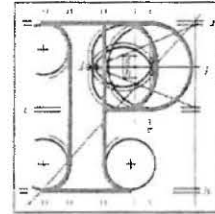


Our Case Number: PA0033



**An
Bord
Pleanála**

IBEC
84/86 Lower Baggot Street
Dublin 2

Date: 10 February 2025

Re: Galway Harbour Extension
Renmore and Townparks Townlands, Galway

Dear Sir / Madam,

An Bord Pleanála has received your recent submission in relation to the above mentioned proposed development and will take it into consideration in its determination of the matter.

The Board will revert to you in due course with regard to the matter.

Please be advised that copies of all submissions / observations received in relation to the application will be made available for public inspection at the offices of the local authority and at the offices of An Bord Pleanála when they have been processed by the Board.

More detailed information in relation to strategic infrastructure development can be viewed on the Board's website: www.pleanala.ie.

If you have any queries in the meantime please contact the undersigned officer of the Board. Please quote the above mentioned An Bord Pleanála reference number in any correspondence or telephone contact with the Board.

Yours faithfully,

Lauren Griffin
Executive Officer
Direct Line: 01-8737244

PA04

Teil	Tel	(01) 858 8100
Glaó Áitiúil	LoCall	1800 275 175
Facs	Fax	(01) 872 2684
Láithreán Gréasáin	Website	www.pleanala.ie
Ríomhphost	Email	bord@pleanala.ie

64 Sráid Maoilbhríde	64 Marlborough Street
Baile Átha Cliath 1	Dublin 1
D01 V902	D01 V902

Lauren Griffin

From: Lauren Griffin
Sent: Friday 7 February 2025 15:19
To: helen.leahy@ibec.ie
Subject: RE: Submission to the consultation on the Galway Harbour Extension Project

A Chara,

The Board acknowledges receipt of your email, official correspondence will issue in due course.

Kind regards,

Lauren

From: Helen Leahy <helen.leahy@ibec.ie>
Sent: Friday 7 February 2025 15:11
To: LAPS <laps@pleanala.ie>
Subject: Submission to the consultation on the Galway Harbour Extension Project

Caution: This is an **External Email** and may have malicious content. Please take care when clicking links or opening attachments. When in doubt, contact the ICT Helpdesk.

RE: Galway Harbour Extension Project - Ibec submission to the public consultation

Submitted: on Friday 7 Feb 2025
Email: laps@pleanala.ie

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find attached to this email a copy of Ibec submission to the consultation on the Galway Harbour Extension Project.

Many thanks.

Regards,
Helen

Helen Leahy
Ibec
M: 086 0209046
E: helen.leahy@ibec.ie
W: www.ibec.ie

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EU Transparency register 479468313744-50

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EU Transparency register 479468313744-50



Galway Harbour Extension

Ibec Submission to the Public Consultation

February 2025

Contents

Contents

Introduction

Port Capacity

Regional Dimension

Broader Policy Context

Future Development

Conclusion

Introduction

As an open and trade-intensive island economy, our ports are of critical importance. Operating in the background, ports are key enablers, directly or indirectly, of a host of industries ranging from logistics to offshore renewable energy (ORE). They are the lynchpin in complex supply chains facilitating the import/export of bulk raw materials. Port expansion, therefore, will be key to maintaining our continued economic success. We see a clear need for this kind of future-proofing which is necessary to safeguard our port as engines of both national and regional growth. As a strategic asset serving both Galway City and the region at large, this expansionary vision for the Port of Galway warrants support.

Port Capacity

Like many other Irish ports in urban settings, the Port of Galway is constrained by its size. Port capacity and facilities are wholly inadequate from where they need to be in order to compete for, and win, new national and international business and to meet the changing requirements of its existing customers. The Port is restricted in the sizes of ship it can service but has the potential to host larger vessels with capacity above 6,000 tonnes. The core business of the Port is in the importation of oil, bitumen, steel and general cargo and in response to changing economic and environmental dynamics, this core business is subject to change. Companies engaging in the importation of these items are opting to import at greater capacity to avail of more competitive prices. Vessel sizes are increasing in an effort to reduce carbon footprint. The Port needs to be in a position to accommodate 12- 20,000 tonne vessels and the proposed extension is crucial to this.

In a national context, it is under the assumption that all currently on-track expansionary projects at Irish ports are successfully delivered that the Ports Capacity Study claims to see Irish ports handle forecasted demand out to 2040¹. This is while referencing the reality that 'financing and planning difficulties may cause delays and associated capacity constraints'². The findings of the Port Capacity Study state that to meet forecasted demand in the highest growth scenario by 2040, all planned port developments need to be delivered on time³. The Galway Port Expansion will be integral in growing our capacity in this regard.

