Our Case Number: ABP-319811-24



Wexford County Council Planning Department Carricklawn Wexford Co. Wexford Y35 WY93

Date: 29 May 2024

Re: Proposed development of an extension to current port infrastructure at Rosslare Europort to provide assembly support for offshore wind farms. Rosslare Harbour, Ballygillane Big, County Wexford.

Dear Sir / Madam,

Please be advised that the Board has received a request to enter into pre-application consultations in relation to the above mentioned proposed development. This request has been received in accordance with section 287 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

If you have any queries in the meantime, please contact the undersigned officer of the Board or email marine@pleanala.ie quoting the above mentioned An Bord Pleanala reference number in any correspondence with the Board.

Yours faithfully,

Ellen Moss **Executive Officer**

PP FRIM

Direct Line: 01-8737285

OC02

Our Case Number: ABP-319811-24
Your Reference: lamrod Éireann



Gavin & Doherty Geosolutions Unit A2 Nutgrove Business Park Rathfarnham Dublin 14

Date: 29 May 2024

Re: Proposed development of an extension to current port infrastructure at Rosslare Europort to provide assembly support for offshore wind farms.

Rosslare Harbour, Ballygillane Big, County Wexford.

Dear Sir / Madam,

An Bord Pleanála has received your request and fee to enter into pre-application consultations under section 287 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, in respect of the above-mentioned proposed development. A receipt for the fee lodged is enclosed.

Please be advised that section 294 of the Act provides for the Board to recover its costs in conducting pre-application consultations. These costs together with costs incurred by the Board in determining any application made to it will be included in the Board's decision. The Board will offset any application fees paid by the applicant against its costs.

Further advice or details in relation to the above will be provided by the Board at pre-application consultation meetings (if held).

The Board will revert to you in due course in respect of this request.

If you have any queries in the meantime, please contact the undersigned officer of the Board or email marine@pleanala.ie quoting the above mentioned An Bord Pleanála reference number in any correspondence with the Board.

Yours faithfully,

Ellen Moss
Executive Officer

Direct Line: 01-8737285

OC01





an RSK company

Rosslare ORE Hub

ABP Planning Pre-Application Document



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Client

Irish Rail

Document Ref. 23172-TN-010-00 ABP Pre-Application

Document

Project Title Rosslare ORE Hub - Environmental

Management



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Project Title:

Rosslare ORE Hub – Environmental Management

Report Title:

Rosslare ORE Hub

ABP Planning Pre-Application Document

Document Reference:

23172-TN-010-00 ABP Pre-Application Document

Client:

Irish Rail

Ultimate Client:

Irish Rail

Confidentiality

Non Confidential



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1 PROSPECTIVE APPLICANT

1.1 MARITIME AREA CONSENT DETAILS

A Maritime Area Consent (MAC) application was submitted to Maritime Area Regulation Authority (MARA) in December 2023. The application is currently under consideration. A MAC is not required for a port project to engage in pre-planning with An Bord Pleanála (ABP).

1.2 DESIGN TEAM PROPOSED

The larnrod Éireann project team is provided in Table 1-1 and the consultancy design team is provided in Table 1-2:

Senior Management	Role	Technical Project Team	Role	Finance and Commercial Support	Roles
Jim Meade	Chief Executive Officer	David Vaughan	Programme Manager Desigr and Construction	n Dermot Kearney	Commercial Manager
Paul Henrick	Director of Capital Investments	Ray Robinson	Head of Civi and Structura Engineering	Maria	Head of Finance
Ciarán Brown	Assistant Director of Capital Investments	Declan McCabe	M&E Senior Project Manager	r	
		Billy Hoey	Senior Project Manager	t	
		Matthew Greene	Project Manager		
		Michael O'Sullivan	Assistant Project Manager		

