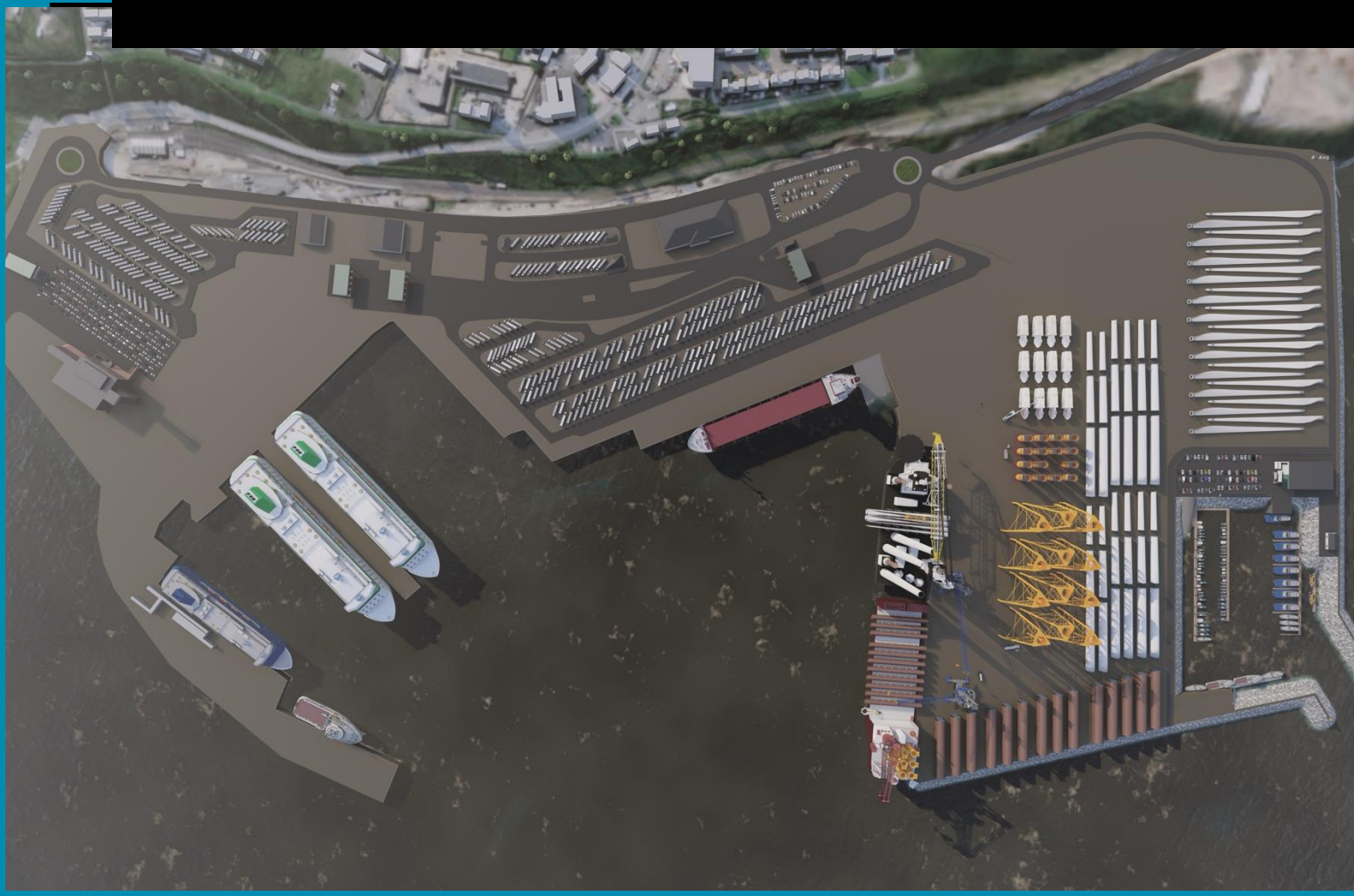
Iarnród Éireann
Irish Rail

Rosslare ORE Hub Project

Planning Report



venterra | GDG GAVIN & DOHERTY GEOSOLUTIONS

NICHOLAS O'DWYER an RSK company

Co-funded by the European Union

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1. ORE Hub Vision for Potential Future Uses

Appendix 2. Copy of submission by Iarnród Éireann – Irish Rail to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) with an observation non the proposal to designate the Seas off Wexford candidate Special Protection Area (cSPA), 9th April 2024

Appendix 3. Copy of submission by Iarnród Éireann – Irish Rail to NPWS with an objection to the classification of the proposed cSPA seeking exclusion of IÉ's Area of Legal Interest from the cSPA boundary, 30th October 2025. A copy of the GIS shape file attached to this submission can be provided on request.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Appropriate Assessment
AASR	Appropriate Assessment Screening Report
BWI	BirdWatch Ireland
CB	Coastal breakwater
CEF	Connecting Europe facility
cSPA	Candidate Special Protection Area
COP	Conference of the Parties
CTV	Crew Transfer Vessels
DMAP	Designated Maritime Area Plan
EC	European Commission
EGD	European Green Deal
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIAR	Environmental Impact Assessment Report
EIASR	Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report
ESPO	European Sea Ports Organisation
EU	European Union
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
GW	Gigawatt
ha	hectares
IROPI	Imperative reasons for overriding public interest
LCoE	Levelized cost of energy
MAC	Maritime Area Consent
MAP	Maritime Area Planning (Act)
MARA	Maritime Area Regulatory Authority
mCD	Metres Chart Datum
MCIB	Marine Casualty Investigation Board
MSO	Marine Survey Office
MW	Megawatt
NDP	National Development Plan
NECP	National Energy and Climate Plan
NIS	Natura Impact Statement
NMPF	National Marine Planning Framework
NMS	National Monuments Service
NPF	National Planning Framework
NPP	National Ports Policy
NPO	National Policy Objectives
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
NSO	National Strategic Outcomes
O&M	Operations and Maintenance
OMPP	Overarching Marine Planning Policies
OPR	Office of the Planning Regulator
ORE	Offshore Renewable Energy
OREDP	Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan
ORESS	Offshore Renewable Electricity Support Scheme

REAR	Rosslare Europort Access Road
RED	Renewable Energy Directive
RFI	Request for Information
RNLI	Royal National Lifeboat Institute
RoPax	Roll-on roll-off (Passenger ferry transport)
RoRo	Roll-on roll-off (freight ferry transport)
RSES	Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SC-DMAP	South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan
SLVIA	Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
SMPP	Sectoral Marine Planning Policies
SPA	Special Protection Area
TEN-T	Trans-European Transport Network
TII	Transport Infrastructure Ireland
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WCC	Wexford County Council
WFD	Water Framework Directive
ZoI	Zone of Influence

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the Author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor any granting authority can be held responsible for them.

1 INTRODUCTION

This Planning Report has been prepared to accompany an application by Iarnród Éireann – Irish Rail (IÉ) to An Coimisiún Pleanála ("the Commission") for a 10-year permission for the Rosslare Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Hub (hereafter the 'Proposed Development') at a site located immediately adjacent and to the northwest of the existing Rosslare Europort at Rosslare Harbour in County Wexford, which is operated by IÉ.

The application for development permission is made under section 291 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 to 2025 (Planning Acts), as inserted by section 171 of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 (S.I. No. 488 of 2022), as amended (MAP Act). The application follows the granting of a Maritime Area Consent (MAC) by the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) on 2nd July 2025 (Ref: 20230005).

1.1 PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

This Planning Report outlines the applicable legislation and planning policy context and summarises the proposed development, along with a description of the application site and project evolution. It is intended to assist the Commission make a decision on the application for development permission.

The Planning Report is structured as follows:

Section 1: Introduction	Purpose and structure of the report, applicant details, the contents of the application, need for the project, and how the Proposed Development relates to the Strategic Vision for Rosslare Europort
Section 2: Key Consenting Legislation	Identifies the key planning and development legislation related to an application which concerns lands within the maritime area and govern the making of the application for development permission, and the EU directives which are relevant to the Proposed Development
Section 3: Stakeholder Consultations	Summary of stakeholder engagement and consultations undertaken in relation to design, during preparation of the EIA Report and in relation to the permission application for the Proposed Development
Section 4: Site Location and Context	Description of the site and its current operations as well as any relevant environmental, historical and cultural designations
Section 5: The Proposed Development	A summary description of the Proposed Development that includes the key components, the table of areas, and pertinent details as relates to its construction and operation
Section 6: Planning Policy Context	Description of relevant local, regional, national and European planning policy and guidelines
Section 7: Planning Appraisal	Justification and scope of the proposed development, description of alternative solutions, environmental and community impact, sustainability considerations
Section 8: Conclusions	Conclusions reached through the planning appraisal

1.2 THE APPLICANT

The details of the applicant are:

Registered name: Iarnród Éireann – Irish Rail

Registered address:
Connolly Station
Dublin 1
Dublin
D01 V6V6
Ireland

Company directors:
Steve Murphy
Suzy Byrne
James Doran
Thilde Restofte Pedersen
Sarah Roarty
Tommy Wynne
Gwendoline Cazenave
Pat O'Donoghue
John McDonnell

