistency is available at Appendix A to this draft Plan.

The Minister has also taken into account the State's obligations under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021.

South Coast DMAP

Key NMPF Objectives



Draft DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Developments

3. Draft DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Developments

3.1 Plan-Led ORE Development and the South Coast DMAP

This draft Plan relates to a geographical area along Ireland's South Coast, as set out in the Map at Figure 1 on page 17. It extends from the marine area stretching from the Administrative Boundary for local government areas on the South Coast bordering the northern boundary of the SC-DMAP area to the 80-metre depth contour and/or the edge of the Irish Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and comprises a total geographical area of approximately 8,813 square kilometres. The proposed geographical area of the draft SC-DMAP has accordingly been partially refined from that set out in the SC-DMAP proposal which incorporated an area up to the High-Water Mark along the northern boundary of the SC-DMAP area.[1]

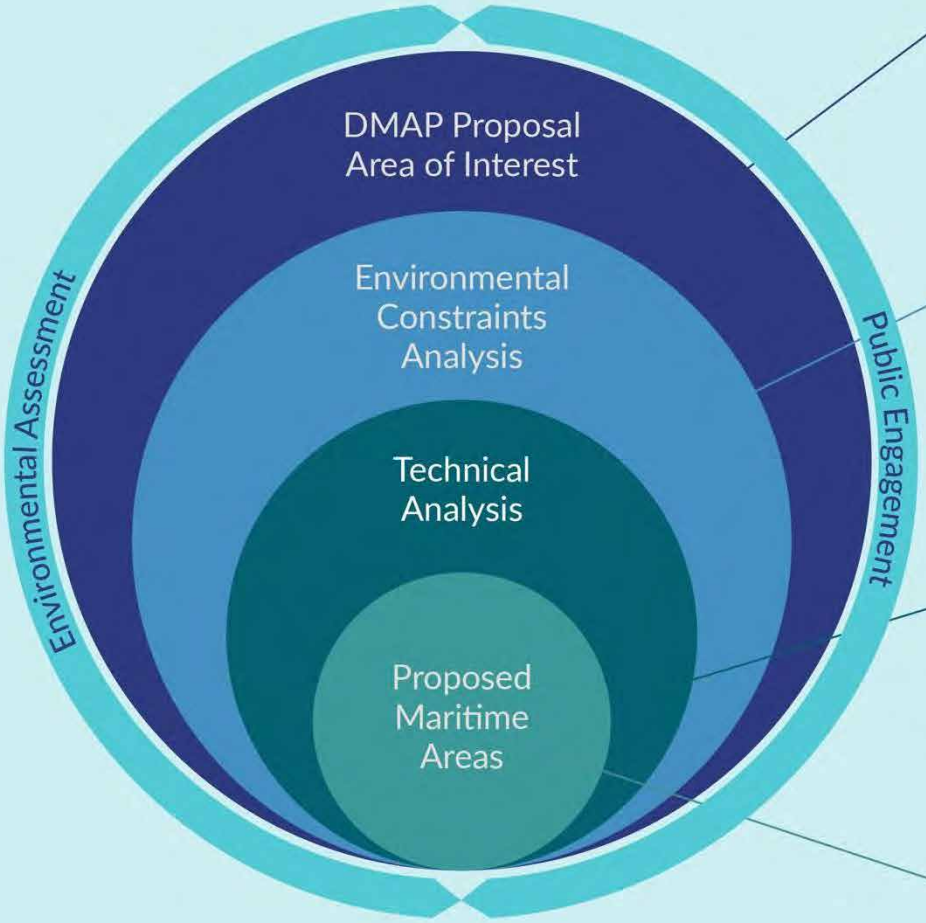
The establishment of the SC-DMAP gives effect to the decision by Government and the Oireachtas in 2023 that, as part of the new national plan-led regime for ORE, all post-Phase One offshore wind developments in Ireland will be located within maritime areas identified for this purpose by Government through the establishment of DMAPs. In doing so, it will provide a framework for the sustainable use of the State's offshore wind resource and marine space through coordinated, coherent and transparent decision making in relation to ORE development and informing associated key enabling onshore and offshore infrastructure.

The establishment, objectives and implementation of the SC-DMAP are consistent with and build upon a suite of existing national policies and plans, which identify a central role for ORE in driving Ireland's green energy transition and bolstering energy security. These include but are not limited to the NMPF, 2021, the National Planning Framework, 2019, the Climate Action Plan, 2023, the draft Climate Action Plan, 2024, the Carbon Budget Programme, 2021, and the draft Offshore Renewable Energy Future Framework Policy Statement, 2024. It is further consistent with the Offshore Wind Industrial Strategy, 2024, and the Energy Security in Ireland to 2030 Report, 2023. Additionally, the facilitation of ORE development within the SC-DMAP area is aligned with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region and City and County Development Plans for Local Authorities adjoining the SC-DMAP.

As part of the new plan-led approach to ORE development, the SC-DMAP will provide for the sustainable development of offshore wind through consideration of environmental and social protection and existing marine users and activities, while maintaining, and where possible, enhancing marine biodiversity. This is reflected in provisions within the draft Plan that seek to maximise opportunities for the co-existence of ORE with other marine activities, including seafood/aquaculture activity and commercial fishing, as well as the protection of biodiversity.

[1] It is important to note in the interests of clarity that figure 2 within the SC-DMAP Proposal of July 2023 erroneously indicated that the geographical area contained in the Proposal did not extend to the full High Water Mark.

South Coast DMAP
Maritime Area Identification



DMAP Proposal Area of Interest

The DMAP Proposal proposed a geographical area based on potential to deliver cost effective deployment of offshore renewable energy based on current and anticipated commercial and technological readiness e.g. fixed offshore wind. This area was refined through stakeholder engagement and environmental and technical analysis.

Environmental Constraints Analysis

An environmental constraints analysis of multiple environmental criteria including ecosystem goods and services including fisheries, designated sites, water quality, recreation and heritage was carried out. This identified areas with higher cumulative constraints, generally closer to shore. Areas of high environmental constraint were removed from consideration for locating fixed offshore wind.

Technical Analysis

A technical constraints analysis of multiple technical criteria including areas of exposed bedrock and water depths greater than 75 m was carried out. Levelized cost of energy (LCOE) mapping including bathymetry and mean wind speed was also carried out to identify the more economically attractive locations for fixed offshore wind.

Proposed Maritime Areas

The process above identified four broad Maritime Areas. These are areas of low environmental and technical constraint and low LCOE. The identification of these areas does not give permission for offshore wind projects. Any future offshore wind projects will be subject to all necessary project-specific environmental assessments and applications for State permits.

3.2 Fixed Offshore Wind in the Irish Celtic Sea

The draft SC-DMAP makes provision for a plan-led approach for the development of ORE within its geographical area, and specifically fixed offshore wind technology. The decision to establish Ireland's first ORE DMAP in the Irish Celtic Sea reflects the suitability of this maritime area for the accelerated deployment of fixed offshore wind technology and the achievement of Ireland's renewable energy and climate objectives. In particular, this decision is informed by the following key points, which collectively support the approval by Government and the Oireachtas to establish Ireland's first ORE DMAP off the South Coast:

- There is a substantial marine space off the South Coast of Ireland with sea-depths suitable for immediate and future developments of fixed offshore wind. This is a proven renewable energy technology that can be delivered at scale, within an accelerated timeframe, and at an affordable cost to Irish electricity households and

businesses. This will provide for the timely, strategic, orderly and sustainable development of offshore wind that delivers a clean and secure alternative to imported fossil fuels.

- The Irish Celtic Sea contains a very significant offshore wind resource, which will contribute to the accelerated and cost-effective achievement of Ireland's renewable energy and decarbonisation objectives, while bolstering security of supply.
- As identified by Ireland's transmission system operator, EirGrid, there is sufficient immediate available onshore grid capacity along the South Coast, to connect up to approximately 800 MW of ORE capacity to the onshore transmission system.
- The SC-DMAP area is within proximity to a number of significant port facilities which have the potential to enable accelerated installation and servicing of these future developments and provide a significant source of regional and local economic and employment growth. This proximity should further minimise associated installation and servicing costs.
- There is a significant population and industrial base along the South Coast that is well placed to stimulate and benefit from the secure and cost-effective long-term supply of green energy that will be provided by implementation of the SC-DMAP once established. This proximity will further provide for alternative off-take solutions for potential non-grid connected offshore wind projects, including but not limited to the production of green hydrogen and other green fuels, as well private wires directly connected to large energy users.

3.3 Fixed Offshore Wind Technology

The draft SC-DMAP identifies four Maritime Areas (Maritime Areas A to D) as the proposed locations for future deployments of ORE, in this instance exclusively relating to fixed offshore wind technology.

The draft Plan provides that a proposed fixed offshore windfarm located in Maritime Area A will be directly connected to the onshore electricity transmission system. It additionally provides that prospective developments located in the remaining Maritime Areas B, C and D may either be directly connected to the onshore transmission system or otherwise, should alternative offtake arrangements be available. This will enhance prospects for timely utilisation of the maximum available wind resource.

This decision to prepare a draft DMAP for ORE that provides exclusively for the deployment of fixed offshore wind reflects the enhanced opportunities presented by this technology versus alternatives, including floating offshore wind. Fixed offshore wind is a proven technology that has been delivered at scale in other jurisdictions and is supported by an existing global supply chain, thereby offering the best prospects for accelerated deployment. In addition to increased deliverability prospects, fixed offshore wind can be deployed at an affordable cost to Irish electricity consumers, as highlighted by the outcome of Ireland's first offshore wind auction in 2023, ORESS 1. Put simply, deployment of fixed-bottom offshore wind is aligned with the

accelerated achievement of Ireland's renewable energy and legally binding decarbonisation objectives.

For the avoidance of doubt, Government policy recognises that floating offshore wind is an important emerging technology, which is expected to make a significant contribution towards meeting Ireland's future medium- and long-term renewable energy objectives, most significantly within deeper waters beyond the technological capabilities for fixed offshore wind. Future DMAPs to be established in the coming years will therefore identify prospective marine areas for deployment of this technology beyond 2030. Government will further establish two working groups to aid the accelerated emergence of floating offshore wind in Ireland in these future DMAPs, comprising a State-Industry forum to facilitate collaborative engagement and guide relevant elements of the ORE Future Framework policy statement, and an additional technical group focused on delivering a floating offshore wind demonstrator project.

3.4 Draft DMAP Maritime Areas for Fixed Offshore Wind Deployment

The preparation of the draft SC-DMAP has taken place in accordance with the provisions of the MAP Act and the objectives of the NMPF. This has involved applying an ecosystem-based approach in the identification of the most appropriate maritime areas for future ORE projects within the SC-DMAP area. The ecosystem-based approach has further provided that the draft Plan has been established with regard to other marine users and maritime activities, such as commercial fisheries, as well as the protection of the marine environment and biodiversity.

Technological constraints and the existence of a supply chain that can deliver offshore wind deployments in a timely manner have informed the extent of the marine space within which fixed offshore wind can potentially be located. However, it is important to note that the ecosystem-based approach provides that potential ORE project development costs represent only one of a much wider number of constraints, including environmental considerations, that have informed the preparation of the draft SC-DMAP. In this respect, the draft SC-DMAP places significant restrictions on the extent of future ORE development which may only take place in the four identified Maritime Areas. This approach will achieve the objectives of accelerating ORE development, while at the same time avoiding and minimising associated adverse impacts, and in particular potential adverse impacts on the environment, biodiversity and on other existing marine users.

The methodology used to identify these Maritime Areas is outlined in greater detail in the background report 'South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan: Marine Area Identification - Report for the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications' April 2024 which is published alongside the draft SC-DMAP.[2]

[2] Available at gov.ie/southcoastdmap

It is important to note that the methodology that has determined the identification of specific maritime areas for future fixed offshore wind deployments in the draft SC-DMAP area reflects the unique characteristics of this wider marine space off the South Coast of Ireland. While it is anticipated that future DMAPs will be established according to a similar methodology, some divergences are expected, in particular in relation to the siting of areas for ORE, which will *inter alia* be contingent on sea-depths, sea-bed conditions, technological advances and supply chain evolution.

Maritime Areas A to D

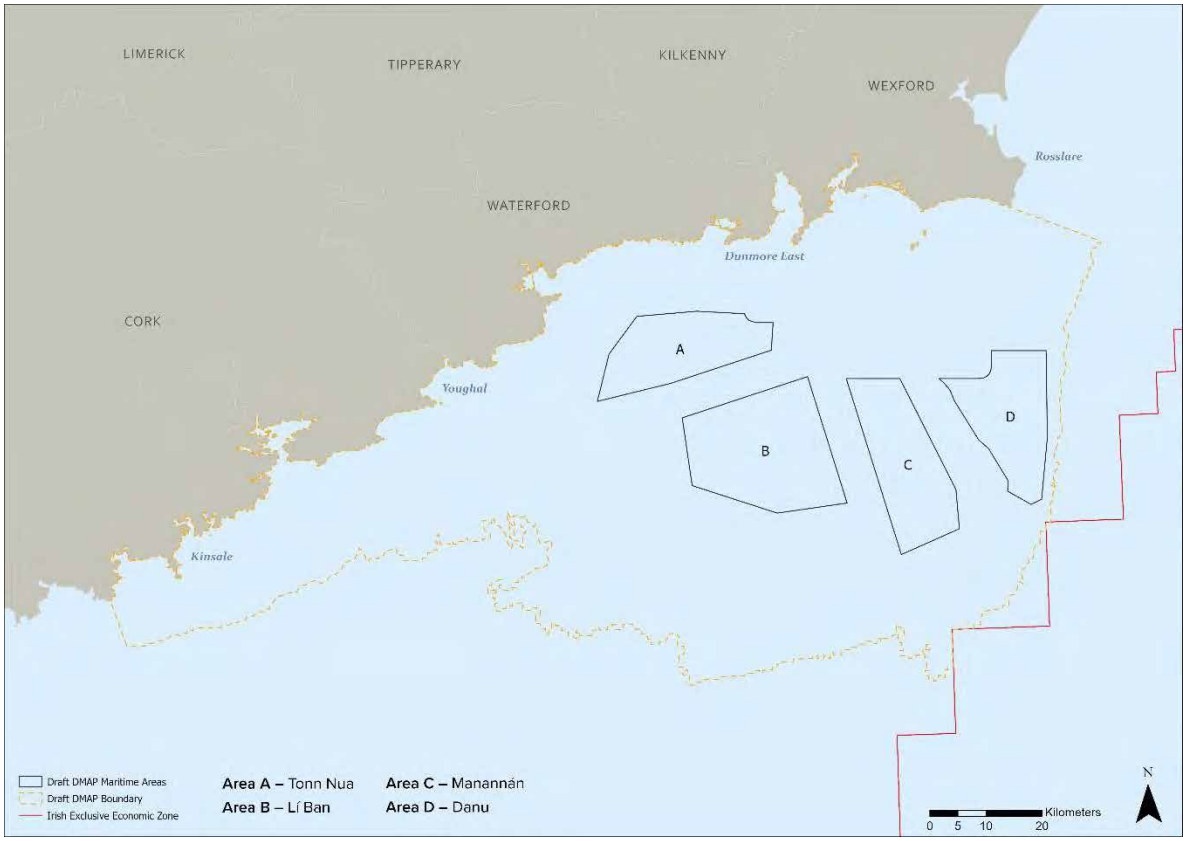


Figure 1: Maritime Areas A to D proposed for offshore wind development in the SC-DMAP

The draft SC-DMAP identifies four Maritime Areas for proposed future deployments of both grid connected and non-grid connected ORE. While these areas are identified as being suitable for future ORE development, they are sufficiently large areas to allow for future spatial refinement at project level which may be necessary in order to *inter alia* avoid and/or minimise adverse environmental impacts, maximise co-existence opportunities and to take account of technical considerations. While a development within Maritime Area A will aim to deploy by 2030 or as soon as feasible thereafter, subject to all necessary project level assessments and consents, further subsequent programmes of deployment will take place within Maritime Areas B, C and D area over the next approximate ten-year period through an orderly, strategic and managed process of development.

In addition to being confined to Maritime Areas A to D, ORE development within the SC-DMAP area will be regulated by the policy objectives specified in this draft Plan. These policy objectives include extensive measures to ensure co-existence between ORE and other maritime users, as set out in Section 7 of this Plan, as well as policy objectives seeking to avoid, minimise and mitigate potential adverse environmental effects of proposed ORE development in these areas (and any associated transmission infrastructure), as set out in Section 6. In addition, all proposed offshore wind projects within the SC-DMAP area must obtain MACs and development permissions and comply with project level environmental assessments, including EIA, AA, and species protection, as required.

The timing, scale and precise location of future ORE developments within each of the proposed four Maritime Areas will ultimately be determined by a number of factors, including but not limited to the following:

- Environmental, technical and logistical considerations.
- The implementation and monitoring of the SC-DMAP.
- Measures identified in the Plan that are required to be implemented by proposed ORE projects.
- The availability of onshore transmission system capacity and/or alternative off-take solutions.

As outlined in more detail below, Maritime Area A is identified for the first proposed ORE development to take place within the SC-DMAP area, which will aim for deployment by 2030 or as soon as feasible thereafter. Subject to project level environmental assessment, and future MAC awards and development permissions by relevant competent authorities, it is intended that a fixed offshore wind deployment within Area A will have an installed capacity of approximately 900 MW, to be developed by the winner of Ireland's second offshore wind auction, known as ORESS 2.1. This auction is currently intended to commence in late 2024 or 2025.

In addition to the above, further subsequent programmes of deployment will take place within Maritime Areas B, C and D over the next decade through an orderly, strategic and managed process of development. The precise timing, process and methodology for MAC awards for Maritime Areas B to D will be determined by the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA), consistent with the relevant legislative provisions within the MAP Act. This may include the award of MACs through a 'competitive MAC award' process, pursuant to Sections 93 and 103 of the MAP Act on either a phased or non-phased basis.

In addition, development permission applications for ORE in Maritime Areas B, C and D should only be considered following the completion and subsequent analysis of Regional Level Surveys in respect of mobile/migratory species including birds, marine mammals and bats protected under the Habitats and Birds Directives (hereafter referred to as the Regional Level Surveys). This is a requirement in order to support the monitoring and implementation of the Plan and to inform the assessment of potential in-combination and cumulative impacts associated with offshore wind developments within these Areas at the project level. The scope

of the required Regional Level Survey works will be determined by the SC-DMAP Programme Implementation Board further to a recommendation by the Marine Ecosystems and Ornithology Working Group to be established as part of the governance structure for the SC-DMAP, and may be implemented by the State and / or by MAC holders in respect of Maritime Areas B, C and D. Further detail is out set out in Section 4 of the draft Plan.

The scale and location of future ORE developments within Maritime Areas B, C and D will therefore be informed by the outcome of these Regional Level Surveys, in addition to further project specific surveys, mitigation and assessments. For the avoidance of doubt, MAC awards under Part 4 of the MAP Act are not contingent on the implementation and outcome of the Regional Level Surveys.