Table 1-1 Applicant project team



Name	Role
William Brown (GDG)	Project Manager
Paul Doherty (GDG)	Technical Director
Jim Oliver (NOD)	Project Director
Eoin Carey (GDG)	Design Manager
Diarmuid O'Loan (GDG)	Lead Design Engineer
Neil Skelton (NOD)	Lead Civil / Structural Engineer
Carlos Moreira (GDG)	Lead Marine Engineer
Nikos Zarkadoulas (GDG)	Civil / Structural Engineer
Louise Scally (MERC)	Marine Ecologist
Jeannine Dunne (GDG)	Planning Specialist/Advisor
Anastasios Batilas (GDG)	Lead Geotechnical Engineer
Tomás McGrath (GDG)	Geotechnical Engineer
Joey O'Connor (GDG)	Lead Environmental Scientist
Krista Farrugia (NOD)	Environmental Engineer
Niall Brady (ADCO)	Marine Archaeologist
Eric Brennan (GDG)	Engineering / CAD Technician
Justin Hughes (NOD)	Project Supervisor Design Process
Colin Fulham (GDG)	Commercial Manager / Senior Quantity Surveyor
Michael Reale (NOD)	Senior Resident Engineer
Steven Heaney (GDG)	Resident Engineer
Stiofáin Mac Dáibhéad (GDG)	Stakeholder Liaison Officer
Ronan Kearns (Pinnacle)	Traffic Expert

Table 1-2 Consultancy design team

1.3 Section 287B consultations

No Section 287B consultations have taken place to date.

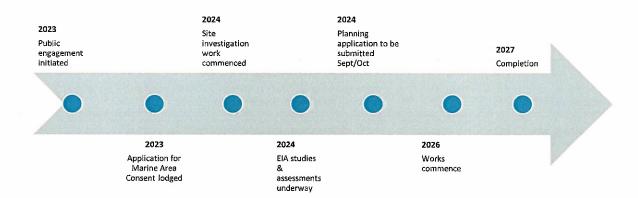


1.4 ANTICIPATED TIMELINES

The project commenced in 2021 and has progressed to site investigation and environmental surveys and public consultation in 2024. Following the completion of surveys and public and wider stakeholder engagement, a finalised project design will be produced, with a planning application intended for submission in September/October 2024.

The proposed development is of a class specified in the Eighth Schedule of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (inserted by section 172 of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021). In addition, as the proposed development is development of a class specified in the Eighth Schedule situated partly on land and partly in the nearshore area of a coastal planning authority, the application will be submitted under the relevant Section of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, inserted by Section 171 of the Map Act 2021, as amended.

Construction is hoped to commence in early 2026, with a construction programme spanning 18-24 months. Project completion is anticipated in 2027.





2 Brief description of proposed development

2.1 Brief Description of SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

larnród Éireann intends to develop port infrastructure within a marine area adjacent to and immediately to the north of the existing Rosslare Europort (Figure 3-1) to support the development of offshore wind farms in the Celtic and Irish Seas.

The total development area, or Project Development Boundary, includes a reclamation area and dredge area and lies largely within the maritime area. Dredging is required to provide material for the reclamation and to create the required channel depth. The proposed reclamation area will provide for circa 21 ha of storage and operational areas. The terrestrial component of the site is comprised of brownfield hard standing areas and a small harbour, all owned by Rosslare Europort.

The Rosslare ORE Hub will deliver an ORE purpose-built quay and berth (with berth pockets dredged down to -12 mCD water depth), ORE quayside storage and pre-construction areas, a navigable channel (dredged down to -10 mCD water depth), a management control centre and management offices and facilities.

The total development area, or Project Development Boundary, includes the reclamation area and the dredge area, and lies largely within the maritime area (Figure 3-2). Dredging is required to provide material for the reclamation and to create the required channel depth.

The primary purpose of the proposed development is to provide a main staging, installation and storage facility for offshore renewable energy projects for the east coast of Ireland and the Celtic Sea, as well as an operations and maintenance facility for the duration of the offshore renewable energy projects. The proposed development may support traditional port operations (e.g. Roll On Roll Off cargo operations) in periods where there is no offshore renewable energy project demand for the development, though the primary use of the facility will be for ORE operations.