Company registration number: 119571

1.3 THE APPLICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT PERMISSION

The application for development permission is accompanied by the application documentation listed in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Permission application documentation

Section	Report / Document Title
Application Documents	Application cover letter
	Completed Maritime Area Planning Application form
	Copy of Maritime Area Consent
	Application payment receipt
	GIS files of the Planning Development Boundary
	Copies of the published newspaper notices
	Copy of the Site Notices as erected
	EIA Portal acknowledgement
	Schedule of prescribed bodies and the notice notifying them of the application
	Notification to the Coastal Planning Authority Wexford County Council of the making of the application
	Record of consultations conducted in respect of the application
	Drawing Schedule

Section	Report / Document Title
	An Bord Pleanála notification to formally close the pre-application procedure
	Rehabilitation Schedule
	Uisce Éireann Confirmation of Feasibility of water and wastewater connection
	Planning Report (with Appendices)
Supporting Documents	EIA Scoping Report (screening statement appended)
	outline Construction Environmental Management Plan
	Road Safety Audit (with Designer's Response)
Appropriate Assessment Reporting	Appropriate Assessment Screening Report
	Natura Impact Statement
Water Framework Directive Report	Water Framework Directive Compliance Assessment
Environmental Impact Assessment Report	Volume 1: Non-Technical Summary
	Volume 2: Introductory, Environmental Topic, and Concluding chapters
	Volume 3: Technical Appendices
Application Drawings	Refer to Drawing Schedule submitted with the Application Documents

The application documentation may be viewed or downloaded on the following website: www.rosslareorehub.ie.

1.4 SITE LOCATION

The Proposed Development is located in a site immediately adjacent to Rosslare Europort, which is situated on the southeastern coast of Ireland in County Wexford. The Proposed Development Boundary (PDB) (i.e., the area where planning permission is sought to construct and operate the Proposed Development) encompasses a total area of 80.3 hectares, lying mostly within the maritime area, comprising 48.4 hectares of capital dredging area, 27.7 hectares of reclamation from the sea, and 4.2 hectares of terrestrial reclamation and existing land area. The site location and PDB outlined in red are shown on Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1: Site location and Proposed Development Boundary

1.5 NEED FOR THE PROJECT

There are currently five applications for consent for offshore wind farms in the Irish Sea (Ireland's east coast) targeting for deployment by 2030. Further developments are planned for the Celtic Sea (Ireland's south coast) under the South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan. As displayed in Figure 1.2, Rosslare Europort is strategically positioned at the southern end of the Irish Sea, offering direct maritime access to key offshore wind development zones in the Celtic Sea and Irish Sea.

Offshore wind farms being progressed in Ireland are proposed in direct response to Ireland's Climate Action Plan 2025 target to have 5 Gigawatts (GW) of offshore wind operational by 2030, with further aims of 20GW by 2040 and 37GW by 2050 as set out in the *Future Framework for Offshore Renewable Energy* (Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment, 2024). In 2021, the Minister for Transport undertook an assessment of the options for Irish State ports to facilitate the ORE sector, and published its *Policy Statement on the facilitation of Offshore Renewable Energy by Commercial Ports in Ireland* (Department of Transport, 2021) wherein it is stated that a multiport approach will be required to address the needs of the ORE industry, to deliver on the ORE targets set out in national policy, and to take advantage of the economic opportunity created by the roll out of fixed and floating offshore wind in Irish waters which is identified in *Powering Prosperity Ireland's Offshore Wind Industrial Strategy* (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2024).

The proposed ORE Hub is in a prime location relative to the offshore wind farm projects currently in the pipeline and planned for the future. The ORE Hub can serve as the primary port in Ireland for storage, marshalling, staging and integration of ORE components, and is perfectly placed to support an entire ORE project from construction through to operation and maintenance.

By providing the facility to enable offshore wind development in the Irish Sea and Celtic Sea, the Proposed Development will support the construction of offshore renewable energy projects which will themselves contribute to achievement of the climate action objectives and energy security. The proposed Rosslare ORE Hub is therefore considered urgent and in the public interest.

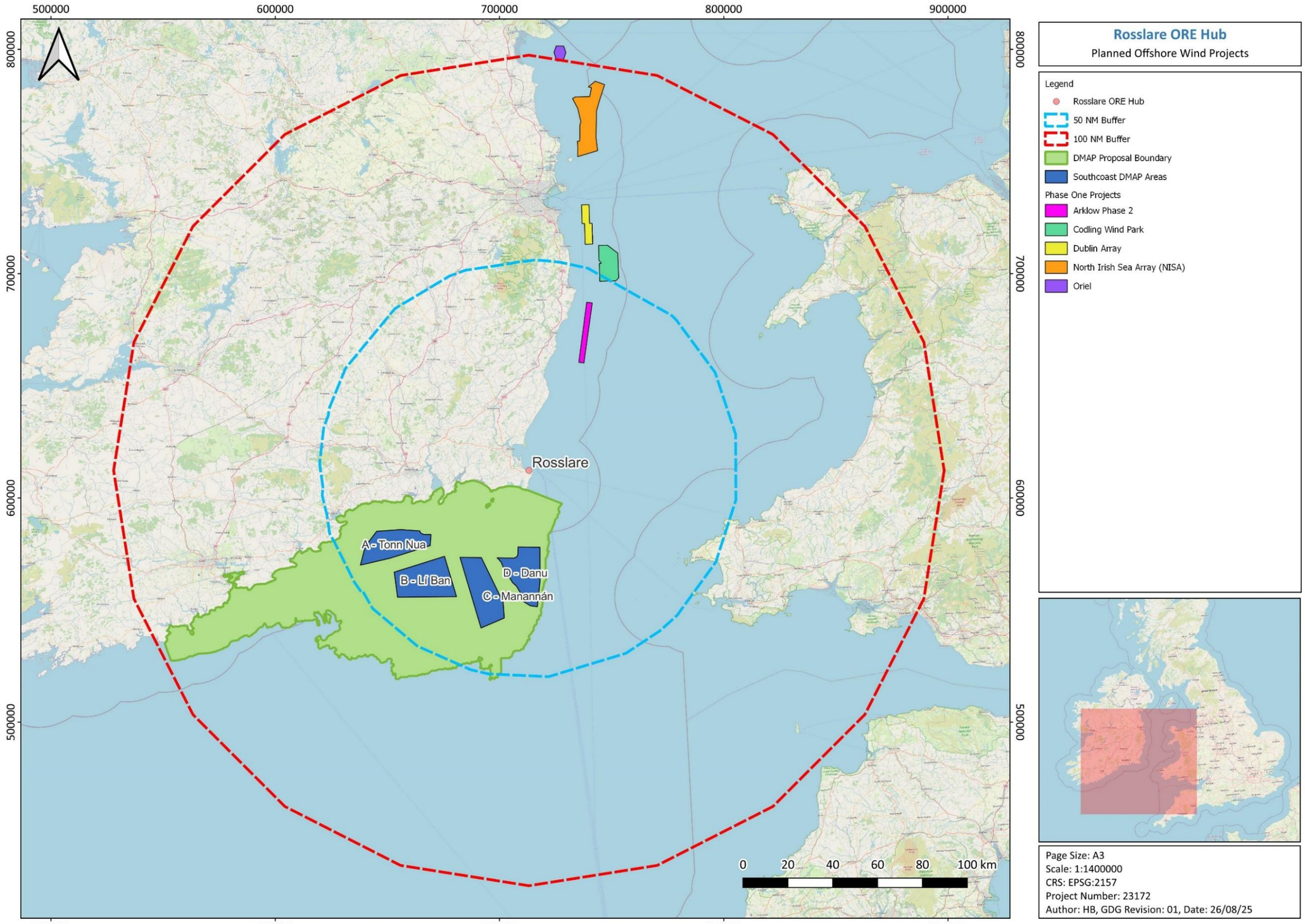


Figure 1.2: Planned offshore wind developments and Designated Maritime Area Plan for ORE in vicinity of proposed Rosslare ORE Hub

1.6 STRATEGIC VISION FOR ROSSLARE EUROPORT

The proposal to develop an Infrastructure Masterplan for Rosslare was part of the Strategic Plan for Rosslare port, dating back to October 2018. The Strategic Plan identified a number of issues to be addressed at Rosslare Europort including

- Improvements in operational efficiencies and investment, giving staggered revenue growth reaching 20% by 2025, as a reasonable growth target
- An IT upgrade, to increase operational efficiency
- Combine Berths 3 & 4 and add a double deck linkspan
- To reconfigure the port infrastructure.

There were also proposals which required consideration for the alteration and upgrade at the port, such as:

- New Customs & Immigration facilities and a Border Inspection Post
- New N25 Rosslare Europort Access Road.

The Strategic Plan for Rosslare Europort also looked well into the future, and envisaged infrastructure developments and opportunities for future development of the port which included:

- Capital dredging and reclamation
- New berth development
- Offshore wind energy development.

