Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan for Offshore Renewable Energy

October 2024

Prepared by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents i

Preamble 7

1. The South Coast DMAP 13

2. National Marine Planning Framework Objectives 15

3. DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Developments 19

3.1 Plan-Led ORE Development and the South Coast DMAP 19

3.2 Fixed Offshore Wind in the Irish Celtic Sea 20

3.3 Fixed Offshore Wind Technology 21

3.4 DMAP Maritime Areas for Fixed Offshore Wind Deployment 22

4. Plan Level Measures 30

5. Implementation, Governance and Monitoring 36

6. Marine, Environment and Biodiversity 46

7. Co-existence 58

7.1 Co-existence with Aquaculture, Seafood and Fisheries 59

7.2 Co-existence with Shipping 63

7.3 Co-existence with Tourism and Recreation 64

7.4 Co-Existence with Telecommunications 65

7.5 Co-existence with Marine Archaeological and Cultural Heritage 66

8. Land and Sea Interactions 76

8.1 Ports and Harbours 79

8.2 Transmission System Infrastructure 81

9. Economic and Employment Growth Potential 85

10. Commitment to on-going local and regional community engagement 89

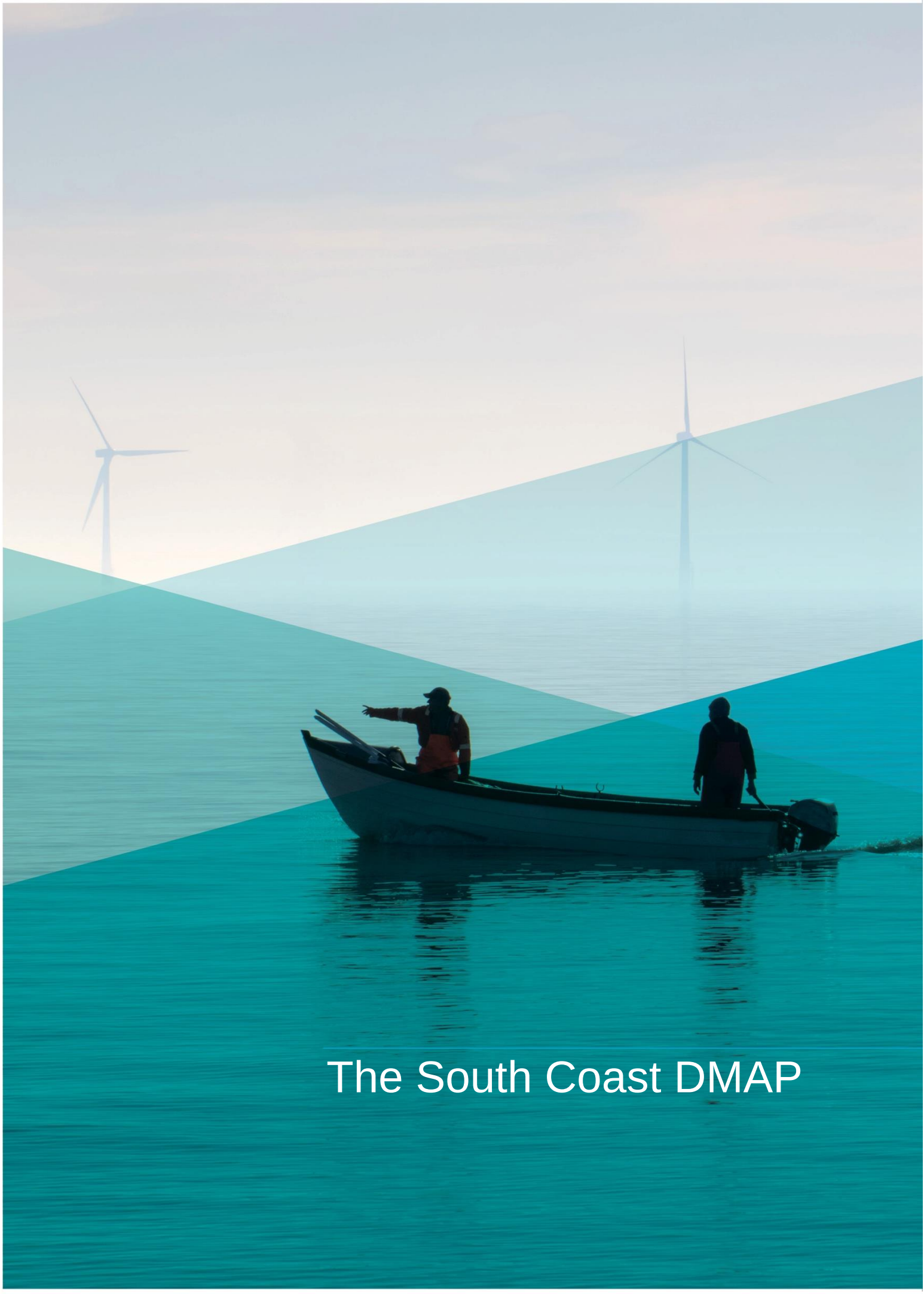
Appendices 91

Appendix A 92

Appendix B 98

Appendix C 105

Appendix D 106



The South Coast DMAP

Glossary

Abbreviation or Term	Definition or Meaning
AA	Appropriate Assessment
ADCP	Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler
AEZ	Archaeological Exclusion Zones
AIS	Automatic Identification Systems
AMMS	Aquaculture Management and Mitigation Strategies
BIM	Bord Iascaigh Mhara
CBF	Community Benefit Fund
CDS	Conventional Distance Sampling
CMP	Cable Management Plan
CPT	Cone Penetration Test
DECC	Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications
DETE	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
DHLGH	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
DMAP	Designated Maritime Area Plan
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIAR	Environmental Impact Assessment Report
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EMF	Electro Magnetic Field
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESCA	European Subsea Cables Association

ESAS	European Seabirds at Sea (ESAS) survey
FLO	Fisheries Liaison Officer
FLS	Floating LiDAR System
FMMS	Fisheries Management and Mitigation Strategies
GW	Gigawatt
GSI	Geological Survey of Ireland
GIS	Geographical Information System
INFOMAR	Integrated Mapping for the sustainable development of Ireland’s marine resource
MAC	Maritime Area Consent
MAP	Maritime Area Planning Act, 2021
MARA	Maritime Area Regulatory Authority
MARPOL	International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships
MBES	Multibeam Echosounder
MECC	Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications
MI	Marine Institute
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MSDI	Marine Spatial Data Infrastructure
MSFD	Marine Strategy Framework Directive
MSO	Marine Survey Office
MSP	Marine Spatial Planning
MSP Directive	Maritime Spatial Planning Directive

MW	Megawatt
NBAP	National Biodiversity Action Plan
NDP	National Development Plan
NIS	Natura Impact Statement
NMPF	National Marine Planning Framework
NPF	National Planning Framework
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
ORE	Offshore Renewable Energy
ORESS	Offshore Renewable Electricity Support Scheme
PAM	Passive Acoustic Monitoring
RSES	Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SC-DMAP	South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEAI	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
SLVIA	Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
SPA	Special Protection Area
SSS	Side Scan Sonar
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System
WFD	Water Framework Directive

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 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 SC-DMAP or the Plan) 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 the SC-DMAP has taken place pursuant to the legislative provisions of the Maritime Area Planning Act, 2021, as amended (MAP Act), and is consistent with Ireland's National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF).

The preparation of a draft SC-DMAP and accompanying Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) followed a nine-and-a-half-week non-statutory public consultation which took place on the South Coast DMAP Proposal during August to October 2023. This was followed by a six-week statutory public consultation period on the draft SC DMAP that took place during May to June 2024, and an additional period of statutory public consultation during August 2024. Issues raised during consultation have informed the Plan. The 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.

The draft SC-DMAP was initially prepared and published by the MECC in May 2024 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 by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage (MHLGH), as the competent authority responsible for all ORE plans (sectoral area) in the Irish maritime area, as defined in Section 3 of the MAP Act. After the President signed the Gas (Amendment) and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill 2023, Section 27 of that Act provided that this designation as Competent Authority (D) ceased and the MECC took on the role of Competent Authority (M). Figure 4 outlines the iterative process for the SC-DMAP.

The draft SC-DMAP, together with the Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment Determination in respect thereof, was laid before the Oireachtas in September 2024. The draft Plan was approved by Seanad Éireann on 9 October and by Dáil Éireann on 10 October. The SC-DMAP was made by the Minister for the Environmental, Climate and Communications (MECC) on 24 October 2024.

Maritime Areas

The SC-DMAP identifies four Maritime Areas within the wider geographical area, which is the subject of the 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, 2014, and required by the Plan. Further, the SC-DMAP includes a suite of associated policy objectives which will collectively support and guide the implementation of the Plan. Regarding development timelines, the 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 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 can fully participate in the planning process 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 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 developments 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 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 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, 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 ORE developments will continue to be informed by best available data.

What is a plan-led system?

The vision set out in the NMPF is 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. Under the new plan-led approach, Government, supported by other public sector bodies, will 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 permission 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 will also support 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.

The 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 for renewable energy infrastructure projects at the time of each project application.

The SC-DMAP has been established during a time of legislative evolution arising from an increased focus at EU and national level on the urgent need for rapid deployment of renewable energy. This includes but is not limited to the revised EU Renewable Energy Directive (RED III), which is expected to be transposed into Irish law during the lifetime of the SC-DMAP. RED III includes a substantial increase in renewable energy ambition and further requires the designation of Renewables Acceleration Areas and Grid Infrastructure Areas by EU member states. It is important to note that the implementation of the Plan may be informed by this evolving legislative landscape.

The Plan 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 Plan. However, no activity should take place within these areas that would undermine the ability to deliver ORE. Similarly, the Plan provides that no fixed offshore wind development, or other ORE project developments, should be permitted within the SC-DMAP area beyond the four Maritime Areas. This will be kept under review throughout the implementation of the SC-DMAP.

Vision

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. 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 will directly contribute to the achievement of Government objectives to deliver installed offshore wind capacities of 5 gigawatts (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.

Implementation of the Plan will support and respond to the UN Sustainable Development Goals of Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7), Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8), Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9), Climate Action (SDG 13) and Life Below the Water (SDG 14). In addition, implementation of the Plan is consistent with the National Planning Framework (NPF) National Strategic Outcome 8 Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society.

Central to Ireland's new plan-led regime for ORE, the establishment of the SC-DMAP has taken place through extensive consultation with local coastal communities along the South Coast. 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.

Through providing a pipeline of potential future ORE deployments that are both connected to Ireland's onshore electricity transmission system and otherwise, the 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. As well as seeking to address the energy security of supply and climate crises, the establishment of the SC-DMAP, and similar future plans, 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, which represents Ireland's first spatial plan for ORE, will be followed by further such plans over the coming years. The Future Framework Policy Statement for Offshore Renewable Energy outlines Ireland's long-term ambitions to deliver installed ORE capacity of 20 GW by 2040 and 37GW by 2050 and lays down a roadmap of how they will be achieved. The Future Framework includes key actions to develop Ireland's long-term, plan-led approach to offshore wind including actions to develop future ORE DMAP requirements.

As further DMAPs are established, additional considerations will be required regarding regional balance to ensure effective integration and coherence between maritime and land use planning. This includes the balance of grid and infrastructure, including large energy users, with the need to prioritise national, regional and local population and employment growth, and associated energy demand across the NPF, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) and City and Country Development Plans. Additional priorities will include:

- The need for cross departmental and infrastructure agency coordination to deliver sustainable regional and local infrastructure to enable ORE development.
- The need to service growth of Cities and Metropolitan areas, Key Towns, other towns and rural areas in proximity to the availability of renewable energy.
- Transitioning Ireland's society and economy to a net zero future.
- Bolstering and maintaining energy security and energy price affordability.
- Capturing economic opportunities associated with developing an indigenous ORE sector and enterprise activity associated with ORE.
- Continuing to provide for the sustainability of ORE growth, including in the context of the escalating biodiversity crisis.

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment's (DETE) publication 'Powering Prosperity Offshore Wind Industrial Strategy' highlights the potential role for ORE in driving regional development. The IDA and Enterprise Ireland are also committed to supporting the establishment of an indigenous ORE sector. In this context, Regional Assemblies, Local Authorities and other entities responsible for regional and local development can capitalise on this opportunity by supporting policies and actions that provide for the sustainable expansion within Ireland's ORE sector and identifying areas suitable for large renewable 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 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. To this end, the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) will develop

those appropriate mechanisms, structures and governance to ensure alignment of energy generation, transmission and uses to be applied to the SC-DMAP 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.

Regional Assemblies and Local Authorities are well-placed to consider, take part and where necessary lead in the debate on how this potential renewable energy may be used. There are many options, and one exercise may be to bring a focus on identifying areas suitable for the sustainable development of energy parks subject to required planning and environmental assessment processes. This potential may be considered by the Offshore Renewable Energy Task Force through consideration for the requirement for a national energy park strategy.

1. The South Coast DMAP

The maritime usage which is the subject of this SC-DMAP exclusively relates to fixed offshore wind technology (referred to as ORE in the Plan) and the 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 Plan to avoid, minimise and/or mitigate potential adverse impacts.
- Co-existence Provisions.
- Land-Sea Interactions.
- Governance, Implementation and Monitoring.

Timeframe and Review of the SC DMAP

The SC-DMAP will be reviewed in accordance with the requirements of Part 2 of the MAP Act which, as currently enacted, requires that this be done not later than six years following first publication. The SC-DMAP has however been prepared in the context of a long-term horizon consistent with projected deployment timelines for ORE delivery. Any reviews will be cognisant of this and will have regard to Government policy to enable decarbonisation and support the delivery of ORE. Any extension of the timeframe for the review of DMAPs beyond the six-year timeframe as currently prescribed will be a matter for future changes to the relevant provisions of the MAP Act.

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. National Marine Planning Framework Objectives

The Plan sets out programmes of deployment of ORE which will take place within the SC-DMAP area through an orderly, strategic and managed process of development. This will include an initial development of approximately 900 megawatts (MW) offshore wind capacity that will aim to contribute to achieving the Government objective of 5 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 MECC therefore considers that the preparation of this 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 wider geographical area of the SC-DMAP, including but not limited to the four Maritime Areas, 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 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.

