

6 March 2014

An Bord Pleanála
64, Marlborough Street
Dublin 1

**Submission regarding Galway Harbour extension
(Case reference: PL61.PA0033 "Renmore and town parks town
lands, Galway)**

Dear Sir/Madam

The Western Development Commission (WDC) is a statutory body promoting economic and social development in the Western Region of Ireland (counties Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Roscommon, Mayo, Galway and Clare) (www.wdc.ie).

The WDC operates under the aegis of the Department of Environment , Community, and Local Government ,DECLG ,and its remit is to promote, foster and encourage economic and social development in the Western Region. The WDC has the following strategic aims in the pursuance of its remit:

- To promote the benefits of living, working and doing business in the Western Region.
- To encourage the development of the rural economy based on the sustainable development of the Western Region's strengths and resources.
- To provide risk capital to SMEs and social enterprises in their start-up and expansion phases through the WDC Investment Fund and the WDC Micro-Loan Fund: Creative Industries.
- To inform policy-making on economic and social development in the Western Region through high quality analysis

In recent years through its efforts with regional and national partners to ensure sustainable employment and enterprise opportunities for the Western Region the WDC has helped create 1899 jobs and supported hundreds of regional enterprises both directly and indirectly through promotional, networking and efforts on ensuring sufficient access infrastructure development for the region. Areas of support have included tourism, renewable energy (including marine based), creative economy, life sciences and general SME start up activity etc.

It is our understanding that Galway Harbour Company has submitted proposals for a Harbour Extension at Galway to address severe constraints to their operations within the existing harbour, resulting from:-

- severely restricted access,
- tidal and gated harbour,
- uneconomic vessel size capacity,
- channel too shallow,
- port draught and dimensions too limited,
- inadequate quay length and limited berthage.

The proposed Galway Harbour Extension [GHE] development is intended to seek to address the above constraints and provide improved infrastructure to consolidate existing business, develop new business and services, provide for the international cruise liner business and facilitate the economic growth of the Western region.

As such the WDC supports any such compliant and suitable development which enhances the West of Ireland region's ability to access and compete in the global economy. In terms of the anticipated growth in offshore wind energy and marine tourism alone the WDC would see a major benefit to having a suitable development of Galway Harbour to facilitate this .

For instance port draught and onshore access to suitable rail and road infrastructure would be considered prime determinants in the marine energy sector development . Similarly in terms of facilities to host major maritime tourism events , enhanced harbour facilities would significantly increase the ability of the region to avail of these opportunities. In the recent *Volvo ocean race* series, Galway has led the way in landing these events against stiff international competition. In 2009 the Volvo brought an estimated €55,000,000 and 650,000 spectators to the region. The WDC consider any developed harbour facilities as advantageous to repeating these type of major international event wins .

In conclusion in terms of increased regional business infrastructure and also increased economic growth the WDC would welcome the proposal of the Galway harbour company to achieve these objectives for Galway and the region through the proposed harbour extension.

Yours sincerely



Ian Brannigan
CEO (A) & Head of Regional Development
ianbrannigan@wdc.ie