Post 2040 the proposed development will continue to provide ORE operations and maintenance facilities and will retain the ability to provide an ORE support infrastructure for major repairs such as blade, tower or nacelle replacement if a catastrophic failure should occur on any turbine, though the primary use from this time may shift to supporting traditional port operations. It must be noted that actual use of the ORE Hub will depend on the ORE developers' demand over time, driven by currently uncertain ORE project and other ORE supporting port development timelines and locations.

Rosslare Europort is in County Wexford, on the south-east coast of Ireland. The existing port facilities, managed by Iarnród Éireann, provide for passenger and freight ferries to and from the United Kingdom and the European Continent. Rosslare is Ireland's second busiest Roll On Roll Off (RORO)/ Roll On Roll Off Passenger (ROPAX) port for freight traffic, after Dublin. Rosslare is Ireland's closest port to mainland Europe.

Rosslare Europort is situated in the Rosslare Municipal District, which is a rural area, characterised by a high-quality agricultural resource, a vibrant fishing sector and an important tourism economy as well as direct access to the UK and Europe through the Rosslare Europort.

Planning permission will be sought for a project design life of 30 years (i.e. from commencement of construction in 2026 until 2056). As it is envisaged that the port facilities developed by the project will be required beyond this time period, it is not considered necessary to plan for demolition and reinstatement works or closure of the ORE Hub once in place.



2.2 RELEVANT COASTAL OR PLANNING AUTHORITIES

The relevant coastal authority for the project is Wexford County Council.

The relevant planning authority for the project is An Bórd Pleanála.

2.3 NUMBER OF TURBINES PROPOSED

Not applicable, project is a port development to support ORE.

2.4 OUTPUT

Not applicable, project is a port development to support ORE.

2.5 HEIGHT OF TURBINES

Not applicable, project is a port development to support ORE.

2.6 LOCATION OF TURBINES AND ANY OTHER KEY INFRASTRUCTURE

Not applicable, project is a port development to support ORE.