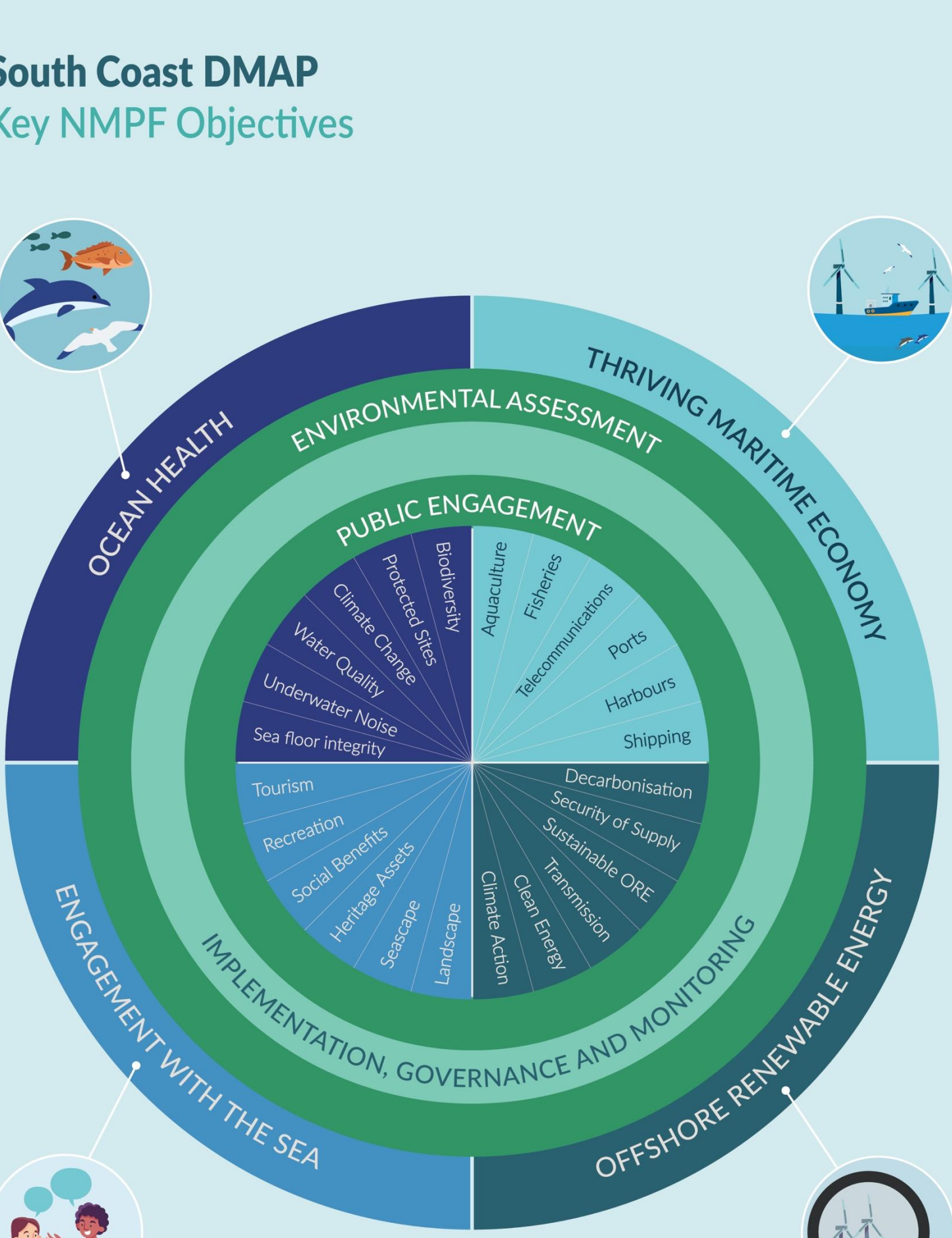
In addition to the above, the SC-DMAP is consistent with the NMPF and has had specific regard to the Overarching Marine Planning Policies outlined in Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the

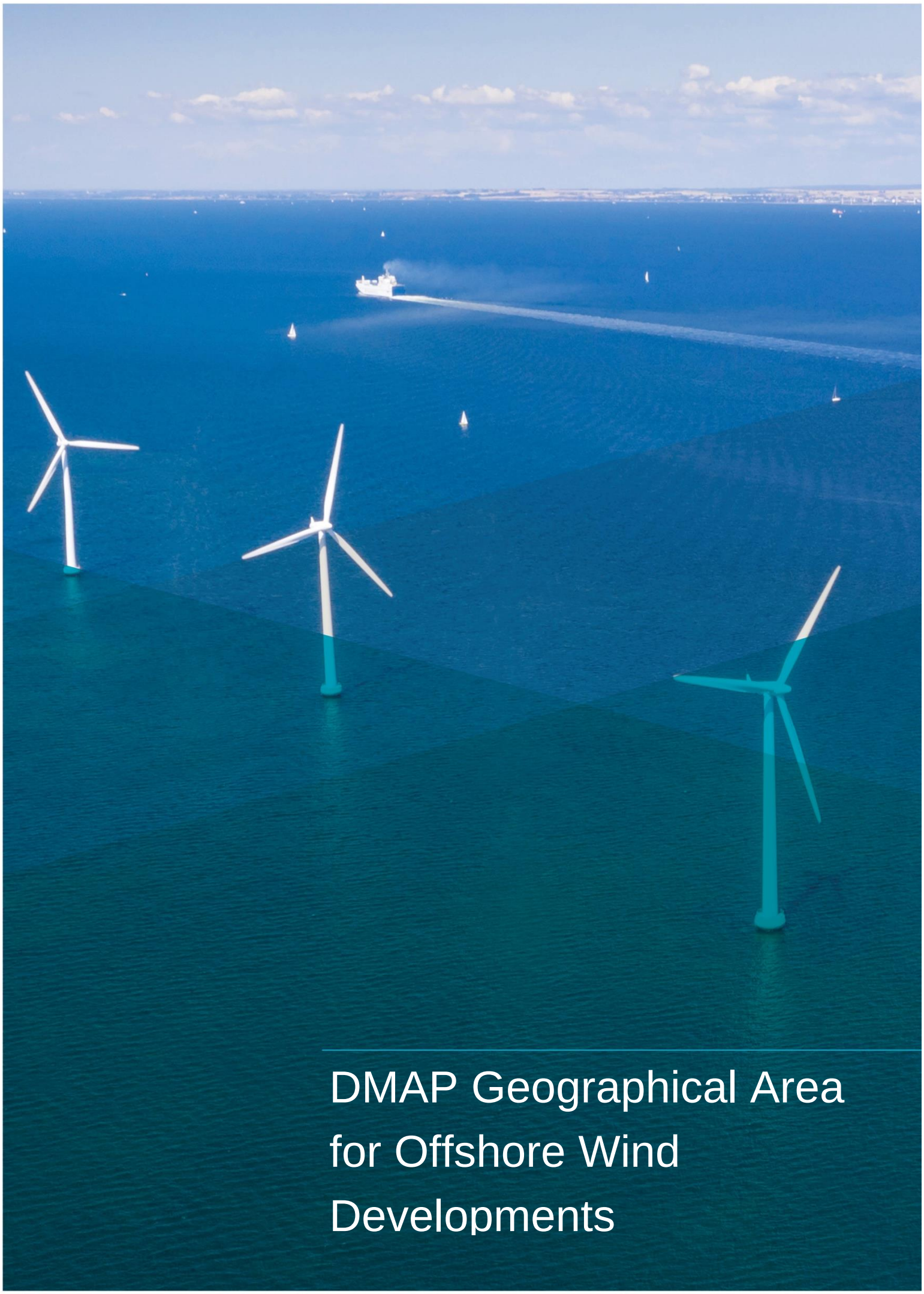
NMPF, including environmental, economic and social objectives and policies. A Table of Consistency is available at Appendix A to this Plan.

The MECC 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





DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Developments

3. DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Developments

3.1 Plan-Led ORE Development and the South Coast DMAP

This Plan relates to a geographical area along Ireland's South Coast, as set out in the Map at Figure 2 in Section 3.4 of the Plan. It extends from the marine area stretching from the Administrative Boundary for local government areas on the South Coast, as established by the Local Government Acts 1925 to 2014, 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 (km^2). The SC-DMAP further identifies four Maritime Areas, within which proposed future developments of ORE may be located.

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 ORE 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:

- NMPF, 2021.
- NPF, 2019 (currently undergoing revision).
- Climate Action Plan, 2024.
- Carbon Budget Programme, 2021.
- Future Framework for ORE Policy Statement, 2024.
- Powering Prosperity: Offshore Wind Industrial Strategy, 2024.
- 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 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.

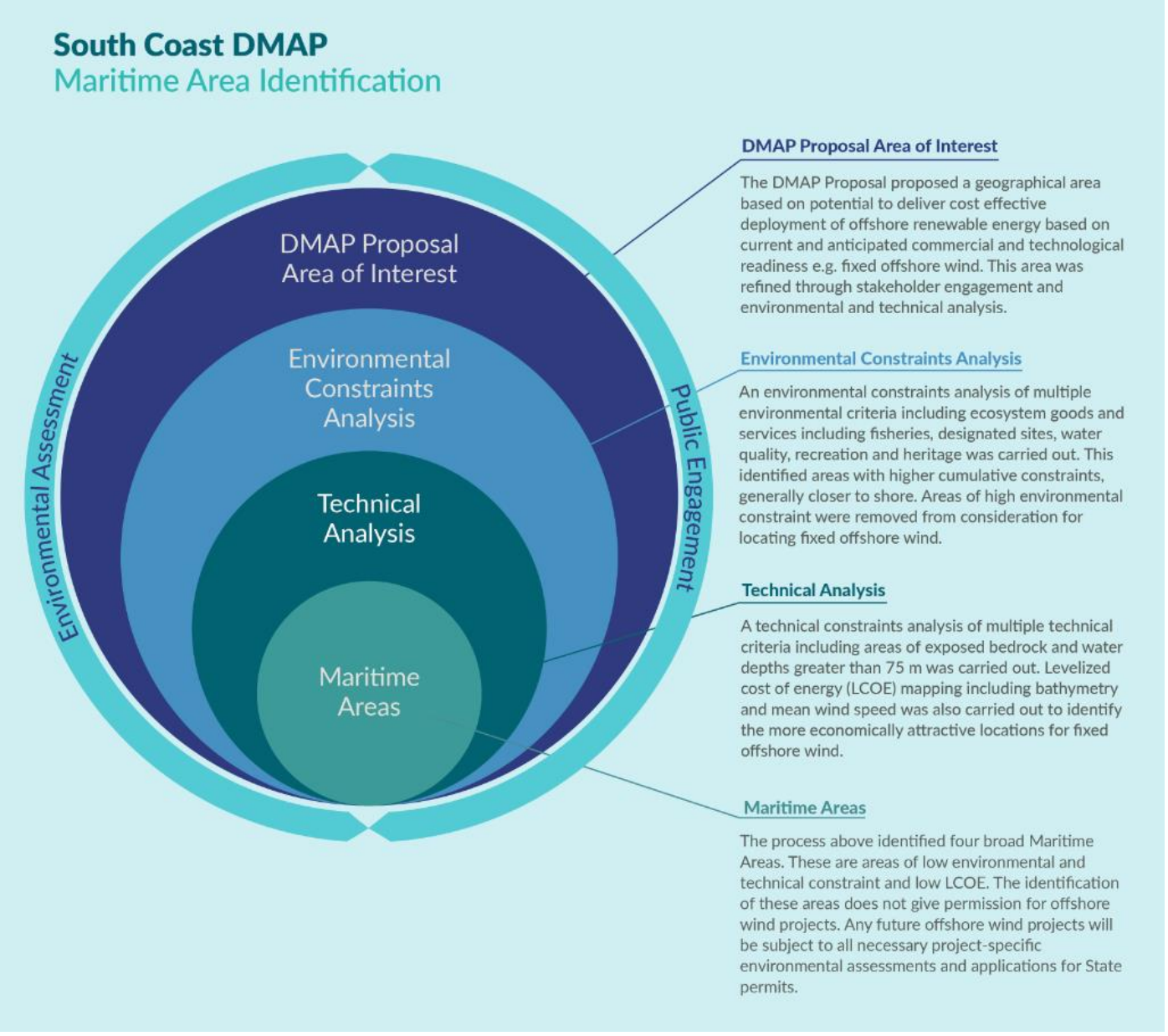


Figure 1: Maritime Area Identification

3.2 Fixed Offshore Wind in the Irish Celtic Sea

The 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 part of the 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 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 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 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 approximately 900 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 and growing 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. This proximity could 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 SC-DMAP identifies four Maritime Areas as the proposed locations for future deployments of ORE, in this instance exclusively relating to fixed offshore wind technology. The 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 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. 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 of fixed offshore wind. Subject to environmental assessment processes, future DMAPs and/or the future review or amendment of the SC-DMAP in the coming years may therefore identify prospective maritime areas for deployment of this technology beyond 2030. Actions included in the Future Framework for ORE Policy Statement, 2024, support the establishment of working groups to aid the accelerated emergence of floating offshore wind in Ireland through future DMAPs, comprising a State-Industry forum to facilitate collaborative engagement and guide relevant elements of the Future Framework for ORE policy statement. A technical group will focus on delivering a floating offshore wind demonstrator project.

3.4 DMAP Maritime Areas for Fixed Offshore Wind Deployment

The preparation of the 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, having regard to the unique characteristics of the wider marine space off the South Coast of Ireland. The ecosystem-based approach has further provided that the 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 SC-DMAP. In this respect, the 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.