Preliminary marine surveys and site investigations may also be carried out by MAC holders in respect of prospective ORE development in Maritime Areas A to D in addition to project level assessments. Applications by MAC holders for and the grant by MARA of licences to carry out such surveys and investigations under Part 5 of the MAP Act are similarly not contingent on the implementation and outcome of the Regional Level Surveys. Further policy objectives in respect of marine environmental surveys are set out in Section 4.

Maritime Area A

Area A is situated off the coast of County Waterford and encompasses a total marine area of 312.6 kilometres (km)². The distance to shore varies from between 12.2 km along the western boundary to 12.4 km along the northern boundary. Area A has a mean water depth of 57 metres (m), with a minimum water depth of 48 m and a maximum water depth of 69 m, giving an overall range of 21 m. The average wind speed in the area is estimated to be 10.4 m per second (s). With a typical density of 4.5 MW/km², a 900 MW development would use 65% of the total marine space within Area A. The spatial flexibility provided will allow for windfarm layout and project boundaries to be adjusted in accordance with further required measures identified in the draft DMAP in order to address potential adverse environmental impacts. However, the scale and location of this deployment will be contingent on a range of additional factors, including further project level environmental assessments and technical analysis.

Without prejudice to future applications and assessments for the award of MACs and development permission by relevant competent authorities, Area A is identified as the proposed location of a single fixed ORE deployment with an installed capacity of approximately 900 MW. It is proposed that this project will be developed by the winner of Ireland's second offshore wind auction, known as ORESS 2.1, currently scheduled to commence in late 2024 or 2025.

It is proposed that this single deployment within Area A will be directly connected to the onshore electricity transmission system at two separate existing onshore sub-stations at locations to be determined by EirGrid. Offshore and onshore transmission system infrastructure, including offshore sub-stations and export cables will be developed by EirGrid. It is intended that this development will aim for deployment by 2030, or as soon as feasible thereafter, in order to contribute to Ireland's legally binding target of reducing greenhouse gas

emissions by 51% by the end of this decade. This is contingent on any proposed ORE developer, as well as EirGrid, successfully attaining all project level MAC and development permissions, and adherence to the measures contained in the relevant policy objectives within the draft SC-DMAP area.

Maritime Area B

Area B is situated off the coast of County Waterford and has a total area of 486 km², with distances to shore varying between 49 km along the western boundary and 29 km along the northern boundary. Area B has a mean water depth of 71 m with a minimum water depth of 66 m and a maximum water depth of 76 m, giving an overall range of 10 m. The average wind speed in the area is estimated to be 10.4 m/s. An initial estimate is that this Maritime Area could potentially facilitate a fixed offshore wind project with a realistic installed capacity of between 1.4 to 2.0 GW. With a typical density of 4.5 MW/km², such a project would use 64 to 91% of the Area.

Maritime Area C

Area C is situated off the south coast of County Wexford and has a total area of 342 km². The distance to shore varies between 52 km along the western boundary and 27 km along the northern boundary. Area C has a mean water depth of 69 m with a minimum water depth of 64 m and a maximum water depth of 72 m, giving an overall range of 8 m. The average wind speed in the area is estimated to be 10.4 m/s. An initial estimate is that this Maritime Area could potentially facilitate a fixed offshore project with an installed capacity of 1 to 1.4 GW. This is based on a typical density of 4.5 MW/km², and utilisation of 65% to 91 % of the total Area.

Maritime Area D

Area D is situated off the south coast of County Wexford and has a total area of 304 km². The distance to shore varies between 52 km along the western boundary and 27 km along the northern boundary. Area D has a mean water depth of 67 m with a minimum water depth of 55 m and a maximum water depth of 78 m, giving an overall range of 23 m. The average wind speed in the area is 10.4 m/s. An initial estimate is that this Maritime Area could potentially facilitate a fixed offshore project with an installed capacity of 0.9 to 1.3 GW. With a typical density of 4.5 MW/km^2, such a project would use 65 to 95 % of the Area.

Policy Objectives for Maritime Areas (MA)

MA 1:

To support Ireland's legally binding climate objectives through enabling achievement of 5 GW of offshore wind by 2030, 20 GW by 2040, and 37 GW by 2050, by providing for the strategically managed and sustainable development of fixed offshore wind technology and associated offshore transmission system infrastructure within the SC-DMAP area. The

development of fixed offshore wind brought forward under this Plan is considered to be of strategic and national importance to the State.

MA 2:

That the development of ORE within the SC-DMAP area will exclusively relate to fixed offshore wind technology and may incorporate projects that are directly connected to the onshore electricity transmission system, as well as projects with alternative offtake solutions and therefore not connected to the onshore transmission system.

MA 3:

Maritime Area A will contain the first development of fixed offshore wind within the SC-DMAP area, to be developed by the winner of the ORESS 2.1 auction, which aims to deploy by 2030, or as soon as feasible thereafter, and will be connected to the onshore electricity system.

MA 4:

Following the SC-DMAP being made, the award of MACs in respect of proposed future ORE developments within Maritime Areas B, C, and D, should be granted according to timing, methodology and processes to be determined by MARA in accordance with the MAP Act.

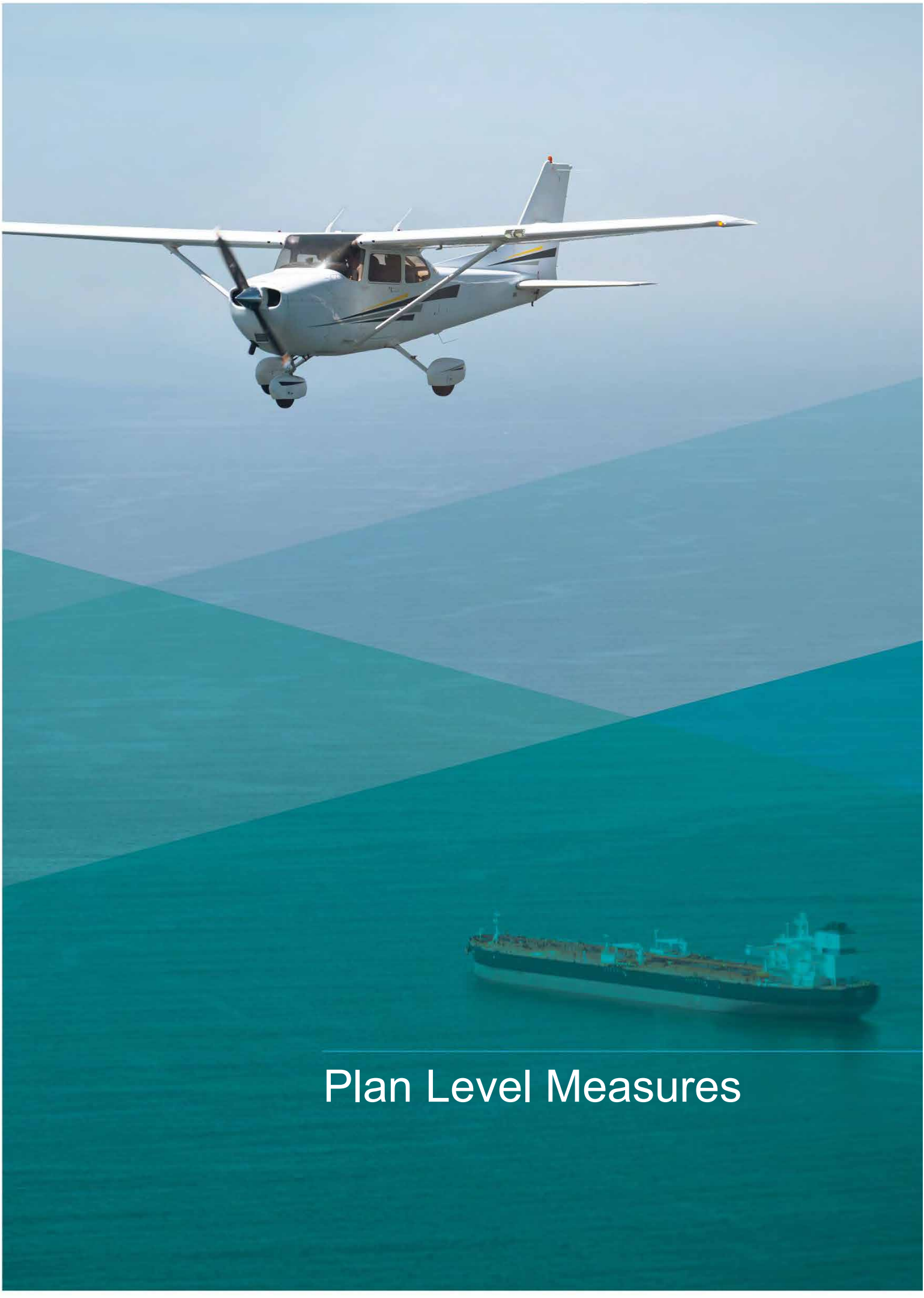
Proposed Names for SC-DMAP Maritime Areas

The following names are proposed for the Maritime Areas identified in the draft SC-DMAP:[3]

Maritime Area A	Tonn Nua	In English this translates to 'New Wave'. It symbolises the new approach the State is taking to designate areas for ORE to accelerate renewable energy while protecting the marine environment and biodiversity and promoting co-existence with other maritime activities.
Maritime Area B	Lí Ban	The Mermaid Saint. The Celtic Sea has a long association with mermaids and folklore.
Maritime Area C	Manannán	Sea God associated with Ireland and the Isle of Man. Also associated with the Tuatha Dé Danann.
Maritime Area D	Danu	The mother of Irish gods, believed to be the mother of the Tuatha Dé Danann people and the Celtic goddess of nature.

Table 1: Proposed Names for SC-DMAP Maritime Areas

[3] With thanks to the Department of Early and Medieval Irish, University College Cork, for their generous assistance with and suggestions for, the names of these proposed sites.



Plan Level Measures

4. Plan Level Measures

The identification of Maritime Areas A, B, C and D within which prospective future ORE developments may take place has sought to avoid and minimise potential associated adverse environmental impacts, including impacts on biodiversity, EU Natura 2000 sites, and other existing marine users. This has taken place through the comprehensive environmental constraints analysis and constraints mapping exercise which has informed the identification of these Maritime Areas, as discussed in further detail in the background report 'South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan: Maritime Area Identification'.

In addition to the above, proposed future developments of ORE and associated transmission infrastructure within the draft SC-DMAP area will be subject to robust project level environmental assessment at the development permission application stage, including EIA and AA as required. This is provided for through existing statutory requirements and guidelines, and may include modelling to assess the impacts of the proposed development on migratory and foraging patterns of marine mammals, fish and birds. Further project specific measures may be identified at the development permission application stage. The suite of policy objectives included in the draft Plan, which will apply to all prospective developments in Areas A to D and associated transmission infrastructure, complement existing environmental regulations and policies and include policies in relation to Biodiversity and Marine Environment, and Co-Existence.

Project level application and assessment stage inherently delivers mitigation through the assessment of potential cumulative and in-combination environmental impacts at project level EIA and AA including in respect of Natura 2000 sites. However, it is recognised that the assessment of cumulative impacts will be a particularly important feature of the planning and environmental assessment of proposed ORE projects across Maritime Areas B, C and D, particularly with respect to species protection, in circumstances where the in-combination effects with existing and/or permitted ORE projects in Maritime Area A will need to be assessed (together with any other existing and/or permitted ORE projects in the remaining areas B to D). Accordingly, project level environmental assessment will be supported through Plan Level measures, which will apply to prospective developments of ORE in Maritime Areas B, C and D. For the purposes of the implementation and monitoring of the SC-DMAP and to support cumulative and in-combination assessments at project level for development permission applications within Maritime Areas B, C and D, the draft Plan provides for additional Regional Level Surveys to be carried out within the draft SC-DMAP area.

The outcome of these Regional Level Surveys will inform the appropriate scale and location of proposed ORE developments within Maritime Areas B, C and D and subsequent development permission applications submitted by MAC holders for these Maritime Areas. It is however important to emphasise that these Regional Survey activities are intended to support, rather than replace, all necessary project level assessments to be carried out by MAC holders and developers of proposed ORE in Maritime Areas B, C and D. The outcome of these assessments, including cumulative impact assessment, will ultimately inform, and supplement

the information to inform, whether permission should be granted for the projects as proposed in these Areas.

The scope and timing of this Regional Level Survey activity will be decided by the SC-DMAP Implementation Programme Board, to be established within six months of the establishment of the SC-DMAP. This decision will in turn be informed by advice and recommendations from the Marine Ecosystems and Ornithology Working Group. The SC-DMAP Implementation Programme Board may determine that the required Regional Level Survey activity may be implemented by either the State, MAC holders (on a joint or collaborative basis), or a combination of the State and MAC holders. However, it is a requirement of the draft Plan that development permission applications for ORE development in Maritime Areas B, C and D will be informed by the outcome of these Regional Level Surveys. Development permission applications in these Maritime Areas should not therefore be submitted or considered until these surveys have been completed and the results of the surveys made available.

Given these requirements, it is also an objective of the draft Plan that any licence application that may need to be made to MARA under Part 5 of the MAP Act for the purposes of these Regional Level Surveys should be treated as priority, subject to compliance with Part 5 of the MAP Act and any relevant regulations.

In addition, it is expected that individual ORE developers will also wish to undertake project-specific marine environmental surveys for the purposes of site investigation and/or in support of an application for development permission, including both pre-planning and pre-construction surveys. It is, therefore, also an objective of the draft Plan that licence applications to MARA by MAC holders in Maritime Areas A to D for the purposes of any such project-specific surveys in the draft SC-DMAP area should also be treated as priority.

For the avoidance of doubt, nothing in this Plan is intended to or shall be deemed to fetter MARA's discretion to grant or refuse a licence application, in accordance with Part 5 of the MAP Act, or to grant a licence with such conditions as the MARA sees fit.

Data Repository

The SC-DMAP Implementation Programme Board will coordinate a data repository for the SC-DMAP including a common, shared Geographical Information System (GIS) data repository for Plan and project level data. In line with the principle "collect once, use often", the output of the Regional Level Survey activities will be added to this GIS data repository. Other Government Departments and State bodies may also contribute to the GIS data repository. There will be opportunities for strengthened data sharing trough DECC's role implementing the EU INSPIRE Directive which aims to standardise geospatial environmental information among public sector organisations. Data in this repository will be held by or on behalf of DECC and will be made available for use by all Government Departments, State bodies, project applicants, environmental NGOs and the public generally. In addition, MAC and development

permission holders for Maritime Areas A, B, C and D are required to share data that has been obtained pursuant to a licence or authorisation granted by the State, or referred to or relied upon in a development application (where possible having regard to third party copyright and other legal restrictions), for the GIS data repository. The data repository will also endeavour to maintain an up-to-date list of plans and projects relevant to cumulative and in-combination assessment of ORE development and associated development in the SC-DMAP area and access to relevant databases to identify relevant plans and projects.

Project Pre-Consent Preliminary Survey Requirements and Guidance

To further support and inform development permission applications and assessments for ORE development in Maritime Areas A to D, and associated transmission infrastructure in the wider SC-DMAP area, Appendix B provides a summary table, informed by the SC-DMAP SEA, of typical offshore pre-consent surveys required at project level. Development permission applications in Maritime Areas A to D should have regard to the relevant survey requirements and guidance in Appendix B.

Policy Objectives for Mitigation (MI)

MI 1:

(a) Applications for development of ORE in Areas B – D and associated transmission infrastructure, should only be submitted to and considered by the planning authority when the data from completed Regional Level Surveys is available to inform the project level EIA and AA in-combination and cumulative assessments. The scope of the Regional Level Surveys, and a decision regarding whether they will be carried out by the State, MAC holders, or both, will be determined by the DMAP Implementation Programme Board.

(b) Within 6 months of the SC DMAP being made, DECC will establish the SC-DMAP Implementation Programme Board to agree the scope of Regional Level Surveys and the mechanism for making such data accessible via a GIS Data Repository to be established as an implementation action of the SC-DMAP.

(c) Proposed ORE developments and associated transmission infrastructure should use data collected through the GIS Data Repository to support project level EIA and AA assessments as this data is completed and made accessible.

MI 2:

At the project level, all applications for development consents for ORE projects and transmission infrastructure emanating from any SC-DMAP policy objective should have regard to the relevant pre-consent survey requirements and guidance set out in Appendix B. Applications for development consent that may give rise to likely significant effects on the environment should be accompanied by one or more of the following, as relevant:

- Ecological Impact Assessment Report.
- Environmental Report.
- Environmental Impact Assessment Report if required under the relevant legislation (statutory document).
- Natura Impact Statement if required under the relevant legislation (statutory document).
- Article 12 (Habitats Directive) Assessment on Annex IV species.
- Article 5 (Birds Directive) Assessment on wild or migratory bird species.
- An assessment of any proposed derogation from the requirements of the Habitats or Birds Directives.

MI 3:

Any Licence application that may need to be made to MARA under Part 5 of the MAP Act for the purposes of carrying out the Regional Level Surveys, as well as Licence applications by MAC holders in Areas A to D for the purposes of ORE project-specific site investigations and marine environmental surveys in the SC-DMAP area, should be treated as priority by MARA, subject to compliance with Part 5 of the MAP Act and any relevant regulations.

Implementation, Governance and Monitoring

5. Implementation, Governance and Monitoring

The ecosystem-based approach to SC-DMAP

The ecosystem-based approach considers environmental, economic and social data, evidence and information to support sustainable development and promotion of the co-existence of relevant activities and uses. The principles of the ecosystem-based approach can be organised into three broad themes:

1. Capturing the integrity, functioning and dynamics of marine ecosystems.
2. Incorporating human activities and their potential ecosystem effects along with their socio-economic considerations.
3. Organising the MSP process with regard to governance and management.

The process to establish the SC-DMAP is taking place according to the ecosystem-based approach in making spatial and policy assessments based on ecological and socio-economic considerations, and by involving stakeholders and the public throughout the process. The ecosystem-based approach can be seen, in particular, through the process for identifying the Maritime Areas within which ORE may take place. As part of the constraints mapping and the SEA processes which analysed data from environmental, economic and social activities to assess the interactions and impacts between fixed offshore wind and associated infrastructure and activities and the marine environment within the SC-DMAP area. This has led to integrated consideration of these activities in the development of the SC-DMAP. The marine environment and protection of biodiversity has been central to those processes. For more information on these processes see Section 3 and Section 6.

Governance

The draft Plan incorporates a framework for a governance structure which will oversee and monitor the implementation of the SC-DMAP. The governance structure will be completed and established within six months following the making of the SC-DMAP.

As the Competent Authority for the SC-DMAP, the MECC will head the governance structure for the SC-DMAP. On behalf of the Minister, DECC will lead on the implementation of the SC-DMAP, with input as needed from relevant Government Departments, State agencies and other stakeholders. The Minister will be further supported by a SC-DMAP Implementation Programme Board. DECC will lead this Board with support and input, as required, from relevant key stakeholders such as MARA.