3 DRAWINGS



3.1 SITE LOCATION MAP

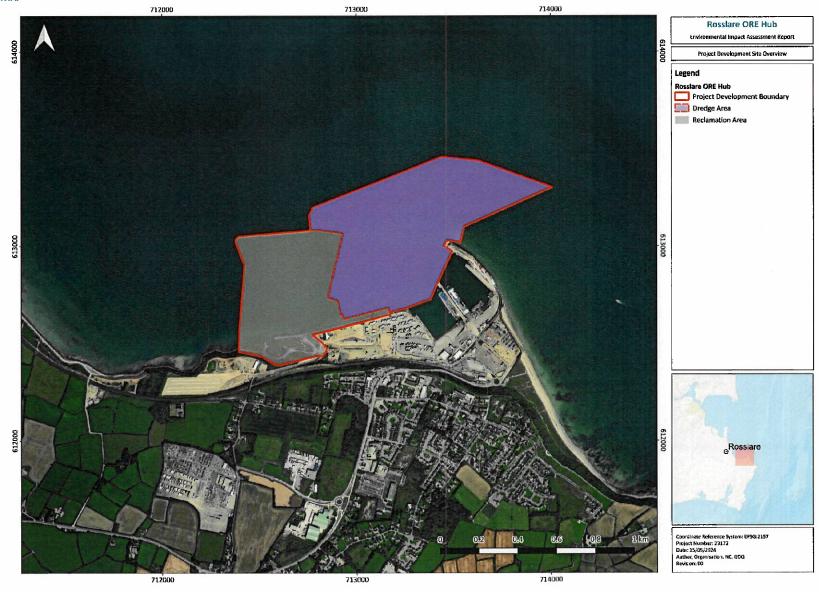


Figure 3-1: Site Location



3.2 SITE LAYOUT

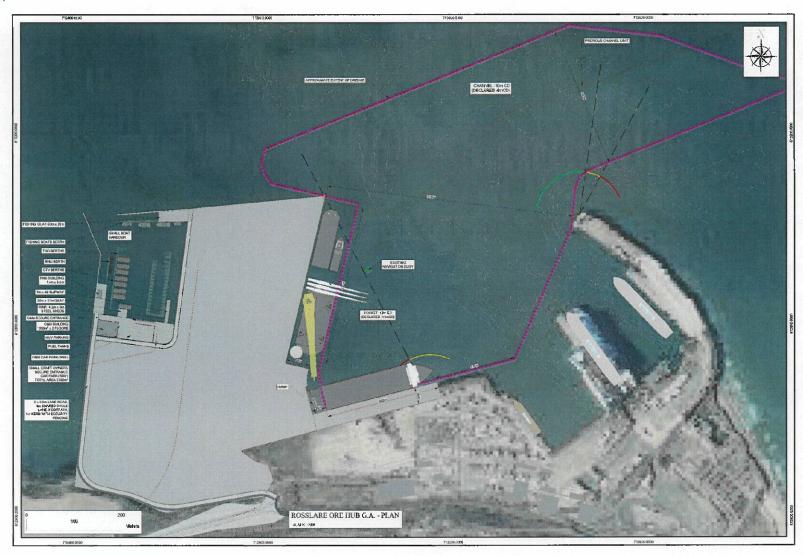


Figure 3-2 Site Layout



3.3 PHOTOMONTAGES



Figure 3-3: Example of operational layout including turbine tower and foundation vessel loading operations quayside (aerial view from land)





Figure 3-4: Example of operational layout including turbine tower and foundation vessel loading operations quayside (aerial view seaward side)





Figure 3-5: Example of operational layout with reference to existing port facilities





Figure 3-6: Example of Monopile and Jacket Foundations onsite for Offshore Wind Turbines



3.4 MAPS OF COASTLINE AND DESIGNATED AREAS

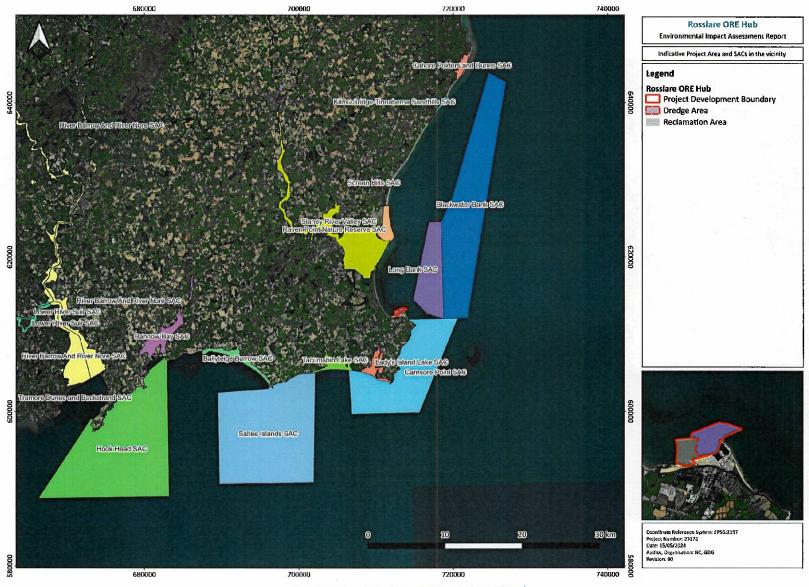


Figure 3-7 Map of coastline and Designated Areas (SACs)