Maritime Areas A to D

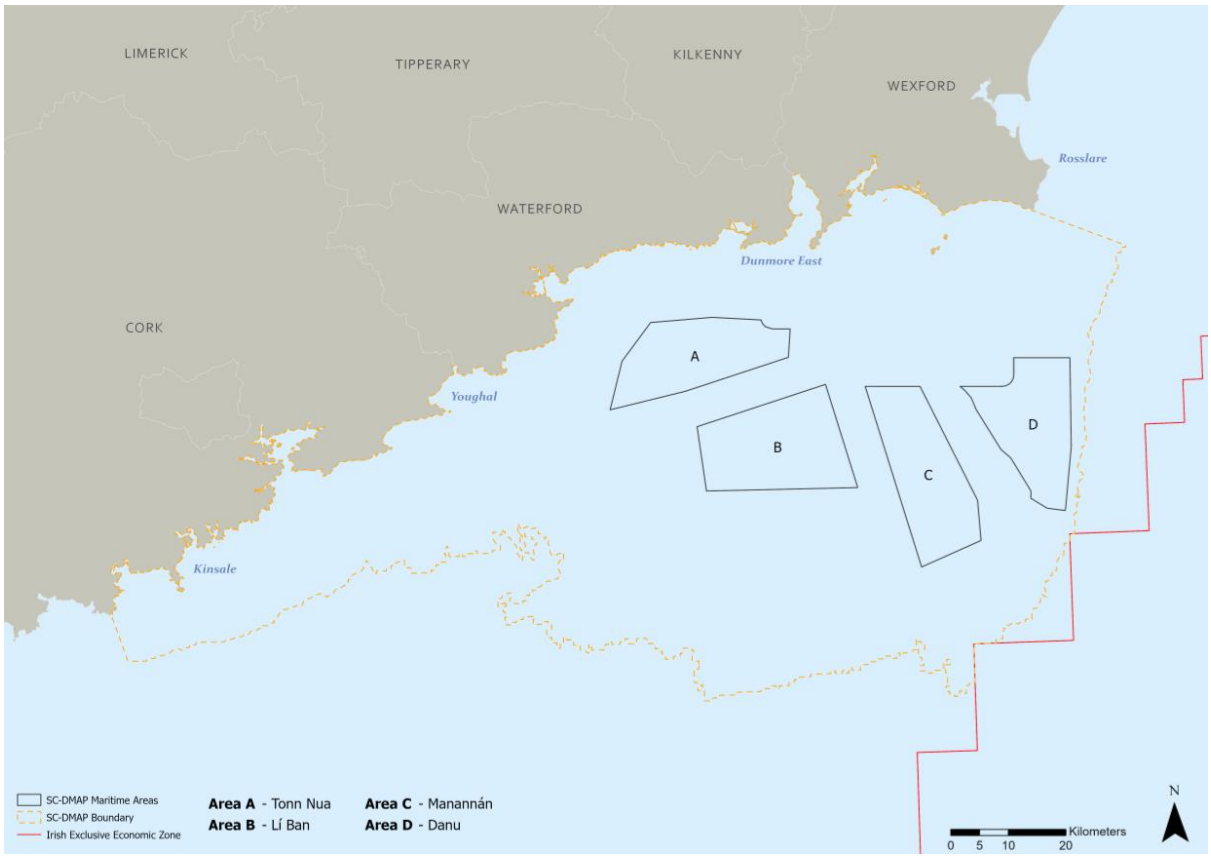


Figure 2: Maritime Areas A to D

The 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. 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. Due to significantly shallower water depths than within Maritime Areas B, C and D, and therefore the existence of the global supply chain required to facilitate construction at these depths, an ORE project located in Maritime Area A offers significantly greater prospects for achieving deployment by 2030 or as soon as feasible thereafter. This is critical to achieving Ireland's renewable energy and climate objectives. Further programmes

of deployment will take place within Maritime Areas B, C and D area 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 informed by the policy objectives specified in this 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 ORE projects within the SC-DMAP Area will be subject to all necessary project level assessments and consents.

The timing, scale and precise location of future ORE developments within each of the 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 Maritime Area A will have an installed capacity of approximately 900 MW. It is envisaged that this project will be developed by the winner of Ireland’s second offshore wind auction, expected to commence in 2025.

In addition to the above, further programmes of deployment will take place within Maritime Areas B, C and D 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 MARA, consistent with the relevant legislative provisions within the MAP Act. This may include the award of MACs through a competitive process, pursuant to Sections 93 and 103 of the MAP Act, on either a phased or non-phased basis. Likewise, the timing and scale of future Offshore Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (ORESS) auctions or other competitive support schemes will be confirmed by Government at a later point in time.

The design and layout of offshore wind in Maritime Areas B, C and D will be informed by the findings of Regional Level Surveys in respect of mobile/migratory species including birds, marine mammals and bats protected under the Habitats and Birds Directives. The surveys will include both initial and further longer-term Regional Level Surveys. The scope of both

the initial and further longer-term Regional Level Surveys will be determined by the SC-DMAP Implementation Programme Body. Applications for development of ORE in Maritime Areas B, C and D shall only be submitted to and considered by the planning authority when the data meeting the scope of the initial Regional Level Surveys is made available.

These Regional Level Surveys align with the ecosystem-based approach which has been applied to the SC-DMAP. They are a mitigation measure designed to support the monitoring and implementation of the Plan and to inform the assessment of potential in-combination and cumulative impacts associated with ORE developments within these areas at the project level. The outcome of the Regional Level Surveys will also inform future statutory reviews of the SC-DMAP. The scope of the Regional Level Surveys will be determined by the SC-DMAP Implementation Programme Body taking into account the recommendations made by the Marine Ecosystems and Ornithology Working Group, both of which will be established as part of the governance structure for the SC-DMAP.

The SC-DMAP Implementation Programme Body will decide whether the Regional Level Surveys are carried out by the State and/or by MAC holders in respect of Maritime Areas B, C and D. Further detail is set out in Section 4 of the 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 as required. 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.

The sequencing in respect of proposed ORE developments in Maritime Areas B, C and D may be as below, noting that this will be contingent on the evolution of Government policy and is therefore subject to possible change, as required:

1. Scope of initial Regional Level Surveys determined by SC-DMAP Implementation Programme Body.
2. Publication of notice by MARA of a competitive MAC process.
3. MAC applications and award.
4. Collection of initial Regional Level Survey data and sharing of data (this step may have commenced by State bodies before MAC awards).
5. Further project level surveys to be carried out by MAC holders, contingent on licence application approval by MARA.
6. Application for development consent.

Maritime Area A

Maritime Area A is situated off the coast of County Waterford and encompasses a total marine area of approximately 306 km². The distance to shore varies from between approximately 12.2 km along the western boundary to 12.4 km along the northern boundary. Maritime Area A has a mean water depth of approximately 57 metres (m), with a minimum water depth of 48 m and a maximum water depth of 69 m. The average wind speed in the area at 150 m height 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 Maritime 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 SC-DMAP in order to address potential significant adverse environmental impacts to be balanced with the climate mitigating benefits of the deployment of ORE. 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, Maritime Area A is identified as the proposed location of a single fixed ORE deployment with an installed capacity of approximately 900 MW. With a sea depth that is significantly shallower than within Maritime Areas B, C, and D, a project located in Maritime Area A offers the best prospects for deployment by 2030 or as soon as feasible thereafter and is therefore critical to achieving Ireland's decarbonisation objectives. It is envisaged that this project will be developed by the winner of Ireland's second offshore wind auction, currently scheduled to commence in 2025.

It is proposed that this single deployment within Maritime 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 SC-DMAP area.

Maritime Area B

Maritime Area B is situated off the coast of County Waterford and has a total area of approximately 368 km², with distances to shore varying between approximately 29 km along the western boundary and 24 km along the northern boundary. Maritime Area B has a mean water depth of 70 m, with a minimum water depth of 65 m and a maximum water depth of 76 m. The average wind speed in the area at 150 m height 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 1.1 to 1.5 GW. With a typical density of 4.5 MW/km², such a project would use 66% to 91% of the Area.

Maritime Area C

Maritime Area C is situated off the south coast of County Wexford and has a total area of approximately 341 km². The distance to shore is approximately 25 km along the northern boundary. Maritime 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. The average wind speed in the area at 150 m height 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

Maritime Area D is situated off the south coast of County Wexford and has a total area of approximately 300 km². The distance to shore is approximately 26 km along the northern boundary. Maritime Area D has a mean water depth of approximately 67 m with a minimum water depth of 48 m and a maximum water depth of 94 m. The average wind speed in the area at 150 m height 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 67% to 96% 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 which aims to be deployed by the end of 2030, or as soon as feasible thereafter, 20 GW by 2040, and 37 GW by 2050, by providing for the strategically managed and sustainable development of fixed offshore wind technology in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and associated offshore electricity transmission 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 Irish onshore electricity transmission system, as well as projects with alternative offtake solutions and therefore not connected to the Irish onshore electricity 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 second ORE auction, which aims to deploy by

2030, or as soon as feasible thereafter and will be connected to the Irish onshore electricity transmission system.

MA 4:

A MAC will be the entry point for all future ORE in Maritime Areas B, C and D and associated transmission infrastructure development in the SC-DMAP area. The award of MACs in respect of proposed future ORE developments within Maritime Areas B, C, and D, shall be granted according to timing, methodology and processes to be determined by MARA in accordance with the MAP Act, consistent with Government policy.

Names for SC-DMAP Maritime Areas [1]

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: Names for SC-DMAP Maritime Areas

[1] 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 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 methodology which has informed the identification of these Maritime Areas, including an environmental constraints analysis.

In addition to the above, proposed future developments of ORE and associated transmission infrastructure within the SC-DMAP area will be subject to all project level environmental assessments and any further measures identified at the development permission application stage. Further project specific measures may be identified at the development permission application stage. They will furthermore have the benefit of the output of available data from the Regional Level Surveys. The suite of policy objectives included in the 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 an 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 Plan therefore provides for additional Regional Level Surveys to be carried out within the 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. In particular, applications for development of ORE in Maritime Areas B, C and D shall only be submitted to the planning authority when the data meeting the scope of the initial Regional Level Surveys is available through the Geographical Information System (GIS) data repository. It is, however, important to emphasise that these Regional Level 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 Maritime Areas. The outcome of the Regional Level Surveys will also contribute to a continual strengthening of data to inform future statutory reviews of the SC-DMAP.

The scope and timing of this Regional Level Survey activity, including the scope of the initial and longer-term surveys, will be decided by the SC-DMAP Implementation Programme Body, to be established within six months of the establishment of the SC-DMAP. These decisions will in turn be informed by advice and recommendations from the Marine Ecosystems and Ornithology Working Group. The SC-DMAP Implementation Programme Body may determine that 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 Plan that development permission applications for ORE development in Maritime Areas B, C and D will be informed by the outcome of the initial Regional Level Surveys. Development permission applications in these Maritime Areas should not therefore be submitted or considered until the outcome of the initial Regional Level Surveys have been made available by DECC via the shared Geographical Information System (GIS) data repository.

Given these requirements, it is also an objective of the 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 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 SC-DMAP area should be prioritised where practicable.

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 Body will coordinate a data repository for the SC-DMAP including a common, shared 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 by DECC to this GIS data repository. Other Government Departments and State bodies may also contribute to the GIS data repository. Data

collection for the repository will have regard to best practice standards including the Marine Spatial Data Infrastructure (MSDI) to support data standardisation, acquisition, quality assurance and application.

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. It should be noted that these are examples of the types of data that should be collected and should not be regarded as a definitive list. The relevant competent authorities will determine whether any survey is adequate or when additional information is required.

Seascape and Landscape Visual Impact

The Plan limits the development of ORE to the four specific Maritime Areas – Maritime Areas A, B, C and D - and provides for separation distances between each area and between the areas and the coast. While it is acknowledged that the development of ORE will change the view from land out to sea, the balance between the sustainable and plan-led development of ORE and the change in sea views in considered an acceptable balance by the Plan. This balance is made in the context of the necessary actions that Ireland must take to address the escalating climate crisis, to meet obligatory targets for decarbonisation of our society and economy, and to increase renewable energy production through ORE resources.

Spatial flexibility is provided within Maritime Areas A, B, C and D for ORE project designs and array layouts to respond to a Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (SLVIA). The SLVIA will inform project designs to reduce and/or mitigate against likely significant effects on visual amenities. Consistent with NMPF Seascape and Landscape

Policy 1, a policy objective is provided in the SC-DMAP reinforcing the importance of a SLVIA at the project stage.

Wake Effects

It is acknowledged that wake effects can occur downstream of a turbine effecting adjacent turbines and/or neighbouring windfarms which could impact energy output. There may also be indirect effects of wake impacts on ecology including birds/bats. Project level ORE design and environmental assessment will consider such wake effects. Policy Objective MI 5 seeks to avoid, minimise or mitigate significant adverse wake effect impacts through project design.

Policy Objectives for Mitigation (MI)

MI 1:

(a) Proposed ORE developments and associated transmission infrastructure shall use relevant data made available through the GIS Data Repository to support the requisite statutory environmental assessments at project level (which may include EIA and/or AA).

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

(c) Applications for development of ORE in Maritime Areas B, C and D in the SC-DMAP Area, shall only be submitted to and considered by the planning authority when the data meeting the scope of the initial Regional Level Surveys is available through the GIS repository, to inform requisite statutory environmental assessments at project level, (which may include EIA and/or 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 SC-DMAP Implementation Programme Body.

(d) The design, scale and location of future ORE developments within Maritime Areas B, C and D should be informed by the outcome of the Regional Level Surveys.

MI 2:

At the project level, all applications for development consents for ORE projects and transmission infrastructure relating to any SC-DMAP policy objective should have regard to the relevant pre-consent survey requirements and guidance set out in Appendix B and D. Applications for development consent that may give rise to likely significant effects on the environment shall 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).
- Demonstrate compliance with Article 12 (Habitats Directive) on Annex IV species.
- Demonstrate compliance with Article 5 (Birds Directive) on wild or migratory bird species and Article 4.4 (Birds Directive) to strive to avoid pollution or deterioration of habitats outside of protection areas.
- Demonstrate the need for any derogation from the applicable 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 in the SC-DMAP area, should be prioritised where practicable by MARA, subject to compliance with Part 5 of the MAP Act and any relevant regulations. Any licence application submitted to MARA for the purposes of site investigations and marine environmental surveys, by EirGrid in respect of transmission infrastructure, or by the State or MAC holders in respect of ORE projects in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D should also be prioritised where practicable.