Arising from the 2018 Strategic Plan, an Infrastructure Masterplan was developed in 2020 to address the requirements for efficiency, the imminent developments in the wider area, and the potential expansion of the port in the future. The Infrastructure Masterplan outlined how the port could expand; it addressed some of the inefficiencies and set out a phased approach to development that balanced maintaining operations at the port whilst working to realise a future vision for the port. As of October 2025, the Infrastructure Masterplan has been fully realised with implementation of Phases 1 to 4 of the Masterplan and construction of a new Border Control Post.

The proposed ORE Hub is the next iteration of the Strategic Vision for Rosslare Europort which will secure a sustainable future for the port over the next 50 years and beyond. The Strategic Vision is displayed in the drawing titled “ORE Hub Vision for Potential Future Uses” contained in **Appendix 1** to this Planning Report. This drawing identifies areas within the existing and expanded port for potential future developments and future uses, which include:

- Future uses of the Proposed Development:
    - potential future rail freight link to the ORE Hub
    - traditional port activities, including Roll-on Roll-off (RoRo) function and bulk storage, at the ORE Storage Area and at the ORE berths with potential future addition of linkspans and Lift-on Lift-off (LoLo) function

- Operations & Maintenance (O&M) facilities and a new RNLI base at the new Small Boat Harbour

- Future developments:
  - the Rosslare Europort REAR Road fully constructed (indicated in green)
  - upgraded Berth 3, and upgraded RoRo Linkspan

The drawing in Appendix 1 also includes areas such as the Small Boat Harbour and Sea Scouts facility, where the proposed use will continue unchanged, after the ORE activities have ended.

2 KEY CONSENTING LEGISLATION

2.1 MARITIME AREA CONSENT

Under the MAP Act, IÉ are required to obtain a MAC from MARA prior to applying for development permission for the Proposed Development. The MAC was granted on 2nd July 2025 (Ref.: MAC20230005) for the permitted maritime usage of "*the construction, use, operation and maintenance of port facilities and a small boat harbour, including all associated decommissioning, demolition, rehabilitation and any other works required on foot of any development permission relating to the port facilities".* A copy of the MAC is submitted with the application documentation.

Two of the MAC conditions relate to this application for development permission.

- **Clause 5.1.** "*The Holder shall submit an application for Development Permission relating to the Permitted Maritime Usage the subject of this Consent on or before the date set out in the Particulars Schedule. This date may be extended on request in writing by the Holder and provided the Grantor is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for doing so and the extension does not constitute a material amendment to this Consent. The application for Development Permission shall have attached to it a Rehabilitation Schedule, within the meaning of section 95 of the Act*."

  IÉ must submit an application for development permission no later than 18 months following the commencement date of the MAC (i.e., by 1st January 2027).

- **Clause 19.1**. "*The Holder shall before the expiration of this Consent, rehabilitate the Consent Area, and any other part of the maritime area, adversely affected by the Permitted Maritime Usage in accordance with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Schedule to be attached to this Consent following the grant of Development Permission (as may be amended in accordance with the requirements of this Consent)."*

  The EIAR considers a project design life for the quay structures and marine works of 50 years from completion of construction. All port facilities developed for the ORE Hub will be retained and required by Iarnród Éireann – Irish Rail for ORE, traditional port activities[1] and community use beyond this time period (with ongoing maintenance and repairs undertaken). Therefore, it is not considered necessary to plan for decommissioning and reinstatement works or for closure of the quays, storage areas, new Small Boat Harbour or parts of the ORE Hub once they are in-place. A Rehabilitation Schedule is provided with the application documentation.

The outline of the MAC Area, as certified by MARA as granted under MAC20230005, is shown in Figure 2.1. The MAC relates to the maritime area only whilst the Proposed Development Boundary shown in red outline on Figure 1.1 encompasses the maritime and land areas to which the application for development permission relates.

[1] Traditional port activities as defined in the Rosslare Europort Masterplan (March 2020) are roll-on/roll-off (RoRo) and passenger ferry services (RoPax); storage and movement of trade cars and trailers; freight and passenger check-in operations; Customs and Immigration processing; marine services such as berthing, mooring and vessel turnaround; and some bulk cargo handling.

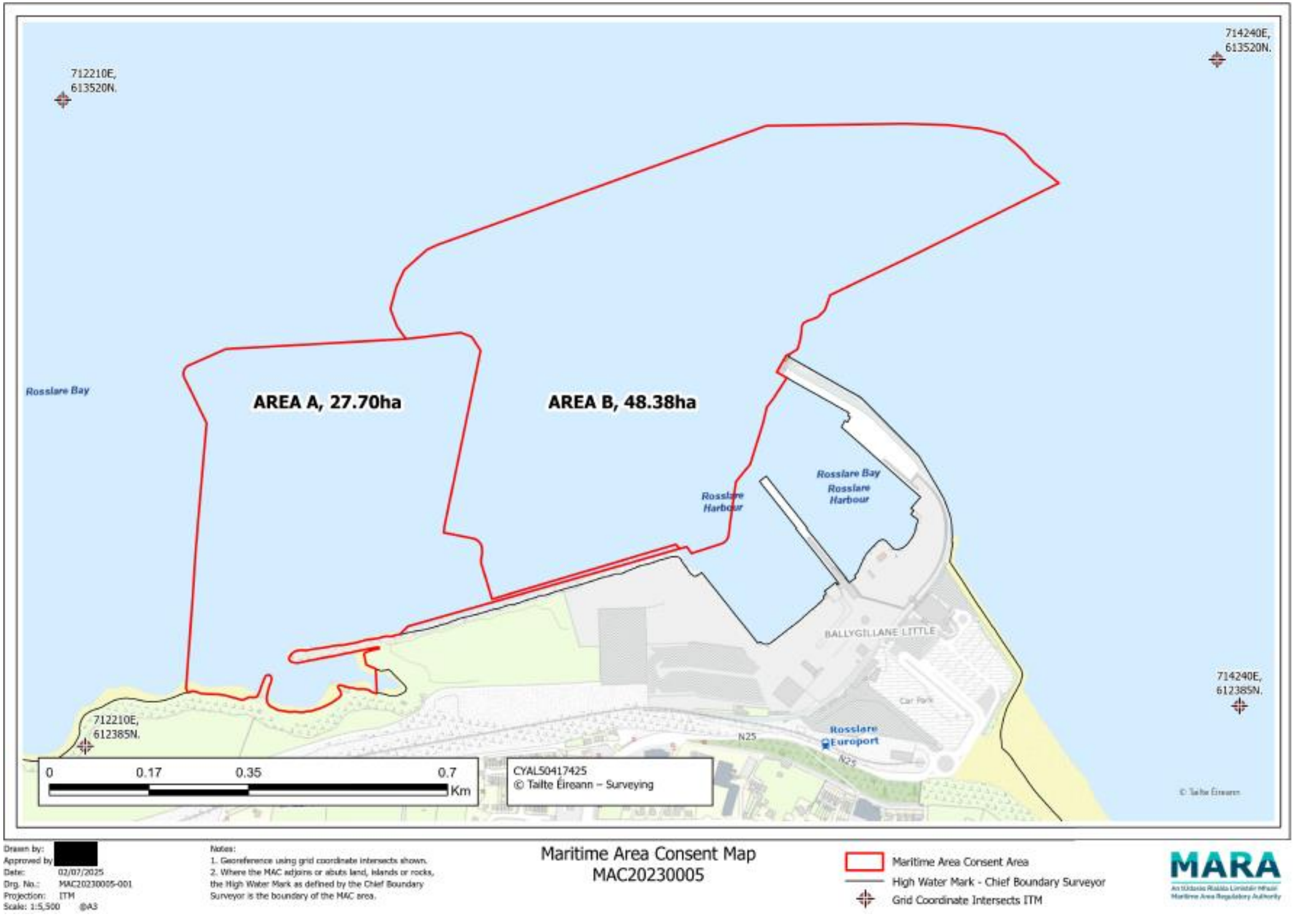


Figure 2.1: MAC20230005 Maritime Area Consent boundary as certified by MARA

2.2 MARITIME AREA PLANNING ACT

The application for development permission is submitted to the Commission under Part XXI, Chapter III, section 291 of the Planning Acts as inserted by section 171 of the MAP Act.

The Proposed Development meets or exceeds the threshold for a number of classes of development listed under the Eighth Schedule of the Planning Acts and therefore is a class of development specified for purposes of Chapter III of Part XXI as follows:

- Paragraph 1 of the Eighth Schedule states:

  "1. Development referred to in the Seventh Schedule."

  - Paragraph 2 of the Seventh Schedule reads:

    "Transport Infrastructure

    2 - Development comprising or for the purposes of any of the following:

    …

    —A harbour or port installation …—

    (a) where the area or additional area of water enclosed would be 20 hectares or more, or

    (b) which would involve the reclamation of 5 hectares or more of land, or

    (c) which would involve the construction of one or more quays which or each of which would exceed 100 metres in length, or

    (d) which would enable a vessel of over 1350 tonnes to enter within it."

