



## **APPENDIX 5-7**

**FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AND  
MITIGATION STRATEGY**

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## ACRONYMS

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## ACRONYMS

Acronym	Definition
ABP	An Bord Pleanála
AIS	Automatic Identification System
CMS	Construction Methods Statement
COLREGS	International Regulations for the Prevention of Collision at Sea
CoP	Construction Programme
EIAR	Environmental Impact Assessment Report
EU	European Union
FIR	Fisheries Industry Representative
FLO	Fisheries Liaison Officer
FLOWW	Fishing Liaison with Offshore Wind and Wet Renewables
FMMS	Fisheries Management and Mitigation Strategy
FU	Functional Unit
ICES	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
LMP	Lighting and Marking Plan
MAC	Maritime Area Consent
MMO	Marine Management Organisation
MSP	Marine Spatial Planning
MW	Megawatt
NMPF	National Marine Planning Framework
NSVMP	Navigational Safety and Vessel Management Plan
NtM	Notice to Mariners
OEMP	Offshore Environmental Management Plan
OFLO	Offshore Fisheries Liaison Officer
ORE	Offshore Renewable Energy
ORESS	Offshore Renewable Energy Support Scheme

Acronym	Definition
OWF	Offshore Wind Farm
RIFF	Regional Inshore Fisheries Forum
SOLAS	International Regulations for the Safety of Life at Sea
VHF	Very High Frequency
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System
WTG	Wind Turbine Generator

## SUMMARY

This Fisheries Management and Mitigation Strategy (FMMS) has been prepared by Xodus Group Ltd (Xodus) on behalf of Fuinneamh Sceirde Teoranta (hereafter referred to as ‘the Applicant’), who intend to apply to An Bord Pleanála for planning permission for the construction of the Sceirde Rocks Offshore Wind Farm (hereafter referred to as ‘the Project’).

This FMMS has been prepared for submissions as part of the Sceirde Rocks OWF application for development permission, and is subject to further development, revisions and adoption through the planning process, prior to construction of the Project. The FMMS presents the Project approach to fisheries liaison and mitigation in order to minimise impacts and disruption to commercial fisheries receptors and to address the specific requirements of the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF). All Project personnel, contractors and subcontractors will be required to comply with the FMMS throughout the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning phases of the Project.

This FMMS covers the following:

- Introduction, including purpose, consent compliance, scope of the plan, relevant policy and guidance, relevant other documents, structure and location of the plan;
- Project background;
- Information on consultation;
- Data used to inform the FMMS;
- Overview of local fisheries;
- Details on communication, roles and responsibilities of the fisheries liaison;
- Details on the mitigation measures applied in the fisheries management and mitigation strategy

# 1. FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AND MITIGATION STRATEGY

## 1.1 Introduction

### 1.1.1 Purpose of this FMMS

This Fisheries Management and Mitigation Strategy (FMMS) has been prepared by Xodus Group Ltd (Xodus) on behalf of Fuinneamh Sceirde Teoranta (hereafter referred to as ‘the Applicant’), who intend to apply to An Bord Pleanála for planning permission for the construction of the Sceirde Rocks Offshore Wind Farm (hereafter referred to as ‘the Project’).

The National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2021) outlines specific policies for fisheries in the context of marine development. As part of these policies it is recommended that an FMMS should be prepared (Fisheries Policy 2) for an offshore development where there is the potential to result in a significant effect on fisheries receptors. While the Sceirde Rocks Offshore Windfarm (OWF) Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) Chapter 13: Commercial Fisheries concluded that the Project would not result in a significant impact on commercial fisheries receptors, the Applicant has prepared this FMMS to facilitate a positive relationship and co-existence between the Project and the commercial fishing industry.

This FMMS has been prepared for submissions as part of the Sceirde Rocks OWF application for development permission, and is subject to further development, revisions and adoption through the planning process, prior to construction of the Project. The FMMS presents the Project approach to fisheries liaison and mitigation in order to minimise impacts and disruption to commercial fisheries receptors and to address the specific requirements of the NMPF (as detailed in Section 1.1.4 below). All Project personnel, contractors and subcontractors will be required to comply with the FMMS throughout the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning phases of the Project.

### 1.1.2 Consent compliance

This FMMS has been produced to fulfil the requirements of the consent conditions for the development of the Project, as presented within Table 1 below. Details of where the consent condition has been addressed within this FMMS is also provided within Table 1.