MI 4:

At the project level, all applications for development consents for ORE projects in the Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and associated electricity transmission infrastructure in the SC-DMAP area shall undertake and submit a seascape, landscape and visual impact assessment (SLVIA) and respond to mitigation recommendations informed by such assessments in the design and layout of ORE arrays and related electricity transmission infrastructure. The SLVIA shall be scoped and conducted in accordance with the most relevant and up-to-date published good practice guidance and will consider effects on seascape, landscape and visual resources and receptors identified within a zone of theoretical visibility including areas of high importance to tourism, protected views, landscape and seascape character.

MI 5:

Any subsequent ORE proposals within the Maritime Areas that could affect existing ORE projects or sites for which permission for ORE has been granted shall, in order of preference, seek to avoid, minimise or mitigate significant adverse wake effect impacts on these projects through project design. ORE project developers within the Maritime Areas shall consult with each other to identify wake effect impacts.

Implementation, Governance and Monitoring

5. Implementation, Governance and Monitoring

The ecosystem-based approach to the 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 Plan incorporates a framework for a governance structure that 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.

Further details on the Implementation Programme Body will be communicated by DECC once the governance arrangements are completed in partnership with the relevant cross-sectoral stakeholders. The governance structure will be cross-sectoral in principle and will acknowledge engagement between relevant Departments, the Southern Regional Assembly, the coastal Local Authorities, and other key infrastructure agencies to support effective land and sea planning policy coordination and sustainable infrastructure investment to support

ORE in the Plan area. DECC supports the principle of including relevant Government agencies and will consider the inclusion of environmental NGO representation in the Marine Ecosystems and Ornithology Working Group. As the Competent Authority for the SC-DMAP, the MECC will head the governance structure for the SC-DMAP. On behalf of the MECC, DECC will lead on the implementation of the SC-DMAP, with input as needed from relevant Government Departments, State agencies and other stakeholders. The MECC will be further supported by a SC-DMAP Implementation Programme Body. DECC will lead this Body with support and input, as required, from relevant key stakeholders such as MARA.

The key tasks for DECC as the Implementation Programme Body lead 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 MECC) 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 EU 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 Body 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 currently has responsibility for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), and include engagement with environmental NGOs. The scope of the Regional Level Surveys will be determined by the SC-DMAP Implementation Programme Body taking into account recommendations by the Marine Ecosystems and Ornithology Working Group.

The Implementation Programme Body 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 Implementation Programme Body 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 Body will 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 2.

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 Body 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 Body	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 timely recommendations to the SC-DMAP Implementation Programme Body. • To develop and recommend the Implementation Plan to monitor the implementation of the SC-DMAP. • To recommend to the Implementation Programme Body the scope of the Regional Level Surveys. • To be informed by relevant future National (e.g. MPAs) and European (e.g. Natura 2000) designations relevant to the SC-DMAP, and consider any implications arising for the Plan.
Technical Working Group	DECC; Key stakeholders	• To discuss development of transmission infrastructure and other enabling infrastructure to service the Plan including port infrastructure. • To share data gathered with the GIS data repository.
Other sectoral subgroups	DECC; Key Stakeholders	• The SC-DMAP Implementation Programme Body may establish other sectoral and cross-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 use of Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely (SMART) principles and setting of environmental, economic and social Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) as part of the Implementation Plan.
- 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 and non-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 Body within one year following the making of the SC-DMAP. This working group will be involved in reviewing available data, and identifying the most important gaps to fill in priority order so that assessments can be conducted at the appropriate level. In addition to ornithology, this working group will consider marine mammals and any other relevant species to the Habitats Directive and the Wildlife Act.

The Implementation Plan will provide for ongoing monitoring of progress of the Plan against environmental, economic and social indicators for which a set of measurable KPI’s will be identified. 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 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, the Marine Institute will 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 fish species and stocks. The overall aim of the programme will be to collect robust scientific data before, during and after 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 kept under review to ensure that it remains up-to-date and that it reflects the latest policy, environmental (including outcomes from the Regional Level Surveys), technological and industrial developments, as appropriate. Reviews in accordance with the relevant provisions of the MAP Act 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.

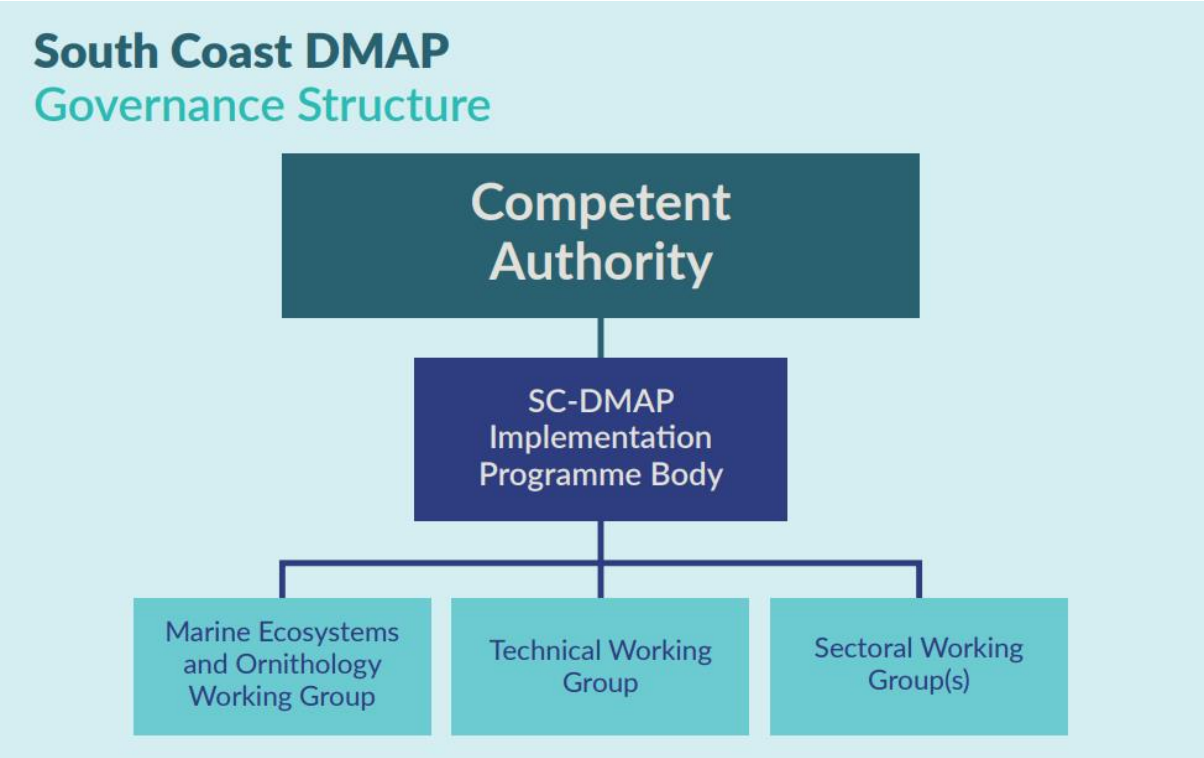


Figure 3: South Coast DMAP Governance Structure

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:

(A): A SC-DMAP Implementation Programme Body, headed by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, which, inter alia, will:

- Oversee the implementation of the SC-DMAP.
- Agree, having regard to the recommendations from the Marine Ecosystems and Ornithology Working Group, the scope and coordination of Regional Levels Surveys to inform the project application assessment and development stage of Maritime Areas B, C and D.
- Convene and chair a six-monthly meeting of all SC-DMAP governance working groups within a single 'Collaborative Forum' for the duration of the SC-DMAP to discuss all proposed ORE projects and enabling infrastructure to be brought forward under the Plan and cumulative and in-combination effects.
- Facilitate a data repository for the SC-DMAP including a common, shared, GIS data repository for Plan and project level data.

(B): A Marine Ecosystems and Ornithology Working Group whose role will include:

- Advising the SC-DMAP Implementation Programme Body on the monitoring of and implementation of the SC-DMAP.
- Recommending the scope of the Regional Level Surveys.
- Coordinating the development of an Ecosystems Services Map which identifies key services including but not limited to climate regulation services for the SC-DMAP Area.

IGM 2:

Include a cross section of 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 Marine Institute.

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 the requisite statutory environmental assessments at project level (which may include EIA and/or AA) and data relevant to cumulative and in-combination assessment. Data gathered shall be submitted to MARA in a format to be determined by MARA within three months of being collected. The data shall 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 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 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 SC-DMAP, including resilience to climate change impacts.

Environmental features within the SC-DMAP Area

The total geographical area of the SC-DMAP is approximately 8,813 km² in size and includes four Maritime Areas within which ORE developments may take place, as outlined in Figure 2. 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 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 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 harbour porpoise, fin whale, minke whale, grey seal, and harbour seal. Bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus)*, harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*), grey seals (*Halichoerus grypus*) and harbour seals (*Phoca vitulina*) have been recorded in the SC-DMAP area. These species are listed on

Annex II of the Habitats Directive which requires the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (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 SC-DMAP.

Fishing activity identified within the SEA SC-DMAP Study Area (which is larger than the SC-DMAP area)[2] includes two areas where net fishing occurs, two midwater trawl fishing areas, 14 areas where pot fishing occurs, 35 dredge fishing areas and 41 periwinkle harvesting collecting sites. It further identified 105 licensed aquaculture sites, the majority are for Pacific Oyster farms, as well as two sites for brown 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. 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 marine ecosystems, including but not limited to commercially valuable fish species and stock levels. 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 12.4 km from shore on its northern edge and 12.2 km on its western edge. As outlined in Section 3.4, Maritime Areas B, C and D are located further from shore. As part of the ecosystem-based approach used to develop the 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 (Refer to Section 4 of the Plan for the inclusion of Policy Objective MI 4 addressing seascape and landscape visual impact assessment).

[2] 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 SC-DMAP proposal area, and a further 40km to the westernmost edge.

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 SC-DMAP area.

As part of the iterative process to developing the Plan, environmental assessments were carried out in parallel with the development of the Plan. Measures identified through these on-going SEA and AA processes have been incorporated into the Plan, which has included the introduction of Regional Level Surveys and a common, shared GIS data repository set out in Section 4. The SEA Statement and NIS provide examples of how mitigation measures are addressed by the plan approach and policy objectives. An overview of the integration of the SEA and AA processes with the development of the Plan is set out in Figure 4.

The result of the iterative process for developing the SC-DMAP is a Plan which provides a framework for the sustainable development of ORE (fixed offshore wind) off the South Coast. The policy objectives in the 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 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.

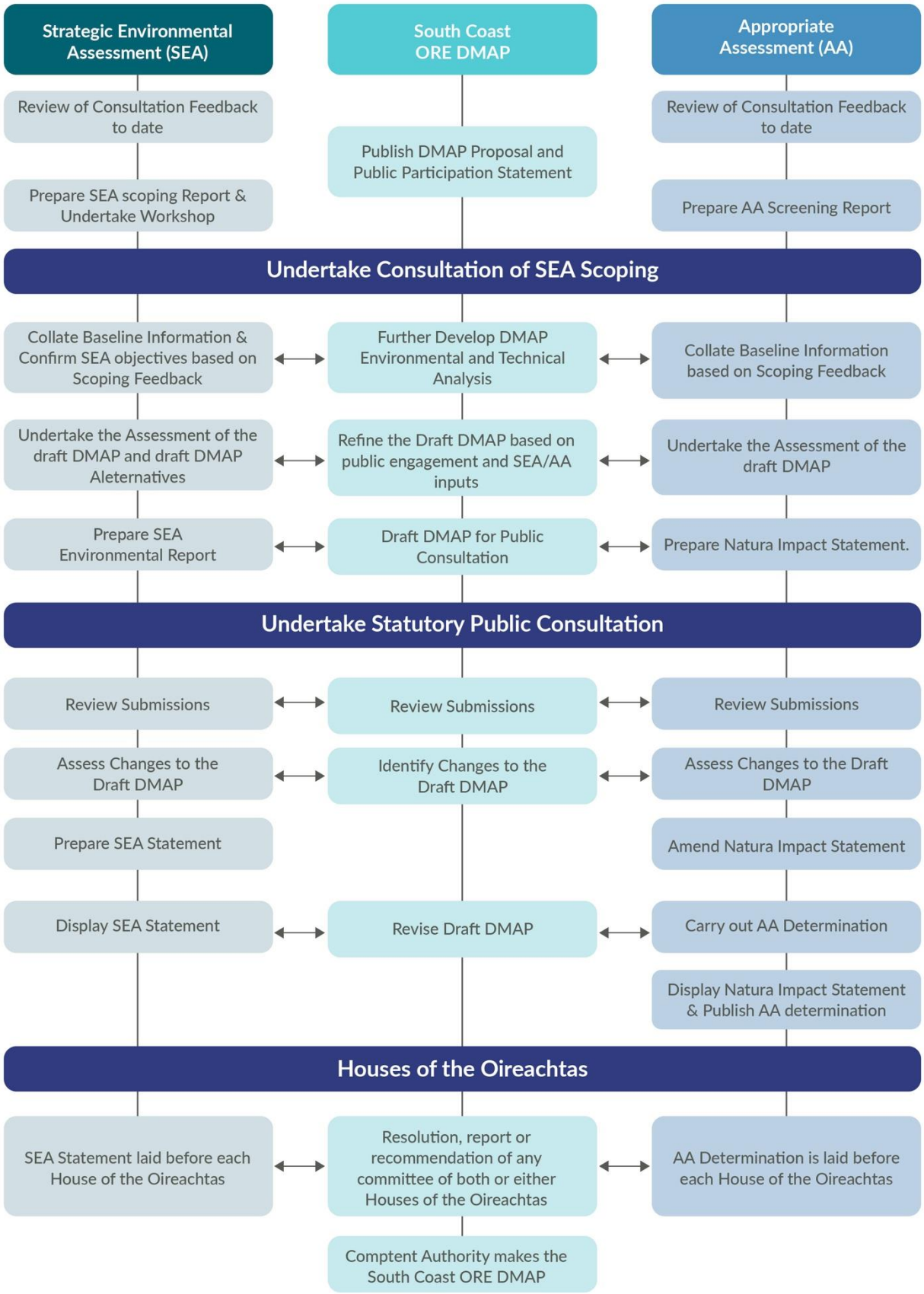


Figure 4: Summary of the iterative process for developing the SC-DMAP

Protected Sites

Protected marine sites in Ireland mainly consist of marine SPAs and 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 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.