The key tasks for DECC as the lead implementation body will include:

- To ensure the effective and strategic implementation of the SC-DMAP policy objectives and plan level measures.
- To continually monitor and evaluate the implementation of the SC-DMAP including its environmental impact.
- To advise and make recommendations to the Competent Authority (the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications) for amending and reviewing the SC-DMAP and any corrective action arising from monitoring the implementation of the Plan.
- To report into the cross-departmental Offshore Wind Delivery Taskforce.
- To ascertain key learnings from the implementation and monitoring of the SC-DMAP for inclusion into the process for developing future ORE DMAPs.
- To contribute to national implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD).
- To contribute to an increased understanding of the impacts of climate change on our marine and coastal environment to inform action and decision-making for mitigation, resilience and adaptation.

The SC-DMAP Implementation Programme Board will be further supported in its work by a Marine Ecosystems and Ornithology Working Group. This Working Group will include biodiversity representatives such as the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, which has responsibility for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), National Parks and Wildlife and the Marine Institute (MI). It will also be supported by a Technical Working Group which will include key stakeholders such as MARA, EirGrid, SC-DMAP MAC holders and the Department of Transport (ports).

The SC-DMAP Implementation Programme Board will convene and chair a bi-annual meeting of all the governance groups for the SC-DMAP within a broad Collaborative Forum. The Collaborative Forum will facilitate discussions on the implementation of the Plan, including the development of ORE and associated infrastructure projects within the SC-DMAP area and a coordinated approach to relevant marine environment and biodiversity matters, such as surveys and cumulative and in-combination assessments. While the Collaborative Forum will meet bi-annually, it is anticipated that it will meet more regularly in the years immediately following the making of the SC-DMAP.

The governance structure for the SC-DMAP will participate and, where relevant, coordinate with existing governance structures relevant to ORE such as the NMPF governance structure, the Offshore Wind Delivery Taskforce and Project Ireland Marine 2040. It is also anticipated that the SC-DMAP Implementation Programme Board will also feed into the governance model for Project Ireland Marine 2040, a marine governance group, working under the broader Project Ireland delivery board, to provide leadership and oversight for NMPF implementation.

Further information on the framework of the proposed Governance Structure of the SC-DMAP including some of the key responsibilities is outlined in Table 1.:

SC-DMAP Governance Structure

Title	Membership	Responsibilities
Competent Authority	Minister for ECC	• To carry out a review of the SC-DMAP in accordance with section 26 of the MAP Act. • To make any amendments to the SC-DMAP in accordance with section 28 of the MAP Act. • To prepare and issue any policy directives for the purpose of the SC-DMAP in accordance with section 8 of the MAP Act. • To take any corrective action arising from monitoring of the SC-DMAP, having taken into consideration any recommendations from the SC-DMAP Implementation Programme Board and sectoral working groups. • To collate learnings from the implementation and monitoring of the SC-DMAP for inclusion into the process for developing future ORE DMAPs.
SC-DMAP Implementation Programme Board	DECC; Key stakeholders	• To provide recommendations to the Competent Authority. • To assign human, capital, and technical resources to ensure effective governance, as necessary. • To finalise the Implementation Plan and oversee the implementation of the SC-DMAP including mitigation and monitoring of the SC-DMAP. • To determine the scope of Regional Level Surveys and coordinate their implementation. • To coordinate a common, shared GIS data repository for the SC-DMAP. • To convene, and chair, bi-annual meetings of all SC-DMAP governance groups within a single 'collaborative forum'. • To establish other sectoral subgroups where it considers it necessary.
Marine Ecosystems and Ornithology Working Group	DECC; biodiversity representatives;	• To submit recommendations to the SC-DMAP Implementation Programme Board. • To develop and recommend the Implementation Plan to monitor the implementation of the SC-DMAP.

		• To recommend the scope of the required Regional Level Surveys. • To monitor relevant future National e.g. MPAs and European e.g. Natura 2000 designations relevant to the SC-DMAP.
Technical Working Group	DECC; Key stakeholders	• To discuss development of transmission infrastructure. • To share data gathered with the GIS data repository.
Other sectoral subgroups	DECC; Key Stakeholders	• The SC-DMAP Implementation Programme Board may establish other sectoral subgroups where it considers it necessary.

Table 2: SC-DMAP Governance Structure

Implementation

Effective implementation and monitoring will be key to the success of the SC-DMAP. Implementation of the SC-DMAP will involve the following:

- The adoption of the policy objectives set out in this document in the development of ORE.
- The formal establishment of the governance structure outlined above for the implementation and monitoring of the Plan.
- The scoping and carrying out of the Regional Level Surveys to support cumulative and in-combination assessments at project level for development permission applications within Maritime Areas B, C and D.
- The development of an Implementation Plan for the SC-DMAP to provide for ongoing monitoring of progress of the Plan against environmental, economic and social indicators.
- The establishment of a dedicated offshore wind-maritime research programme to monitor any possible discernible interactions between the development of offshore wind and transmission infrastructure and commercially valuable fish species and stock levels, as well as associated ecosystems in the SC-DMAP.
- The use of data from conditions to MACs and developments permissions as part of the Maritime Authorisation Database provided for in the MAP Act.

As with the development of the SC-DMAP itself, implementation of the Plan will be done through extensive collaboration across Government, Marine State Bodies and Agencies and the public, particularly coastal and marine communities and developers of projects within the SC-DMAP area. For example, it is anticipated that any areas for further research in relation to

the impacts of offshore wind on biodiversity identified in the Implementation Plan will facilitate more focused research calls from funding bodies.

An Implementation Plan will be developed by the Marine Ecosystems and Ornithology Working Group and finalised by the SC-DMAP Implementation Programme Board within one year following the making of the SC-DMAP. The Implementation Plan will provide for ongoing monitoring of progress of the Plan against environmental, economic and social indicators. It will also incorporate SEA monitoring requirements to monitor any identified significant environmental effects of implementation of the SC-DMAP in order, *inter alia*, to identify at an early-stage unforeseen adverse effects and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action.

Environmental monitoring

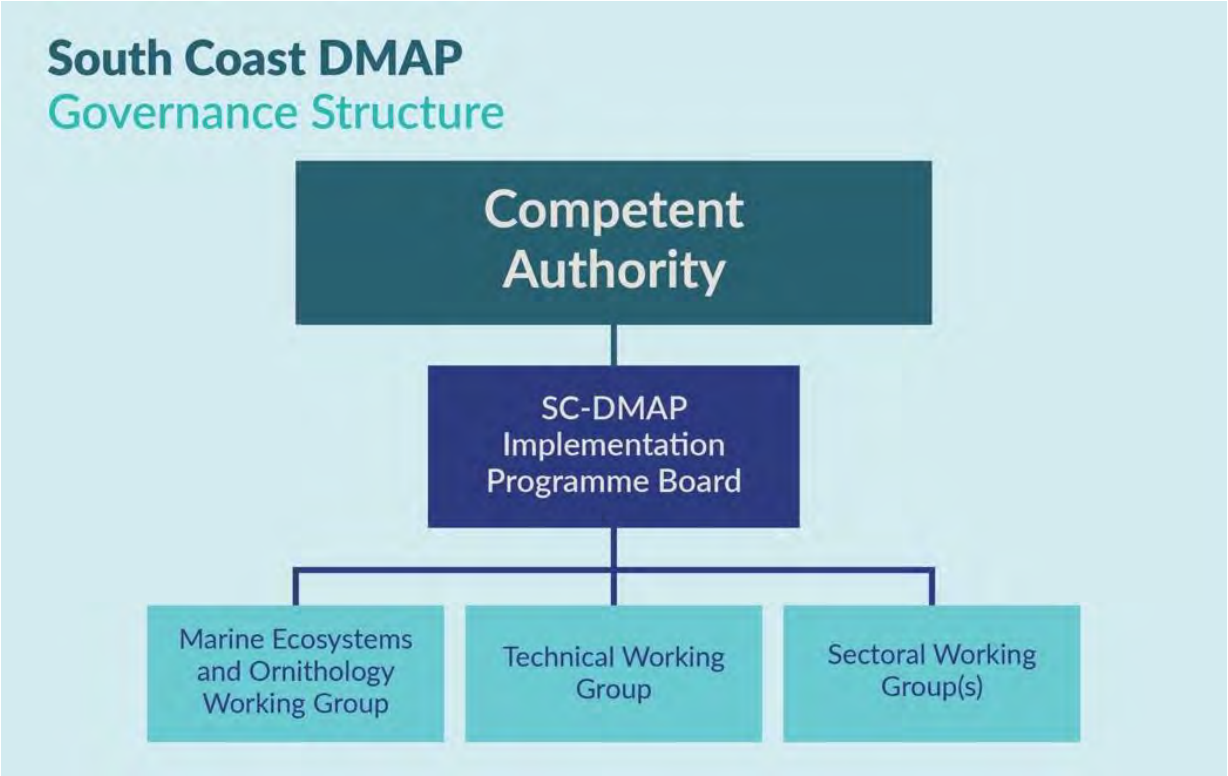
Environmental assessments have played a central role in the development of the draft SC-DMAP. They provide an environmental evidence and data baseline to inform the strategic direction for the collection of further priority environmental data over the coming years. The SEA will provide indicators to help monitor the potential effects of implementation of the SC-DMAP on the marine environment and biodiversity. This evidence base will be complemented over time by the relevant statutory environmental assessments that will assess the direct and indirect effects of offshore wind at project level. Environmental evidence and data collected at the project level will be provided to the State as part of the conditions for MACs and development permissions for projects within the SC-DMAP area.

In addition to the data collected at the project level, the SC-DMAP environmental baseline will be augmented through the implementation of the plan level measures identified in the SEA and AA processes, in particular the Regional Level Surveys. The augmented baseline will inform the implementation of the Plan, including the development permission processes for Marine Areas B, C, and D. For more information on the Regional Level Surveys see Section 4.

As part of the implementation and monitoring of the SC-DMAP, DECC will also fund the Marine Institute to develop a monitoring and research programme within the SC-DMAP area, in order to monitor whether there are changes to the marine ecosystem following the development of ORE. This programme will be based on international best practice. It will explore putative interactions between the development of ORE projects and the below water ecosystem (e.g., benthic and pelagic habitats) and any potential impacts/interactions with on fish species and stocks. The overall aim of the programme will be to collect robust scientific data before, during and after of the development of ORE in Irish waters, aiming to generate a more effective national level understanding of possible impacts on the wider marine environment. Relevant monitoring requirements will be identified in consultation with key stakeholders. The monitoring programme will inform the application of an ecosystem-based approach for the purpose of supporting proper planning and sustainable maritime usages. The new long-term datasets will also contribute to national assessment and reporting obligations for the marine environment, conservation and climate change.

Review and Amendment

The SC-DMAP will be formally reviewed in accordance with the relevant provisions of the MAP Act to ensure that it remains up-to-date and that it reflects the latest policy, environmental, technological and industrial developments. Reviews and possible amendments to the SC-DMAP may be triggered by significant environmental, technology or socio-economic developments and the wider policy and regulatory context.



Policy Objectives for Implementation, Governance and Monitoring (IGM)

IGM 1:

A governance structure to facilitate the implementation of the SC-DMAP will be established within six months following the making of the SC-DMAP, and will include the following:

- A SC-DMAP Implementation Programme Board, headed by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, which, *inter alia*, will: oversee the implementation of the SC-DMAP; agree the scope and coordination of Regional Levels Surveys to inform the project application assessment and development stage of Maritime Areas B to D; convene and chair a bi-annual meeting of all SC-DMAP governance groups within a single 'Collaborative Forum' to discuss all proposed ORE projects and enabling infrastructure to be brought forward under the Plan and cumulative and in-combination effects; and facilitate a data repository for the SC-DMAP including a common, shared, GIS data repository for Plan and project level data.
- A Marine Ecosystems and Ornithology Working Group whose role will include: advising the SC-DMAP Implementation Programme Board on the monitoring of and implementation of the SC-DMAP and recommending the scope of the Regional Level Surveys.

IGM 2:

Include biodiversity representatives as part of the governance framework for the implementation of the SC-DMAP to ensure that marine biodiversity objectives are central to the implementation and monitoring of the SC-DMAP and any remedial or corrective action required.

IGM 3:

To monitor the implementation the SC-DMAP an Implementation Plan will be developed within one year following the making of the SC-DMAP. It will incorporate SEA monitoring requirements to monitor any identified significant environmental effects of implementation of the SC-DMAP.

IGM 4:

Establish a dedicated offshore wind-maritime research programme in partnership with and managed by the MI.

IGM 5:

To support the Maritime Authorisation Database provided for in the MAP Act. MACs and development permissions for projects within the SC-DMAP area should include conditions requiring developers to gather data, including ecological data, to inform project level EIA and AA and data relevant to cumulative and in-combination assessment. Data gathered will be

submitted to MARA in a format to be determined by MARA within three months of being collected. The data will be added to a common, shared GIS data repository for use by the projects and Government Departments and State bodies.

Marine, Environment and Biodiversity

6. Marine, Environment and Biodiversity

The SC-DMAP is a key part of the State's response to climate change through its contribution to the transition to renewable energy sources. Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030 (NBAP) calls for a "Whole-of-Government, Whole-of Society" approach to the governance and conservation of biodiversity. As acknowledged in the NBAP, climate change is a growing driver of biodiversity loss including changes to the distribution of species and degradation of habitats. While the purpose of the draft Plan is to assist in the attainment of the NMPF's ORE policies, regard has been had to the State's environmental and biodiversity objectives and targets including the NBAP. An ecosystem-based approach has been used to develop the draft SC-DMAP including the extensive consideration of environmental features. The preservation and protection of the marine environment and biodiversity has been a key consideration in the development of the draft SC-DMAP, including resilience to climate change impacts.

Environmental features within the draft SC-DMAP Area

The geographical area of the draft SC-DMAP is approximately 8,813 km^2 in size, extending from the Administrative Boundary for local government areas on Ireland's South Coast boarding the northern boundary of the SC-DMAP area to the 80m depth contour and/or the edge of the Irish EEZ. The draft SC-DMAP further identifies four Maritime Areas within this geographical area in which future ORE developments may take place. The four Maritime Areas are of a sufficient size to enable the use of project level spatial flexibility that will allow for future micro-siting of individual ORE projects within each area in order to avoid, minimise or mitigate potential adverse environmental impacts.

Ireland's latest assessment under the MSFD found that, while Ireland's coastal and marine waters are generally clean and healthy, pressures persist including from increasing development in marine waters. The Water Quality in Ireland 2016–2021 report by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found that 80% of coastal and 38% of transitional water bodies have achieved or maintained at least Good ecological status under the under the Water Framework Directive.

Ireland has a high standard of air quality. The main activity affecting air quality in the marine environment is emissions from shipping. Through the sustainable development of ORE, the draft SC-DMAP will contribute to achieving Ireland's climate targets.

The following habitat types are present within the SC-DMAP area: reefs, estuaries, sandbanks, tidal mudflats and sandflats, large shallow inlets and bays and submarine structures made by leaking gases. Ireland's temperate waters are highly productive and provide a rich mosaic of marine life. Cetaceans such as whales, dolphins and harbour porpoise and pinnipeds e.g., grey seals have been recorded within the SC-DMAP area. The most common marine mammals that have been recorded include common harbour porpoise, fin

whale, minke whale, grey seal, harbour seal and leatherback turtle. All cetaceans recorded in the SC-DMAP area are listed on Annex II of the Habitats Directive which requires the designation of SACs where areas of importance for these species can be identified. Each of the habitat types and marine mammals found in the SC-DMAP area were incorporated within the environmental constraints analysis which informed the identification of the four Maritime Areas for ORE development within the SC-DMAP area. See the section 'Protected Sites' below for more information on protected sites and the draft SC-DMAP.

Fishing activity identified within the SEA SC-DMAP Study Area (which is larger than the SC-DMAP area)[4] includes two areas where net fishing occurs, two midwater trawl fishing areas, 14 areas where pot fishing occurs, 35 dredge fishing areas and 41 perriwinkle harvesting collecting sites. It further identified 105 licensed aquaculture sites, the majority are for Pacific Oyster farms, as well as two sites for seaweed harvesting. Spawning and/or nursery grounds are present within the SC-DMAP area for a variety of commercially valuable fish species. There is a partial overlap between the four Maritime Areas with the spawning areas of cod, haddock and whiting and with nursery grounds of haddock, hake, horse mackerel, mackerel, megrim and whiting, but not herring which requires very specific sediment types. An analysis carried out by the MI of the fishing activity and spawning and nursery grounds taking place in the four Maritime Areas within the SC-DMAP area noted that the potential impact to these areas is unlikely to be severe to the stocks as a whole. In addition, the four Maritime Areas are broad enough to provide for spatial flexibility in the micro siting of individual ORE developments within those areas to avoid, minimise or mitigate impacts including on spawning and/or nursery grounds. Furthermore, the implementation of the SC-DMAP will include a dedicated ORE-maritime research programme, to monitor any possible discernible interactions between the development of ORE and commercially valuable fish species and stock levels, as well as associated ecosystems in the Irish marine. See Section 7.1 for more information on co-existence with Seafood, Aquaculture and Fisheries and Section 5 for more information on the offshore wind-maritime research programme.

Maritime Area A is located between 12.2 km and 12.4 km off the coast. Maritime Areas B, C and D are located further from shore at 29-49 km for Maritime Area B and 27-52 km for both Maritime Areas C and D. As part of the ecosystem-based approach used to develop the draft Plan, the location of the four Maritime Areas for ORE has sought to avoid locations identified as being of high sensitivity. In doing so, it has considered the specific landscape characteristics of the coastline, the policies of the current County Development Plans including Seascape Character Assessments, where available, and specified protected views. As noted above, the four Maritime Areas are broad enough to provide for spatial flexibility in the micro siting of individual offshore wind farms within those areas to avoid, minimise or mitigate environmental impacts including visual impacts. Section 7.5 of the NMPF sets out policy and guidance for the consideration of landscape and seascape. All development proposals are required to give careful consideration to the impact of a development on seascape and landscape. A visualisation assessment to inform the design and layout of ORE projects is

[4] The SEA Study Area includes a buffer of 10 km from the Irish coastline to the onshore and an additional 30 km to the south from the draft SC-DMAP proposal area, and a further 40km to the westernmost edge.

required under the NMPF.[5] It also requires that visualisation assessments must be included as part of required statutory environmental assessments e.g., EIA and AA where required at planning stage for projects. The design and layout of the offshore windfarm should be modelled to mitigate impacts on landscape and seascape as part of visual assessments for ORE projects within the SC-DMAP area.