*Table 1 Consent conditions relevant to the FMMS*

Consent Condition	Details	Relevant Section
	This table will be populated with planning conditions as required	

### 1.1.3 Scope of the Plan

This FMMS provides information on the following:

- An overview of the relevant commercial fisheries receptors which have the potential to be affected by works associated with the Project;
- A description of the Project;
- The roles and responsibilities for those implementing the FMMS; and
- An overview of the management and mitigation measures adopted for the Project.

The recommendations made within this FMMS are applicable throughout the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning phases of the Project.

#### 1.1.4 Relevant policy and guidance

In line with the requirements of European Union (EU) Directive 2014/89/EU, the NMPF was established in 2021 to facilitate Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) and the effective use of the Irish marine environment. The following policies detailed within the NMPF are considered relevant to the development of this FMMS:

- Fisheries Policy 1: which states that any proposal which has the potential to result in a significant adverse impact on existing fishing activities should demonstrate that they will avoid, minimise or mitigate against such impacts as far as possible;
- Fisheries Policy 2: which states that where a significant impact upon fishing activity may arise from any proposal, an FMMS should be prepared by the proposer of the development in consultation with local fishing interests; and
- Co-existence Policy 1: which states that a proposal should demonstrate that they have given consideration to the use of marine space, including through consideration of opportunities for co-existence and co-operations with other activities.

This FMMS has been developed in accordance with the following guidance:

- Seafood/Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Engagement in Ireland – A Summary Guide (Seafood/ORE Working Group, 2023).

Additionally, consideration has been given to the following international guidance to inform this FMMS:

- Draft Guidance on preparing a Fisheries Management and Mitigation Strategy (Marine Scotland, 2020);
- Fishing Liaison with Offshore Wind and Wet Renewables Group (FLOWW) Best Practice Guidance for Offshore Renewables Developments: Recommendations for Fisheries Liaison (FLOWW, 2014);
- FLOWW Best Practice Guidance for Offshore Renewables Developments: Recommendations for Fisheries Disruption Settlements and Community Funds (FLOWW, 2015); and
- Good Practice Guidance for assessing fisheries displacement by other licensed marine activities (Marine Scotland, 2022).

Any updates to these guidance documents or the publication of new guidance will be reviewed upon the finalisation of the FMMS post-consent.

#### 1.1.5 Relevant other documents and plans

Once finalised, the FMMS will form one of several key plans which will be developed on behalf of the Project to manage and mitigate against any potentially significant impacts during the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning phases. At this stage, the list of final consent and management plans that will be required for the Project is not yet known, however the linkages between

the FMMS and other consent and management plans which are likely to be required for the Project are summarised in Table 2 below.

*Table 2 Links with other consent and management plans*

Consent/Management Plan	Linkage with the FMMS
Construction Programme, within Chapter 5: Project Description	Information on construction methodologies and programme is provided in Chapter 5 of the EIAR. This will be updated on appointment of the main contractor for the works. The CMS provides information on construction procedures and good working practices proposed for the Project. The CMS is supported by the CoP which details the proposed construction programme for the Project, including the proposed timing and sequencing of works. Of relevance to the FMMS, both the CMS and CoP confirm when offshore construction works will commence and cease.
Vessel Management Plan (VMP) (Appendix 5-10)	The VMP provides information on the indicative transit routes of Project vessels and details proposed navigational safety measure (e.g., advisory safety zones). The plan also outlines the proposed construction/operational ports which will be used for Project vessels. All vessels mobilized to implement the FMMS will also be required to adhere to and implement the requirements of the VMP.
Offshore Environmental Management Plan (OEMP) (Appendix 5-2)	The OEMP will outline the approach to environmental management throughout the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning phases of the Project. The plan will outline the role of the Fisheries Liaison Officer (FLO) within the wider Project team, providing detail on the procedures for reporting of dropped objects and pollution response procedures. All Project personnel, contractors and subcontractors implementing the FMMS will also be required to adhere to the commitments of the OEMP.
Lighting and Marking Plan (LMP) (Appendix 5-9)	The LMP will provide detailed information on the marine and aviation lighting to be applied to Project vessels and offshore infrastructure throughout the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning phases of the Project. This information will supplement the FMMS, with all requirements of the LMP applicable to vessels mobilized as part of the FMMS.

The FMMS and other consent and management plans will be developed further post-consent once consent conditions are known. The FMMS and other consent and management plans will be prepared in consultation with key stakeholders prior to the commencement of any construction works.