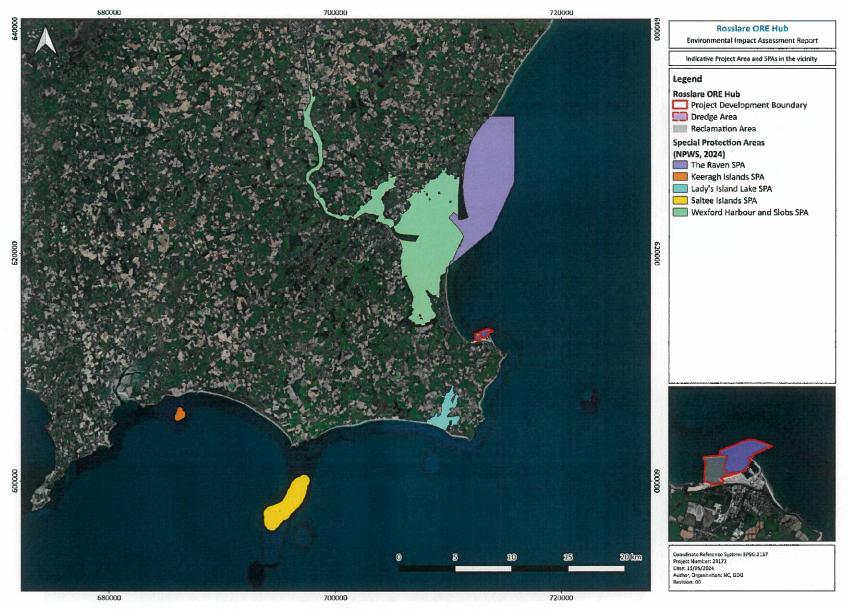


Figure 3-8 Map of coastline and Designated Areas (SPAs)



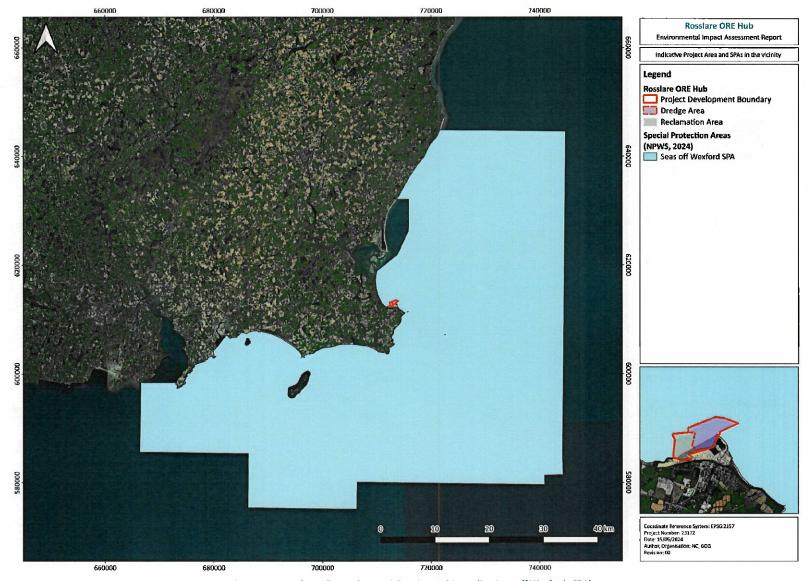


Figure 3-9 Map of coastline and potential Designated Areas (i.e. Seas off Wexford cSPA).

Note while the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage issued a notification under Regulation 15 in January 2024 that he is considering classifying the Seas Off Wexford as a candidate Special Protection Area, a notice of intention to designate the Seas Off Wexford as an cSPA has not been published.



4 ONSHORE DEVELOPMENT

4.1 DETAILS OF DRAWINGS

See Section 3 above.

4.2 PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATIONS HELD AND/OR PROPOSED CONSENTING APPROACH/TIMEFRAME

See Section 6.



5 Brief Policy Context for Proposed Development

As outlined in the Climate Action Plan (DECC, 2019), the Irish government set a target of at least 3.5 GW of offshore renewable wind in operation by 2030. This figure was increase upon the publication of the Programme for Government, in June 2020, which included a target of 5 GW of offshore wind in the Irish and Celtic Seas by 2030, this was then included in the 2021 Climate Action Plan (DECC, 2021), more recently this figure has been increased to an ambitious 7 GW. Despite the ambitious targets, offshore wind remains the only renewable technology capable of being deployed at a suitable scale to meet these targets, thus sufficient facilities and infrastructure needs to be developed to support this sector.