- Paragraph 2 of the Eighth Schedule states:

  "2. Development consisting of a trading port or pier for loading and unloading goods that—

  (a) is connected to land, and

  (b) can accommodate vessels of over 1,350 tonnes".

- Paragraph 8 of the Eighth Schedule states:

  "10. Development consisting of the reclamation of not less than 10 hectares of land from the sea."

- Paragraph 21 of the Eighth Schedule states:

  "21. A harbour or port installation, including—

(a) loading or unloading areas

(b) vehicle queuing and parking areas,

(d) areas for berthing … of ships, and

(e) areas for the weighing, handling or transport of goods…, and any associated offices or other similar facilities that would—

(i) result in the enclosed area of water in the harbour or port installation being not less than 20 hectares,

(ii) involve the reclamation of an area of land of not less than 5 hectares,

(iii) involve the construction of a quay greater than 100 metres in length, or

(iv) be capable of admitting a vessel of more than 1,350 tonnes."

As the Proposed Development is development of the above classes of the Eighth Schedule and is situated partly on land and partly in the nearshore area of a coastal planning authority, Wexford County Council, the application for development permission is submitted to the statutory planning authority, in this case An Coimisiún Pleanála.

2.3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

2.3.1 EIA SCREENING

An EIA Screening statement was prepared in June 2022 in accordance with the following guidance:

1. *Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment*, from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (2018)
2. Practice Note PN02 *Environmental Impact Assessment Screening*, Office of the Planning Regulator (2021)
3. *Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects, Guidance on Screening* (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU), from the European Commission (2017)

The EIA Screening statement identified that, as the Proposed Development is of a class listed under Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended[2], it is subject to mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment and therefore requires an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) to be prepared and submitted with the application for development permission.

2.3.2 EIA SCOPING

The scope of the EIAR was confirmed through consultation by the EIA project team with topic relevant stakeholders by issue of an EIA Scoping Report in February 2023. The EIA Scoping Report contained the information specified in article 95 (b) and (c) of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 as amended.

[2] Schedule 5 Part 1 8 (b): Trading ports, piers for loading and unloading connected to land and outside ports (excluding ferry piers) which can take vessels of over 1,350 tonnes.

The EIA Scoping Report was sent to the following topic relevant stakeholders:

- Bord Iascaigh Mara
- Commissioners of Irish Lights
- Department of Transport Marine Survey Office
- Inland Fisheries Ireland
- Irish Coast Guard
- Marine Institute
- National Monuments Service Underwater Archaeological Unit
- National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)
- Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) Wexford
- Sea Fisheries Protection Authority
- Wexford County Council.

The above consultees were asked to provide a written response. However, no responses to EIA scoping were received. In lieu of a written response, meetings were held with key stakeholders as a follow up to EIA scoping. The issues raised in the consultations and the actions taken by the EIA project team in relation to project design and preparation of the EIAR are set out in Table 2.1Table 2.1. Further detail on the scope of the EIAR is provided in EIAR Chapter 4: Scoping and Consultation and the environmental topic chapters.

Table 2.1: Scoping consultation meetings with key stakeholders - key comments, responses and outcomes

Consultee meeting date	Key comments made during scoping consultations	Response	Outcome
Commissioners of Irish Lights (CIL) / 3rd April 2023	CIL asked project team to consider adding sector light on NE corner of reclaimed land for safety and marking approach	Consideration of adding sector light to NE corner of reclamation area scoped into EIAR.	Provision of sector light on NE corner of reclamation discussed further with relevant stakeholders during Hazards Workshop (see EIAR Volume 3, Technical Appendix 20: Shipping and Navigation). Introducing leading lights installed on the reclaimed area of the Proposed Development, aligned with the dredged area, was discussed with consultees including the Irish Lights, Harbourmaster, Stena Lines, Irish Ferries, (Det Forenede Dampskibs-Selskab) (DFDS) and Finnlines. These consultees agreed that these would offer little benefit and may confuse other vessels operating further offshore.
Department of Transport Marine Survey Office (MSO) / 19th April 2023	MSO note there can be a discrepancy between the Automatic Identification System (AIS) results and incidents information where local small fishing vessels are not included in AIS data but are included in incident information. MSO noted VTSmay be needed to ensure safety of navigation	Consideration of discrepancy between the AIS results and incidents information and of Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) requirement scoped into EIAR.	Incident analysis into the type and frequency of incidents in and around Rosslare Europort was carried out for Chapter 20: Shipping and Navigation using data sourced from RNLI (2008-2023), Marine Casualty Investigation Board (1992-2023) and directly from Harbour Master reports (2015-2022). Chapter 20: Shipping and Navigation states that the Harbourmaster will engage with the MSO to review and update (where necessary) the Local Positioning System (LPS) manual prior to Operational phase of Proposed Development. Note this engagement will determine whether VTS is required to ensure safety of navigation.
National Monuments Service Underwater Archaeological Unit (NMS) / 19th April 2023	NMS confirmed an EIAR marine archaeology chapter is sufficient for underwater archaeology risk assessment, advised archaeologist should liaise with geophysical	EIAR marine archaeology chapter scoped into EIAR, project archaeologist to provide toolbox talk to project geophysical surveyors prior to surveys	Project archaeologist provided toolbox talk to project geophysical surveyors prior to surveys being undertaken to ensure surveys fit for purpose for archaeology. Chapter 16: Cultural Heritage addresses marine archaeology and provides summary of marine surveys

Consultee meeting date	Key comments made during scoping consultations	Response	Outcome
	survey provider to ensure surveys are fit for purpose	being undertaken to ensure surveys fit for purpose for archaeology.	which informed archaeology baseline, including geophysical survey.
National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) / 4th September 2023	National Parks and Widlife Service (NPWS) advised marine mammal Vantage Point surveys at the project site should be undertaken for 24 months. NPWS advised a sufficient number and coverage of grab samples be taken as part of the benthic ecology survey to robustly characterise the benthic infaunal communities present.	Consideration given to extending temporal coverage of marine mammal surveys and to ensuring sufficient number and coverage of grab samples collected at project site to robustly characterise the benthic infaunal communities present.	As described in Chapter 13: Marine Mammal Ecology, marine mammal vantage point surveys extended in September 2023 to provide 24 months spatial coverage (from 12 months). As described in Chapter 11: Benthic Ecology, benthic ecology survey designed to ensure sufficient number and coverage of grab samples taken to robustly characterise the benthic infaunal communities present.

2.3.3 THE EIA REPORT

An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) has been prepared in respect of the Proposed Development following the Environmental Protection Agency's "*Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports*" (EPA, 2022). The EIAR serves to ensure that the likely significant effects on the environment of the Proposed Development are thoroughly evaluated prior to the granting of consent. The EIAR submitted with the application contains all information stipulated in Article 5(1) and Annex IV of the amended EIA Directive, as incorporated into national law under Schedule 6 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.

Article 5(3)(a) of the amended EIA Directive states that *"the developer shall ensure that the environmental impact assessment report is prepared by competent experts".* The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) *Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports* (2022) highlight the need for competent experts to be involved in the EIA process and in the preparation of the EIAR. Accordingly, a team of specialist consultants, headed by highly qualified environmental consultants and EIA practitioners has prepared the EIAR on behalf of IÉ. The Project Team responsible for authoring the introductory and concluding chapters and co-ordination of the EIAR, and lead authors of the EIAR technical chapters are identified in EIAR Chapter 1: Introduction and Methodology.

The EIAR which is submitted with the application for development permission has been prepared to assist the Competent Authority, in this case An Coimisiún Pleanála, to conduct an EIA in respect of the Proposed Development and to support the decision-making process on the application for development permission.

2.4 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

The Habitats and Birds Directives (Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC) form the cornerstone of European Union (EU) nature conservation legislation which provides protection to habitats and species of European importance in a network of sites known as Natura 2000 sites. These include Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPA) designated under the Birds Directive. Irish legislation includes candidate SACs and candidate SPAs in the definition of "*European sites*", providing these sites with the same level of protection as those which have completed the formal designation process.

The Habitats Directive establishes that any plan or project which is not directly related to, or necessary for, the management of a protected site—yet is likely to have a significant effect on the conservation objectives of a European site—must be subject to an appropriate assessment. This assessment is required to determine the implications of the proposed plan or project for the site, specifically in relation to its conservation objectives. The Competent Authority shall grant development consent only after having determined that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site concerned.

To support the Competent Authority in conducting an appropriate assessment of the Proposed Development, an Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report and a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) are submitted with the application for development permission.

2.5 WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE ASSESSMENT

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) was signed into law in October 2000. It requires EU member States to achieve at least "*Good*" ecological status in water bodies (i.e., rivers, lakes, groundwater, estuaries and coastal waters), by 2027 at the latest. The WFD places an onus on member states to ensure that water quality is protected. Decline in water quality should not be allowed to occur, and water quality should be restored where necessary to reach these environmental objectives.

The WFD requires for projects that may impact water bodies to undergo an assessment to determine if they will cause a deterioration in the ecological status of a surface or groundwater body or jeopardise the attainment of "*Good"* status. The assessment must identify potentially impacted water bodies, evaluate potential impacts, and propose mitigation measures to prevent or minimise negative effects. If a deterioration is unavoidable, a derogation under Article 4(7) of the WFD must be granted to allow the project to proceed.