## 1.1.6 Structure of the plan

This FMMS is divided into six main parts:

- Section 1.2 – Project Background: which provides details on the scope offshore works associated with the Project, including the location, design and programme of the Project;
- Section 1.3 – Consultation: which provides details on consultation which have been completed as part of the Project which has been used to inform this FMMS;



- Section 1.4 – Data to Inform the FMMS: which provides details on the publicly available data and information sources which have been used to inform this FMMS. This information has been supplemented by Project site-specific surveys;
- Section 1.5 – Fisheries Overview: which provides details on the relevant commercial fisheries receptors which may potentially be affected by works associated with the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning phases of the Project;
- Section 1.6 – Fisheries Liaison: which provides details on the transfer of information (including the roles of responsibilities of individual parties) between the Project and the fishing industry. This section also details how communication will be maintained between the Project and the fishing industry; and
- Section 1.7 – Fisheries Management and Mitigation Strategy: which provides details on the mitigation measure which will be applied throughout the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning phases of the project. The mitigation measures proposed as part of the FMMS have been developed in consideration of the relevant guidance and policy (as detailed in section 1.1.4), with emphasis given to measures which facilitate a positive relationship and co-existence between the Project and the commercial fishing industry.

All sections within this FMMS will be updated as required once further details on the Project are available post-consent. As part of this update a review of all data and information used to inform this FMMS will be reviewed and updated (as required).

## 1.2 Project Background

The Project was awarded a Maritime Area Consent (MAC) in December 2022, and as such was eligible to participate in the first Offshore Renewable Energy Support Scheme (ORESS1) auction. The Project was one of four successful projects in ORESS1, awarded support in June 2023.

The Applicant is proposing the development of the Sceirde Rocks Offshore Wind Farm located off the West Coast of Ireland. The offshore elements of the Project (hereafter referred to as the Offshore Site) include 30 No. wind turbine generators (WTGs) and associated offshore foundations and substructures, one Offshore Substation and associated foundation, inter-array cables, one offshore export cable and a trenchless landfall. The operational life of the Project (for both offshore and onshore elements) is 38 years. The maximum export capacity of the Project is c. 450 megawatts (MW). Full details of the Project description are presented within the Sceirde Rocks Offshore Wind Farm EIAR Chapter 5: Project Description.

The Offshore Site is located within the following International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) statistical rectangles 34E0, 35E0 and 35D9. The ICES rectangles considered as part of this FMMS are presented within Figure 1.