Regional Dimension

The Galway Harbour Extension project will impact across the entire Western Region. The proposed redevelopment will ensure that the Port remains at the heart of Galway City's economic development while allowing for the redevelopment of the inland harbour. The extension envisages the creation of a marine facility capable of ensuring that Galway has a harbour infrastructure fit for projected demand. Improvement of harbour facilities is of particular importance as it has the potential to spur on other industries in the region with increased connectivity for cruise vessels aiding the tourism sector where the unique location of Galway harbour is conducive to attracting cruise business.

¹ Irish Maritime Development Office (IMDO), 'Irish Ports Capacity Study', *Executive Summary*, 2023, <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/274073/b39b9cbc-d9f5-4ec5-aa13-01b90e105090.pdf#page=null>

² IMDO, p.5

³ IMDO, p.5

The project will allow for a healthy diversification of port activities and revenue streams through ORE – enabling the installation and service of offshore wind energy off the West Coast. The establishment of land-based infrastructure to service offshore energy will establish the Port as a key facilitator supporting this sector and the component supply chains in the wider Western region. Alongside greater trading capacity, the inclusion of a rail link will add to the existing route-to-market system - supporting supply chains and economic activity across the region. Through adopting rail freight, the region has the opportunity to reduce road freight emissions and mitigate road congestion all while improving heavy goods connectivity.

Broader Policy Context

The National Ports Policy (NPP) 2013 recognises the importance of regional ports in serving their hinterlands and in supporting balanced regional development. It further notes that these ports could play a more significant role in supporting national economic development in certain specialised trades (e.g.: oil/petroleum import & storage/offshore energy servicing) and maritime tourism. Ireland's ambitions for the renewable energy sector will do a great deal of heavy lifting on our path to a net-zero economy and Galway is one of several ports that are vital to the achievement of Ireland's decarbonisation objectives.

The regulatory landscape for port infrastructure projects has undergone a transformation, with the introduction of the Maritime Area Planning Act, the establishment of the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority and swathes of new legislation reforming the planning system more broadly. While complying with these legislative requirements, the Project aligns with the development objectives outlined in the National Planning Framework, the strategic investment priorities in the National Development Plan, the National Marine Planning Framework and National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland to deliver the National Strategic Outcomes in Project Ireland 2040.

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) highlights the importance of Galway as a Port of regional significance with a number of its Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs) supporting the Region's strategic ports and harbour assets. The RSES identifies the rail freight service from Galway Harbour as a strategic project in the RSES that will enhance accessibility and connectivity in the region to 2040. In addition, Policy 4.7 of Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 states it will "support proposals for development and extension of port facilities and an extension of the rail line to the port, which are of strategic importance to the City and the northern and western region."

Future Development

The proposed harbour redevelopment presents a transformative opportunity with benefits for the city, county and wider region. The regeneration of the inner dock, facilitated by the development of the new deep-water port, will enable Galway City to develop sustainably whilst achieving a number of broader strategic objectives. The relocation of port operations will allow for a mixed-use urban quarter adjacent to the city centre on an underutilised urban site which is particularly welcome in the context of land scarcity in our urban areas. The new port will be a modern, sustainable facility that is well-connected internationally with multi-modal access across rail and road nationally.

Conclusion

Ports are guided by considered individualised, long-term master plans which allow adequate scope for corresponding investments in their environs. However, public awareness on the necessity of expanding port infrastructure will be required going forward. Resistance to new infrastructure along coastlines on environmental grounds or given their proximity to population centres must be fairly weighted. Proper spatial planning must facilitate, not restrict, the future development of our ports. Operators of these strategic assets should maintain full autonomy over these asset management decisions to support Ireland's export ambitions. It is imperative that the Port be allowed to expand in a manner that does not lead to capacity constraints, and we urge that the project is assessed for its Gross Value Add (GVA) to the broader economy. The Galway Harbour Expansion Project will serve as a key determinant of the region's future economic prosperity and should be approved.

About Ibec

Ibec is Ireland's largest lobby group and business representative organisation. We campaign for real changes to the policies that matter most to business. Policy is shaped by our diverse membership. With 39 trade associations covering a range of industry sectors, 6 offices around Ireland as well as an office in Brussels. With almost 300 employees, Ibec communicates the Irish business voice to key stakeholders at home and abroad. Ibec also provides a wide range of professional services and management training to members on all aspects of human resource management, occupational health and safety, employee relations and employment law.

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