Iterative Plan Development

Following publication of the SC-DMAP Proposal in July 2023, an environmental constraints analysis was carried out on the SC-DMAP area. This analysis considered ecosystem goods and services including fisheries, designated sites, water quality, recreation and heritage. A Geographic Information System (GIS) was used to develop heat mapping to identify areas of high cumulative sensitivity. The environmental constraints analysis has enabled the avoidance of known ecologically important features such as protected sites in the draft SC-DMAP area. See Section 3 and background report 'South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan: Maritime Area Identification' for more information on the analysis of the marine area and identification of Maritime Areas A to D.[6]

As part of the iterative process to developing the draft Plan, environmental assessments are being carried out in parallel with its development. Measures identified through these on-going SEA and AA processes have been incorporated into the draft Plan, which has included the introduction of Regional Level Surveys and a common, shared GIS data repository set out in Section 4. Following the forthcoming public consultation on the draft Plan and environmental reports, the outcome of the consultation will be reviewed and assessed to inform the finalisation of the SC-DMAP. An overview of the integration of the SEA and AA processes with the development of the draft Plan is set out in Figure 2.

[5] NMPF (2021), Section 13 Energy – Offshore Renewable, ORE Policy 9
[6] Available at gov.ie/southcoastdmap

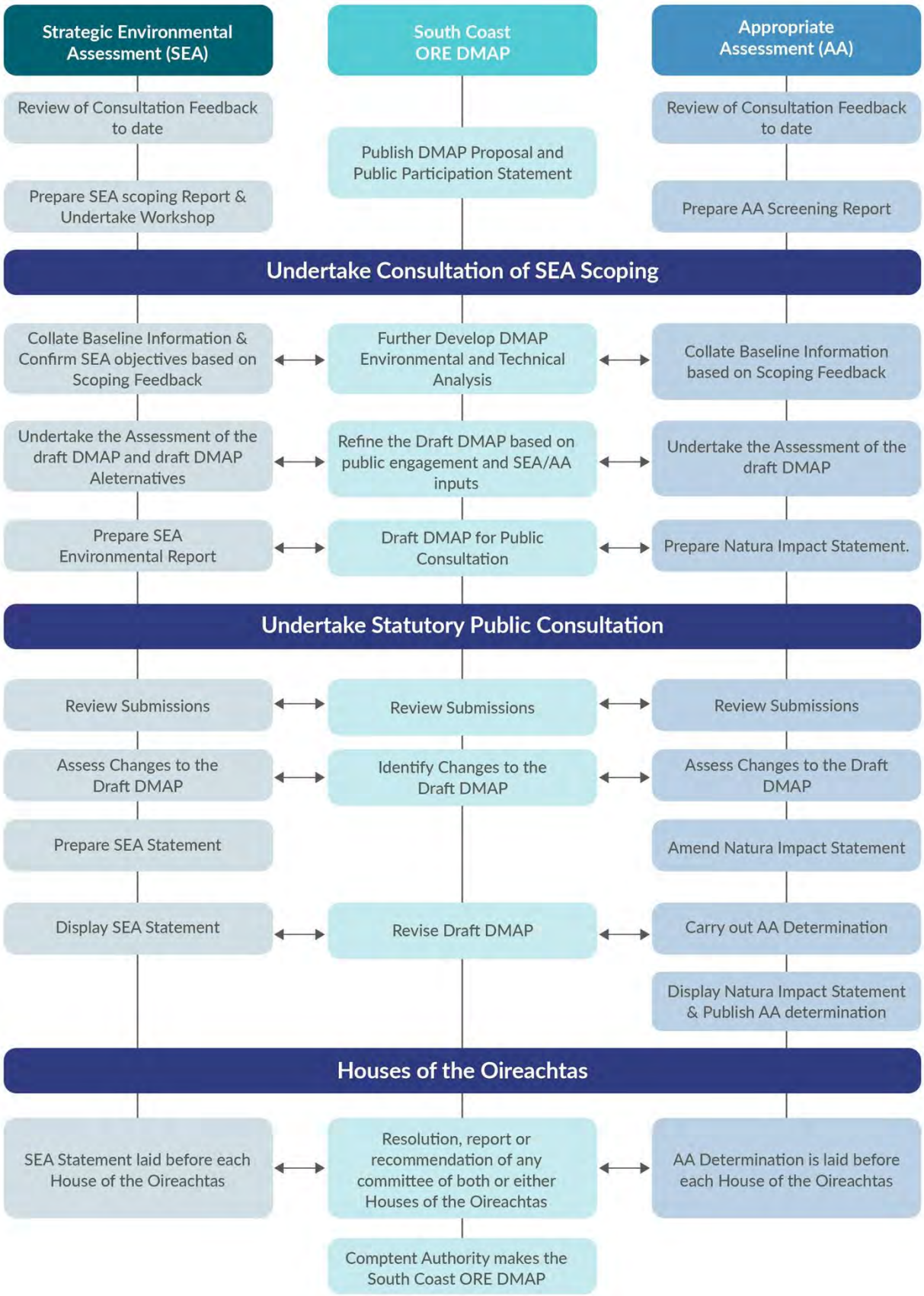


Figure 2: Summary of the iterative process for developing the draft SC-DMAP

The result of the iterative process for developing the draft SC-DMAP is a draft Plan which provides a framework for the sustainable development of ORE (fixed offshore wind) off the South Coast. The policy objectives in the draft Plan provide for both supporting Ireland's green energy transition while also recognising and supporting the State's national conservation objectives.

It is important to note that the policy objectives in the draft SC-DMAP are in addition to existing measures for the protection of the environment. They are a complement to existing environmental regulations and policies, including the statutory requirements for EIAs and AAs and the overarching environmental policies in the NMPF. There are several policies in the NMPF requiring projects to demonstrate that they will, in order of preference, a) avoid, b) minimise or c) mitigate impacts.

Protected sites

Protected marine sites in Ireland mainly consist of marine Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Birds and Habitats Directives (Natura designations). Natura designations were included in the area specific assessment carried out to identify the Maritime Areas in the draft SC-DMAP. The process for identifying the four Maritime Areas included removing the areas of highest cumulative sensitivity, prior to subsequently selecting the optimal areas for ORE deployment from the remaining marine space within the SC-DMAP area. It is important to note that this methodology has resulted in no overlap between the four Maritime Areas and protected sites within the SC-DMAP area, including SPAs and SACs, as well as the candidate SPA off the coast of Wexford announced by the Minister of State for Nature, Heritage and Electoral Reform on 11 January 2024.

As set out in the NMPF, protected marine sites can also include new types of protected areas for species or habitats or ecosystem services to which the MSFD is applicable, and which go beyond Ireland's network of Natura 2000 sites established under the EU Birds and Habitats Directives. While Ireland does not currently have a legal definition or statutory instrument that makes provision for MPAs in Ireland's maritime area, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage is at an advanced stage of developing legislation to enable the designation and management of MPAs in accordance with Ireland's national and international commitments. Formally designated MPAs are therefore expected to form the mainstay of such newly protected sites in the future.

In advance of the new MPA legislation being enacted, the MPA Advisory Group of independent experts is currently carrying out an Ecological Sensitivity Analysis of the Celtic Sea. This analysis, which follows a similar study of the Irish Sea published in June 2023, will help to inform future designations of MPAs within the Celtic Sea as underpinned by the MPA legislation, once enacted. DECC has engaged with the MPA Advisory Group to provide it with information and data from the draft SC-DMAP which is relevant to its ecological sensitivity analysis, including the locations of the four Maritime Areas proposed for ORE development.

Marine Ecosystems and Ornithology Working Group

The governance structure for the SC-DMAP will include a Marine Ecosystems and Ornithology Working Group. This Working Group will assist in monitoring the implementation of the SC-DMAP from an environmental perspective including with regard to the emergence of future protected sites relevant to the Plan. It will also make recommendations to the SC-DMAP Implementation Programme Board, led by DECC, regarding the scope of the Regional Level Surveys in respect of mobile/migratory species including birds, mammals and bats. The outputs from which will support the implementation and monitoring of the SC-DMAP and inform cumulative and in-combination assessments at project level for development permission applications within Maritime Areas B, C and D. Environmental data gathered from these Regional Level Surveys, as well as project level surveys that have been obtained pursuant to a licence or authorisation granted by the State, or referred to or relied upon in a development application will be added to a common, shared GIS data repository. As noted in Section 4, data held in this repository will be available for use by all Government Departments, State bodies, project applicants, environmental NGOs and the public generally. For more information on the governance structure see Section 5.

Policy Objectives for Overarching Environmental Protection (OEP)

OEP 1:

Development permission applications for development for ORE and associated infrastructure within the SC-DMAP area should have regard as appropriate to Guidelines issued under section 7 of the MAP Act including forthcoming Marine Planning Guidelines for ORE. Applications should also include, where relevant, the proposed management plans listed at Appendix C. The proposed management plans will then form part of the public consultation and assessment process and final plans may be submitted for approval by the consenting authority prior to construction.

OEP 2:

To ensure robust project assessments and to contribute to best practice for projects brought forward under the Plan, environmental constraints such as the presence of designated sites, the attainment of good environmental status and the processes and functions necessary to ensure no adverse effects on the integrity of European Sites should be integrated in to all stages of decision making including but not limited to constraints analysis, route and site selection, and project level assessment for EIAR and NIS preparation. If it cannot be concluded that a plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of European Sites following mitigation, it will be a matter for the competent authority to determine if permission should be granted in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive and all necessary compensatory measures must be taken to ensure the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 network is protected.

OEP 3:

To contribute to the ecological enhancement of the marine environment, projects should, through a project-specific Nature Enhancement and Rehabilitation Plan, provide for ecological enhancement and recovery of the marine environment that goes beyond measures required for project mitigation and which contribute to European, national and local biodiversity policies, including any National Nature Restoration Plan, and are commensurate with and proportional to the scale/footprint and potential environmental effect of the project. Projects which incorporate features that enhance or facilitate species adaptation or migration, or natural native habitat connectivity will be supported, subject to the outcome of statutory environmental assessment processes and subsequent decision by the competent authority, and where they contribute to the policy objectives of this SC-DMAP.

Policy Objectives for Biodiversity (B)

B 1:

Applications for development permission should have regard to the following guidance and plans, and updates thereof, set out in Appendix D.

Policy Objectives for Protected Marine Sites (MS)

MS 1:

To ensure that statutory reviews of the SC-DMAP and projects brought forward under this Plan must consider the evolution of baseline conditions, which includes additional future national protected sites e.g., Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and European Sites e.g., marine SPAs and SACs and data from regional level survey activities and projects. This augmented baseline should inform statutory environmental assessment processes including cumulative and in-combination assessment with respect to EIA and AA of projects under the plan.

Policy Objectives for Water Quality (WQ)

WQ 1:

To protect and improve water quality, projects should carry out comparative analysis of routes and installation techniques, including the use of modelling to determine the scale of sediment plume relative to the sensitivity of the environmental receptors e.g., wading birds or aquaculture sites.

Policy Objectives for Marine Litter (ML)

ML 1:

Proposals for projects should comply with Marine Litter Policy 1 set out within the NMPF, specifically priority should be given within project design to proposals that, in order of preference, facilitate the prevention, reuse and recycling of waste. Where waste is expected to be generated a waste management plan should be in place to prioritise a hierarchy of avoid, minimise, mitigate in relation to marine litter. The waste management plan should explicitly

address wastes and litter generated during enabling, construction, operation and decommissioning of development.

ML 2:

Projects brought forward under this Plan should minimise electromagnetic field (EMF) in the marine environment, including where necessary, through project design mitigation e.g., prioritisation of cable burial where possible. Projects should gather evidence to inform the project level impact assessment.

Policy Objectives for Underwater Noise (UN)

UN 1:

Applications for projects should demonstrate that they have had regard to guidance relating to underwater noise including NPWS Guidance to Manage the Risk to Marine Mammals from Man-made Sound Sources in Irish Waters and updates thereof and propose appropriate mitigation measures for any activity that may generate underwater noise. Until such time as the NPWS guidance is updated projects should have regard to the underlying research this guidance is based on, and updates to this research.

UN 2:

To minimise the risk of disturbance on biodiversity and the cumulative effects of underwater noise along with other pressures such as increased sedimentation, survey and installation works should, so far as possible, be programmed to be carried out at separate times to reduce potential for noisy or other disturbing activities to occur at the same time and which could affect the same area.

UN 3:

To support MSFD descriptor 11 that the introduction of offshore renewable energy, including underwater noise is at levels that do not adversely affect the marine environment. Projects should consider techniques such as adjusting the parameters of the pile stroke, soft-start piling activities, avoiding piling in periods of ecological importance, delaying piling if mammals are spotted, or using acoustic deterrent devices or sound barriers (where suitable) to avoid, minimise or mitigate to reduce those impacts on marine fauna. Best available techniques should be used to reflect the emerging evidence base on noise abatement for offshore wind developments in water greater than 45m.

Policy Objectives Air Quality (AQ)

AQ 1:

To reduce a reliance on fossil fuels, and associated emissions and air pollution. Projects should comply with existing regulatory and policy commitments to offshore and vessel management air pollution protocols as set out in MARPOL and Ireland's enacting legislation. Installation and Maintenance vessels should use alternative lower emission fuels and more efficient transport strategies, where possible.

Policy Objectives Climate Change (CC)

CC 1:

To support Ireland's climate and renewable energy objectives by providing for ORE development. In addition to delivering renewable energy, projects should demonstrate the integration of a multi-benefit approach into their project, which may include the delivery of carbon sequestration, biodiversity enhancement, coastal management, water quality management or other ecosystem services through the project design and/or mitigation.

CC2:

To support the role played by the marine environment in carbon storage and carbon sequestration, development in the SC-DMAP area should avoid impacts on carbon storage and carbon sequestration and include consideration of the integrity of European sites. Project-specific impacts on carbon sequestration resources, biodiversity enhancement, managing coastal erosion e.g., through stabilising sediment and opportunities for carbon sequestration should be considered and any losses in storage or sequestration should be quantified and compensated for.

Co-existence

7. Co-existence

The NMPF recognises that a significant volume of maritime activity and usage is concentrated within increasingly congested coastal areas. This is reflected at a regional level within the geographical area of the SC-DMAP, which supports multiple economic and social activities, including commercial fishing, seafood production and tourism, as well providing considerable ecological benefits. Effective Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) will therefore be critical to ensuring the continued orderly and sustainable development of our seas and maritime sectors, including opportunities for the co-existence and co-location of different marine activities and biodiversity. The introduction of a new plan-led regime for future ORE development provides a significant opportunity to ensure that successful coexistence between ORE and other maritime uses, as well as marine biodiversity, is facilitated and promoted to the greatest extent possible, informed by extensive engagement and consultation with local communities.

Co-existence is defined in Ireland's National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) as 'multiple developments, activities or maritime uses existing together or close to each other in the same area and / or at the same time'.

Co-location, considered to be a subset of coexistence, can be defined as where two or more developments, activities or uses are actively managed together in the same place, sharing the same footprint or area within the marine environment. 'Footprint' can include both the physical location of a development or activity, e.g., a built structure/windfarm, and a wider area associated with the development or activity, e.g., a surrounding DMAP area.

The facilitation and promotion of coexistence and co-location of ORE with other maritime usages and activities has therefore been central to the preparation of the draft SC-DMAP. To maximise coexistence opportunities to as great an extent as possible, the draft Plan provides that mandatory permanent exclusions on additional activities or usages within Maritime Areas identified for future ORE development should be not imposed save relating to safety or in other exceptional circumstances. Accordingly, MACs should, where possible, be granted to prospective ORE and transmission system developers on a non-exclusive basis, noting that this is ultimately a matter for MARA to determine on a case-by-case basis. The need for the relevant State authority to establish possible navigational safety exclusion zones in proximity to ORE turbines and offshore transmission substations is also recognised.

Policy Objectives for Co-existence (CO)

CO 1:

That, in order to promote co-existence between ORE and other existing and future uses within the SC-DMAP area, permanent exclusions on activities or usages around or within ORE or transmission infrastructure located within the SC-DMAP area should be avoided where

possible, save relating to safety or in other exceptional circumstances where considered warranted by MARA or statutory authorities in accordance with their respective roles. The likely requirement for temporary exclusion zones during periods of offshore infrastructure construction, maintenance and decommissioning is recognised. Any such restrictions should, where possible, endeavour to avoid adverse impacts on other maritime users.

CO 2:

Developers of ORE projects and transmission infrastructure shall accurately map their respective development sites, including electricity export and inter-array cables as laid post development. This location and coordinate data shall be made available to MARA and other maritime users, including fishers, in a format that can be downloaded on navigation systems including a suitable plotter format which can be installed within fishing vessels.

7.1 Co-existence with Aquaculture, Seafood and Fisheries

The NMPF recognises the important role of seafood production, fishing and aquaculture as a source of economic and employment activity, most notably within those coastal communities which are more economically dependent on these activities than alternative sources of employment. In addition to economic considerations, it is recognised that fishing may be intrinsically linked with the cultural identity of many coastal communities. In line with the NMPF, the economic, social and cultural significance attached to commercial fishing within many coastal communities along the South Coast of Ireland has informed and influenced the preparation of the draft SC-DMAP. This has taken place through comprehensive and continued engagement by Government with members of the seafood and fishing community since summer 2023, efforts to maximise opportunities for co-existence, and avoiding overlap between the most significant commercial fishing grounds and fish spawning/nursery grounds with Maritime Areas identified for future ORE development to as great an extent as possible. This has been based on analysis of best available data, noting that there is limited precise spatial data with regard to the location of fishing activities of smaller vessels which have no statutory obligation to carry vessel monitoring systems (VMS) and are at present not widely used by these smaller vessels in the DMAP area. This further emphasises the importance of continued engagement and participation by all parties.

As noted, the process of preparing the draft Plan has taken place through significant engagement with the fishing and seafood sector, facilitated in part through procurement of a dedicated SC-DMAP Fisheries Liaison Officer (FLO) by Government. This has included direct engagements with sectoral producer organisations and representative bodies, the Seafood-ORE Working Group, the MI, and individual fishers along the South Coast. It has further included engagements with UK fishers and producer organisations to learn from their experiences of operating in proximity to ORE developments. It is important to note that the outcome of these engagements has informed the preparation of the SC-DMAP and its Policy

Objectives, which seek to maximise opportunities for co-existence between commercial fisheries and ORE.

Implementation of the SC-DMAP will be informed by continuous engagement between the State and the fishers and wider seafood sector to ensure that co-existence becomes a reality. The SC-DMAP represents a unique opportunity for a continued three-way collaboration between Government, ORE developers, and the fishing/seafood sector over the lifetime of the Plan, in order to maximise future opportunities of co-existence to as great an extent as possible. Maximising these opportunities will require continued willingness of all parties to engage in effective and constructive dialogue. The Seafood / ORE Working Group was established by Government in 2022 to facilitate discussion on matters arising from the interaction of the seafood and ORE industries, to promote and share best practice, and to encourage liaison with other sectors in the marine environment. It will continue to play an important, central role in these engagements into the future.

The implementation of the following Policy Objectives for Seafood and Fisheries (SF) and adherence of developers and the fishing and wider seafood sector to these principles will promote successful coexistence between windfarm and fishing activity within the SC-DMAP area.

Policy Objectives for Seafood and Fisheries (SF):

SF 1:

Developers of proposed ORE projects and transmission infrastructure within the SC-DMAP area should maintain a record of engagement with Irish-registered fishers and the wider seafood sector regarding proposed survey activity and should optimise infrastructure design and layout to maximise opportunities for co-existence with fishing and seafood activity. Where feasible, a reduction of potential adverse impacts should be investigated through avoiding areas of identified high fishing activity or, failing this, through minimising and/or mitigating impacts on fishing activity, including through optimising windfarm layout to facilitate co-existence.