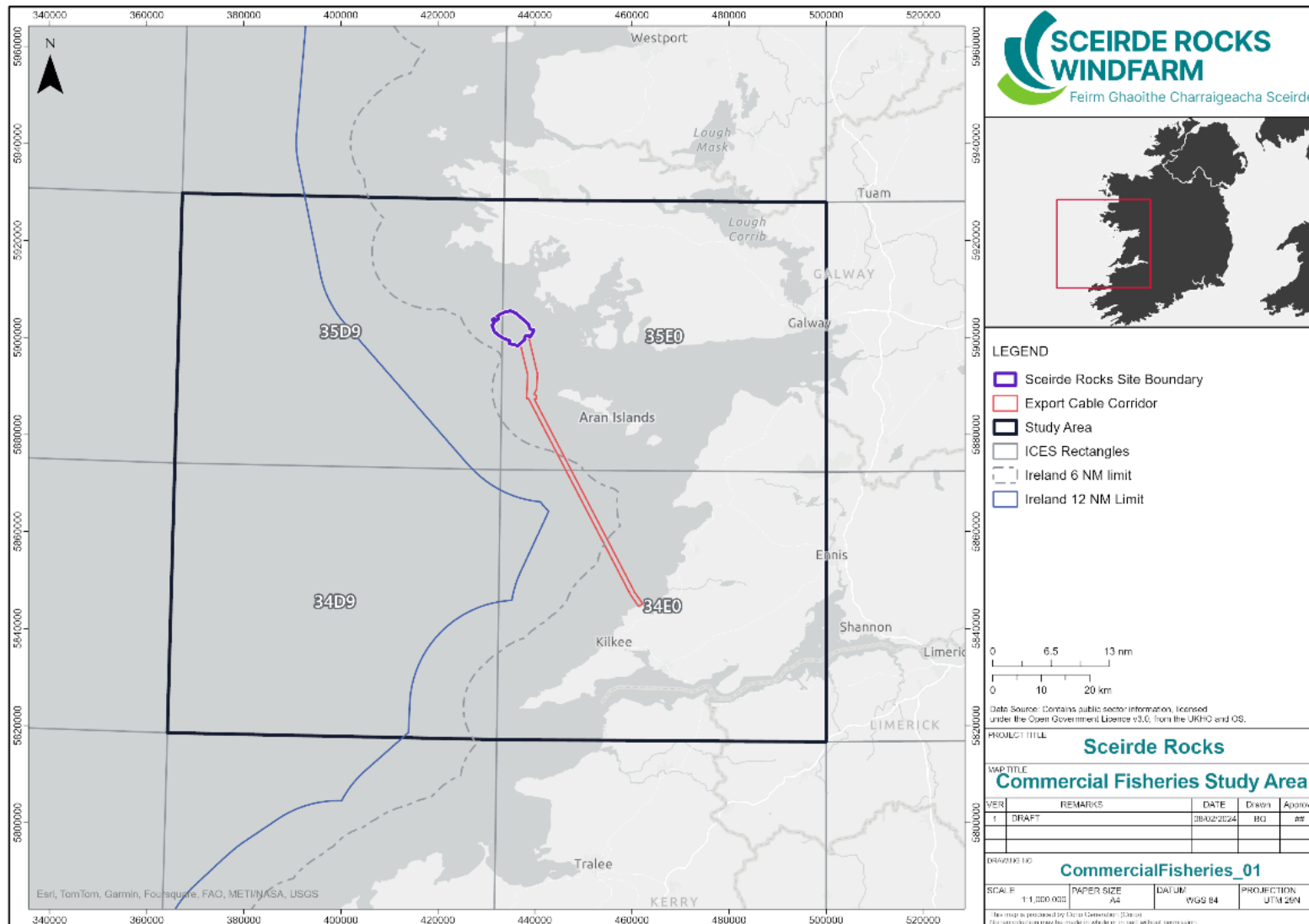


Figure 1 The Commercial Fisheries Study Area, as identified within the EIAR.

## 1.3

## Consultation

Stakeholder consultation has been ongoing throughout the design concept phase of the Project by the appointed FLO. The inputs of the FLO aided in confirming the spatial extent of commercial fisheries activity within the commercial fisheries baseline within the EIA. The FLO has established a working relationship with key local fishing industry representatives and individuals. A summary of consultation relevant to developing the commercial fisheries EIA baseline which has been undertaken to date it presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3 Consultation relevant to commercial fisheries

Year	Date(s)	Consultation / Meeting
2022	9 <sup>th</sup> March, 27 <sup>th</sup> April, 5 <sup>th</sup> May, 25 <sup>th</sup> May, 2 <sup>nd</sup> June, 16 <sup>th</sup> June, 22-24 <sup>th</sup> June.	Meeting at Carna – Emigration Centre (9 <sup>th</sup> March). Meetings at piers and various locations at Lettermullan, Kilkieran, Carna, Ard West, Roundstone, Bunowen, including calling to houses, etc. Discussed survey works and the wider project
2023	7 <sup>th</sup> February, 3 <sup>rd</sup> May, 13/14 <sup>th</sup> June, 4/5 <sup>th</sup> July and 1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup> August.	Meetings held at Roundstone, Ard West, Carna, Lettermullen, two at Rosamh�il to discuss survey works and the wider Project.
	29 <sup>th</sup> August	Meeting with FLO; confirmation of available data and fishing activity within the commercial fisheries study area
	6 <sup>th</sup> November	Meeting with FLO; confirmation of scouting and additional survey data.
2024	20/21 <sup>st</sup> February, 6/7 <sup>th</sup> March, 28 <sup>th</sup> March	Meetings held at Roundstone, Carna, Lettermullan, 28 <sup>th</sup> March (Rosamh�il only) to discuss survey works and the wider Project.

The Applicant will continue to engage with the fishing industry and relevant stakeholders to continue this positive relationship and will utilise further input in order to inform the final post-consent FMMS. The details on further consultation held post this -FMMS will be presented within this section of the post-consent FMMS.