The Plan, in accordance with the implementation of relevant environmental directives including the Birds and Habitats Directives, EIA Directive and transposing national legislation seeks robust project level assessments for ORE and transmission system infrastructure that takes into consideration environmental constraints, the presence of designated sites, attainment of good environmental status and avoidance of adverse effects on European Sites. Policy Objective OEP 2 seeks consideration of environmental constraints across all stages of a project cycle including early-stage constraints analysis, route and site selection and project level assessment. In the implementation of Policy Objective OEP 2, should the procedure under Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive need to be followed, the decision to proceed with a plan or project must meet all the requirements under the law, including that all necessary compensatory measures will be taken to ensure the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 network is protected.

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 (DHLGH) 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, with the support of DHLGH, conducted an Ecological Sensitivity Analysis of the Celtic Sea, which was published in June 2024. As set out in its report, a core objective of the Ecological Sensitivity Analysis of the Celtic Sea was, inter alia, to provide rationales and recommendations for potential future MPA designations in the Celtic Sea area of interest under MPA legislation, and to provide data and analyses that may inform decisions regarding the location of ORE development off the south of Ireland.

Using stringent selection criteria, the group's analyses identified 41 biological and environmental features that could be shortlisted and may be recommended for spatial protection in the Celtic Sea, beyond those species and habitats already afforded spatial protection under the EU Birds and Habitats Directives. In determining its spatial designation recommendations, the methodology used by the MPA Advisory Group built on methods developed for a preceding study of the western Irish Sea (2022-2023) and accounted for certain human activities including existing commercial fisheries, shipping activity and areas with potential for future ORE development.

As noted in its Celtic Sea report, consultation and information exchange between the MPA Advisory Group, its wider project team, and DECC took place regarding the identification of broad locations for future ORE development. The ecological sensitivity analysis project therefore represents another example of the effective cross-Government collaboration that has informed the establishment of the SC-DMAP and will inform its effective implementation.

Among the key outcomes of the Celtic Sea sensitivity analysis are the identification of suitable areas within which a potential future network of MPAs may be delivered in respect of the 41 features shortlisted and could be recommended for spatial protection. The Celtic Sea report noted that the full extent of these suitable areas would not be required for an effective network of MPAs in the Celtic Sea, and highlighted the likelihood that not all human activities would need to be restricted within them. The MPA Advisory Group findings further highlighted minimal overlap between these suitable areas identified by the Celtic Sea analyses and the four Maritime Areas included in the SC-DMAP. The datasets which informed the Celtic Sea Environmental Sensitivity Analysis may be added to the SC-DMAP data repository, and may, in addition to further datasets, guide future ORE developments within the SC-DMAP.

Contingent on the stated conservation objectives of new MPAs established under legislation, there may be some opportunities for co-existence between MPAs and ORE developments. The identification, designation and management of future MPAs and the setting of their respective conservation objectives is a matter for the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, in line with MPA legislation.

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 endeavour to make unanimously agreed recommendations to the SC-DMAP Implementation Programme Body, led by DECC, regarding the scope of the Regional Level Surveys in respect of mobile/migratory species including birds, mammals and bats. The outputs of these Regional Level Surveys 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.

Marine Water Quality

Consistent with NMPF Water Quality Policy 1, the SC-DMAP commits to contributing to the achievement of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) objectives to use River Basin Management Plans and Programmes of Measures to contribute to the protection of and, where necessary, contribute to the restoration of water bodies in order to reach good status, and to prevent deterioration. The WFD applies to inland, transitional, and coastal surface waters as well as groundwaters. An objective specifying the need for ORE and associated transmission infrastructure to take account of relevant WFD requirements is included in the Plan to ensure it is a priority at project level and addressed as part of the requisite project level environmental assessments, which may include Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIAR).

The SC-DMAP also supports the implementation of objectives of the EU MSFD through sustainable ORE project development. The principles of MSFD, which aim to protect the marine environment and maintain or achieve good environmental status for seas through the application of an ecosystems-based approach to the management of human activity, are central to the principles and objectives of the SC-DMAP.

Policy Objectives for Overarching Environmental Protection (OEP)

OEP 1:

Applications for development permission for ORE development in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and associated electricity transmission infrastructure within the SC-DMAP area shall have regard to, as appropriate, Guidelines issued under section 7 of the MAP Act including any Marine Planning Guidelines for ORE. Applications shall also include, where relevant, the management plans listed in Appendix C. The appropriate stages of the relevant management plans will be subject to public consultation as part of the planning application process and, subject to any conditions imposed, will form part of any subsequent development permission.

OEP 2:

The following considerations shall be integrated into all stages of decision making for ORE and electricity transmission infrastructure projects, including but not limited to constraints analysis, route and site selection, and project level assessment to inform the preparation of requisite project-level applications (which may include EIA and/or AA):

- Environmental constraints such as the presence of designated sites.
- The attainment of good environmental status.
- The processes and functions necessary to avoid adverse effects on the integrity of European Sites.

OEP 3:

Applications for development permission for ORE development in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D should, through a project-specific Nature Enhancement and Rehabilitation Plan, aim towards no net loss and provide for ecological enhancement and recovery of the marine environment. This should target contribution to European, national and local biodiversity policies, including any National Nature Restoration Plan. Measures should be commensurate with and proportional to the scale/footprint of the development area, and any part of the maritime area, which may be adversely affected by the development. Nature enhancement measures are separate, and in addition, to the mitigation hierarchy. 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 the outcome of planning and / or licensing processes as relevant.

Policy Objectives for Biodiversity (B)

B 1:

Applications for development permission for ORE and associated electricity transmission infrastructure shall have regard to the guidance and plans as relevant, and updates thereof, set out in Appendix D.

Policy Objectives for Protected Marine Sites (MS)

MS 1:

Applications brought forward for projects in the SC-DMAP Area shall consider up to date understanding of baseline conditions, including any future national protected sites (e.g., Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and European Sites e.g., marine SPAs and SACs) and relevant data available through the GIS Data Repository. This up-to-date baseline shall inform the requisite statutory environmental assessments at project level (which may include EIA and/or AA) including cumulative and in-combination assessment.

Policy Objectives for Water Quality (WQ)

WQ 1:

ORE and electricity transmission infrastructure projects shall 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 as part of project level assessments.

WQ 2:

ORE projects in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and electricity transmission infrastructure in the SC-DMAP area shall take account of the relevant requirements of the Water Framework Directive (relating to aspects such as supporting cabling/infrastructure impacts near shore and on-land) and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive along with the national requirements implementing these directives e.g., latest River Basin Management Plan.

Policy Objectives for Marine Litter (ML)

ML 1:

Proposals for ORE projects in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and electricity transmission infrastructure projects in the SC-DMAP area shall comply with Marine Litter Policy 1 set out within the NMPF. Specifically, priority shall be given within project design to solutions that, in order of preference, facilitate the prevention, reuse and recycling of waste. Where waste is expected to be generated, a waste management plan shall be established to prioritise a hierarchy of avoid, minimise or mitigate in relation to marine litter. The waste management plan shall explicitly address waste and litter generated during development, construction, operation and decommissioning of ORE and associated infrastructure.

ML 2:

ORE projects in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and electricity transmission infrastructure projects in the SC-DMAP area brought forward under this Plan shall assess the impact of electromagnetic field (EMF) in the marine environment as part of the statutory environmental assessment at the project level and use the most effective techniques available to industry to, in order of preference, avoid, minimise or mitigate likely significant adverse effects from EMF impacts.

Policy Objectives for Underwater Noise (UN)

UN 1:

Applications for ORE projects in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and electricity transmission infrastructure projects in the SC-DMAP area shall demonstrate that they have had regard to guidance relating to underwater noise including DAHG Guidance to Manage the Risk to Marine Mammals from Man-made Sound Sources in Irish Waters and updates thereof. Appropriate mitigation measures for any activity that may generate underwater noise shall be included in applications. Until such time as the DAHG guidance is updated, projects shall have regard to the underlying research this guidance is based on, and updates to this research.

UN 2:

Projects for ORE in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and electricity transmission infrastructure in the SC DMAP area shall 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.

UN 3:

Projects for ORE in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and electricity transmission infrastructure in the SC DMAP area shall use, as relevant, the most effective techniques available to industry for noise abatement such as adjusting the parameters of 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 appropriate to, in order of preference, avoid, minimise or mitigate likely significant adverse effects on marine fauna.

Policy Objectives Air Quality (AQ)

AQ 1:

To reduce reliance on fossil fuels, and reduce associated emissions and air pollution, projects for ORE in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and electricity infrastructure in the SC-DMAP area shall comply with existing regulatory and policy commitments to offshore and vessel management air pollution protocols as set out in the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL).

Policy Objectives Climate Change (CC)

CC 1:

Project developers for ORE and associated electricity transmission infrastructure in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D shall demonstrate the integration of a multi-benefit approach into the

design of 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.

CC 2:

Development of ORE projects in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and electricity transmission infrastructure in the SC-DMAP area should avoid impacts on natural carbon storage and carbon sequestration and include consideration of the integrity of European sites. Project-specific impacts on carbon storage and sequestration resources, biodiversity enhancement, managing coastal erosion e.g., through stabilising sediment and impacts on opportunities for natural carbon sequestration shall be considered and any losses in natural storage or sequestration resources or opportunities shall be quantified and offset.

CC 3:

To increase sustainability, recognising that ORE is inherently a low carbon technology, ORE projects in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and electricity infrastructure in the SC-DMAP area shall be designed, installed and operated with reasonable measures to reduce through-life carbon emissions and increase the circular economy.

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 co-existence 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 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 SC-DMAP. To maximise coexistence opportunities to as great an extent as possible, the 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. For instance, these exceptional circumstances would be expected to include time limited periods for the carrying out of survey and construction activities by developers of ORE projects and transmission infrastructure. 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:

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 in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D or electricity transmission infrastructure located within the SC-DMAP area shall be avoided where possible. This does not apply to exclusions related to marine safety assessed via navigational risk assessments and approved by the Marine Survey Office (MSO), or exclusions required for environmental protection or in other exceptional circumstances, where considered warranted by the competent authorities in accordance with their respective roles. The likely requirement for temporary exclusion zones during periods of surveying, as well as offshore infrastructure construction, maintenance and decommissioning is recognised. Any such restrictions shall endeavour to minimise likely significant adverse effects on other maritime users.

CO 2:

Developers of ORE projects in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and electricity transmission infrastructure in the SC-DMAP area shall accurately map their respective development sites, including electricity export and inter array cables as laid post installation, and after any relevant intervention during operation and decommissioning. 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 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 seeking to avoid 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 current statutory obligation to carry vessel monitoring systems (VMS) and are at present not widely used by these smaller vessels in the SC-DMAP area. This further emphasises the importance of continued engagement and participation by all parties.

In the implementation of SC-DMAP co-existence policy objectives, consideration should be given by developers of proposed ORE projects and transmission infrastructure to the best available evidence-based data. In respect of inshore fishers, this may include consideration of evidence gathered by Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) as part of its planned community based, participatory mapping project, which will enable under 12-meter vessel owners to provide validated spatial information on their fishing activities.

As noted, the process of preparing the 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 further continuous engagement between the State, 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. For the avoidance of doubt, maximising these opportunities and implementation of SC-DMAP co-existence policy objectives will require continued willingness of all parties and sectors to engage in effective and constructive dialogue. This requirement for constructive engagement will be particularly important in the preparation and implementation of Fisheries Management and Mitigation Strategies (FMMS) and Aquaculture Management and Mitigation Strategies (AMMS). It should be noted that particular consideration may be required by developers of proposed ORE projects and transmission infrastructure to engage with inshore fishers, noting that, in some instances, this may be less straightforward than engagement with operators of larger vessels. 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.

Noting that the scope of possible interactions between ORE projects and transmission infrastructure developments with local fishers and aquaculture may differ according to each

stage of project development and/or operations, it is intended that the FMMS and AMMS may be dynamic in nature and subject to various iterations, as appropriate. For instance, the Cable Management Plan reference in SF 6 may not be appropriate for inclusion in an initial FMMS or AMMS, and in some instances may not be applicable at all. Likewise, it is important to note that the SC-DMAP does not preclude ORE project or transmission infrastructure development in the event of failure to agree an FMMS and AMMS with identified local fishers. However, all efforts to agree these strategies must be demonstrated.

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 in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and electricity transmission infrastructure within the SC-DMAP area, shall in order of preference, avoid, minimise or mitigate likely significant adverse effects with existing fishing and seafood activity. A record of engagement and actions with Irish-registered fishers and the wider seafood sector regarding proposed survey, installation and operation activity will be maintained, and developers shall seek to optimise infrastructure design and layout to maximise opportunities for co-existence with fishing and seafood activity, where feasible.

SF 2:

Developers of proposed ORE projects in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and electricity transmission infrastructure in the SC-DMAP area, as well as the seafood/fishing sector, shall 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 shall document these efforts as part of maintaining a record of engagement under Policy Objective SF 1 and a Fisheries Management and Mitigation Strategy (FMMS).

SF 3:

Developers of proposed ORE projects in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and electricity transmission infrastructure in the SC DMAP area shall prepare a Fisheries Management and Mitigation Strategy (FMMS) in consultation with identified local fishers post the award of any required Maritime Usage Licences and prior to any surveys being carried out and/or applications for development consent being made. All efforts shall be made to agree the FMMS with those interests. Those fishers shall also undertake to engage with developers and provide spatial information in a timely manner to enable completion of the FMMS. For

each commercial fishery that can establish within a reasonable timeframe to developers of prospective ORE projects and transmission infrastructure, that they would be adversely affected by the development, the FMMS shall identify management and mitigation measures. The FMMS shall be updated and amended by developers throughout the lifetime of a project as appropriate.

SF 4:

As part of an FMMS, developers of prospective ORE projects in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and electricity transmission infrastructure in the SC DMAP area, 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 shall be made to agree on the AMMS with those interests. The AMMS shall identify management and mitigation measures to ensure that likely significant adverse effects of ORE and transmission infrastructure development on seafood/aquaculture activity are, in order of preference, avoided, minimised or mitigated.

SF 5:

Developers of proposed ORE projects in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and electricity transmission infrastructure in the SC-DMAP area 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 including development, construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning.