SF 2:

Developers of proposed ORE projects and transmission infrastructure, as well as the seafood/fishing sector, should take into account the objectives and principles established in the ‘Seafood/ORE Engagement in Ireland - A Summary Guide’ and its successors, regarding protocols for constructive cooperation and engagement between the ORE and Seafood Sectors. Proposed developers of ORE projects and transmission infrastructure should document these efforts.

SF 3:

A Fisheries Management and Mitigation Strategy (FMMS) shall be prepared by developers of proposed ORE projects and transmission infrastructure, in consultation with identified local fishing interests. All efforts should be made to agree the FMMS with those interests. Those

interests must also undertake to engage with developers and provide spatial information in a timely manner to enable completion of the FMMS. The FMMS should identify management and mitigation measures for each commercial fishery that can establish within a reasonable timeframe to developers of prospective offshore wind projects and transmission infrastructure, through the provision of spatial information, that they would be adversely affected by the development. The FMMS will be updated and amended by developers throughout the lifetime of a project as appropriate and as necessary.

SF 4:

As part of an FMMS, developers of prospective ORE projects and transmission infrastructure, shall consult with local seafood/aquaculture interests and other interests as appropriate, and shall prepare an Aquaculture Management and Mitigation Strategy (AMMS) where relevant. All efforts should be made to agree the AMMS with those interests. The AMMS should identify management and mitigation measures to ensure that potential adverse impacts of ORE and transmission infrastructure development on seafood/aquaculture activity are, in order of preference, avoided, minimised and mitigated.

SF 5:

Developers of proposed ORE projects and transmission infrastructure shall maintain a Fisheries Liaison Officer (FLO) to facilitate direct, effective, constructive consultation and engagement on an ongoing basis with Irish-registered fishers and wider seafood sector members operating within the SC-DMAP area at all stages of any offshore wind project pre-construction, and during construction, operation and decommissioning.

SF 6:

Any FMMS should include a Cable Management Plan (CMP) exploring options and identifying appropriate site-specific, substrate-specific inter-array and offshore transmission cable protection measures that can be installed to mitigate the risk of cable exposure and unintentional cable snagging by seafood/fishing activity. Consideration should be given to prioritising the burial of cables at a suitable depth where possible, as well as other types of cable protection measures compatible with relevant types of fishing for each area.

SF 7:

Developers of proposed ORE projects and transmission infrastructure shall engage with potentially impacted seafood sector members and Irish-registered fishers to ensure that risks associated with fishing/seafood activity over the cables are minimised. A cable risk mitigation plan shall be submitted with any application for development involving the laying of cables within the SC-DMAP area and include requirements for fishing trials over the cables and other inspections considered relevant on an appropriately regular basis.

7.2 Co-existence with Tourism and Recreation

The tourism sector is one of Ireland's most important economic sectors nationally and is locally significant in terms of direct and indirect jobs. Coastal areas by their very nature are important tourism assets. Coastal tourism comprises recreational activities taking place in the proximity of the sea (such as swimming, coastal walks, and wildlife watching) as well as those taking place in the maritime area, including nautical sports.

The process for identifying the four Maritime Areas A to D included removing the areas of highest cumulative sensitivity, prior to subsequently selecting the optimal areas for ORE deployment from the remaining marine space within the SC-DMAP. This methodology included sensitivity to locations where marine based tourism and recreation activity is concentrated. Where interaction between the two maritime activities is possible, the SC-DMAP seeks to provide for future co-existence between ORE with coastal tourism, including marine sports and water tours.

The quality and beauty of the coastal landscape, natural environment, geology, coastal heritage and culture are all unique tourism assets on the southern coastline. These scenic coastal areas include the Copper Coast UNESCO Global Geopark, the Hook Peninsula, Dunmore East, scenic clifftop walks, beaches and Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) located along the Cork Coast and Kilmore Quay among others.

The SC-DMAP area overlaps with two of Failte Ireland's Regional Tourism Development Strategy areas – Ireland's Ancient East covering Wexford, Waterford and part of county Cork and the Wild Atlantic Way covering the western part of Cork. The SC-DMAP respects the significance of scenic coastal areas to the tourism sector and to local communities, alongside the need to protect their quality and character.

Through effective coordination of land and marine planning, the draft SC-DMAP supports the delivery of offshore energy and supports onshore infrastructure in a manner that avoids significant impacts on coastal heritage, amenities, sea angling / recreational fisheries, designated protected views and scenic routes *inter alia*, all intrinsic features for tourism. In addition to existing tourism assets, the draft SC-DMAP also supports the principle of sustainable development of future tourism activities that coexist successfully with ORE, including the potential for educational and visitor experience of ORE where such proposals assist local tourism diversification and the local tourism economy.

Fáilte Ireland is supportive of the plan-led approach to maritime development and has undertaken research and analysis into visitor attitudes to offshore windfarm infrastructure in Ireland and other jurisdictions. It is important to note that this body of research, Visitor Awareness and Perceptions of the Irish Landscape,[7] has found little evidence of negative impacts on tourism from visible renewable energy development. Government's 2019 Policy Statement 'People, Place and Policy – Growing Tourism to 2025'[8] recognises that the

[7] Report on Visitor Awareness and Perceptions of the Irish Landscape, Fáilte Ireland, 2019

[8] gov - People, Place and Policy - Growing Tourism to 2025 (www.gov.ie)

significant infrastructural investments required for Ireland's future energy needs must be carefully managed to take account of tourist sites, routes and other potential assets. The SC-DMAP supports this principle.

Policy Objective for Tourism and Recreation (T)

T1:

To support and facilitate coexistence between ORE development and a thriving tourism sector subject to carrying out statutory environmental assessment at plan and project level for these activities as required (which may include SEA, EIA and/or AA) and the outcome of planning and / or licensing processes as relevant.

7.3 Co-Existence with Telecommunications

Guaranteeing existing and future international telecommunications connectivity is critically important to support the continued digitalisation of the Irish economy and society, and to maintain and enhance continued competitiveness of the Irish economy. This will require continued deployment of additional subsea telecommunications cable infrastructure, as recognised in Harnessing Digital: The Digital Ireland Framework (2022) and the NMPF.

In recognition of the national strategic importance of national and international telecommunications connectivity, the draft SC-DMAP aims to ensure that future offshore wind deployments do not conflict with the operation of undersea cable corridors. In accordance with NMPF Telecommunications Policy 3, the draft Plan further aims to support the principle of shared corridors for renewable energy and digital communications, where technically feasible.

Policy Objective for Telecommunications (TEL)

TEL 1:

The SC-DMAP supports the principle of coexistence of ORE development with digital telecommunications infrastructure, subject to carrying out statutory environmental assessment at plan and project level (which may include SEA, EIA and/or AA) and the outcome of planning and licensing processes as relevant. No exclusions should be placed on the deployment, operation or maintenance of subsea telecommunications cables within or around ORE developments or the associated cabling, unless required for safety or environmental reasons. Project route selection for ORE cables should seek to avoid the need for exclusions in the first instance and projects should consult with service providers to understand limitations on their existing infrastructure.

7.4 Co-existence with Marine Archaeological and Cultural Heritage

Ireland's coastal and marine area possesses a wealth of cultural and archaeological heritage. The National Monuments Service manages, protects and promotes Ireland's underwater archaeological heritage and undertakes assessment and issuing of licences and consent for activities including excavation, survey, dive licences and detection consents relating to archaeological heritage in the marine area that interacts with or is in close proximity to protected heritage. The National Monuments Act 1930-2014[9] makes specific provisions for the protection of shipwrecks and underwater archaeological objects and gives legal protection to all wrecks over 100-years old.

Off our extensive coastline, over 4,500 shipwrecks alone are listed on databases such as the INFOMAR programme, which is jointly managed by Geological Survey Ireland's (GSI) Marine and Coastal Unit in partnership with the MI. The National Monuments Service also maintains a Wreck Inventory of Ireland Database and Viewer. Most listed wrecks are however without exact locations and many more wrecks and archaeological artefacts await discovery. In 2022, the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage published an Advice Note for the Public on Ireland's Underwater Archaeological Heritage[10]. As stated in the publication, the entire history of human settlement in Ireland is represented by our underwater archaeological heritage. This heritage is fragile and irreplaceable and needs to be protected so it can be enjoyed and interpreted by future generations.

Government is preparing a National Strategy for the Future Protection and Management of Ireland's Underwater Cultural Heritage. This guidance will assist project development in the SC- area and ensure effective measures to protect and strengthen our knowledge of marine heritage are followed.

The SC-DMAP will align with the requirements of the National Monuments Acts (and the replacement Historic and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023 when commenced), and NMPF Heritage Assets Policy 1 by requiring development proposals for the deployment, operation and servicing of offshore wind to include measures which protect marine and coastal heritage assets.

[9] Historic and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023, when commenced, will replace the 1930 Act: https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2023/act/26/enacted/en/html

[10] Available at https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/55976-advice-to-the-public-on-irelands-underwater-archaeological-heritage/

Policy Objectives for Marine Archaeological Heritage (AH)

AH 1:

ORE surveys, site investigation and development, including associated ORE and transmission infrastructure, should, where relevant, include measures to protect underwater archaeological and cultural heritage in the SC-DMAP area and:

(a) Comply with the National Monuments Act as amended, and the Historic and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023 when commenced, and have regard to guidance of the National Monuments Service for assessment(s) to avoid and mitigate impacts with marine archaeological and cultural heritage features.

(b) Undertake early consultation with the Underwater Archaeology Unit of the National Monuments Service and engage qualified archaeologist(s) to prepare assessments including an Underwater Archaeological Impact Assessment and Archaeology Management Plan as relevant.

(c) Support the protection of onshore archaeological, architectural, and cultural heritage in terrestrial plans and projects in the development of associated onshore infrastructure to enable ORE sites in the SC-DMAP area.

Policy Objectives for Co-existence (CO)	
CO 1:	That, in order to promote co-existence between ORE and other existing and future uses within the SC-DMAP area, permanent exclusions on activities or usages around or within ORE or transmission infrastructure located within the SC-DMAP area should be avoided where possible, save relating to safety or in other exceptional circumstances where considered warranted by MARA or statutory authorities in accordance with their respective roles. The likely requirement for temporary exclusion zones during periods of offshore infrastructure construction, maintenance and decommissioning is recognised. Any such restrictions should, where possible, endeavour to avoid adverse impacts on other maritime users.
CO 2:	Developers of ORE projects and transmission infrastructure shall accurately map their respective development sites, including electricity export and inter-array cables as laid post development. This location and

	coordinate data shall be made available to MARA and other maritime users, including fishers, in a format that can be downloaded on navigation systems including a suitable plotter format which can be installed within fishing vessels.

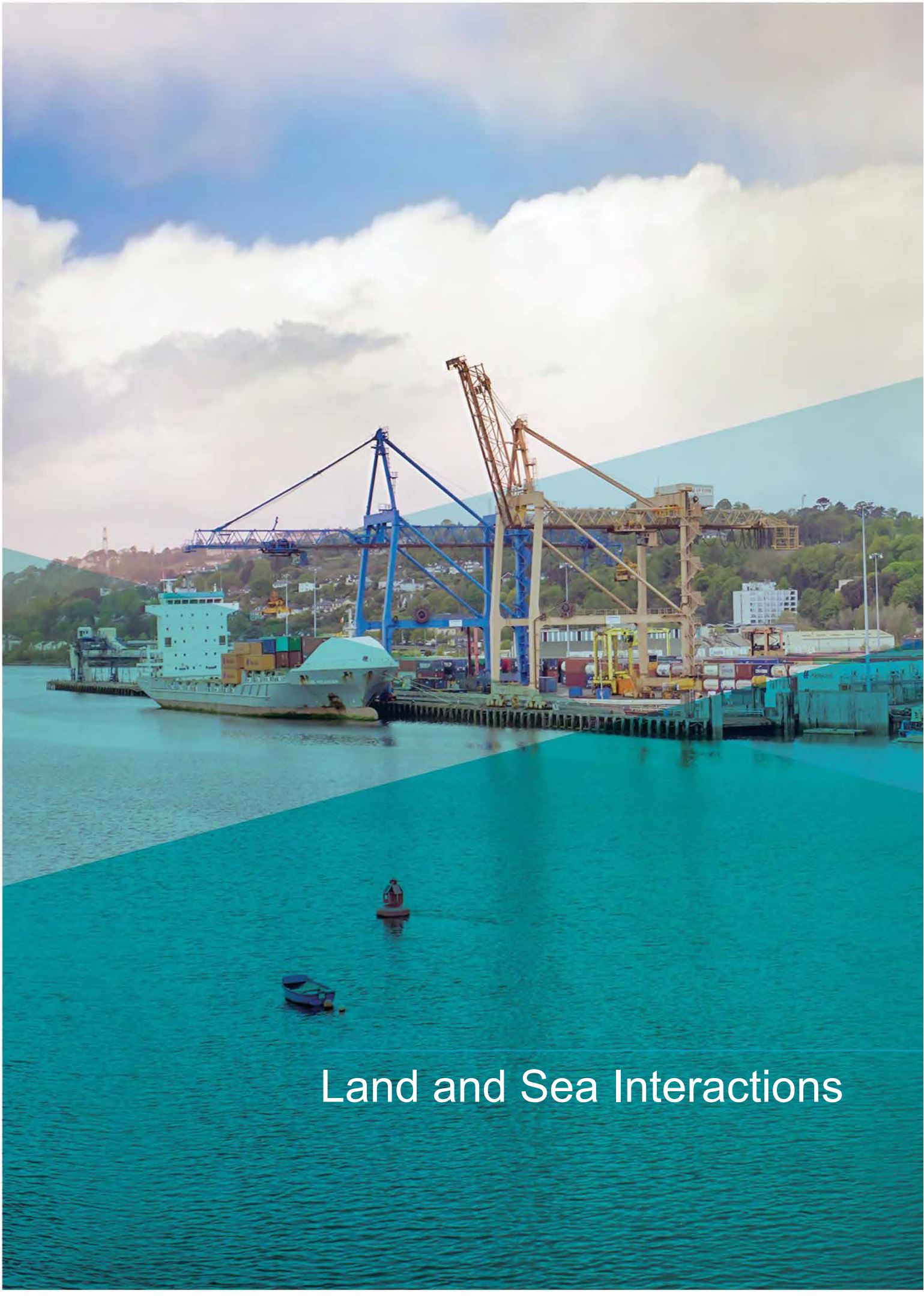
Policy Objectives for Seafood and Fisheries (SF)

SF 1:	Developers of proposed ORE projects and transmission infrastructure within the SC-DMAP area should maintain a record of engagement with Irish-registered fishers and the wider seafood sector regarding proposed survey activity and should optimise infrastructure design and layout to maximise opportunities for co-existence with fishing and seafood activity. Where feasible, a reduction of potential adverse impacts should be investigated through avoiding areas of identified high fishing activity or, failing this, through minimising and/or mitigating impacts on fishing activity, including through optimising windfarm layout to facilitate co-existence.
SF 2:	Developers of proposed ORE projects and transmission infrastructure, as well as the seafood/fishing sector, should take into account the objectives and principles established in the 'Seafood/ORE Engagement in Ireland - A Summary Guide' and its successors, regarding protocols for constructive cooperation and engagement between the ORE and Seafood Sectors. Proposed developers of ORE projects and transmission infrastructure should document these efforts.
SF 3:	A Fisheries Management and Mitigation Strategy (FMMS) shall be prepared by developers of proposed ORE projects and transmission infrastructure, in consultation with identified local fishing interests. All efforts should be made to agree the FMMS with those interests. Those interests must also undertake to engage with developers and provide spatial information in a timely manner to enable completion of the FMMS. The FMMS should identify management and mitigation

	measures for each commercial fishery that can establish within a reasonable timeframe to developers of prospective offshore wind projects and transmission infrastructure, through the provision of spatial information, that they would be adversely affected by the development. The FMMS will be updated and amended by developers throughout the lifetime of a project as appropriate and as necessary.
SF 4:	As part of an FMMS, developers of prospective ORE projects and transmission infrastructure, shall consult with local seafood/aquaculture interests and other interests as appropriate, and shall prepare an Aquaculture Management and Mitigation Strategy (AMMS) where relevant. All efforts should be made to agree the AMMS with those interests. The AMMS should identify management and mitigation measures to ensure that potential adverse impacts of ORE and transmission infrastructure development on seafood/aquaculture activity are, in order of preference, avoided, minimised and mitigated.
SF 5:	Developers of proposed ORE projects and transmission infrastructure shall maintain a Fisheries Liaison Officer (FLO) to facilitate direct, effective, constructive consultation and engagement on an ongoing basis with Irish-registered fishers and wider seafood sector members operating within the SC-DMAP area at all stages of any offshore wind project pre-construction, and during construction, operation and decommissioning.
SF 6:	Any FMMS should include a Cable Management Plan (CMP) exploring options and identifying appropriate site-specific, substrate-specific inter-array and offshore transmission cable protection measures that can be installed to mitigate the risk of cable exposure and unintentional cable snagging by seafood/fishing activity. Consideration should be given to prioritising the burial of cables at a suitable depth where possible, as well as

		other types of cable protection measures compatible with relevant types of fishing for each area.
	SF 7:	Developers of proposed ORE projects and transmission infrastructure shall engage with potentially impacted seafood sector members and Irish-registered fishers to ensure that risks associated with fishing/seafood activity over the cables are minimised. A cable risk mitigation plan shall be submitted with any application for development involving the laying of cables within the SC-DMAP area and include requirements for fishing trials over the cables and other inspections considered relevant on an appropriately regular basis.
	**Policy Objective for Tourism and Recreation (T)**	
	T 1:	To support and facilitate coexistence between ORE development and a thriving tourism sector subject to carrying out statutory environmental assessment at plan and project level for these activities as required (which may include SEA, EIA and/or AA) and the outcome of planning and / or licensing processes as relevant.
	**Policy Objective for Telecommunications (TEL)**	
	TEL 1:	The SC-DMAP supports the principle of coexistence of ORE development with digital telecommunications infrastructure, subject to carrying out statutory environmental assessment at plan and project level (which may include SEA, EIA and/or AA) and the outcome of planning and licensing processes as relevant. No exclusions should be placed on the deployment, operation or maintenance of subsea telecommunications cables within or around ORE developments or the associated cabling, unless required for safety or environmental reasons. Project route selection for ORE cables should seek to avoid the need for exclusions in

		the first instance and projects should consult with service providers to understand limitations on their existing infrastructure.
	**Policy Objectives for Marine Archaeological Heritage (AH)**	
	AH 1:	ORE surveys, site investigation and development, including associated ORE and transmission infrastructure, should, where relevant, include measures to protect underwater archaeological and cultural heritage in the SC-DMAP area and: (a) Comply with the National Monuments Act as amended, and the Historic and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023 when commenced, and have regard to guidance of the National Monuments Service for assessment(s) to avoid and mitigate impacts with marine archaeological and cultural heritage features. (b) Undertake early consultation with the Underwater Archaeology Unit of the National Monuments Service and engage qualified archaeologist(s) to prepare assessments including an Underwater Archaeological Impact Assessment and Archaeology Management Plan as relevant. (c) Support the protection of onshore archaeological, architectural, and cultural heritage in terrestrial plans and projects in the development of associated onshore infrastructure to enable ORE sites in the SC-DMAP area.