## 1.4

## Data to Inform the FMMS

This FMMS has been informed by a number of publicly available data and information sources, as identified within EIA Chapter 13: Commercial Fisheries, supplemented by relevant stakeholder engagement (as summarised in Table 3 above) and Project site-specific surveys. A summary of these data sources and surveys are presented below:

### ➤ Data and information sources:

- Ireland's Marine Atlas (Marine Institute, 2024);
- Average Annual Landings by Vessel Length, Species & Gear Type (Marine Management Organisation (MMO), 2023);
- Atlas of commercial fisheries around Ireland, third edition (Gerritsen, H.D. and Kelly, E., 2019);
- Annual Fisheries Report: Findings of the National Seafood Survey 2023 (BIM, 2023);
- The Business of Seafood 2022 (BIM, 2023);
- West Regional Inshore Fisheries Forum (RIFF) (F  raim Iascaigh Cois Cladaigh (Inshore Fisheries Forums)), 2023);
- Automatic Identification System (AIS);
- Vessel Monitoring System (VMS); and

- Data collected by the FLO.
- Project site-specific surveys:
  - Vessel Traffic Survey; and
  - Fishing Gear Visual Survey.

Full details on each of the data sources and Project site-specific surveys which have been used to inform this FMMS are presented within EIA Chapter 13: Commercial Fisheries. The final FMMS will be updated, as required, with any additional data sources that are available following the submission of the Offshore Site EIA Report and ahead of the construction of the Project.

## 1.5

## Fisheries Overview

The commercial fishing activity within the vicinity of the Project are described in EIA Chapter 13: Commercial Fisheries and summarised in Table 4. It should be noted that the FMMS will apply to all fisheries active in the vicinity of the offshore Project, even if they do not fall within the categories outlined in Table 4.

Table 4 Key commercial fisheries receptors identified for the Project

Fishing Method	Target Species	OAA	OECC
Static gear (e.g., pots, nets and traps)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Lobster (<i>Homarus Gammarus</i>); and</li> <li>➤ Crabs (brown (<i>Cancer pagurus</i>), velvet (<i>Necora puber</i>), spider (<i>Maja branchyodactyla</i>).</li> </ul>	✓	✓
Demersal trawlers and seines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Nephrops (<i>Nephrops norvegicus</i>);</li> <li>➤ Monkfish (<i>Lophius piscatorius</i> / <i>L. budegassa</i>); and</li> <li>➤ Megrim (<i>Lepidorhombus whiffiagonis</i>).</li> </ul>		✓
Pelagic trawlers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Mackerel (<i>Scomber scombrus</i>); and</li> <li>➤ Horse mackerel (<i>Trachurus trachurus</i>).</li> </ul>		✓

## 1.5.1

### Static gear (e.g. pots, nets and traps)

Vessels deploying static gear are active throughout the Project area, with the main target species being lobster and crabs (brown, velvet, spider), in addition to fishing for crayfish, wrasse and shrimp. The static gear fishing activity includes smaller inshore vessels with over 90% of the vessels within the Western RIFF, which comprises the coastal zone of County Clare and County Galway, being 12 m and under. According to consultation data derived from fishing stakeholder engagement, fishers are mainly targeting grounds within the vicinity of the Offshore Array Area (OAA), within which the turbines and offshore substation will be located, and to a lesser extent present within the Offshore Export Cable Corridor (OECC) within which the export cable will be installed. For vessels deploying static gear over 12 m length, fishing effort and landings data from the Marine Institute (2014 – 2018) (as presented within the EIAR) indicates that activity is concentrated around the Aran Islands and close to the shoreline.

Static gear is typically deployed (shot) in strings of multiple pots on a main line anchored to the seabed and marked at either end with a buoy. The number of pots in a string can vary from five in some inshore fisheries to over 100 in offshore fisheries. Small, inshore vessels often operate a few fleets whilst larger vessels operate several thousand pots in fleets of around a hundred. These long fleets can be

around 2.4 km in length. The fleets can be hauled and re-baited daily, though some vessels let the gear ‘soak’ up to several days.

### 1.5.2 Demersal trawlers and seines

Demersal trawlers and seines are active within the OECC, with the main target species being *Nephrops*, monkfish and megrim. Fishing effort is mainly concentrated near the OECC around the Aran, Galway Bay and Slyne Head *Nephrops* Grounds, Functional Unit (FU) 17. The 2023 survey report for the Aran, Galway Bay and Slyne Head *Nephrops* Grounds (FU17) which provides the density of *Nephrops* burrows indicates that the OECC passes through an area of low density, which is reflected in the low levels of fishing activity in that area. There is limited trawling activity within the OAA given the bathymetry, which has steep rocky protrusions and exposed rocks throughout.