SF 6:

Any FMMS shall include a Cable Management Plan (CMP) which:

- Explores options and identifies appropriate site-specific, substrate-specific inter-array and/or offshore transmission cable protection measures that can be installed to mitigate the risk of cable exposure and unintentional cable snagging by seafood/fishing activity:
- Considers 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.
- Considers aquaculture activities in relation to land access routes and timing of construction / maintenance activities.
- Identifies risk mitigation measures and includes requirements for fishing trials over the cables and other inspections considered relevant on an appropriately regular basis.

7.2 Co-existence with 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.

Policy objectives will seek applicants for ORE development in the SC-DMAP area to consult with port and harbour authorities, the Marine Survey Office and comply with all relevant legislation and marine notices to minimise disruption to shipping. Navigation Risk Assessments will be undertaken for project planning applications.

The parameters of an ORE project including specific infrastructure locations within the Maritime Areas and layout of turbines in the array will comply with the recommendations of the Navigation Risk Assessment and be designed to provide safe distances between shipping and ORE infrastructure in compliance with national and international best standard guidance.

To support consistent data analysis of shipping traffic activity through the SC-DMAP area as part of project level Navigation Risk Assessments, an action of the SC-DMAP under plan implementation will be to commission and prepare a shipping density mapping analysis, based on at least 12 months data, following the making of the SC-DMAP. This mapping analysis shall be used in project level Navigation Risk Assessments and will be made accessible by DECC on the shared data repository for SC-DMAP.

Policy Objective for Shipping (S)

S 1:

Applicants for ORE development in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and associated electricity transmission infrastructure in the SC-DMAP area and associated surveys shall consult with local/regional port and harbour authorities and the Marine Survey Office prior to submitting planning or licence applications. Any consequent surveys or works shall comply with all relevant legislation and Marine Notices to minimise disruption to shipping in the SC-DMAP area.

S 2:

At the project level, all applications for development permissions for ORE projects in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and associated electricity transmission infrastructure in the SC-DMAP area shall undertake and submit a Navigation Risk Assessment to inform the design and location of projects and in compliance with national and international best standard guidance on safe distance between shipping and ORE infrastructure.

S 3:

A GIS shipping density mapping analysis, based on at least 12 months data, will be prepared by DECC within six months following the making of the SC-DMAP. This mapping analysis shall be used in project level Navigation Risk Assessments and will be made accessible by DECC on a data repository for the SC-DMAP for plan and project level data facilitated through the SC DMAP Implementation Programme Body.

7.3 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 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 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.

Analysis and research on visitor attitudes towards renewable energy infrastructure in Ireland and other jurisdictions has found little evidence of associated negative impacts on local tourism. Government's 2019 Policy Statement 'People, Place and Policy – Growing Tourism to 2025'[3] recognises that the 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)

T 1:

The SC-DMAP supports and facilitates coexistence between ORE development and the 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.

7.4 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 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 Plan further aims to support the principle of shared corridors for renewable energy and digital communications, where technically feasible.

Maritime Areas A, B, C and D are designated with sufficient space to allow flexibility at the project level to design and plan for cable routes and crossing points that address the requirements of both the ORE and telecommunications sector where co-existence occurs. Policy Objective TEL 1 will seek project developers to consult with service providers to understand limitations on their existing and planned infrastructure. Industry best practice, including the European Subsea Cables Association (ESCA) Guideline No.6 The Proximity of

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

Offshore Renewable Energy Installations & Subsea Cable Infrastructures, provide recommended distances for safe operation and maintenance (O&M) of cables in proximity to ORE infrastructure to assist project design.

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 the requisite statutory environmental assessments at plan and/or project level (which may include SEA, EIA and/or AA), and the outcome of planning and licensing processes, as relevant. No exclusions shall 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, environmental reasons or other exceptional circumstances. Project route selection for ORE cables shall seek to avoid the need for exclusions in the first instance and project developers shall consult with service providers to understand limitations on each sector's respective existing and/or planned infrastructure.

7.5 Co-existence with Marine Archaeological and Cultural Heritage

Ireland's coastal and marine area possess 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[4] makes specific provisions for the protection of shipwrecks and underwater archaeological objects and gives legal protection to all wrecks over 100-years old.

Off Ireland's 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.

[4] 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

Government's Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage supports the avoidance of development impacts on archaeological heritage and preservation in-situ of archaeological sites and monuments as a preferred option. The carrying out of archaeological assessment where appropriate is the first step in protecting archaeological heritage.

In 2022, DHLGH published an Advice Note for the Public on Ireland's Underwater Archaeological Heritage[5]. 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-DMAP 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 ORE to include measures which protect marine and coastal heritage assets. Underwater archaeology and built heritage will be a key consideration in route and site selection processes for ORE and transmission infrastructure projects.

The Plan supports developers of ORE and transmission infrastructure projects to engage at an early stage with the Underwater Archaeology Unit of the National Monuments Service and to complete any requisite geophysical survey licences, dive survey licences, detection device consents and Underwater Archaeological Impact Assessments as relevant and required.

Policy Objectives for Marine Archaeological Heritage (AH)

AH 1:

Surveys, site investigation and development of ORE in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and associated electrical transmission infrastructure in the SC-DMAP area shall, 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, the Historic and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023 and have regard to

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

guidance of the National Monuments Service including “Frameworks and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage” for assessment(s) to avoid or mitigate impacts on 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) Comply with all relevant licencing procedures including geophysical survey licences, dive survey licences and detection device consents.
d) Support the protection of onshore archaeological, architectural, and built cultural heritage in terrestrial plans and projects for the development of associated onshore infrastructure to enable ORE sites in the SC-DMAP area subject to carrying out assessment at plan and/or project level for these activities as required, and the outcome of planning and/or conservation guidance, as relevant.

Policy Objectives for Co-existence (CO)

CO 1:	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 in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D or electricity transmission infrastructure located within the SC-DMAP area shall be avoided where possible. This does not apply to exclusions related to marine safety assessed via navigational risk assessments and approved by the Marine Survey Office (MSO), or exclusions required for environmental protection or in other exceptional circumstances, where considered warranted by the competent authorities in accordance with their respective roles. The likely requirement for temporary exclusion zones during periods of surveying, as well as offshore infrastructure construction, maintenance and decommissioning is recognised. Any such restrictions shall endeavour to minimise likely significant adverse effects on other maritime users.

CO 2:	Developers of ORE projects in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and electricity transmission infrastructure in the SC-DMAP area shall accurately map their respective development sites, including electricity export and inter array cables as laid post installation, and after any relevant intervention during operation and decommissioning. 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 in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and electricity transmission infrastructure within the SC-DMAP area shall, in order of preference, avoid, minimise or mitigate likely significant adverse effects with existing fishing and seafood activity. A record of engagement and actions with Irish-registered fishers and the wider seafood sector regarding proposed survey, installation and operation activity will be maintained, and developers shall seek to optimise infrastructure design and layout to maximise opportunities for co-existence with fishing and seafood activity, where feasible.
SF 2:	Developers of proposed ORE projects in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and electricity transmission infrastructure in the SC- DMAP area, as well as the seafood/fishing sector, shall 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 shall document these efforts as part of

	maintaining a record of engagement under Policy Objective SF 1 and a Fisheries Management and Mitigation Strategy (FMMS).
SF 3:	Developers of proposed ORE projects in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and electricity transmission infrastructure in the SC DMAP area shall prepare a Fisheries Management and Mitigation Strategy (FMMS) in consultation with identified local fishers post the award of any required Maritime Usage Licences and prior to any surveys being carried out and/or applications for development consent being made. All efforts shall be made to agree the FMMS with those interests. Those fishers shall also undertake to engage with developers and provide spatial information in a timely manner to enable completion of the FMMS. For each commercial fishery that can establish within a reasonable timeframe to developers of prospective ORE projects and transmission infrastructure, that they would be adversely affected by the development, the FMMS shall identify management and mitigation measures. The FMMS shall be updated and amended by developers throughout the lifetime of a project as appropriate.
SF 4:	As part of an FMMS, developers of prospective ORE projects in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and electricity transmission infrastructure in the SC DMAP area, 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 shall be made to agree on the AMMS with those interests. The AMMS shall identify management and mitigation measures to ensure that likely significant adverse effects of ORE and transmission infrastructure development on seafood/aquaculture activity are, in order of preference, avoided, minimised or mitigated.

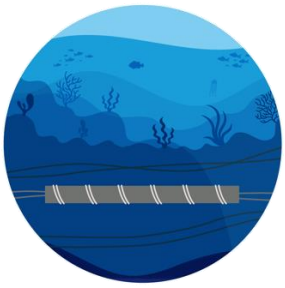
SF 5:	Developers of proposed ORE projects in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and electricity transmission infrastructure in the SC-DMAP area shall maintain a Fisheries Liaison Officer (FLO) to facilitate direct, effective, constructive consultation and engagement on an ongoing basis with Irish-registered fishers and wider seafood sector members operating within the SC-DMAP area at all stages of any offshore wind project including development, construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning.
SF 6:	Any FMMS shall include a Cable Management Plan (CMP) which: • Explores options and identifies appropriate site-specific, substrate-specific inter-array and/or offshore transmission cable protection measures that can be installed to mitigate the risk of cable exposure and unintentional cable snagging by seafood/fishing activity: • Considers 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. • Considers aquaculture activities in relation to land access routes and timing of construction / maintenance activities. • Identifies risk mitigation measures and includes requirements for fishing trials over the cables and other inspections considered relevant on an appropriately regular basis.

Policy Objectives for Shipping (S)

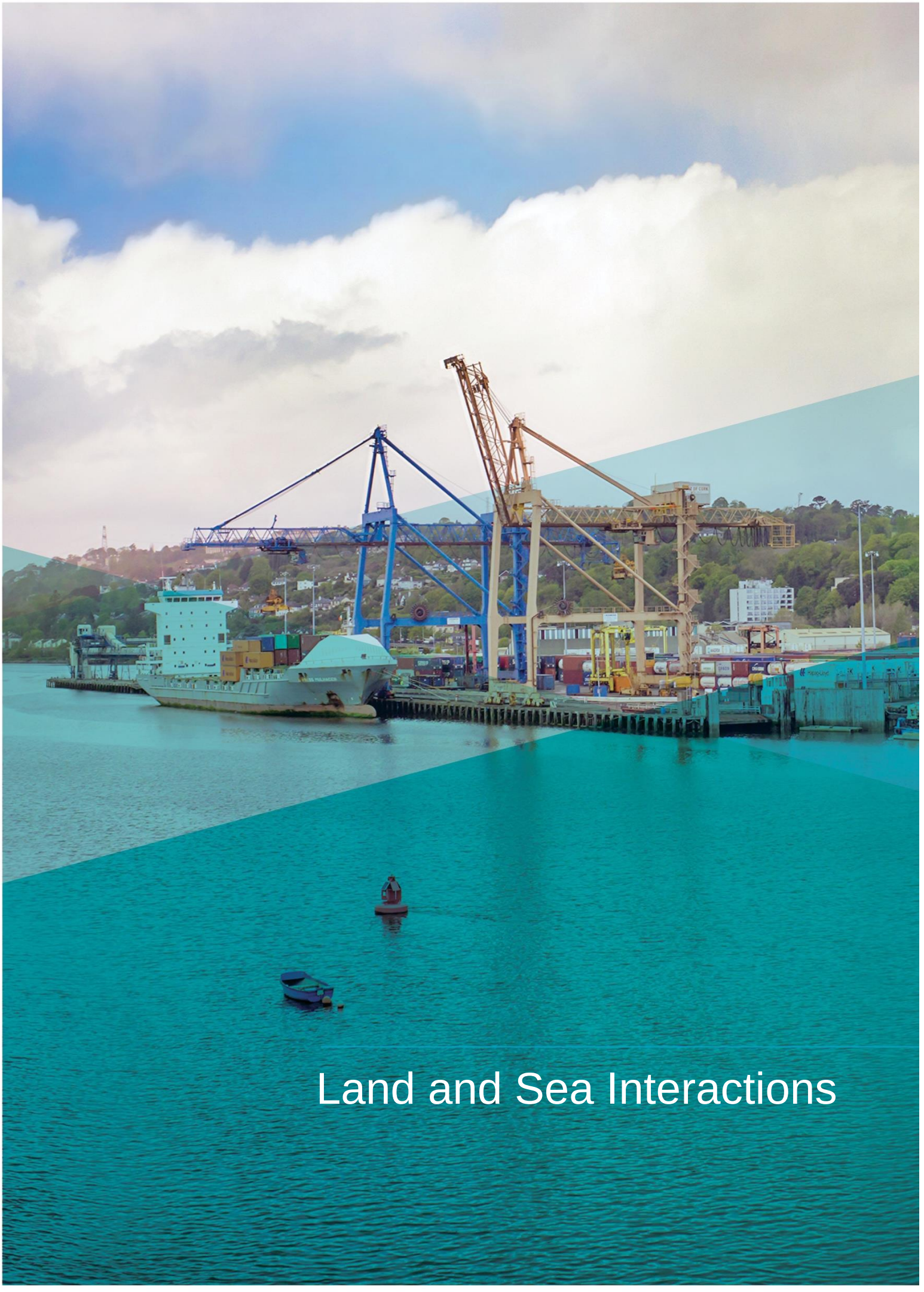
S 1:	Applicants for ORE development in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and associated electricity transmission infrastructure in the SC-DMAP area and associated surveys shall consult with local/regional port and harbour authorities and the Marine Survey Office prior to submitting planning or licence applications. Any consequent surveys or works shall comply with all relevant legislation and Marine Notices to minimise disruption to shipping in the SC-DMAP area.
S 2:	At the project level, all applications for development permissions for ORE projects in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and associated electricity transmission infrastructure in the SC- DMAP area shall undertake and submit a Navigation Risk Assessment to inform the design and location of projects and in compliance with national and international best standard guidance on safe distance between shipping and ORE infrastructure.
S 3:	A GIS shipping density mapping analysis, based on at least 12 months data, will be prepared by DECC within six months following the making of the SC-DMAP. This mapping analysis shall be used in project level Navigation Risk Assessments and will be made accessible by DECC on a data repository for the SC-DMAP for plan and project level data facilitated through the SC DMAP Implementation Programme Body.