Land and Sea Interactions

8. Land and Sea Interactions

The MSP Directive recognises that marine and coastal activities are often closely interrelated and further requires these interactions to be taken into account within member state maritime spatial plans. The preparation of the draft SC-DMAP has taken place in accordance with these provisions and provides an integrated and strategic vision which will inform the review of terrestrial plans.

In addition to the above, Government policy in Ireland supports the alignment of maritime and terrestrial spatial planning, with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) providing that coastal planning authorities must ensure that when making or varying development plans they are consistent with the NMPF, which will incorporate the SC-DMAP. In this regard, it is important to note that terrestrial plans at a regional and local level have already anticipated, planned, and environmentally assessed the principle of onshore infrastructure to facilitate ORE development while also protecting the marine environment and marine cultural heritage.

The draft SC-DMAP has been prepared to be consistent with the NMPF, which inherently addresses land and sea interaction throughout its overarching and sectoral policies spanning the marine environment, marine economy, and social interaction with the sea. The draft Plan in turn demonstrates that it has considered how to optimise successful coexistence with maritime uses in support of the NMPF which recognises the importance of integration between land and marine planning and the many shared aims and overlapping areas of coordination and activity between the two regimes.

Alignment between land and maritime spatial planning, co-existence and cooperation between different activities in the SC DMAP Area is supported through policy objectives of the draft Plan across many sectors including seafood and fishing, the marine economy, ports, shipping, transmission grid, telecommunications, tourism, marine archaeology and cultural heritage. The Draft Offshore Renewable Energy Future Framework Policy Statement (2024) identifies essential components that need to be in place for ORE systems, including strengthened electricity grids, energy storage, supply to centres of high energy demand close to the ORE resource, interconnectors and port facilities that enable marshalling and assembly (M&A) and operations and maintenance (O&M) of offshore wind development.

The draft SC-DMAP aims to create new opportunities for the blue economy along the South Coast of Ireland. The realisation of these opportunities will be dependent on the continued alignment of terrestrial and marine planning policy specifically in terms of port, harbour and grid infrastructure. In line with Government policy, this positive alignment should inform future reviews of these plans. Continued consistency with the objectives of the SC-DMAP across regional and local level will therefore ensure policy objectives and plans for land and sea align to deliver shared goals for enabling the full potential of the marine economy, renewable energy and protection of the marine environment in a sustainable manner.

Good practice methodology[11] for land and sea interaction supports the understanding of the relevant interactions with stakeholders (engagement and data), establishing the requirements for sectors that span the land and marine area, understanding the spatial planning arrangements (overlapping plans and policies) and understanding the governance in place for overseeing actions. Through such models, effective recommendations can be made for complimentary land and sea interaction in marine and land-based plans.

The ecosystem-based approach applied in the preparation of the draft SC-DMAP has adopted such good practice through the extensive public and sectoral stakeholder engagement. Data has been assessed to understand land and sea interaction through the environmental sensitivity and technical constraints mapping for the consideration of plan alternatives, identify the most sustainable, serviceable, and technically viable deployment locations and SEA and AA assessments. The commitment to on-going environmental monitoring of the SC-DMAP and its SEA mitigation throughout the lifetime of the Plan will further ensure an on-going assessment of land and sea interaction progress and impacts throughout Plan implementation, ensuring such provision protects the quality of the natural marine environment.

Climate change is creating challenges for coastal communities in terms of coastal erosion and sea-level rise. The Climate Action Plan 2023 and the Draft Climate Action Plan 2024 identifies that increases in sea levels and storm surge will result in increased frequency of coastal flooding and erosion and identify that coastal local authorities could have a more active role in coastal management in the coming years. The draft SC-DMAP supports the positioning of onshore infrastructure enabling offshore wind within the SC-DMAP area to be resilient to climate change impacts (addressing the risk of coastal erosion and flooding) and to align to the relevant Local Authority Development Plans and Coastal Change Management Plans where prepared under the recommendations of the Government's Inter-Departmental Group on National Coastal Change Management Strategy. Project level SEA, EIA, and/or AA and Flood Risk Assessments will ensure these matters are addressed in land use planning supporting onshore infrastructure for fixed offshore wind within the SC-DMAP area.

Policy Objectives Land and Sea Interaction (LS)

LS 1:

The SC-DMAP supports the coordination of land and sea interactions and the alignment of terrestrial plans and policy at national, regional, and local level that deliver sustainable onshore infrastructure to enable offshore wind energy in the SC DMAP area. This support is subject to the carrying out of all statutory environmental assessments at plan and project level (which may include SEA, EIA and/or AA), cumulative and in-combination assessment of plans and projects and the outcome of planning and / or licensing processes as relevant.

[11] Espon MSP-LSI Maritime Spatial Planning and Land Sea Interactions. Available at: https://www.espon.eu/MSP-LSI

LS 2:

The SC-DMAP supports the location and siting of onshore infrastructure, enabling ORE within the SC-DMAP area, which takes into account the risks associated with coastal change and flooding, avoids locations that are most at risk such as areas where managed retreat may be necessary and are in accordance with Local Authority Development Plans and Coastal Change Management Plans.

8.1 Ports and Harbours

The accelerated deployment of ORE and the achievement of Government's wider renewable energy and decarbonisation objectives will be enabled by the timely development of appropriate national and regional port infrastructure. The establishment of this key component within the ORE supply chain, to be situated within Ireland and aligned with maritime forward spatial planning, is further necessary in order to maximise the economic and employment benefits for local and regional coastal communities associated with offshore wind development. Alongside the outcome of Ireland's first offshore wind auction in 2023 – ORESS 1 – and prospective future maritime forward spatial plans, the SC-DMAP will establish a stable commercial environment for investments in port development by providing a transparent pipeline of proposed future fixed offshore wind projects.

Government support for ports development is recognised across a suite of existing policy frameworks, including: The National Ports Policy, 2013 (currently under review); The National Planning Framework, 2019 (currently under review); and the Policy Statement on the Facilitation of Offshore Renewable Energy by Commercial Ports in Ireland, 2021. It is further aligned with the NMPF, which supports the strategic development of ports in line with approved master/strategic plans, and further supports investment in the land-based and coastal infrastructure that is necessary to establish and maintain an indigenous ORE sector.

The Policy Statement on the Facilitation of Offshore Renewable Energy by Commercial Ports in Ireland, 2021, identifies the need for a multi-port approach to enable marshalling and assembly (M&A), operation and maintenance (O&M) and additional supply chain services necessary for offshore wind project developments. The policy further recognises that existing ports in Ireland, or entities within ports, can play a significant role in facilitating Government's offshore wind ambitions. It is an objective of the NMPF to ensure that the strategic development requirements of Tier 1 and Tier 2 Ports, ports of regional significance, and smaller harbours are appropriately addressed in regional and local marine planning policy. The NMPF further supports the sustainable development of ports, full realisation of National Ports Policy and the provision of adequate capacity to address existing and future demand, and to adapt to the consequences of climate change.

The presence of a significant number of strategically positioned ports and harbours along or within proximity to the South Coast of Ireland speaks to this region's potential to become a focal point for offshore wind development, and associated investment and employment opportunities. The SC-DMAP supports the sustainable development of infrastructure at these ports to enhance their potential to facilitate the accelerated deployment of offshore wind. These port assets and their future potential to service the offshore wind energy sector has been a contributing factor towards establishing the SC-DMAP.

The SC-DMAP supports alignment between terrestrial and marine planning to ensure objectives and plans at regional and local level supports the delivery of port infrastructure that in turn enables the accelerated deployments of fixed offshore wind within the SC-DMAP area. In this regard, it is important to note that policy supports for the integration of terrestrial and marine planning are positively signalled across national, regional and local planning levels.

It is recognised that the implementation of the SC DMAP will be dependent on sustainable infrastructure development across several port facilities. It is imperative that the facilities are provided for with renewed commitment and clarity by future terrestrial planning at regional and local levels. City and County Development Plans of Local Authorities in proximity to the SC-DMAP align with national policy to show support for ORE infrastructure development and for the improvement of port capacity to facilitate the offshore renewable energy targets and ambitions. Future iterations of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region and the Development Plans for Wexford, Waterford and Cork City and Cork County should retain the positive policy support for port and harbour development necessary to support the realisation of ORE.

Policy Objectives for Ports and Harbours (PH)

PH 1:

The SC-DMAP supports, in accordance with national policy, the alignment of terrestrial planning with marine planning at regional and local level to provide for the sustainable development of port infrastructure that enables the development of ORE within the SC-DMAP area. This support is subject to the carrying out of the requisite statutory environmental assessments at plan and project level (which may include SEA, EIA and/or AA) and the outcome of planning and / or licensing processes as relevant.

8.2 Shipping

It is a policy of the NMPF to provide for shipping activity and freedom of navigation. Decisions on the location of projects and activity in the marine area must consider existing and planned routes used by shipping to access ports and harbours and navigational safety. Maritime Areas identified for ORE deployment have sought to avoid the areas of highest density shipping traffic, with further shipping and navigation studies at project level planning stage to inform site specific assessments to protect shipping routes and navigational safety.

The SC-DMAP will implement NMPF Ports, Harbours and Shipping Policies by seeking to minimise impact on any shipping lanes or shipping navigation for ports and harbours as a result of surveying construction and operation of offshore renewable energy projects and associated infrastructure in the SC-DMAP area.

Policy Objective for Shipping (S)

S1:

Applications for development in the SC-DMAP area and associated survey applications should be subject to consultation with port and harbour authorities and the Maritime Safety Directorate prior to submitting planning or licence applications and any consequent surveys or works and shall comply with all required Marine Notices to avoid any disruption to shipping lanes in the SC-DMAP area.

8.3 Transmission System Infrastructure

The realisation of Ireland's ORE resource will require the establishment of an increasingly sophisticated integrated network of offshore and onshore electricity transmission infrastructure. This will be necessary to meet the ambitious Government target that 80% of Ireland's electricity requirements will be provided from renewable sources by 2030, and in particular the longer-term objective to deliver a net zero greenhouse gas emissions economy no later than 2050. In line with the NMPF, the development of offshore and onshore transmission infrastructure, including in respect of alternative off-take solutions for non-grid connected offshore wind projects, will represent a key enabler of successful future ORE development within the SC-DMAP area.

Further technical analysis will be required regarding potential routes and landfall points for future transmission and cable infrastructure connecting proposed ORE developments in the SC-DMAP area to shore, both in respect of proposed developments directly connected to the onshore transmission system and non-grid connected developments. In its role as offshore transmission system owner and operator, this analysis will be carried out by EirGrid upon establishment of the SC-DMAP. A detailed assessment of this infrastructure, including associated environmental impacts is therefore beyond the scope of the draft SC-DMAP. However, it is important to note that an environmental constraints analysis has identified marine areas of high environmental sensitivity regarding the locations of proposed transmission system routes. This analysis must be taken into account by proposed developers of future offshore transmission infrastructure, including but not limited to EirGrid.

The Phase Two Offshore Wind policy approved by Government in March 2023 provides that the offshore transmission system assets, including export cables and offshore sub-stations, that connect the first ORE project located within the SC-DMAP area will be developed by

EirGrid. This will provide for the development of an ORE project that maximises existing available onshore transmission system capacity. This is initially restricted to approximately 800 MW, to be split evenly between two separate onshore connection nodes.

Beyond this initial ORE development to be located in Maritime Area A, there is no current pathway for connecting additional ORE projects developments within the SC-DMAP area to the onshore electricity transmission system. The draft SC-DMAP therefore provides for future developments of both grid connected and non-grid connected projects, including but not limited to developments fully or partially connected to large energy users via private wire(s), power-to-X developments, and hybrid projects connected to Ireland and other neighbouring countries. This approach will provide the best prospect of accelerated achievement of Ireland's offshore renewable energy and decarbonisation objectives, and enhancing energy security.

To maximise prospects for accelerated offshore wind deployments, EirGrid will seek to explore innovative solutions for the connection of additional offshore wind capacity within the SC-DMAP area to the onshore transmission system. This may include analysis of options to future-proof the development of offshore transmission assets in order to provide for the accelerated integration of future offshore wind capacity, as well as reduced associated environmental impacts and costs. This approach is consistent with existing national policies and objectives. Likewise, EirGrid will continue to proactively plan for accelerated developments to the onshore transmission system which may be necessary in facilitate implementation of the SC-DMAP, in line with Ireland's legally binding decarbonisation objectives, and objectives in relation to enhanced energy security of supply. It is therefore critical that the development of offshore and onshore infrastructure required to integrate generated electricity take place in alignment with implementation of the SC-DMAP and the development of fixed offshore wind projects to ensure coordination and integration between land use-plans and maritime spatial planning.

Electricity Transmission System Policy Objectives (ETS)

ETS 1:

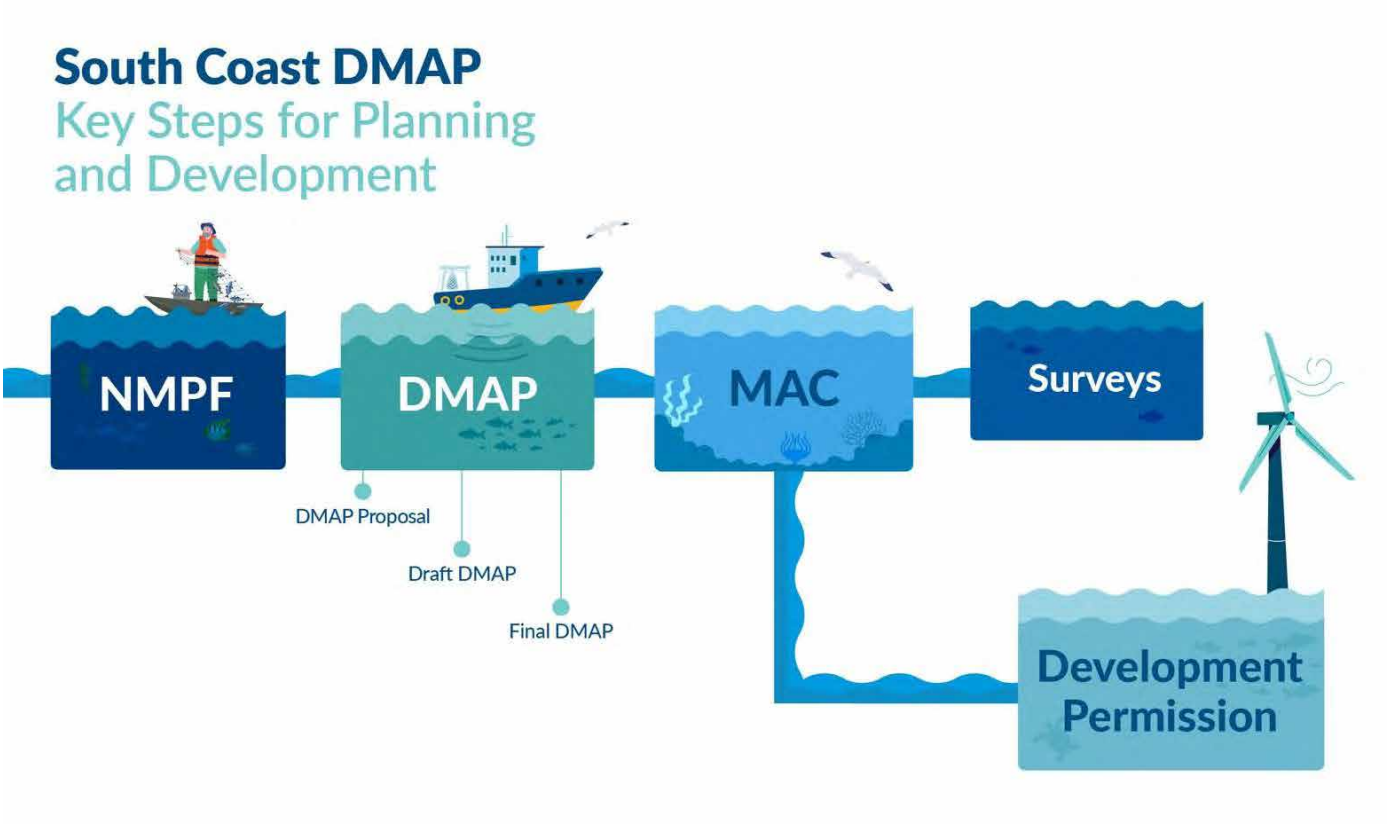
To prioritize the sustainable development of offshore and onshore transmission infrastructure that supports and enables the sustainable development of offshore wind capacity within the SC-DMAP area, which is considered to be of critical and strategic importance. This objective relates to the development of transmission infrastructure for both grid-connected and non-grid connected ORE projects, as well as projects seeking to connect to another country(s) via hybrid-interconnection.

ETS 2:

To support the integration and alignment of terrestrial planning with marine planning at regional and local level that provides for the sustainable development of transmission infrastructure to enable ORE development in the SC-DMAP area. This support is subject to the carrying out of statutory environmental assessment at plan and project level (which may include SEA, EIA and/or AA) and the outcome of planning and / or licensing processes as relevant.

ETS 3:

To avoid, minimise and mitigate potential associated adverse environmental and social impacts and reduce development costs, existing offshore and onshore infrastructure required to connect offshore wind generation to the onshore electricity system should be utilized to as great an extent as possible, with additional provisions for future proofing offshore transmission assets.



Economic and Employment Growth Potential

9. Economic and Employment Growth Potential

Implementation of the SC-DMAP will generate significant associated economic and employment opportunities, the majority of which are likely to be captured at regional level along the South Coast. This will be provided through the substantial inward investment in regional and local coastal community economies associated with the establishment of a transparent pipeline of future offshore wind developments off the South Coast. Maximising these economic benefits is a key objective of the SC-DMAP, and, in this regard, is consistent with other national policies and plans, including the NMPF, and Ireland's Offshore Wind Industrial Strategy. The SC-DMAP is further consistent with the strategic objectives of the National Development Plan, 2019, and the Programme for Government, 2020, to support balanced regional development.

There is a significant population and industrial base along the South Coast that is well placed to benefit from a secure and cost-effective long-term supply of green energy that will be provided by implementation of the SC-DMAP. This proximity will further provide for alternative off-take solutions for potential non-grid connected offshore wind projects, including but not limited to the production of green hydrogen and other green fuels, and private wires directly connected to large energy users.