Landings data (as presented in the ELAR) indicates that medium to large vessels (18 m to 24 m in length) are present; however, the dataset does not capture vessels under 12 m length. It is understood through stakeholder engagement that trawlers under 12 m length are present as well and fishing by trawlers over 12 m length has decreased in recent years.

### 1.5.3 Pelagic trawlers

Fishing effort for pelagic trawlers over 12 m length indicates that pelagic trawling is low throughout the OECC. As described above there is limited trawling within the OAA given the bathymetry which has steep rocky protrusions and exposed rocks throughout. The landings data indicates that vessels between 24 to 40 m and over 40 m length are operating further offshore. These vessels greater than 24 m length are attributed with pelagic trawlers. The main target species are mackerel and horse mackerel. It is acknowledged that small to medium pelagic trawlers (under 12 m length) may be operating closer inshore based on information gained through stakeholder engagement.

## 1.6 Fisheries Liaison

### 1.6.1 Introduction

In line with the recommendations of the guidance documents listed in section 1.1.4, the key principles for fisheries liaison will be the proactive, continuous, and timely engagement by the Applicant with the fishing industry throughout the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning phases of the Project. The principles of liaison will include the implementation of appropriate communication and applicable information transfer between all relevant parties, therefore assisting in minimising interference and facilitating effective co-existence between the Project and the fishing industry.

This section will outline the key roles and responsibilities of all parties and the lines of communication and information dissemination that are proposed for the Offshore Site.

### 1.6.2 Roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities for fisheries liaison throughout the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning phases of the Offshore Site are presented in Table 5 below. Within the final FMMS (which will be developed post-consent) more detailed information on the specific roles (including contact details) will be included once this information is known.

Table 5 Key roles and responsibilities

Role	Contact details	Responsibility
The Applicant	[To be included post-consent]	Throughout the lifecycle of the Project the Applicant is committed to pro-active and timely engagement with the fishing industry through a Project appointed FLO. The Applicant will ensure the effective implementation of the commitments outlined within the FMMS throughout the lifecycle of the Project. Any relevant Project information will be disseminated to the fishing industry via the FLO and Offshore FLO (OFLO) in a timely manner.
Fishing Industry Representative (FIR)	[To be included post-consent]	The FIR is commonly a local fisher, ex-fisher or representative who acts as the first point of contact between the fishing industry and Project and can provide support and guidance to the fishing industry.
FLO (onshore based)	[To be included post-consent]	<p>An FLO has been appointed for the Offshore Site and there will continue to be an FLO throughout the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning phases.</p> <p>The FLO will interface between all Project personnel and the fishing industry and may act as a representative for the Applicant at fisheries engagement meetings. The FLO will maintain a positive relationship with the local fishing industry and will develop a database of fisheries contacts and organisations to ensure that all relevant Project information is circulated in a timely manner.</p> <p>The FLO will circulate key Project information from the Applicant to the fishing industry, as required, and may attend fisheries stakeholder meetings to liaise directly with local fishers and the fishing industry. The FLO will report any comments or concerns from the fishing industry directly back to the Applicant in a timely manner.</p>
Offshore FLO (OFLO)	[To be included post-consent]	The OFLO will be stationed on Project vessels (as required) to minimize any at-sea conflict between the Offshore Site and the fishing industry throughout the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning phases of the Project. The OFLO will maintain contact with the FLO and will record any details of any fishing activity within the vicinity of the Offshore Site during construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning works.
Marine Coordinator	[To be included post-consent]	The Project Marine Coordinator will be responsible for managing and monitoring Project vessel activity through the establishment of a Project Marine Coordinator. The Project Marine Coordinator will maintain ongoing communication with the fishing industry through key lines of communication including a Notice to Mariners (NtM), Information to Sea Users Bulletins (Kingfisher Bulletin) and

Role	Contact details	Responsibility
		Weekly Notices of Operations (WNoO). Notices of Project vessel operations will also be issued to the FLO for distribution to the fishing industry.

### 1.6.3

## Communication and information dissemination

The Applicant will circulate all relevant Project information to the fishing industry and key stakeholders within a timely manner, in line with pre-agreed and established communication channels, including:

- Promulgation of Project information during the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning phases via:
  - NtMs, Kingfisher Bulletins and WNoO facilitated by the FLO and Fisheries Industry Representative (FIR); and
  - Project updates via the official Project website.
- Consultations meetings with the fishing industry and key stakeholders attended by the Applicant, FLO and/or FIR; and
- Any unscheduled liaison to address any Project concerns or issues as and when they arise.