To ensure that the Proposed Development complies with the requirements of the WFD and to facilitate the Commission in carrying out the necessary assessments under the WFD, a WFD Compliance Assessment has been prepared and is submitted with the application for development permission.

2.6 FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

The principal EU legislation relevant to flood risk is the EU Floods Directive (2007/60/EC) (Directive on the Assessment and Management of Flood Risks) which seeks to reduce and manage the risks that floods pose to human health, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity. The Floods Directive also sets out the framework for the assessment and management of flood risks and the specific obligations each member state must implement. These include:

- Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) to identify areas of potentially significant flood risk based on available or readily derivable information
- Flood hazard and risk maps for the areas identified under the PFRA
- Flood Risk Management Plans at a catchment or river basin scale, setting out measures aimed at achieving objectives for the management of flood risks within the areas identified under the PFRA.

The flood risk associated with the Proposed Development has been assessed in accordance with the procedure outlined in '*The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities'* (Department of Environment, Heritage and local Government, 2009), and is described in EIAR Chapter 9: Water Quality and Flood Risk.

3 STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

3.1 PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

A comprehensive programme of stakeholder engagement was undertaken for the Proposed Development which included the following:

- Engagement with Wexford County Council to inform the noise and dust monitoring programme
- Project launch held at Rosslare Europort, and Public information days held at Rosslare Europort at different design stages
- Online information sessions for elected representatives and the Local Authority
- Focused engagement with specific stakeholder groups
- Direct engagement with statutory and non-statutory bodies

In addition, the Project Team had a pre-application consultation meeting with An Bord Pleanála (now An Coimisiún Pleanála) on 24th July 2024. An Bord Pleanála subsequently wrote to inform the Project Team that pre-application consultations were concluded and provided a list of prescribed bodies to be notified following submission of the application for development permission. The letter from An Bord Pleanála to the Project Team dated 28th November 2024 is submitted with the application documentation.

An extensive programme of engagement with the local community was undertaken between December 2023 and December 2024 in line with the principle of early public participation under the Aarhus Convention and the EIA Directive (2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU). The purpose of the engagement was to seek the views of the wider public on the Proposed Development, to gather information pertinent to the preparation of the EIAR, and to get feedback on the proposals and design.

In all consultations, the response to the proposals in the ORE Hub has been positive. All submissions and comments made by stakeholders, including the public, have been fully considered by the Project Team in the design of the Proposed Development and in the preparation of the EIAR and application for development permission.

Full details of Scoping and Consultation undertaken to support project design and the EIAR is provided in EIAR Chapter 4: Scoping and Consultation. A summary of engagement across the various stakeholders and stakeholder groups is provided in Table 3.1Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Pre-application consultation: key comments and responses

Key comments	Response
An Bord Pleanála	
To ensure proper planning and sustainable development, proposed development consent application needs to consider:	
National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF), and in particular the need to clearly indicate project compliance with NMPF policies and objectives	Considered in EIAR Chapter 2: Legislation and Policy Context
Policy context surrounding proposal ranging from strategic to local, including the Regional Spatial Economic Strategy for the Southern Region and the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028. Documentation needs to be robust in its assessment against national and local policy and use of best available scientific data	Considered in EIAR Chapter 2: Legislation and Policy Context
Public consultation process, including with prescribed bodies such as NPWS	Considered in this chapter and topic specific chapters as relevant
Potential impact on birds and extent of survey area, using most up to date data and impact from construction and operation noise	Considered in EIAR Chapter 14: Ornithology and the Appropriate Assessment reporting
Potential impact on migratory and/or mobile species, including marine mammals	Considered in EIAR Chapter 13: Marine Mammal Ecology and the Appropriate Assessment reporting
Potential impact on hydrodynamic, wave patterns and coastal processes (including patterns of erosion and deposition along the coastline)	Considered in EIAR Chapter 8: Coastal Processes
Potential impacts on seabed and benthic communities	Considered in EIAR Chapter 11: Benthic Ecology and the Appropriate Assessment reporting
Potential impacts on fisheries, shipping and navigation, cultural heritage, air quality and noise, landscape and visual and cumulative impacts	Considered in EIAR Chapter 12: Fish Ecology, Chapter 15: Commercial Fisheries, Chapter 16: Cultural Heritage, Chapter 18: Air Quality, Chapter 19: Airborne Noise and Vibration Chapter 20: Shipping and Navigation, Chapter 23: Landscape and Visual and Chapter 25: Interactions and the Appropriate Assessment reporting respectively
Potential impacts from construction and operational phases- Construction impacts include inter alia: Dredging (increase in suspended sediment); piling/drilling/blasting (increase in underwater noise);	Considered in EIAR chapters as relevant. Increase in freight vessel traffic from 2040 (disruption to shipping traffic) is not relevant to this application.

Key comments	Response
Reclamation (change to local hydrological and sediment dynamics); Increase in construction vessel traffic (disruption to shipping traffic). Operational impacts include inter alia: operation of ORE facility (provision of storage and operational areas to facilitate ORE projects); Operation of new Small Boat Harbour (provision of small boat harbour with enhanced facilities for current users); Increase in ORE vessel traffic (disruption to shipping traffic); Increase in freight vessel traffic from 2040 (disruption to shipping traffic)	
Survey work- methodologies adopted, modelling assumptions and any data gaps clearly set out	Considered in EIAR Volume 3: Technical Appendices and summarised in topic specific chapters as relevant
Potential impacts on terrestrial habitats and species	Considered in EIAR Chapter 10: Terrestrial Ecology and the Appropriate Assessment reporting
Potential impacts on traffic and traffic management given other developments in the area, specifically the permitted access road	Considered in EIAR Chapter 17: Traffic and Road Transport and Chapter 25: Interactions
Designated sites and habitats- consideration of Zone of Influence, noting extent of zone of influence can be large given mobility of species, and noting proximity to Seas off Wexford cSPA and recent additions to SACs in the area	Considered in the Appropriate Assessment reporting
Consideration of carbon sequestration and consideration of destination of any removed material (including any EPA Licence requirements)	Considered in EIAR Chapter 5: Consideration of Alternatives and Project Design, Chapter 6: Project Description and Chapter 24: Climate
Important that EIAR includes robust impact assessments, setting out of methodology, most up to date data, source of survey data, dates of surveys etc and identify areas of uncertainty	Robust impact assessments completed with methodology set out in EIAR Chapter 1: Introduction and Methodology and each topic specific chapter. Most up to date data have been used with sources of survey data, dates of surveys and all other relevant information provided in Technical Appendices contained in EIAR Volume 3 and summarised in EIAR chapters as relevant. Areas of uncertainty clearly outlined in Data Limitations section of each topic specific EIAR chapter.
It is advised to submit a Natura Impact Assessment Report with the proposed application	A Natura Impact Statement has been completed and submitted with the proposed application.

Key comments	Response
Wexford County Council	
The Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane Settlement Plan (Volume 3 of Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028) recognises the need to improve the public realm and visual amenities of the settlement to encourage visitors to spend time there, and also to give a positive introduction to our county for those arriving at the Europort. Objective RHK 46 states that it is an objective of the Council "To encourage and facilitate improvements to the built environment and public realm in and surrounding the Europort in order to create a positive, attractive gateway to the county and region subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria." The planning application to An Bord Pleanála should factor in these requirements.	Details of Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028 are considered in context of Proposed Development in EIAR Chapter 2: Legislation and Policy Context with visual amenity considered in Chapter 23: Seascape / Landscape and Visual Assessment. Compliance with the Habitats Directive is addressed in EIAR Chapter 2: Legislation and Policy Context and the Appropriate Assessment reporting.
ABP may attach a condition requiring, in whole or in part, (i) the construction of the financing of a facility, or (ii) the provision of the financing of the provision of a service, in the area in which the proposed development would be situated, being a facility or service that, in the opinion of the Board would constitute a substantial gain to the community. WCC would encourage Rosslare Europort to work with the local community in this regard.	Details of how the Applicant will work with local community in circumstance of such condition is outlined in the Planning Report
NPWS	
NPWS advised Project Team to clarify source of imported material for infilling Reclamation Area	Delivery routes of imported material for infilling the Land Reclamation Area are provided in EIAR Chapter 6: Project Description. Exact sources of

Key comments	Response
	materials are subject to confirmation by the Contractor at detailed design stage.
NPWS advised Project Team to clearly define construction sequencing to avoid any uncertainties or gaps in impact assessment.	Details of construction sequencing are provided in EIAR Chapter 6: Project Description
NPWS advised Project Team to consider potential disturbance to birds such as Common Scoter and Red Throated Diver due to increased vessel traffic from construction and increased vessel activity from small boat harbour and potential cumulative impacts in combination with existing fishing vessel activities. Project Team to consider implications of NPWS observation of nesting Black Guillemots on existing pier infrastructure (breakwater on the outer edge of the harbour facing out towards the sea) in summer 2024.	Potential disturbance to birds, including Common Scoter, Red Throated Diver and Black Guillemots due to Proposed Development and potential cumulative impacts in combination with existing fishing vessel activities, is considered in EIAR Chapter 14: Ornithology and the Appropriate Assessment reporting
NPWS noted the modelled sediment footprint overlaps with nearby SACs and highlighted the need to address this and ensure site-specific conservation objectives are considered. Impacts on coastal processes should also be considered.	Effects on site-specific conservation objectives of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) and cSPA from increased sedimentation due to proposed dredging considered in relevant topic specific chapters and the Appropriate Assessment reporting. Hydrodynamic and sediment transport modelling has been undertaken to inform assessment of impacts of Proposed Development on coastal processes as described in EIAR Chapter 8: Coastal Processes and EIAR Volume 3 Technical Appendix 8: Coastal Processes.
NPWS queried whether seasonal restrictions and/or acoustic mitigation such as bubble curtains or Acoustic Deterrence Devices are being considered as mitigation for underwater noise impacts on marine mammal species and emphasised that the 2014 DAHG guidance is a risk assessment tool, not a mitigation tool, and should not solely be relied upon for mitigation measures.	Activity and species-specific risk assessment-based mitigation measures for underwater noise is provided in EIAR Chapter 13: Marine Mammals.