Policy Objective for Tourism and Recreation (T)

T 1:	The SC- DMAP supports and facilitates coexistence between ORE development and the 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 the requisite statutory environmental assessments at plan and/or project level (which may include SEA, EIA and/or AA), and the outcome of planning and licensing processes, as relevant. No exclusions shall 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, environmental reasons or other exceptional circumstances. Project route selection for ORE cables shall seek to avoid the need for exclusions in the first instance and project developers shall consult with service providers to understand limitations on each sector's respective existing and/or planned infrastructure.
	Policy Objectives for Marine Archaeological Heritage (AH)	

AH 1:	Surveys, site investigation and development of ORE in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and associated electrical transmission infrastructure in the SC- DMAP area shall, 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, the Historic and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023 and have regard to guidance of the National Monuments Service including "Frameworks and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage" for assessment(s) to avoid or mitigate impacts on 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) Comply with all relevant licencing procedures including geophysical survey licences, dive survey licences and detection device consents. d) Support the protection of onshore archaeological, architectural, and built cultural heritage in terrestrial plans and projects for the development of associated onshore infrastructure to enable ORE sites in the SC-DMAP area subject to carrying out assessment at plan and/or project level for these activities as required, and the outcome of planning and/or conservation guidance, as relevant.



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 considered within member state maritime spatial plans. The preparation of the 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 anticipated and planned for the principle of onshore infrastructure to facilitate ORE development balanced with protecting the marine environment.

The SC-DMAP has been prepared to be consistent with the NMPF, which addresses land and sea interaction throughout its overarching and sectoral policies spanning the marine environment, marine economy, and social interaction with the sea. The 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 Plan across many sectors including seafood and fishing, the marine economy, ports, shipping, transmission grid, telecommunications, tourism, marine archaeology and cultural heritage. The Future Framework for ORE Policy Statement identifies essential components that are needed to support 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 SC-DMAP aims to create new opportunities for the marine 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.

The diagram below demonstrates the important interaction at policy level between planning for both the land and maritime areas and the need for consistency between the policies of the NMPF, a DMAP which becomes part of the NMPF and the policies and objectives of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and City and County Development Plan(s). Sustainable planning for existing and future co-ordinated activities on land and sea across national, regional and local level to support strategic infrastructure investment, project delivery in our regions and Local Authority areas and to deliver sustainable ORE development is required to meet the climate emergency and Ireland's legally binding climate and renewable energy generating targets.

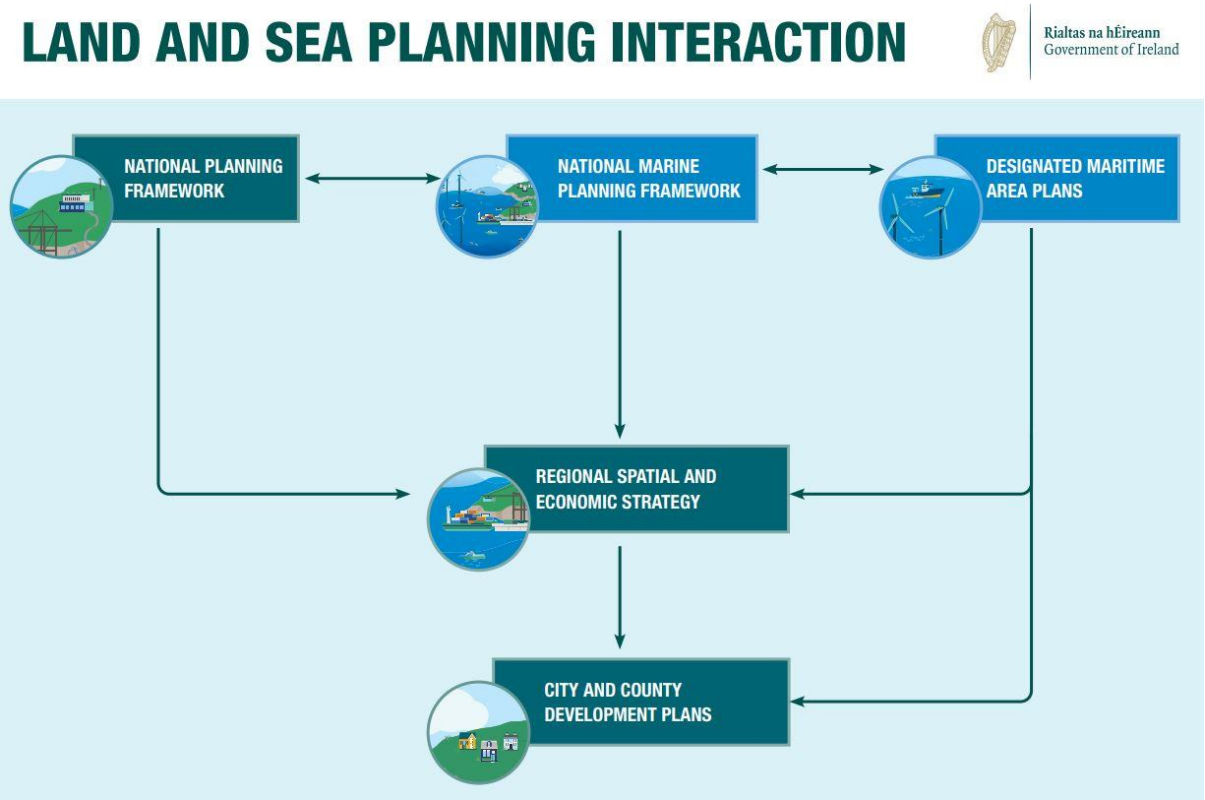


Figure 5: Land and Sea Planning Interaction

Good practice methodology[6] 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 SC-DMAP has adopted such good practice through the extensive public and sectoral stakeholder engagement. Data

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

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 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 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 ORE in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and electricity transmission infrastructure in the SC DMAP area. This support is subject to the carrying out of the requisite statutory environmental assessments at plan and/or 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.

LS 2:

The SC-DMAP supports the location and siting of onshore infrastructure, enabling ORE in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and electricity transmission infrastructure 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. This support is subject to the carrying out of the requisite statutory environmental assessments at plan and/or 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.

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 critical to meet Ireland's ORE targets and necessary 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. This includes the Ports of Cork, Rosslare Europort and Waterford in addition to regional ports and harbours. The SC-DMAP supports the sustainable development of infrastructure at these ports and harbours 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 Plan supports funding pathways to upgrade port and harbour infrastructure. It supports inter Departmental and public authority actions to deliver strategic regional infrastructure as identified under the National Development Plan (NDP), RSES and City and County Development Plans to connect our ports and harbours and support their growth potential to service ORE.

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 and harbour 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 and harbour 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 and harbour capacity to facilitate offshore renewable energy targets. The Plan is supportive of regional level initiatives including the Southern Regional Assembly's Ports and Harbour Strategy for the Southern Region and City and County Development Plan actions that support the marine economy and sustainable port and harbour development. Future iterations of the RSES and the Development Plans for Wexford, Waterford and Cork City and Cork County should retain the positive policy support for sustainable port and harbour infrastructure development necessary to support the realisation of ORE.

In providing support for sustainable port and harbour infrastructure development, the SC-DMAP supports that planning for such infrastructure follows the guidance document on the implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directive in estuaries and coastal zones with particular attention to port development and dredging, European Commission (2011).

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 and harbour infrastructure that enables the development of ORE in Maritime Areas A, B, C and D and electricity transmission infrastructure within the SC-DMAP area. This support is subject to the carrying out of the requisite statutory environmental

assessments at plan and/or project level (which may include SEA, EIA and/or AA) and the outcome of planning and / or licensing processes as relevant.

8.2 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. The landfall areas and locations for connecting grid infrastructure will be identified through a separate planning and consultation process led by EirGrid consistent with the policy objectives of the SC-DMAP.

The Phase Two Offshore Wind policy approved by Government in March 2023 currently 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 900 MW, which it is envisaged will be split 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 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 to 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:

The SC-DMAP supports the sustainable development of offshore and onshore transmission infrastructure that 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 the electricity 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. This support is subject to the carrying out of the requisite statutory environmental assessments at plan and/or project level (which may include SEA, EIA and/or AA), the implementation of relevant environmental directives such as the Birds and Habitats Directives and EIA Directive and transposing national legislation, cumulative and in-combination assessment of plans and projects and the outcome of planning and / or licensing processes as relevant.

ETS 2:

The SC-DMAP supports 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 the requisite statutory environmental assessments at plan and/or 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 likely significant adverse environmental and social effects and reduce development costs, existing offshore and onshore infrastructure required to connect offshore wind generation to the onshore electricity transmission system shall be

used to as great an extent as possible, with additional provisions for future proofing of offshore electricity transmission system assets. This utilisation is subject to the carrying out of the requisite statutory environmental assessments at plan and/or project level (which may include SEA, EIA and/or AA) and the outcome of planning processes, as relevant.

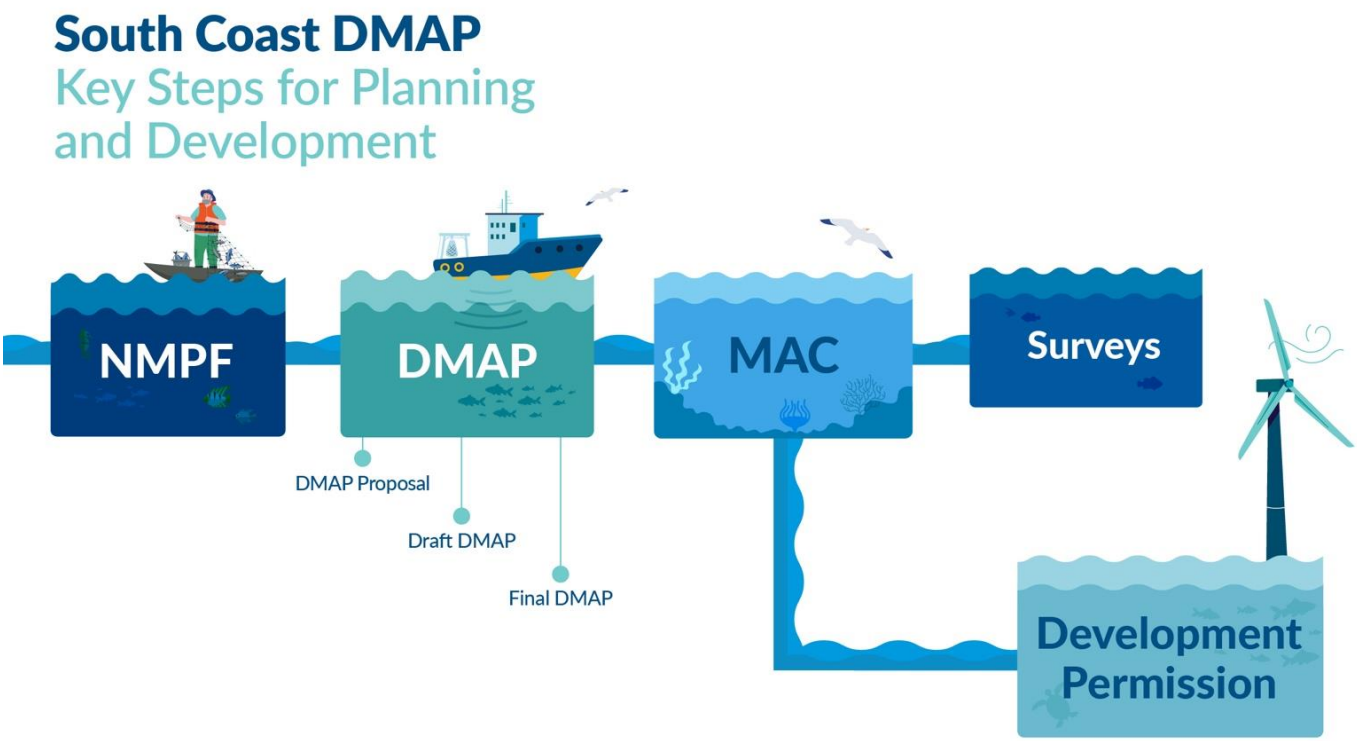


Figure 6: South Coast DMAP Key Steps for Planning and Development

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 Government's Offshore Wind Industrial Strategy (2024). 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.

An independent analysis carried out on the draft SC-DMAP, "South Coast DMAP: Regional Economic Impact of Offshore Wind Development", and published in May 2024, estimated that more than 65% of the Irish economic and employment opportunities associated with implementation of the Plan would directly accrue to the South Coast region. In addition, through establishing a transparent pipeline of prospective future ORE projects, the Plan will help to stimulate inward regional investment and supply chain development. Capturing the full potential of these benefits will require significant investment and delivery of regional infrastructure, not least port and harbour capacity to service the ORE sector.

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. ORE off the South Coast has the potential to service population and economic growth in the region as targeted across the NPF, RSES for the Southern Region and the City and County Development Plans, especially centres of growing energy demand such as in our Cities and Metropolitan areas, Key Towns, other towns and rural communities in proximity to the availability of ORE. 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. This may provide a competitive advantage for the region to attract inward investment, support local enterprise growth, and develop economic specialism within the region, providing employment opportunities within the region in the green economy.

As outlined in Government's Offshore Wind Industrial Strategy (2024), the development of an ORE 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 provide positive support and ambition for job creation through the marine economy and for 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.

In addition, the SC- DMAP supports national, regional, and local actions that deliver research, innovation, and skills development to grow the ORE sector. Initiatives of the higher and further education providers and through lifelong learning (Towards a Learning Region initiative), the Regional Enterprise Plans and skills forums to invest in education and develop a diverse range of skills within the region to meet the needs of the ORE sector are supported. The strong network of higher and further education facilities in the region, including the National Maritime College of Ireland, will ensure education and training opportunities are accessible to our coastal communities to maximise economic uplift from the ORE sector.