The timing and frequency of communication and information dissemination will be detailed further in the final FMMS developed post-consent. Table 6 below outlines the key contacts which should be contacted by the fishing industry under different scenarios.

Table 6 Fisheries contacts

Scenario	Contact
Fishers onshore seeking further information on the Offshore Site in order to provide feedback to the Applicant.	FIR and/or FLO
Fishers seeking to discuss damage to or loss of fishing gear as a result of works associated with the Offshore Site.	FLO
Fishers steaming or fishing within the vicinity of the Offshore Site.	FLO, OFLO and/or the Project Marine Coordinator

### 1.7

## Fisheries Management and Mitigation Strategy

As part of the design of the Offshore Site, certain measures have been adopted in order to reduce the potential for impacts to the receiving environment. The commercial fisheries mitigation by design measures (summarised in Table 7 ) follows best practice guidance for protection of fishers' interests within the marine environment. The final FMMS developed post-consent will account for the commercial fisheries mitigation by design measures and any conditions stipulated within the development permission.

Table 7 Mitigation plans and measures relevant to commercial fisheries

Embedded measure
The first choice of cable protection will be burial. External cable protection will be used where required. Final details will be confirmed following development permission (to take account of any planning conditions).
Development and adherence to a VMP – mitigation by prevention.
All vessels associated with the Project will comply with the provisions of the International Regulations for the Prevention of Collision at Sea (COLREGs) and the International Regulations for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) – mitigation by prevention.
Proactive consultation with key stakeholders within the fishing industry will adhere to best practice guidance – mitigation by prevention.



Embedded measure
The use of guard vessels and OFLOs where required – mitigation by prevention.
Notifications (prior to construction) will be given in a NtMs which will be published in the relevant fishing journals and online portals (e.g., The Marine Times, The Irish Skipper, Kingfisher Fortnightly Bulletin) – mitigation by prevention.
Procedures for dropped objects and claim processes for loss/damage of fishing gear/vessels – mitigation by prevention.

The sections below provide additional detail on the approach to fisheries management that are proposed for the Offshore Site. These measures will be reviewed and additional information provided within the final FMMS developed post-consent.

### 1.7.1 Guard vessels

Guard vessels will be used throughout the Offshore Site, where required, to enable safe construction activities. Guard vessels will coordinate and communicate between Project construction vessels and other sea users throughout construction activities, as well as maintaining periodic contact with the OFLO to provide support on the monitoring of fishing operations within the Offshore Site and adjacent waters throughout the construction phase.

### 1.7.2 Advisory safe clearance zones

Advisory safe clearance zones will be implemented through the Construction, Operation & Maintenance, and Decommissioning phases of the Project. These will be:

- 500 metre advisory safe clearance around any Construction activities (including dredging foundation installation, WTG installation and cable laying);
- 500 metre advisory safe clearance around any major Operational activities (including major component (e.g. WTG blade) replacement; and
- 50 metre advisory safe clearance around operational infrastructure which could pose an obstruction to mariners, including WTGs and the OSS.

### 1.7.3 Dropped objects

The dropped objects at sea procedure will be followed in the event that any Project objects are dropped at sea during construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning works. This procedure will be outlined within the OEMP (Appendix 5-2).

### 1.7.4 Offshore Environmental Management Plan (and annexes)

All vessels contracted for Project work will be issued with a Code of Good Practice to facilitate co-existence between Project vessels and the fishing industry. This Code of Good Practice will ensure the safe operations of both Project and fisheries vessels throughout the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning phases of the Project.

The Code of Good Practice is likely to include:

- Adherence with the provisions of the COLREGs and the SOLAS international regulations, in addition to standard operating procedures outlined by the Applicant;
- Maintenance of open Very High Frequency (VHF) channels and contact with the Project Marine Coordinator at all times;



- Outline the indicative transit routes throughout the Offshore Site and adjacent waters (where possible); and
- Outline the principles and methods of ongoing communication between Project vessels and fishers.

The Code of Good Practice has not yet been developed; however this will be included with the final FMMS developed for the Project post-consent.

