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QESD  
B123494

6<sup>th</sup> March 2014

An Bord Pleanála  
64 Marlborough Street  
Dublin 1

Ref: 61.PA.0033

Dear Sir /Madam,

We refer to the Planning Application from Galway Harbour Company regarding the extension of Galway Port.

National University of Ireland, Galway is very supportive of this planning application and wishes to draw attention to the potential benefits which the developments proposed at Galway Harbour will bring to Galway city and the wider region.

These will be of **strategic benefit to NUI Galway and will positively impact upon university activity** in a range of ways, notably:

- Research and Innovation
- Employment Opportunities for Graduates.

**About NUI Galway**

Established in 1845, NUI Galway is one of Ireland's leading universities with over 17,000 students; 2,400 staff members and 90,000 alumni in 107 countries across the globe.

NUI Galway is internationally recognised for research in priority areas, including:

- Biomedical Science and Engineering
- Internet Technology and Data Analytics
- Environmental, Energy and Marine Research
- Applied Social Sciences and Public Policy
- Humanities, in particular Drama Theatre and Irish Studies.

Ireland's National Strategy for Higher Education envisages a **network of geographically dispersed collaborating institutions** each of which aspires to excellence in **particular and complementary areas of teaching and research** that respond to the social, cultural and economic needs of its hinterland.

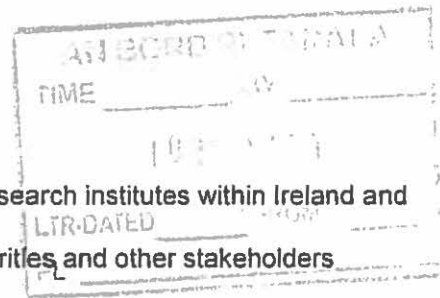
The point here is that each University must **meet the needs and build on the strengths of its region**; do so in the context of **national priorities**; and work in teaching and research to the highest **international standards**. NUI Galway is committed to this policy direction.

**Environmental, Marine and Energy Research at NUI Galway**

Since the late 1990s, NUI Galway has prioritised Environmental, Marine and Energy research – and has consistently invested in the now well-established Ryan Institute – Ireland's leading research institute in this field.

The **Ryan Institute** has been established to:

- develop a high-quality capability in priority areas of environmental, marine and energy research
- support interdisciplinary research across all colleges within NUI Galway



- promote collaborative research with other universities and research institutes within Ireland and overseas
- foster interaction with policy making bodies, regulatory authorities and other stakeholders
- encourage research and research interactions with industry
- educate graduate students with requisite skills for work in the environmental, marine and energy sectors.

The Ryan Institute's location near the North Atlantic Ocean is a strong driver of the research priorities within the Institute, which encompass:

- understanding and prediction of climate, ecological, terrestrial and marine system changes
- innovation in energy-efficient technologies and bioenergy
- R & D in aquaculture, fisheries, offshore renewable energy resources and biodiscovery
- development of technologies for monitoring, modelling and mitigation of environmental pressures
- provision of scientific and technical information to guide socioeconomic and policy decisions.

The context of economic insecurity and increasing competition for natural resources requires solutions based on integrated scientific, technical and socio-economic research. The Ryan Institute bring together a pool of experienced researchers and motivated graduates, supported with excellent facilities, to interact in creative ways with the private sector, state agencies and civil society.

The developments proposed at Galway Harbour will be of benefit to the Ryan Institute's vibrant research programme by enhancing the maritime and physical infrastructure of the port in a range of ways, including:

- increasing the attractiveness for research vessels from partner research institutions and universities to visit the region
- enabling Galway Port and the bay area to be used as test site locations for new technology in areas such as sensors, marine renewables etc.
- the associated upgrade to enterprise activities will provide increased number of potential local R&D partners.

### Employment Opportunities for Graduates

NUI Galway is Ireland's top university for graduate employability with 96% of our graduates employed or in further study within six months of graduating. Employability of our graduates is a key metric of the university's performance.

The investment envisaged at Galway Harbour will significantly enhance the city's attractiveness as a location for indigenous and multinational industry. This is likely to have a significant impact on the employment opportunities for graduates in Galway and its environs, in a range of areas.

Given the potential impact on tourism for the region - graduates in languages, creative industries and the services sector are likely to be in increasing demand. With NUI Galway's strong links with Shannon College of Hotel Management, the benefits are likely to affect opportunities for these students also.

In the areas of marine engineering, law, enterprise, aquaculture and the financial services sector - improved prospects for graduates in these and related disciplines are likely.

The positive impacts for NUI Galway (outlined above) are in addition to the general benefits identified by the Galway Harbour Board in their previous submissions, among these:

- Boost to employment with an anticipated 200 jobs to be created during the construction phase and up to 800 jobs could eventually result due to the increased activity at the port
- Economic benefit to the city as a direct result of the additional jobs during the Construction phase
- Potential contribution from the cruise tourism (10,000 visitors expected to visit the city on cruise ships this year)



- Development of the maritime tourism industry- using the inner harbour (town quays) to attract maritime festivals such as the Volvo Ocean Race, Tall Ships Race, Galway Sea Festival and the SB20 National Sailing Championships
- Opening up of the town quays for future expansion of the city and developing Galway as a waterfront city of excellence
- Development of offshore energy sector
- A more efficient and cost effective import/ export of materials via the port to the city and region
- Economic benefit to the city, region and country as a whole.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, NUI Galway is fortunate to enjoy close, collaborative and mutually-valued relationships with the city, in its broadest sense.

This partnership of 'Town and Gown' was given its fullest expression in the 2009 and 2012 Volvo Ocean Race events, where NUI Galway played a key role.

On behalf of NUI Galway, I offer support for the proposed developments at Galway Harbour and express the hope that An Bord Pleanála will take into account the regional, national and international benefits for Galway and the West of Ireland which this development will engender.

Le gach dea-ghuí,

James J. Browne PhD, DSc, MRIA, C.Eng  
Uachtarán - President

cc: Eamon Bradshaw, Galway Harbour Board, Harbour Office, New Docks, Galway

Encl. €50