Key comments		Response
NPWS queried whether biodiversity enhancement will form part of Proposed Development		Details of proposed biodiversity enhancements is provided in EIAR Chapter 6: Project Description, Chapter 10: Terrestrial Ecology and Chapter 14: Ornithology
BirdWatch Ireland		
BWI advised that consideration should be given to the potential for breeding Sandwich terns from Lady's Island Lake to use the Long Bank sea area north-east of Rosslare Harbour for foraging.		Potential for breeding Sandwich terns from Lady's Island Lake to use the Long Bank sea area considered in EIAR Chapter 14: Ornithology.
Shipping and Navigation Stakeholders		
Irish Coastguard	Consider impacts of Proposed Development on search and rescue. Had the South Shear Channel been considered regarding previous close quarters incidents near the West Holdens Buoy.	Considered in EIAR Volume 3 Technical Appendix 20: Navigation Risk Assessment
Commissioner of Irish Lights	Would a strong NE wind push commercial vessels towards the quay development during their manoeuvres. Would additional vessels present a problem with conflicting ferry operations.	Considered in EIAR Volume 3 Technical Appendix 20: Navigation Risk Assessment
Stena Line	Safe distance for vessels approaching Berth 1 and Berth 2. Suitability of risk controls.	Considered in EIAR Volume 3 Technical Appendix 20: Navigation Risk Assessment and EIAR Chapter 20: Shipping and Navigation

	Key comments	Response
Harbour Master Stena Line DFDS Irish Ferries Finnlines	In regards, to the existing passenger tracks, does the blade overhang create a collision risk depending on the carrier's location along the quay, especially with proposed longer ferry vessels. With the history of close quarters situations, is hazard 1 'Ferry Commercial Vessel ICW Project Vessel' scored too low.	Considered in EIAR Volume 3 Technical Appendix 20: Navigation Risk Assessment
	Is remote pilotage and LPS sufficient management with additional vessels unfamiliar with the harbour. Would additional risk controls be required.	Considered in EIAR Volume 3 Technical Appendix 20: Navigation Risk Assessment and EIAR Chapter 20: Shipping and Navigation
	Is there likely to be an increase in recreational craft when facilitated by the new Small Boat Harbour infrastructure.	Considered in EIAR Volume 3 Technical Appendix 20: Navigation Risk Assessment, and EIAR Chapter 6: Project Description and Chapter 20: Shipping and Navigation
	Would strong swell from the NE, unable to dissipate due to the confines of the quayside, cause a surge and increase the risk of breakout.	Considered in EIAR Chapter 5: Consideration of Alternatives and Project Design and EIAR Volume 3 Technical Appendix 20: Navigation Risk Assessment.
Rosslare Harbour Fisheries Consultative Group		
Rosslare Harbour Fisheries Consultative Group advised berths for larger fishing vessels to unload fish were required in replacement small boat harbour and that existing access to Fisherman's Quay for regular users should not be restricted by construction or operational phases of Proposed Development		Final layout of small boat harbour, which includes berths for larger fishing vessels, construction sequencing and access to Fisherman's Quay is described in EIAR Chapter 6: Project Description and the planning drawings. The design has been agreed in consultations with the Rosslare Harbour Fisheries Consultative Group, as outlined in Chapter 5: Consideration of Alternatives and Project Design, through feedback provided to the Project Team in direct engagement and at consultation events, where drawings of proposed layout options under consideration were shared.
Rosslare Harbour Fisheries Consultative Group raised concerns that proposed geometry of the entrance configuration may lead to		Final design of the entrance configuration is described in EIAR Chapter 6: Project Description and the Application Drawings. The design has been

Key comments	Response
sedimentation in small boat harbour and over-exposure to North-Easterly approaching waves	agreed in consultations with the Rosslare Harbour Fisheries Consultative Group, as outlined in Chapter 5: Consideration of Alternatives and Project Design, through feedback provided to the Project Team in direct engagement and at consultation events, where drawings of proposed layout options under consideration were shared.
Royal National Lifeboat Institution	
RNLI advised provision for vessel berthing for Severn class vessels and allowance for a new building/s were required by RNLI to facilitate move from existing location to new location.	RNLI has been consulted on the final layout of the new Small Boat Harbour and specifically the proposed berthing arrangements and provision of services, as described in EIAR Chapter 6: Project Description and shown on the Application Drawings.
Small Boat Owners Association	
SBOA advised of the following replacement small boat harbour requirements: - 24/7 access to proposed Small Boat Harbour and Fishing Quay - Construction of pontoon facilities for 64 boats - 7 m wide and 49 m long concrete slipway - Secure parking for 50 vehicles (2,100 m2) - 10 number 4 m * 3 m steel sheds - Associated site works including lighting, power, water and CCTV	Final layout of the new small boat harbour, as outlined in EIAR Chapter 5: Consideration of Alternatives and Project Design and described in Chapter 6: Project Description and the Application Drawings, has been agreed in consultations with the SBOA through feedback provided to the Project Team from the SBOA by direct engagement at consultation events described above and with the Harbourmaster, where drawings of proposed layout options under consideration were shared.
SBOA raised concerns that proposed geometry of the entrance configuration may lead to sedimentation in small boat harbour	Final design of the new small boat harbour entrance configuration as outlined in EIAR Chapter 5: Consideration of Alternatives and Project Design and described in Chapter 6: Project Description and the Application Drawings, has been agreed in consultation with the SBOA through feedback provided to the Project Team from the SBOA by direct engagement at consultation events described above and with the Harbourmaster, where drawings of proposed layout options under consideration were shared.
SBOA advised of the following replacement small boat harbour requirements:	Final layout of small boat harbour, as outlined in EIAR Chapter 5: Consideration of Alternatives and Project Design and described in Chapter 6:

Key comments	Response
- 24/7 access to proposed Small Boat Harbour and Fishing Quay - Construction of pontoon facilities for 64 boats - 7 m wide and 49 m long concrete slipway - Secure parking for 50 vehicles (2,100 m^2) - 10 number 4 m * 3 m steel sheds - Associated site works including lighting, power, water and CCTV	Project Description and the Application Drawings, has been agreed in consultations with the SBOA, through feedback provided to the Project Team from the SBOA by direct engagement at consultation events described above and with the Harbourmaster, where drawings of proposed layout options under consideration were shared.
Tuskar Sea Scouts	
Tuskar Sea Scouts advised of the following replacement small boat harbour requirements: - Provision of a relatively small slipway - Limited levels of equipment storage are required - Vehicular access to the site, preferably be via the public road network for vehicular turning (for drop-off) and very small allowance for parking	Final layout of the Proposed Development, as outlined in EIAR Chapter 5: Consideration of Alternatives and Project Design and described in Chapter 6: Project Description and the Application Drawings, has considered these requirements through feedback provided to the Project Team from the Tuskar Sea Scouts by direct engagement at consultation events described above, where drawings of proposed layout options under consideration were shared.

3.2 CONTINUING ENGAGEMENT WITH NPWS

Engagement with NPWS has continued throughout the course of preparing the EIAR and application for development permission, specifically relating to the proposed designation of the Seas off Wexford candidate Special Protection Area (cSPA) site code 004237. IÉ has participated in public consultations on the proposed designation as follows:

- In April 2024, IÉ submitted an observation on the proposal to designate the Seas off Wexford cSPA for nature conservation, with the observation specifically focussed on the cSPA boundary which overlaps with the area of the site where IÉ have a legal interest. In the submission, IÉ provided ornithological evidence demonstrating that the area of IÉ's interest is not a suitable area for inclusion in the cSPA. A copy this submission is provided in **Appendix 2**.
- In October 2025, IÉ made a second submission formally objecting to the classification of the proposed cSPA and the associated Ministerial Direction, specifically seeking an amendment to the cSPA boundary to exclude IÉ's Area of Legal Interest. This further submission was supported by a scientific report which demonstrates, based on multi-year data collected on behalf of both IÉ and the State, that within IÉ's Area of Legal Interest, the proposed bird Species of Conservation Importance which are proposed for protection by the proposed cSPA are not present in numbers that would warrant designation and further establishes that this area is not suitable for inclusion within the proposed cSPA. A copy of this submission is provided in **Appendix 3**.