As outlined in Ireland's Offshore Wind Industrial Strategy, the development of an offshore wind sector supporting development, construction and operation of projects and potential adjacent activities, such as relocation of industries and services that require a reliable source of green energy, can create new clusters of economic and employment opportunity along the South Coast. This strategy provides a pathway and framework for maximising economic benefits associated with the SC-DMAP and capturing domestic supply chain opportunities. The anticipated future economic opportunities provided by implementation of the SC-DMAP are further aligned with established planning and economic policies and actions at regional and local level along the South Coast which will support implementation of economic policy objectives of the SC-DMAP.

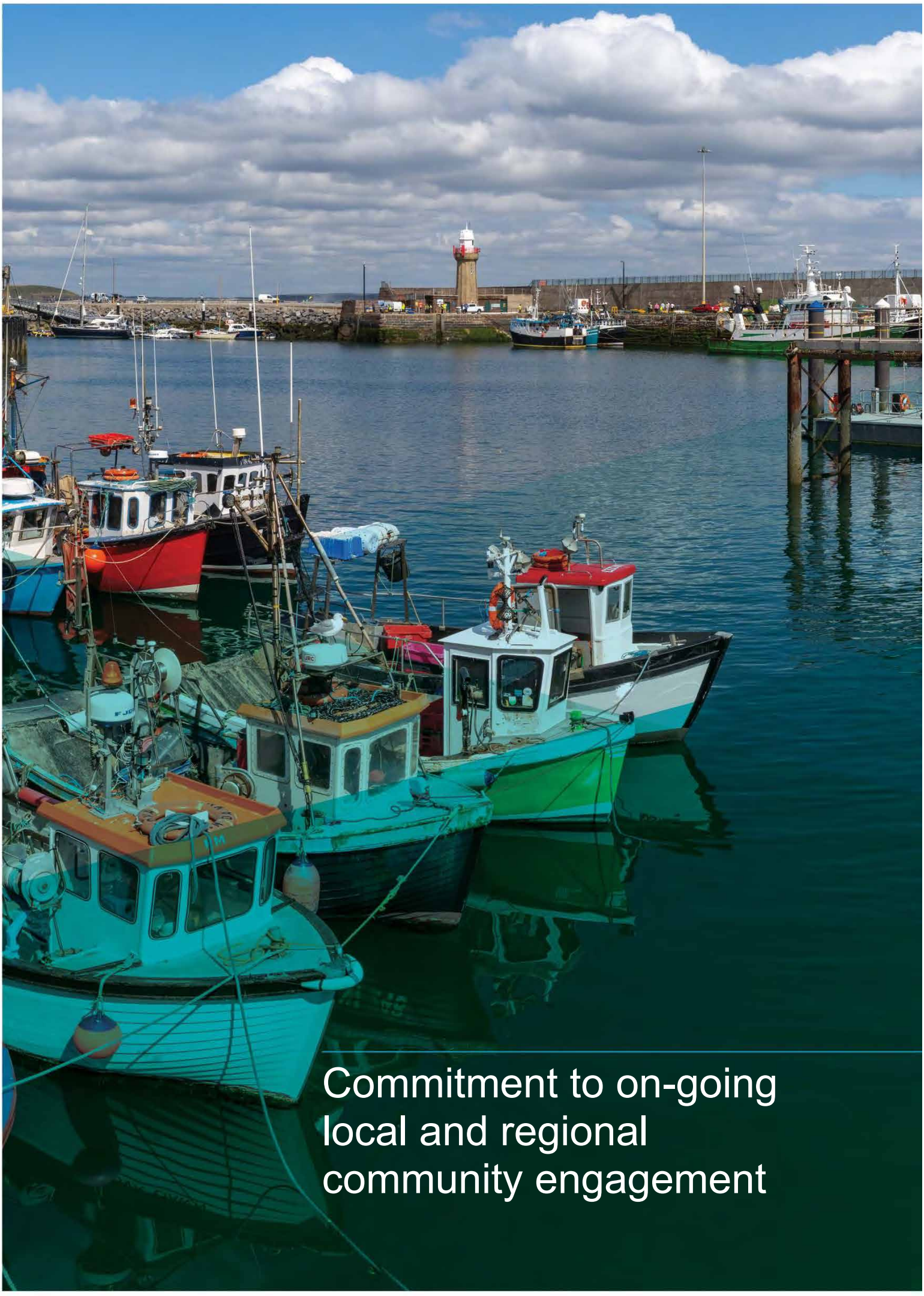
Support for growth in the marine economy and offshore renewable energy is driven forward across the RSES for the Southern Region and through the Regional Enterprise Plans for the South East and South West which support actions for enterprise growth in the green economy and establishment of offshore wind energy hubs. At city and county level, the Development Plans of Cork City, Cork County, Waterford, and Wexford are each ambitious in support for job creation through the marine economy and support the sustainable development of infrastructure and services for enterprise growth in these sectors.

The continued alignment of terrestrial and marine planning policy to harness the potential for economic growth through ORE is supported. The SC-DMAP will set the plan led framework for the delivery of offshore wind projects off the South Coast that will both require and stimulate a supply chain of direct and indirect enterprise and employment for a resilient sector. This will be supported by Government through the Offshore Wind Delivery Taskforce.

Policy Objectives for Economic and Employment Growth Potential

EC 1:

The SC-DMAP supports actions under Government's Offshore Wind Industrial Strategy (2024) and through regional and local level plans that support research, innovation, skills development, enterprise, jobs growth and the sustainable development of economic clusters in the offshore renewable energy sector to support the development and operation of ORE projects in the SC-DMAP area. This support is subject to carrying out of all statutory environmental assessment at plan and project level (SEA, EIA and AA) and the outcome of planning and / or licensing processes as relevant.



Commitment to on-going local and regional community engagement

10. Commitment to on-going local and regional community engagement

The preparation of the draft SC-DMAP has been informed by a wide-reaching and meaningful process of public engagement since summer 2023. This is consistent with the requirements of the Aarhus Convention, the NMPF and the MAP Act. It is further aligned with provisions in the MSP Directive which provides that "*in order to promote sustainable development in an effective manner, it is essential that stakeholders, authorities and the public be consulted at an appropriate stage in the preparation of maritime spatial plans*". This consultative process is a key enabler of the ecosystem-based approach that has informed preparation of the SC-DMAP, which aims to promote the sustainable development and growth of the maritime and coastal economies and the sustainable use of marine and coastal resources.

In line with provisions in the MAP Act, the publication of the SC-DMAP Proposal in July 2023 was accompanied by a Public Participation Statement, which has been regularly updated to outline anticipated opportunities for public engagement throughout establishment of the Plan. These engagements with local coastal communities, interested citizens and key stakeholder groups have contributed to the preparation of the draft SC-DMAP. The publication of this draft SC-DMAP commences a further six-week period of statutory public consultation, incorporating opportunities for public engagement during a series of in-person events taking place along the South Coast in Cork, Waterford, and Wexford, as well as webinar events. These engagements, in addition to written submissions, will contribute to any subsequent revisions to the draft SC-DMAP, and accompanying environmental assessments.

Implementation of the SC-DMAP will require continued engagement with local coastal communities and key stakeholders on a multi-year basis. This will include engagements carried out as part of the implementation and monitoring of the SC-DMAP. It will further include public engagements that must be carried out by prospective developers of offshore wind projects and MAC holders within the SC-DMAP area, as part of the process to determine the proposed location and specification of offshore wind projects within each of the Maritime Areas within the SC-DMAP area.

In addition to SC-DMAP support for community engagement, the establishment of community benefit fund scheme(s) will provide opportunities for local coastal communities playing their part in Ireland's renewable energy transition. An obligatory community benefit fund scheme through the ORESS 2.1 and future potential auctions within the SC-DMAP area will support a suite of measures for community participation and community gain.

Policy Objectives for Community Engagement (CE)

CE 1:

To facilitate continued engagement with South Coast stakeholders, including local coastal communities and fishers, holders of a MAC in the SC-DMAP Maritime Areas should prepare and publish a Public Engagement Plan concerning all matters relating to the Permitted Maritime Usage.

Shaping the Plan

Community Engagement Across Ireland

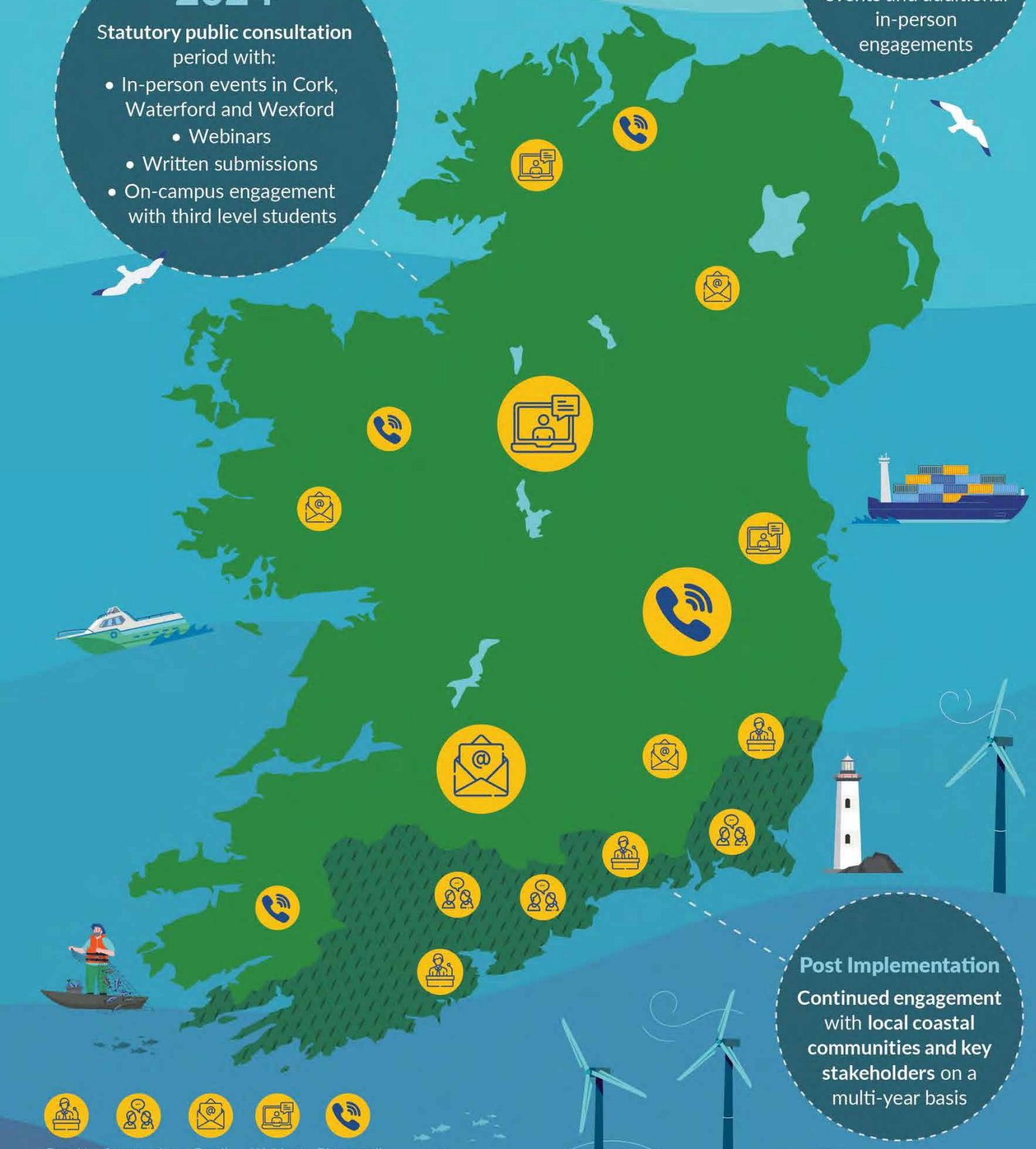
2023

Non-statutory public consultation with 8 public information events and additional in-person engagements

2024

Statutory public consultation period with:

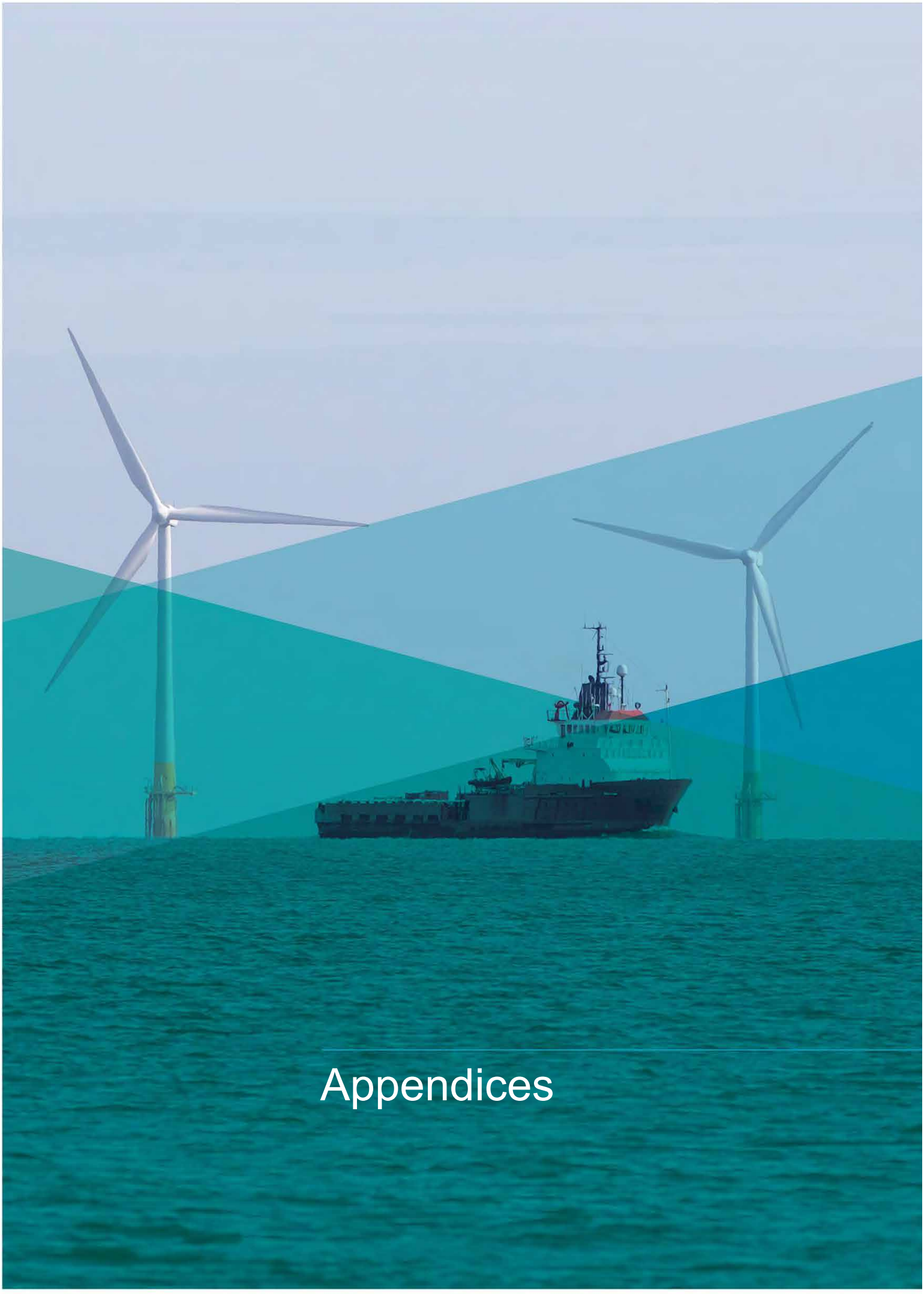
- In-person events in Cork, Waterford and Wexford
- Webinars
- Written submissions
- On-campus engagement with third level students



Post Implementation

Continued engagement with **local coastal communities and key stakeholders** on a multi-year basis

Panel/ Speaker Event | Community Outreach | Email | Webinar | Phone call



Appendices

Appendix A

Consistency of Draft SC-DMAP with the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF)

The following table illustrates the consistency of the Draft SC-DMAP with the objectives and policies of the NMPF including the relevant Overarching Marine Planning Policies and Key Sectoral/Activity Policies in accordance with Section 22 (1) (c) of the MAP Act 2021. While the following table identifies the most relevant draft SC-DMAP sections and policy objectives in this respect, the draft Plan should be read as a whole including the general overall objects of the of the draft Plan under Section 3: Draft DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Development, Section 4: Plan Level Measures, Section 5: Implementation, Governance and Monitoring and Section 10: Commitment to Ongoing Local and Regional Community Engagement.