Additional policy measures outlined in the Programme for Government include the intention to ban the sale and importation of both new and second-hand diesel and petrol cars by the year 2030, combined with the gradual phase-out of fossil fuel-based electricity generation in Ireland, the need for offshore wind developments and the associated infrastructures continue to increase. The increasing targets for offshore wind capacity increase the expectations of fixed bottom offshore developments in the Irish and east Celtic Seas, making Rosslare Europort an ideal installation port for such developments.

The need to develop the offshore wind sector in Ireland has gained significant momentum as part of the national effort to reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions by 51% from 2021 to 2030. One of the National Strategic Objectives (NSO 8) set out in the National Development Plan (NDP)¹ is to achieve 5 GW of installed offshore wind generation by 2030, meeting the ambitious goal of up to 80% renewable electricity by 2030.

The Rosslare Europort ORE Hub project is consistent with and supportive of the Irish Government's policy on the facilitation of ORE in Irish ports². This major policy statement provides clarity to ORE operators about the use of Irish ports. It is notable that the statement says the Rosslare Europort ORE Hub project 'can play a significant role.' The policy statement, in turn, positions Ireland as a significant contributor to the EU's strategy on ORE³. Ireland will contribute 5 GW of the EU's target of 60 GW of offshore wind capacity by 2030. There has been extensive engagement with the ORE sector to ascertain their needs. One direct consequence is that the first Offshore Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (ORESS) auction undertaken in Q4/2022 with the results announced 14 June 2023⁴. The successful Phase 1 projects are due to submit planning in June 2024.

Europe now has 25 GW of installed offshore wind capacity in twelve countries⁵. Despite its huge marine area, Ireland has one small (25 MW – seven turbines) offshore wind farm. Unfortunately, Ireland has been lagging in ORE development and is now committed to catching up. The ORE facility at Rosslare Europort will contribute to the reduction of a serious infrastructure deficit in offshore wind farm projects between Ireland and all other EU Member States. The EU's Offshore Renewables Energy Strategy sets out the EU's ambition to build 300 GW of offshore wind by 2050. The Rosslare Europort ORE Hub facility will play a significant part in ensuring Ireland contributes to achieving that target.

¹ National Development Plan 2021-2030, https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/774e2-national-development-plan-2021-2030/

² Department of Transport, <u>Policy Statement on the Facilitation of Offshore Renewable Energy by Commercial Ports in Ireland</u>, December 2021.

³ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, <u>An EU strategy to harness the potential of offshore renewable energy for a climate neutral future</u>, November 2020.

⁴ ORESS 1 Final Auction Results

Offshore Wind in Europe – key trends and statistics 2020



The proposed development at Rosslare will provide a new offshore wind facility to service the burgeoning Irish Sea offshore wind market — helping meet the target of 7GW of offshore wind by 2030. With a substantial amount of offshore wind activity planned in the Irish Sea over the next decade, Rosslare is strategically positioned to provide port infrastructure facilities for these projects when they commence construction.



6 DETAILS OF CONSULTATIONS HELD TO DATE OR SCHEDULED WITH THE PUBLIC, PRESCRIBED BODIES AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT BODIES OR ORGANISATIONS

Consultations undertaken to date include:

- Engagement with Wexford County Council regarding noise and dust monitoring requirements in July 2022
- Engagement with Statutory Stakeholders following issue of EIA Scoping Report in preparation for the Environmental Impact Assessment Report
 - o Commissioner for Irish Lights (03/04/2023)
 - Department of Transport (19/04/2023)
 - o NMS (19/04/2023)
 - o NPWS (informal phone call on 04/09/2023)
- Ongoing engagement with users of the existing small boat harbour via Harbourmaster and larnród Éireann Project Managers
- 'Town hall' events for public in Rosslare Europort (11-12/12/2023)
- First fishing community workshop (01/02/2024)

Planned consultations include:

- Launch of project website (May 2024)
- Consultation with local elected representatives (May 2024)
- Second and third fishing community workshops (May and July 2024)
- 'Town hall' events for public in Rosslare Europort (May 2024)

Dedicated project website in progress, please see https://www.irishrail.ie/en-ie/about-us/iarnrod-eireann-projects-and-investments/rosslare-europort-ore.