Separately to the above public consultations on the proposed Seas off Wexford cSPA, in agreement with NPWS, IÉ has commissioned a detailed report of analysis and associated reporting of data collected by HiDef Aerial Surveying Limited ("HiDef") in a series of digital aerial surveys (DAS) for the Marine Institute and NPWS during winter 2023/24 covering the Rosslare Bay Regional area (three surveys) plus an additional subset area (two surveys), which spatially overlap Rosslare Europort and IÉ's Area of Legal Interest. Following the surveys, NPWS made IÉ aware of the DAS dataset collected and suggested analysis of the data would be useful for characterising the SPA network, informing the wider regional ORE programme and environmental assessments relating to the proposed ORE Hub. IÉ and NPWS agreed a scope of data analysis and IÉ commissioned HiDef to deliver the scope, the results of which are summarised in a report soon to be issued to NPWS.

4 SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

The site of the Proposed Development is defined by the red line PDB shown in Figure 1.1. The site is located immediately adjacent to the existing Rosslare Europort, which is situated on the southeastern coast of Ireland in County Wexford. The surrounding land uses and site context are now described.

4.1 ROSSLARE EUROPORT

Rosslare Europort is bounded by the Irish Sea to the east, the village of Rosslare Harbour to the west, and a mix of residential, commercial and transport infrastructure in the immediate vicinity. The port is accessible via the N25 national primary road and is connected to the national rail network, providing multimodal transport options for cargo and personnel.

The existing port facilities are managed by IÉ. Rosslare Europort is Ireland's second busiest Roll-on, Roll-off (RoRo) and passenger vehicles (ROPax) port, after Dublin, and is Ireland's closest port to mainland Europe. Rosslare Europort is a Tier 2 National port as defined in Ireland's *National Ports Policy* (2013). It is designated as a Border Inspection Post and is classified as a Coastal Breakwater[3] in the *World port Index* (2019). The port currently has three RoRo berths with total entrance, queuing, laydown and storage areas of approximately 22ha and maximum combined quay lengths of 940m. Small fishing boats are accommodated in the small boat harbour and at Fisherman's Quay.

Rosslare Europort was used in 2004 for marshalling and assembly of the Arklow Bank Phase 1 demonstration project, with a total capacity of 25.2MW, and is the only port in the State that has supported the build phase for an offshore wind farm.

4.2 SMALL BOAT HARBOUR

To the west of the existing port storage area lies a small boat harbour (refer to Figure 1.1) where locals have traditionally docked fishing and leisure craft. Local boat users, including a limited number of local fishermen and the Sea Scouts use the small boat harbour.

4.3 NEARBY SETTLEMENTS

Rosslare Europort is located just north of Rosslare Harbour village, which differs from Rosslare Strand, which is 4km further up the coast. The harbour includes the townlands of Ballygeary, Ballygillane Little, Ballygillane Big, and Ballyknockan. Kilrane lies 1.5km southwest on the N25, followed by Tagoat which is 2km further west. Refer to Figure 4.1.

Rosslare Harbour village mainly consists of residential, leisure, retail, and hotel facilities, while adjacent commercial areas (about 25ha) support car storage, freight, and warehousing. Major businesses include the National Vehicle Distribution Centre, Perennial Freight, and Roches Freight.

[3] The World port Index classifies harbours by type. Types include Coastal Natural, Coastal Breakwater, Open Roadstead, River Tide Gate, River Natural, River Basin, Lake or Canal, Typhoon Harbour and None.

Together with Kilrane, Rosslare Harbour village is classified as a Level 3(a) Service Settlement in the Wexford County Development Plan 2022–2028, serving local communities and supporting county economic activity.

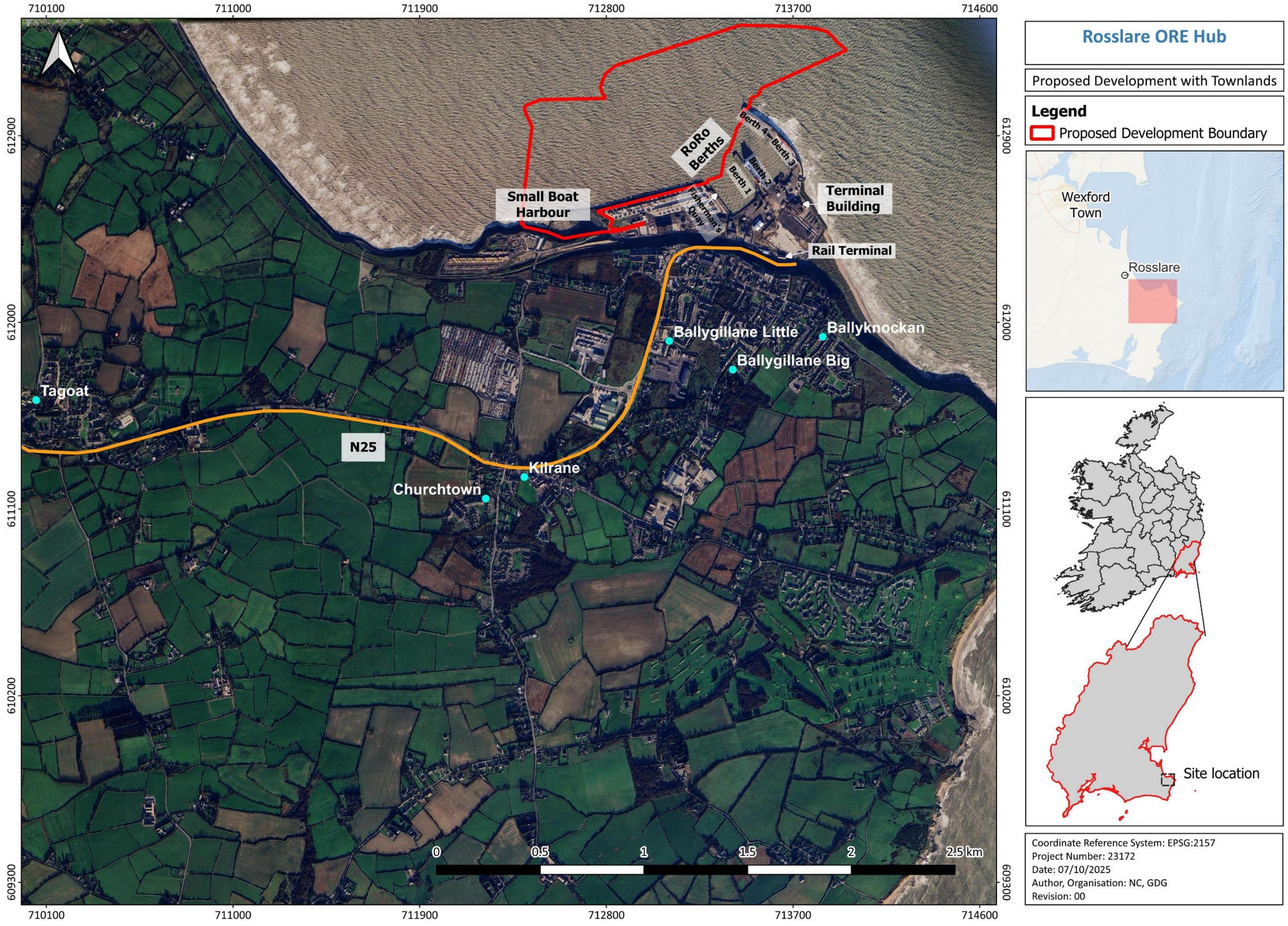


Figure 4.1: Proposed Development Boundary and surrounding settlements

4.4 UTILITIES AND SERVICES

Rosslare Harbour village and Rosslare Europort are served by the Uisce Éireann water supply network with local distribution around the port by IÉ pipelines. The Electricity Supply Board facilitates the distribution of low voltage and medium voltage electricity within the port and nearby settlements. The port is equipped with standard street lighting and high mast lighting.

4.5 ROADS AND ACCESS

The existing road infrastructure around Rosslare Europort includes a network of local roads and the N25 national route running towards the port as a main "*spine*" route connecting to the entrance at the east of the port (refer to Figure 4.2). Rosslare Europort train station provides access to Dublin and the national rail network via Connolly Station.

The N25 Rosslare Europort Access Road (REAR) project, a joint development of Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and Wexford County Council, involves the construction of a 1.45km single carriageway road, featuring a new access route and improvements to existing roads leading to the west of Rosslare Europort (refer to Figure 4.2). The REAR project was granted planning permission by An Bord Pleanála in October 2023 (ref: 314015) and is currently progressing through Phase 5 "*Enabling and Procurement"* of TII's Project Management Guidelines.[4] On completion of Phase 5, and subject to receiving the necessary approvals and the availability of funding, the project will progress to Phase 6 (Construction and Implementation).