#### 1.7.5

### Navigation safety and vessel management

The procedures for navigational safety and vessel management will be outlined within the VMP. This will provide information on the vessel specifications and anchorage areas which will be used throughout the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning phases of the Project. The VMP will also outline the Applicants approach to Project Marine Coordinator, including how the fishing industry can contact the Project Marine Coordinator.

Details on Project transit routes to and from the Offshore Site throughout the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning phases will be detailed within the VMP. This will include information on preferred vessel shelter areas and the reporting approach and mechanisms for any vessel which is unable to comply with the transit route.

#### 1.7.6

### Gear retrieval procedure for snagged or lost fishing gear

The fishing gear retrieval procedure for the Project has been developed in line with the KIS-ORCA 'Emergency Procedures' for submarine cables and structures (KIS-ORCA, 2019). In the context of commercial fisheries, the following gear retrieval procedures have been proposed by the Applicant:

1. If the weight of gear potentially fastened to a cable or substructure is excessive and not easily retrieved, the fishing vessel and crew should not be endangered in an attempt to retrieve the gear. Skippers should not attempt to recover fishing gear lost or cut away within the vicinity of the Offshore Site;
2. The fishing vessel should contact the Coastguard to explain the situation, providing an accurate vessel position and location of the lost gear;
3. If the Coastguard and Project Marine Coordinator confirm that the fishing vessels is in the immediate vicinity of the Offshore Site and associated infrastructure, serious consideration will be given to the slipping of the gear, buoying and recording its position;
4. After buoying off the gear, the position of the gear should be confirmed with the Coastguard and the OFLO;
5. Once the fishing vessel returns to port, the local Fishery Office should be contacted by the skipper or a vessel crew member to register the incident;
6. The incident should also be reported to the OFLO/FLO by the skipper or vessel crew member, with detail provided on the location, time and date of the incident and a description of the lost gear. The OFLO/FLO will then provide a gear loss/claims form; and
7. The fishing vessel should complete a gear loss/claims form and return this to the OFLO/FLO.

Any fishing gear lost or damaged at sea that the skipper believes is a direct result of the Offshore Site and associated Project infrastructure should be reported to the OFLO/FLO. Further details on the gear retrieval procedure will be proposed within the final FMMS that will be developed post-consent, with consideration given to any updated or additional guidance on the retrieval of fishing gear.

### 1.7.7 Post-installation surveys

Following the completion of Project construction works, the Applicant will undertake post-installation surveys to confirm cable burial depth and any potential changes to seabed conditions as a result of the physical presence of Project infrastructure. The exact nature of these surveys has yet to be determined, however it is expected that, following the completion of these surveys, fisheries stakeholders will be able to provide comment on the installed Project infrastructure.

### 1.7.8 Cooperation management

It is possible that instances may arise where works associated with the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning phases of the Project require the relocation of static fishing gear within the Offshore Site and adjacent waters. Where relocation is required, the Applicant will establish evidence-based cooperation agreement (in line with FLOWW (2015) guidance (section 1.1.5)). Further details on the approach to cooperation management will be provided within the final FMMS developed post-consent. Additionally the Applicant will produce a cooperation protocol/arrangement post-consent, informed by ongoing discussions with affected fishers in line with the findings of the Seafood Offshore Renewables Energy Working Group and best practice guidance (e.g., FLOWW).

In the event that mutual cooperation agreements cannot be achieved, both parties can seek Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in line with guidance from the Seafood Offshore Renewable Energy Working Group and undertaken by a mutually agreed third party.

### 1.7.9 Fisheries monitoring

Currently, no monitoring is proposed for commercial fisheries as part of the development of the Offshore Site. The Applicant has established a strong working relationship with the local fishing industry through the FIR, OFLO and FLO. Consultation with the fishing industry will be ongoing throughout the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning phases of the Project.

Any future fisheries monitoring requirements will be identified post-consent and provided within the final FMMS.

## 1.8 References

Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) (2021) The National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF). Available online: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/60e57-nationalmarine-planning-framework/> [Accessed on 12/08/2024].

KIS-ORCA. (2019). Emergency Procedures. Available online at: <https://kis-orca.org/safety/emergency-procedures/> [Accessed on 12/08/2024].

Seafood / ORE Working Group (2023). Seafood/ORE Engagement in Ireland: A Summary Guide <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/263199/aa87ef6b-7419-4620-9146-41c8d0d31283.pdf#page=null> [Accessed on 12/08/2024].