Relevant NMPF Chapter	Relevant High-Level Objectives and Key Policies	Key SC SC-DMAP Section	Key Policy Objectives
5.1: Biodiversity and Protected Marine Sites	Biodiversity policy 1, 2, 4; Protected Marine Sites Policy 1, 4	Draft DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Development, Marine Environment and Biodiversity, Plan Level Measures, Governance, Implementation and Monitoring	OEP1, 2, 3, MI1, 2, B1, MS1, IGM2 Constraints Mapping Methodology
5.2: Non-Indigenous Species	Non-Indigenous Species Policy 1	Marine Environment and Biodiversity	OEP1 (Appendix C)
5.3: Water Quality	Water Quality Policy 1	Marine Environment and Biodiversity	WQ1
5.4: Sea-Floor and Water Column Integrity	Sea-Floor and Water Column Integrity Policy 1, 2, 3	Marine Environment and Biodiversity; Draft DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Development	OEP 1,2, 3, M2, B1, MS1, WQ1 Constraints Mapping Methodology

5.5: Marine Litter	Marine Litter Policy 1	Marine Environment and Biodiversity	ML1, ML2
5.6: Underwater Noise	GES Descriptor (11); Underwater Noise Policy 1	Marine Environment and Biodiversity	ML2, UN1, UN2, UN3
5.7: Air Quality	Air Quality Policy 1, 2	Draft DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Developments; Marine Environment and Biodiversity	AQ1
5.8: Climate Change	Climate Change Policy 1, 2	Draft DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Developments; Plan Level Measures, Marine Environment and Biodiversity	CC1, CC2, OEP1, 2, 3, B1, MS Constraints Mapping Methodology
6. Economic – Thriving Maritime Economy	Objectives	Economic and Employment Growth Potential, Coexistence	EC1, CO 1, 2
6.1: Coexistence	Objective; Co-existence Policy 1;	Draft DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Developments, Plan Level Measures, Coexistence	IGM1, 2, 3, 5, CO1, 2 Constraints Mapping Methodology
6.2: Infrastructure	Infrastructure Policy 1	Land and Sea Interactions, Ports and Harbours, Transmission System Infrastructure, Employment and Economic Growth Potential; Governance, Implementation and Monitoring	LS1, LS2, PH1, ETS 1 -3, EC1,

7: Social - Engagement with the Sea	Objectives	Governance, Implementation and Monitoring, Land and Sea Interactions Commitment to on-going local and regional community engagement	IGM 1 – 5, LS1 - 2, CE1,
7.1: Access	Access Policy 1	Co-Existence with Tourism and Recreation, Draft DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Development	T1 Constraints Mapping Methodology
7.2: Employment	Employment Policy 1	Economic and Employment Growth Potential	EC1
7.3: Heritage Assets	Heritage Assets Policy 1	Co-existence with Marine Archaeological and Cultural Heritage, Draft DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Development	AH1 Constraints Mapping Methodology
7.5: Seascape and Landscape	Seascape and Landscape Policy 1	Plan Level Measures, Marine Environment and Biodiversity, Co-Existence with Tourism and Recreation, Co-Existence with Archaeological and Cultural Heritage, Draft DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Development	MI 2, OEP1, 2, 3, MS1, T1, AH1, B1 (Appendix D) Constraints Mapping Methodology
7.6: Social Benefits	Social benefits policy 1; Social benefits policy 2	Governance, Implementation and Monitoring, Marine Environment and Biodiversity, Coexistence, Co-	IGM4; OEP 1 -3, CO 1 0 2, SF1-7; T1; TEL 1, AH1; EC1, CE1

		existence with Seafood, Aquaculture and Fisheries, Co-existence with Tourism and Recreation, Co-existence with Telecommunications, Co-existence with Marine Archaeology and Cultural Heritage; Economic and Employment Growth Potential, Commitment to on-going local and regional community engagement	
7.7: Transboundary	Transboundary Policy 1	Plan Level Measures, Governance, Implementation and Monitoring, Commitment to on-going local and regional community engagement, Public Consultation	MI1-2, IGM1-5, CE1
9: Aquaculture	Aquaculture Policy 2	Co-existence with Seafood, Aquaculture and Fisheries	SF3, SF4, SF5
10: Defence and Security	Defence and security policy 1	Draft DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Development, Plan Level Measures	MI2, Constraints Mapping Methodology
11: Energy – Emerging Technologies (Carbon Capture and Storage and Hydrogen)	Objectives	Draft DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Development, Marine Environment and Biodiversity	CC1 -2 Constraints Mapping Methodology

12: Energy – Natural Gas Storage	Objectives	Draft DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Development	Constraints Mapping Methodology
13: Energy – Offshore Renewable	Objectives; ORE Policy 1, 2, 4, 7, 10.	NMPF Objectives Draft DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Developments, Plan Level Measures	Overall object and purpose of the SC-DMAP, MA1- 4
14: Energy – Petroleum	Petroleum Policy 2	Draft DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Development	Constraints Mapping Methodology
15: Energy – Transmission	Objectives; Transmission Policy 1; 3	Land and Sea Interaction – Transmission Systems Infrastructure	LS1, ETS 1, 2, 3; Constraints Mapping Methodology
16: Fisheries	Fisheries Policy 1, 2	Co-existence with Seafood, Aquaculture and Fisheries	SF1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
18: Ports Harbours and Shipping	Ports, Harbours and Shipping Policy 2, 3, 4,	Draft DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Development, Land and Sea Interactions – Ports and Harbours, Shipping	LS1, 2, PH1, S1, SF6-7 Constraints Mapping Methodology
19: Safety at Sea	Objectives; Safety at Sea Policy 1, 3, 5	Coexistence; Coexistence with Fisheries; Land and Sea Interactions – Shipping	CO1, 2, SF 1 – 7; S1
21: Sports and Recreation	Sports and Recreation Policy 2	Coexistence, Co-existence with Tourism and Recreation; Marine Environment and	CO 1-2, T1, OEP 1 -3, Constraints

		Biodiversity; Draft DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Development	Mapping Methodology
22: Telecommunications	Telecommunications Policy 3,	Co-Existence with Telecommunication; Draft DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Development	TEL1; Constraints Mapping Methodology
23: Tourism	Tourism Policy 2	Coexistence; Co-Existence with Tourism and Recreation; Draft DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Development	CO1; T1, Constraints Mapping Methodology
24: Wastewater Treatment and Disposal	Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Policies 1-2	Marine Environment and Biodiversity Land and Sea Interactions, Draft DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Development	OEP2, B1, LS1, Constraints Mapping Methodology
25: Implementation and Monitoring	Approach outlined in chapter	Governance, Implementation and Monitoring	IGM1-5

Table 3: Consistency of SC-DMAP with NMPF

Appendix B

Typical Offshore Pre-consent Surveys Required to Inform Project Level Assessment

Survey	Scope	Approach	Survey Outputs
Geophysical	To undertake a survey to identify key physical features of the seabed to characterise the seabed conditions and aid in the development of the project description, including project boundaries and offshore export cable routes, where relevant. Often undertaken in conjunction with benthic surveys	A geophysical survey is needed for detailed site refinement of the offshore infrastructure (including the offshore export cable route, where relevant). The survey would include collection of multibeam echosounder (MBES), magnetometer, sub-bottom profiler (pinger/ parametric echosounder/ chirp/ sparker/ boomer/ minigun) and side scan sonar (SSS) data. MBES are used to collect detailed topographical data of the seabed. SSS surveys are used to determine sediment characteristics and seabed features. Magnetometer surveys are used to identify magnetic anomalies and confirm interpretation of SSS and hazard mapping for metal obstructions, shipwrecks and unexploded ordnance on the surface and in the sub-surface. Sub-bottom profiler surveys are used to characterise the subsurface geological units and foundation conditions. This may include identification of the bedrock/weathered chalk and other features.	Information from the geophysical survey would inform site refinement of the offshore infrastructure and inform determination of archaeological exclusion zones (AEZs)[12]. This would also be used for various topics of the EIA scoping and EIA documents, including Marine Processes (developing models), Intertidal and Subtidal Benthic Ecology (habitat mapping) and Marine Archaeology (to support the baseline characterisation for the EIARs).
Geotechnical	Survey and interpretation to determine seabed conditions associated with the offshore infrastructure .	A geotechnical survey would be proposed for detailed site refinement of the offshore infrastructure and refinement of the offshore export cable route. The survey would include collection of boreholes, seabed and downhole cone penetration tests (CPTs) and vibrocore / grab samples. Samples would then be sent to a laboratory for testing for geotechnical parameters and where applicable contaminant testing.	This information would inform offshore infrastructure site/ route refinement, and engineering design, which may feed into the EIA through refinement of the Project Design Envelope.

[12] With correct planning, the geophysical and geotechnical surveys conducted during the planning phase of the development can provide satisfactory archaeological data to support a marine archaeology and cultural heritage EIA chapter.

Survey	Scope	Approach	Survey Outputs
			Geotechnical data are also used to inform the following EIA topics: Marine Processes: although usually to inform subsurface substrates which may be brought into suspension during construction (e.g. drilling); and Marine Archaeology: to inform the baseline characterisation, providing information on potential palaeo-landscapes. Geotechnical survey information is often collected and analysed for archaeological interest during the post consent/pre-construction phase. As such, this may not be essential for the EIAR.
Metocean	Survey to determine the wave and tidal conditions across the project site	Oceanographic and meteorological survey (to include for example Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler (ADCP), wave measurement device, and floating lidar system). ADCPs would be deployed to examine current conditions in the application area. These are typically deployed on the seafloor. Floating LiDAR System (FLS) would be deployed for a minimum of 12 months. The FLS will measure the wind resource, along with the wave climate and atmospheric parameters at sea level such as air temperature, pressure and humidity. The FLS may also measure tide levels and sea surface water temperature.	This information would inform site selection, offshore design and form the basis of the hydrodynamic model used to undertake numerical modelling. Metocean data are used to inform marine processes modelling as part of the EIA.

Survey	Scope	Approach	Survey Outputs
		Waverider buoys may also be deployed to measure the wave climate to feed into the detailed design of the project.	
Marine Mammals / Ornithology	Survey to determine temporal and spatial abundance, distribution and density (where data allows) of marine mammal and bird species within the offshore infrastructure study area.	Boat based/aerial/high definition videography marine mammal and ornithology surveys to be carried out monthly for at least 2 years (24 months). Boat based surveys are undertaken monthly by trained personnel who record bird/ marine mammals species, count data and behaviour. Aerial surveys are undertaken monthly from an aeroplane. High definition imagery data is collected and analysed by specialists to identify bird and marine mammal species occurring within the survey area. From this data abundance, distribution and densities can be calculated. Flight height data of key bird species can potentially be determined. Where possible, animal behaviour (e.g. direction, foraging) is also recorded. Bird survey should follow European Seabirds at Sea (ESAS) survey methodology and conventional distance sampling (CDS/MCDS) using recommended software (Distance, MRSea, GLM, design based methods). Additionally, haul out counts during breeding and moulting season and provision of seal satellite tracking data from tagged seals can be commissioned to assess specific abundance of seals within the area and quantify the degree of connectivity between the wind farm array and protected haul out sites. Passive acoustic monitoring (PAM) using static acoustic devices, such as CPODs, for some species of marine mammals can be undertaken using acoustic data logger located at fixed points inside and outside the offshore area over a 24 month period. This method is particularly useful for highly vocalising species such as harbour porpoise.	This data would inform baseline characterisation for the project and would be used to inform EIA scoping, Marine Mammal and Ornithology EIA chapters and the AA Screening and Natura Impact Statement undertaken as part of the AA process.

Survey	Scope	Approach	Survey Outputs
Intertidal / Coastal Ornithology	Survey to determine temporal and spatial abundance of bird populations within the intertidal / coastal landfall section of the export cable route.	Intertidal / coastal seabird survey would be required for landfalls, particularly where these occur in soft sediment habitats which could be used by overwintering birds. Surveys would include monthly count surveys of nesting/wintering/migratory birds undertaken by qualified ornithologists over winter months (September to March, including the autumn and spring passage). These could potentially be extended beyond the overwintering period, depending on the potential for nesting birds in the vicinity of the landfall. Surveying through the tidal cycle to understand bird usage of the landfall area at different tidal states.	This information would inform scoping (where surveys have been undertaken prior to scoping), the Ornithology EIA chapter and the LSE screening and Natura Impact Statement undertaken as part of the (HRA) process, if relevant.
Intertidal and subtidal benthic ecology	Surveys to determine abundance/ coverage of benthic habitats and biotopes within the offshore and export cable route. It is often undertaken in conjunction with geophysical survey.	Subtidal survey techniques include Drop Down Video (DDV), deployment of a sediment grab for infaunal and grain size analysis, seabed imagery sampling and potentially epibenthic beam trawl sampling in order to aid characterisation of the benthic fauna, sediment type and habitats present within the survey area. Surveys could be undertaken in association with geophysical or geotechnical survey to ground truth geophysical data collected. Intertidal survey of the export cable route landfall location would comprise a Phase I intertidal walkover survey at each potential landfall location and may include intertidal transects, sieving and replicate core sampling to identify habitat types and benthic species. Each intertidal core station sampled may be accompanied by a sediment sample from the same location, so the sediment particle (grain) size and organic content can be measured.	This information would inform offshore site selection, offshore export cable route refinement, EIA scoping and the following EIA chapters: Marine Processes, Benthic Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology and Fish and Shellfish Ecology.
Shipping and Navigation	Vessel Traffic Survey to provide evidence base to determine commercial, fishing, recreational and all other vessel activity	While MGN 654 (MCA, 2021) is UK guidance, it has been considered as the primary guidance document in the absence of equivalent, detailed Irish guidance.	This information would inform array site selection, EIA scoping and the Shipping and Navigation EIA chapter

Survey	Scope	Approach	Survey Outputs
	within the array area and export cable corridor.	Survey requirements described in MCA's MGN 654: AIS, radar and visual observation data of vessels - coverage of array site (cable route and surface piercing structures as required) plus suitable buffer. Traffic survey of the area concerned should be undertaken within 12 months of submission of EIA Report (24 months subject to conditions). Survey should include all the vessel types found in the area and total at least 28 days – accounting for seasonality (typically 2 weeks summer, 2 weeks winter). It is advised to discuss the traffic survey proposals with relevant stakeholders, as the scope and depth of the assessment should be proportionate to the scale of the development and magnitude of the risks.	and associated Navigation Risk Assessment (NRA).
Seascape, Landscape and Visual Resources	To identify potential impacts of the offshore infrastructure on landscape character, seascape character and visual amenity.	Viewpoint photography should be undertaken following consultation, to confirm appropriate candidate viewpoint locations and receptors. Consultation with key stakeholders to identify potential visual receptors is a standard approach to seascape and visual resources. Land-based visual receptors within the coastal landscape and marine based visual receptors likely to have views of either the construction, operation or decommissioning of the offshore wind farm array, or the construction or decommissioning at the landfall and offshore export cable laying activities will be identified. This will also be used to inform the seascape and landscape character baseline and assessment.	The report will identify key seascape and landscape features and inform the SLVIA EIA chapter and associated photomontages.
Potential Surveys			

Survey	Scope	Approach	Survey Outputs
Subsea Noise	To characterise ambient noise levels in the project area.	Data collected using sound traps to record ambient noise levels in the project area monthly over a one year period to inform the subsea noise baseline study.	Data would ultimately be used to inform the subsea noise characterisation and marine mammal and fish and shellfish ecology impact assessment.
Fish & Shellfish	Survey of fish and shellfish species populations within the offshore wind farm and export cable route.	There is expected to be sufficient desk-based data on the distribution, abundance and ecology of relevant fish and shellfish species likely to be present in the area for the purposes of the EIA. Given the temporal and spatial variation in marine fish populations within a given location, fish surveys will provide little additional information to that which is already available. However, if the insufficient data resources are identified, it should be noted that specific monitoring for key species such as herring, sand eel and cod may be required following consultation with key stakeholders. Guidance on EIS and NIS Preparation for Offshore Renewable Energy Projects (2017) recommends the following surveys: • Trawling; • Beam trawl; • Natural fish population survey; and • Drop-down video. If surveys are considered to be necessary, it is recommended that the advice of the Marine Institute Fisheries Ecosystems Advisory Services (FEAS) is sought on suitable survey methods for the assessment of potential stock in the vicinity of the offshore wind farm array.	This information would inform the Fish and Shellfish EIA chapter
Commercial fisheries	Survey to determine fishing activity within the offshore wind farm.	Given the temporal and spatial variability in fishing activity and the availability of landings and effort data for most fisheries commercial fisheries surveys are generally not undertaken for offshore wind farm projects, unless the site is close to shore and small (i.e. < 10 m vessels, where less	This information would inform offshore site selection, EIA scoping, the Commercial Fisheries EIA chapter and the Fish and

Survey	Scope	Approach	Survey Outputs
		data is available) operate across the array area. If stock data is not available from other sources (including desk based studies and consultation with local stakeholders) it might be required to conduct trawl/acoustic surveys to identify species present at the site. Surveys can also include: • Synoptic fish-presence mapping; • Observer trips (fishing and potting); • Fishing activity questionnaire. The precise nature of any survey would be determined through scoping of the potential effects and determining whether sufficient data is already available. The need for these surveys would also be determined through engagement with fisheries stakeholders. Typically, a robust baseline characterisation can be gained through desk based studies and effective consultation with fisheries stakeholders, however those discussions with stakeholders may raise the need for further studies to fill data gaps, or resolve concerns raised by stakeholders. In some cases this may include monitoring of particular species/stocks which may be well received by fisheries stakeholders. However, these are typically undertaken during pre/post construction monitoring and therefore not critical for the EIA process.	Shellfish Ecology EIA chapter.

Table 4: Typical Offshore Pre-consent Surveys Required to Inform Project Level Assessment

Appendix C

The management plans referred to in OEP 1, OEP 3 and ML 1 are:

- Construction Environmental Management Plan – This relates to the construction of the onshore infrastructure;
- Environmental Management Plan – This relates to the management of the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning of the offshore infrastructure;
- Marine Invasive Non-native Species Management Plan – This relates to the management of marine invasive non-native species during construction of the offshore infrastructure;
- Marine Mammal and Megafauna Mitigation Plan – This includes mitigation for marine mammals during the construction of the offshore infrastructure;
- Marine Megafauna: Vessel Code of Conduct – This includes mitigation for marine mammals during the construction of the offshore infrastructure;
- Marine Ornithology Monitoring Strategy – This includes a strategy of ornithology monitoring post construction of the offshore infrastructure;
- Fisheries Management and Mitigation Strategy– This sets out the approach to fisheries liaison and mitigation for the offshore infrastructure;
- Aquaculture Management and Mitigation Strategy- This sets out the approach to aquaculture liaison and mitigation for the offshore infrastructure.
- Emergency Response Co-operation Plan – This addresses emergency response and coordination arrangements for the construction, operation and maintenance of the offshore infrastructure;
- Lighting and Marking Plan – This includes the lighting and marking scheme to be implemented for the offshore infrastructure of the Project;
- Construction Traffic Management Plan – This provides traffic management measures for the construction of any onshore infrastructure;
- Nature Rehabilitation and Enhancement Plan – This supports the rehabilitation and ecological enhancement of the development area and any part of the maritime area which may be adversely affected by the development; and
- Circular Economy Plan – This includes how essential materials will be reused and/or recycled at the end of life of the offshore wind farm.

Appendix D

The guidance and plans referred to in Policy Objective B1 are:

- Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment (2018) 'Guidance on Marine Baseline Ecological Assessments & Monitoring Activities for Offshore Renewable Energy Projects Part 1 & Part 2'13
- Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government & National Parks & Wildlife Service (2010) 'Appropriate Assessment of Plans & Projects - Guidance for Planning Authorities'
- Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment & Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (2017) 'Guidance on EIS and NIS Preparation for Offshore Renewable Energy Projects'
- European Commission, Directorate-General for Environment, (2002) 'Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites'
- European Commission, Directorate-General for Environment, (2019) 'Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive''
- European Commission, Directorate-General for Environment, (2020) 'Guidance document on wind energy developments and EU nature legislation'14
- National Guidelines for Offshore Renewable Energy development from M127 in MSFD 2008/56/EC- Article 17 update to Ireland's Marine Strategy Part 3: Programme of Measures (Article 13)15
- Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) 2023-203016 and any National Nature Restoration Plan.
- Until such time as national guidance is available, projects should consider the following guidance from the EU and UK:
    - Guidance on Marine Baseline Ecological Assessments and Monitoring Activities for Offshore Renewable Energy Projects Part 1 and 2 (DCCAE, 2018);
    - Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) (now known as NatureScot), Offshore Renewables – Guidance on assessing the impact on coastal landscape and seascape, Guidance for Scoping an Environmental Statement (SNH, 2012);
    - SNH (now known as NatureScot), Visual Representation of Wind Farms Guidance (SNH, 2017a);
    - SNH (now known as NatureScot), Siting and Designing Wind Farms in the Landscape (SNH, 2017b);
    - Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Wind Energy Development in Northern Ireland's Landscapes: Supplementary Planning Guidance to Accompany Planning Policy Statement 18 'Renewable Energy' (2010);

[13] Available at: gov - Guidance Documents for Offshore Renewable Energy Developers (www.gov.ie)

[14] Available at: https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/2b08de80-5ad4-11eb-b59f-01aa75ed71a1

[15] Available at: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a7ebc-marine-strategy-framework-directive-200856ec-article-17-update-to-irelands-marine-strategy-part-3-programme-of-measures-article-13/

[16] Available at: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/93973-irelands-4th-national-biodiversity-action-plan-20232030/