Policy Objectives for Economic and Employment Growth Potential

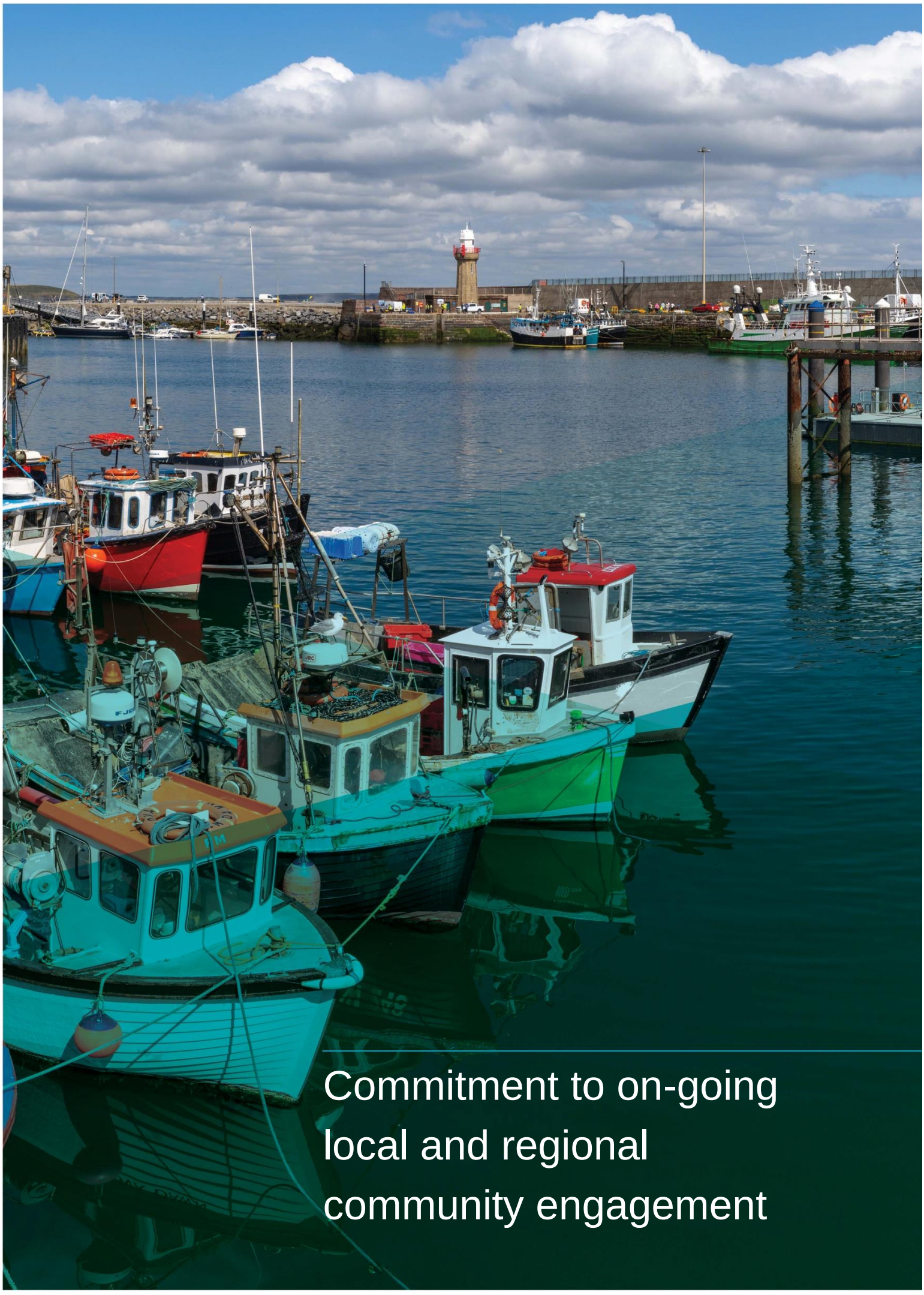
EC 1:

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 ORE sector to support the development and operation of ORE projects in the SC-DMAP area. This support is subject to the carrying out of the requisite statutory environmental assessments at plan and/or project level (which may include SEA, EIA and/or AA) and the outcome of planning and / or licensing processes as relevant.

EC 2:

The SC-DMAP supports actions of the higher and further education and training sector, Regional Skills Forum, Regional Enterprise Plans and Towards a Learning Region to

develop diverse skills and employment opportunities in ORE and support sectors in coastal communities across the Region.



Commitment to on-going local and regional community engagement

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

The preparation of the SC-DMAP has been informed by a wide-reaching and meaningful process of public engagement. 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 SC-DMAP.

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 ORE 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 in the SC-DMAP area.

In addition to SC-DMAP support for community engagement, all ORE projects that deploy in the SC-DMAP will be required to establish a mandatory community benefit fund (CBF) which will be administered by an independent professional fund administrator. This will ensure that local communities can achieve maximum opportunities from the CBF for the direct benefit of the local community as they decide, including long-term strategic planning on special projects identified by them.

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 for ORE and associated electricity transmission infrastructure in the SC-DMAP Maritime Areas shall prepare and publish a Public Engagement Plan concerning all matters relating to the proposed maritime activity.

Shaping the Plan

Community Engagement Across Ireland

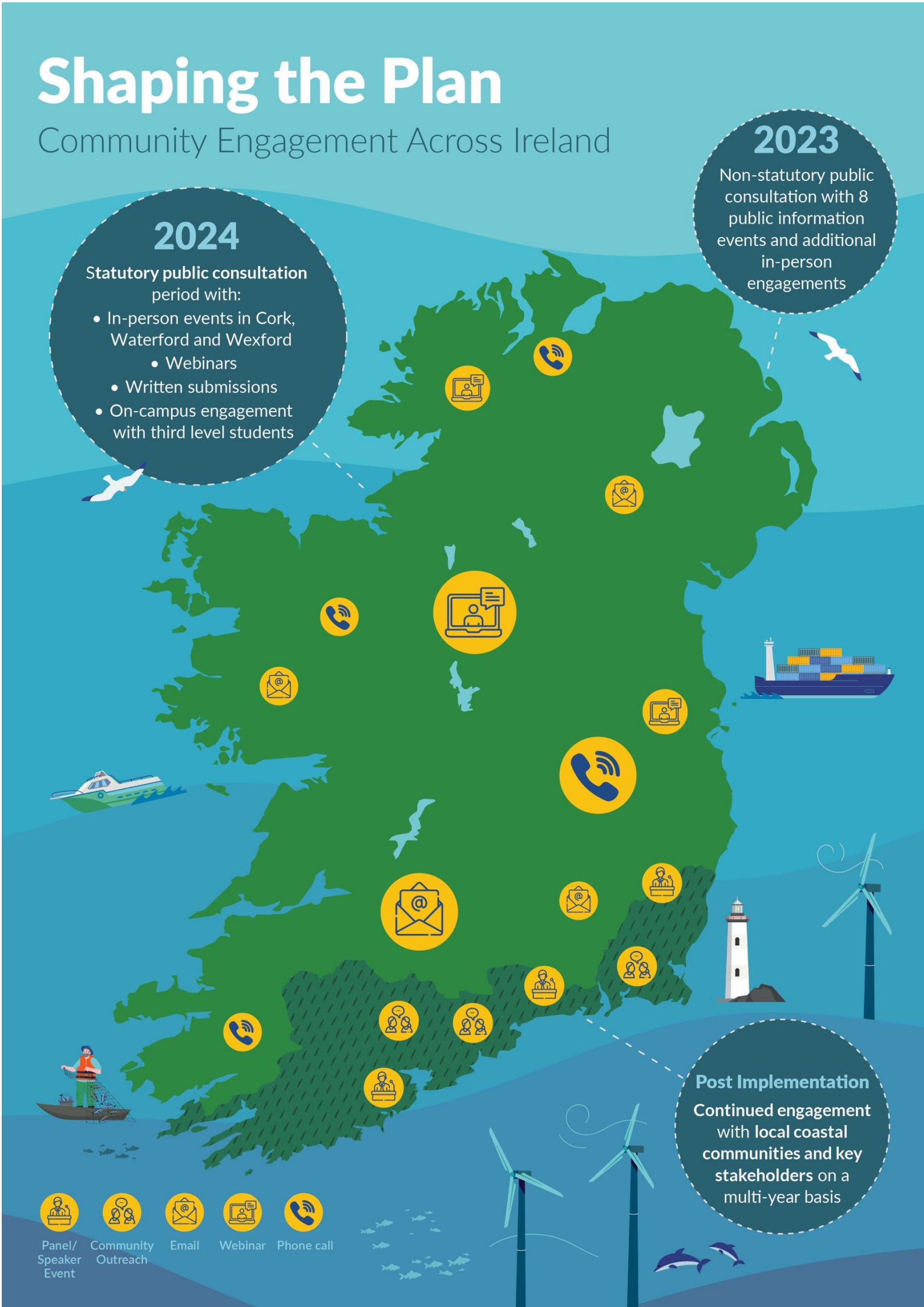
2023

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

The following table illustrates the consistency of the 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. While the following table identifies the most relevant SC-DMAP sections and policy objectives in this respect, the Plan should be read as a whole including the general overall objectives of the Plan under Section 3: 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-DMAP Section	Key Policy Objectives
5.1: Biodiversity and Protected Marine Sites	Biodiversity policy 1, 2, 4; Protected Marine Sites Policy 1, 4	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, WQ 2
5.4: Sea-Floor and Water Column Integrity	Sea-Floor and Water Column Integrity Policy 1, 2, 3	Marine Environment and Biodiversity; DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Development	OEP 1,2, 3, M2, B1, MS1, WQ1, WQ 2 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	DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Developments; Marine Environment and Biodiversity	AQ1
5.8: Climate Change	Climate Change Policy 1, 2	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, EC 2, CO 1, 2
6.1: Coexistence	Objective; Co-existence Policy 1;	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, DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Development	T1 Constraints Mapping Methodology
7.2: Employment	Employment Policy 1	Economic and Employment Growth Potential	EC1, EC 2
7.3: Heritage Assets	Heritage Assets Policy 1	Co-existence with Marine Archaeological and Cultural Heritage, 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, DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Development	MI 2, MI 4, 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-existence with Seafood,	IGM4; OEP 1 -3, CO 1 0 2, SF1-7; T1; TEL 1, AH1; EC1, EC 2, CE1

		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	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	DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Development, Marine Environment and Biodiversity	CC1 -2 Constraints Mapping Methodology

12: Energy – Natural Gas Storage	Objectives	DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Development	Constraints Mapping Methodology
13: Energy – Offshore Renewable	Objectives; ORE Policy 1, 2, 4, 7, 10.	NMPF Objectives 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	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
18: Ports Harbours and Shipping	Ports, Harbours and Shipping Policy 2, 3, 4,	DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Development, Land and Sea Interactions – Ports and Harbours, Shipping	LS1, 2, PH1, S1-S3 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-S 3
21: Sports and Recreation	Sports and Recreation Policy 2	Coexistence, Co-existence with Tourism and Recreation; Marine Environment and Biodiversity; DMAP Geographical Area for	CO 1-2, T1, OEP 1 -3, Constraints Mapping Methodology

		Offshore Wind Development	
22: Telecommunications	Telecommunications Policy 3,	Co-existence with Telecommunication; DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Development	CO 1, TEL1; Constraints Mapping Methodology
23: Tourism	Tourism Policy 2	Coexistence; Co-existence with Tourism and Recreation; 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, DMAP Geographical Area for Offshore Wind Development	OEP2, B1, WQ 1-2, 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

It is important to note the following list is not definitive.

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)[7]. 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 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 EIA through refinement of the Project Design.

[7] 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 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 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	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 AA processes.

Survey	Scope	Approach	Survey Outputs
		for highly vocalising species such as harbour porpoise.	
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), Ornithology EIA chapter and the LSE screening and Natura Impact Statement undertaken as part of (HRA) processes, 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 EIA chapters: Marine Processes, Benthic Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology and Fish and Shellfish Ecology.

Survey	Scope	Approach	Survey Outputs
Shipping, Navigation and Aviation	Vessel Traffic Survey to provide evidence base to determine commercial, fishing, recreational and all other vessel activity within the array area and export cable corridor. An Aviation and Radar Assessment at project level where relevant for any proposed ORE developments in the four Maritime Areas A-D. This assessment may be part of a project EIA.	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. 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. The Aviation and Radar Assessment will include consultation with airport operators to determine any design parameters and embedded mitigations to ensure compliance with IAA requirements e.g. lighting, obstacle identification and marking inter alia.	This information would inform array site selection, EIA scoping and Shipping and Navigation EIA chapters and associated Navigation Risk Assessment (NRA). An Aviation and Radar Assessment (ARA) where relevant as part of a projecy level EIA.
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,	The report will identify key seascape and landscape features and inform SLVIA EIA chapter and associated photomontages.

Survey	Scope	Approach	Survey Outputs
		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.	
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 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 Fish and Shellfish EIA chapters

Survey	Scope	Approach	Survey Outputs
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. < 12 m vessels, where less 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.	This information would inform offshore site selection, EIA scoping, the Commercial Fisheries EIA chapters and Fish and Shellfish Ecology EIA chapters.

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 include:

- 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, operation, maintenance and decommissioning 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;
- Decommissioning Plan - a decommissioning plan/programme and rehabilitation schedule as part of the ORE project Decommissioning Phase.

Appendix D

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

- Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment (2018) 'Guidance on Marine Baseline Ecological Assessments & Monitoring Activities for Offshore Renewable Energy Projects Part 1 & Part 2'8;
- 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'9;
- 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)10;
- Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) 2023-203011 and any National Nature Restoration Plan;
- Guidelines on the implementation of the birds and habitats directives in estuaries and coastal zones (Directorate-General for Environment (European Commission), 2012);
- 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);

[8] Available at: gov - Guidance Documents for Offshore Renewable Energy Developers (www.gov.ie)
[9] Available at: https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/2b08de80-5ad4-11eb-b59f-01aa75ed71a1
[10] 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/
[11] Available at: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/93973-irelands-4th-national-biodiversity-action-plan-20232030/

- Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Wind Energy Development in Northern Ireland's Landscapes: Supplementary Planning Guidance to Accompany Planning Policy Statement 18 'Renewable Energy' (2010);
- Northern Ireland Department for the Economy, Offshore Renewable Energy Action Plan Consultation (2022)[12].

[12] Available at: Offshore Renewable Energy | Department for the Economy (economy-ni.gov.uk)