7 KEY ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS INCLUDING SCHEDULE 7 A OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS 2001 (AS AMENDED) INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

Key environmental considerations are being considered in an Environmental Impact Assessment Report currently being compiled, which will include a Natura Impact Statement. The Environmental Impact Assessment Report will consider and address all information requirements set out in Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).

Work underway and completed to date includes:

- EIA Screening and EIA Scoping
- At site bird and marine mammal surveys to feed into the relevant EIA Chapters to support the application for planning permission
- Noise and Dust monitoring
- Deployment of metocean equipment to measure current and wave patterns in the area
- Deployment of FPODs and Soundtraps to record marine mammal vocalisations in the area
- Geophysical survey campaign
- · Geotechnical survey campaign
- Benthic ecology sampling
- Water quality sampling
- Terrestrial ecology surveys
- Hydrodynamic modelling
- Underwater noise modelling
- Consultation with fishing community
- Submission of an application for a Maritime Area Consent to the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority

The Project Development Boundary does not overlap with any designated Natura 2000 sites.

The Project Development Boundary does overlap with the published proposed boundary of the Seas Off Wexford cSPA. Note while the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage issued a notification under Regulation 15 in January 2024 that he is considering classifying the Seas Off Wexford as a candidate Special Protection Area, a notice of intention to designate the Seas Off Wexford as an cSPA has not yet been published.

larnród Éireann submitted an observation to NPWS in April 2024 which concluded that available ornithological data does not support the inclusion of the Rosslare Europort ORE Hub Project Development Boundary within the Seas off Wexford cSPA. Supporting documents, including relevant reports and publications and ornithological data cited by National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)



to inform the proposed designation of the Seas off Wexford cSPA and an extensive timeseries of ornithological survey data collected by larnród Éireann for the ORE Hub project between May 2022 and February 2024, were reviewed to inform this submission.



8 ANTICIPATED KEY ACTIVITIES/IN-COMBINATION EFFECTS WITH OTHER EXISTING AND FUTURE USERS OF THE MARITIME AREA

Key construction activities (and potential associated effects) which may interact with other existing users of the maritime area include:

- Dredging (increase in suspended sediment)
- Piling/Drilling/Blasting (increase in underwater noise)
- Reclamation (change to local hydrological and sediment dynamics)
 - A phased approach is anticipated to filling as part of the reclamation, with the south-western section of the reclamation area expected be closed in and filled in last to allow small boat harbour operations to continue until the new small boat harbour is completed. Please note the final construction sequence will be determined by the contractor at the construction stage of the project.
- Increase in construction vessel traffic (disruption to shipping traffic)

Key operational activities (and potential associated effects) which may interact with other existing users of the maritime area include:

- Operation of ORE facility (provision of 21 ha of storage and operational areas and to facilitate construction, operation and maintenance of ORE projects)
- Operation of New Small Boat Harbour (provision of small boat harbour with enhanced facilities to replace Ballygeary Harbour for current users of Ballygeary Harbour)
- Increase in ORE vessel traffic (disruption to shipping traffic)
- Increase in freight vessel traffic from 2040 (disruption to shipping traffic)

It is anticipated that the proposed facility will create up to 350 direct Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) jobs during its construction, estimated to span 18-24 months.

Post-construction, the ORE facility is expected to provide up to 100 jobs at the port to support the installation phases of offshore wind developments in both the Irish and Celtic Seas. Long-term jobs will be created at the ORE Operations and Maintenance facility, which will be in place for the full operation lifetime of the project.

These jobs will benefit existing and future users of the maritime area.



9 DETAILS OF PROPOSED PORT(S) USED FOR TRANSPORT AND/OR CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES (IF KNOWN)

Not applicable, project is a port development to support ORE.



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