[4] Rosslare Europort Access Road Project Website, http://rosslareeuroportaccessroad.ie/latest-news/, news posted 19th June 2024. (accessed 7th October 2025).

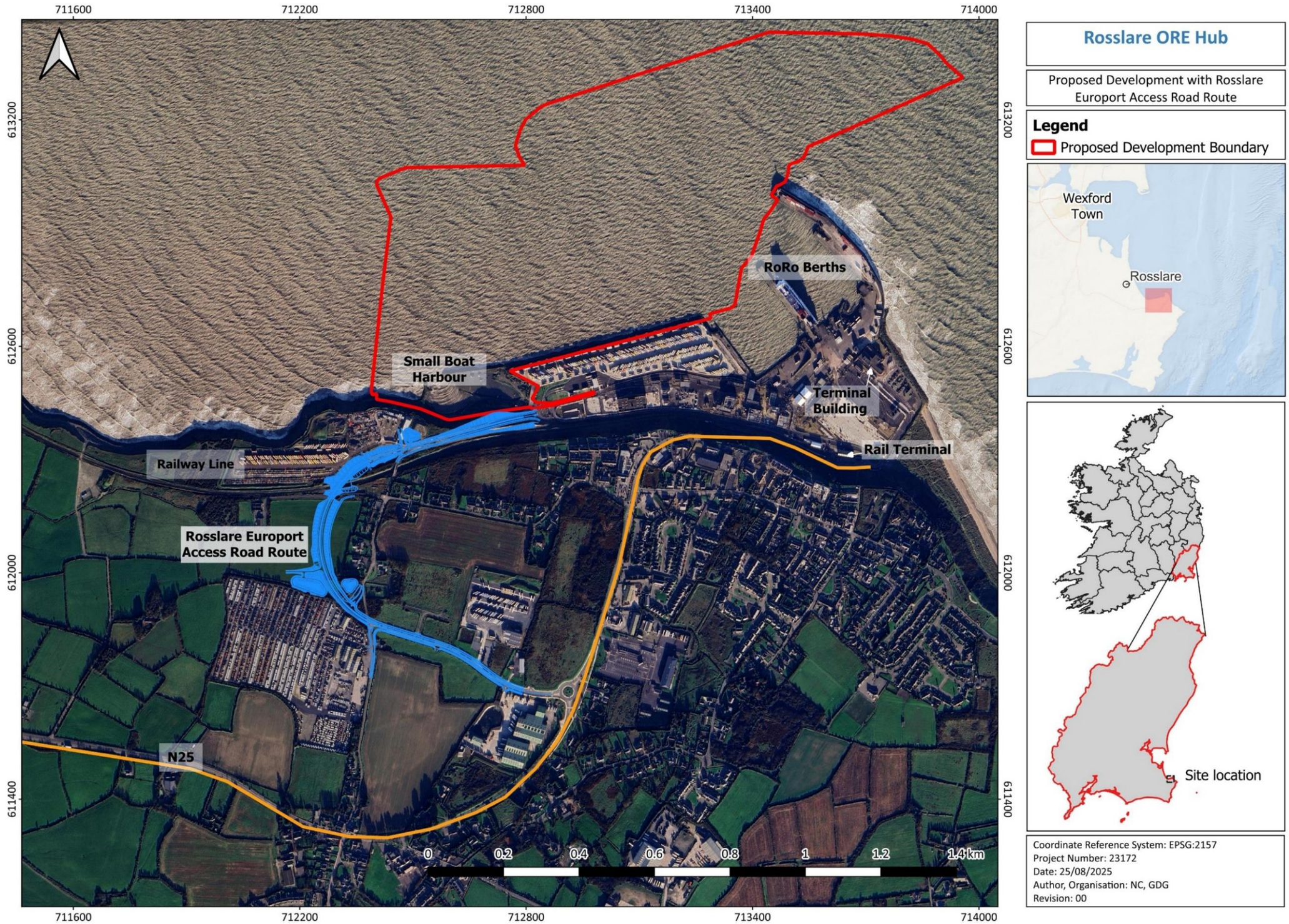


Figure 4.2: Rosslare Europort Access Road Route

4.6 EUROPEAN PROTECTED SITES

Figure 4.3 shows the SACs and SPAs in relation to the PDB. The PDB overlaps with the proposed boundary of the Seas off Wexford candidate SPA (cSPA). Refer to Section 7.11 of this Report for further information.

4.7 CULTURAL HERITAGE

Figure 4.4 shows the location of cultural heritage features within the PDB and the wider study area (500m radius from the Boundary). The only recorded cultural heritage site that is located within the PDB is the lighthouse on the pier head., which is on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH), but is not on the Wexford County Record of Protected Structures (RPS). Two of the nine NIAH buildings in the wider study area are on the Wexford County RPS.

There are two historic shipwreck sites within the wider study area. These are W17556 (trawler *Success* lost in 1982) and W10425 (unknown origin). South of the PDB is a windmill (WX048-018) and a 17th -century house (WX048-017).

A series of small pit features revealed by excavation (WX048-155) which are located southwest of the PDB indicates the potential for archaeological remains to survive inshore.

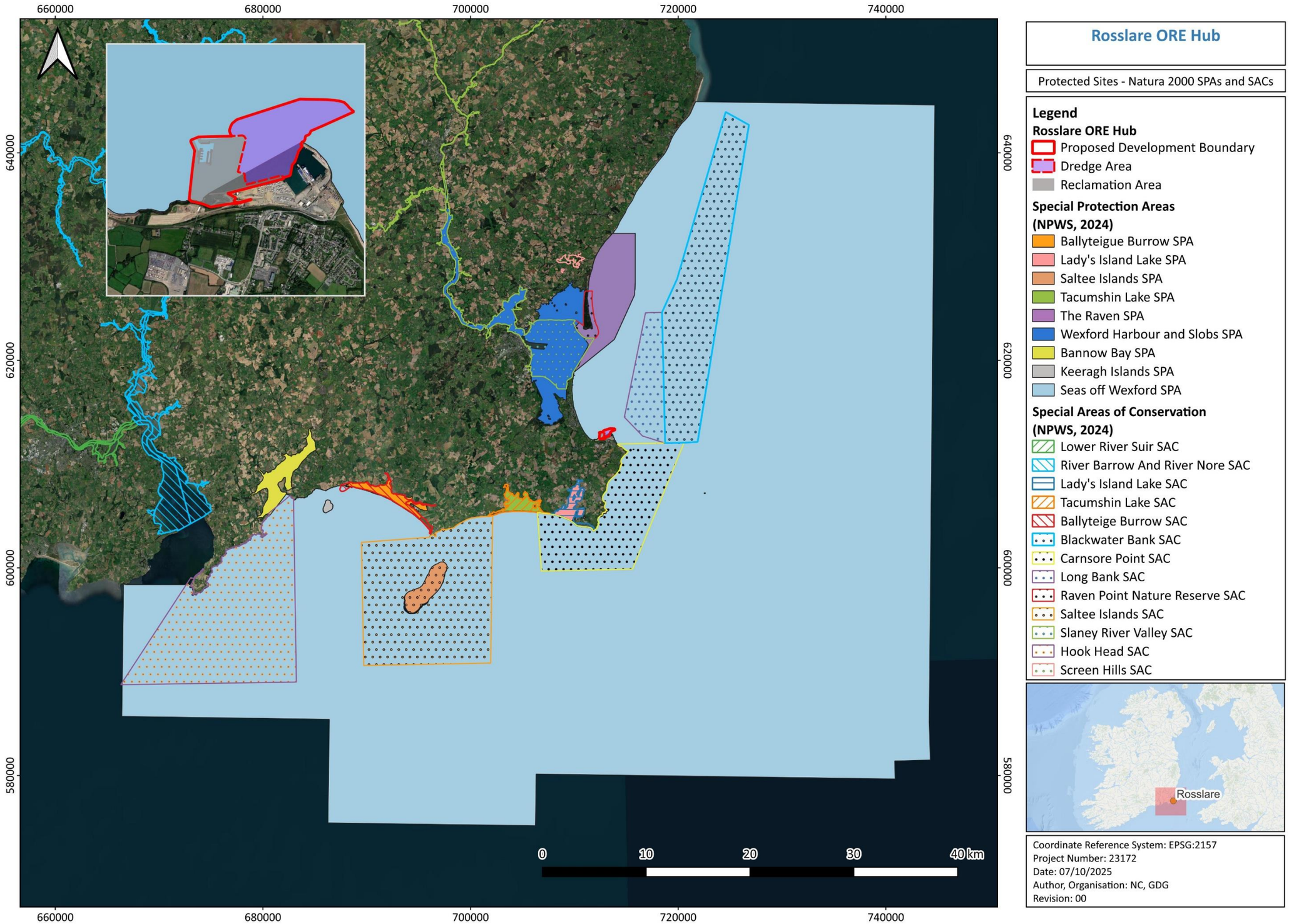


Figure 4.3: European designated protected sites in relation to Proposed Development Boundary

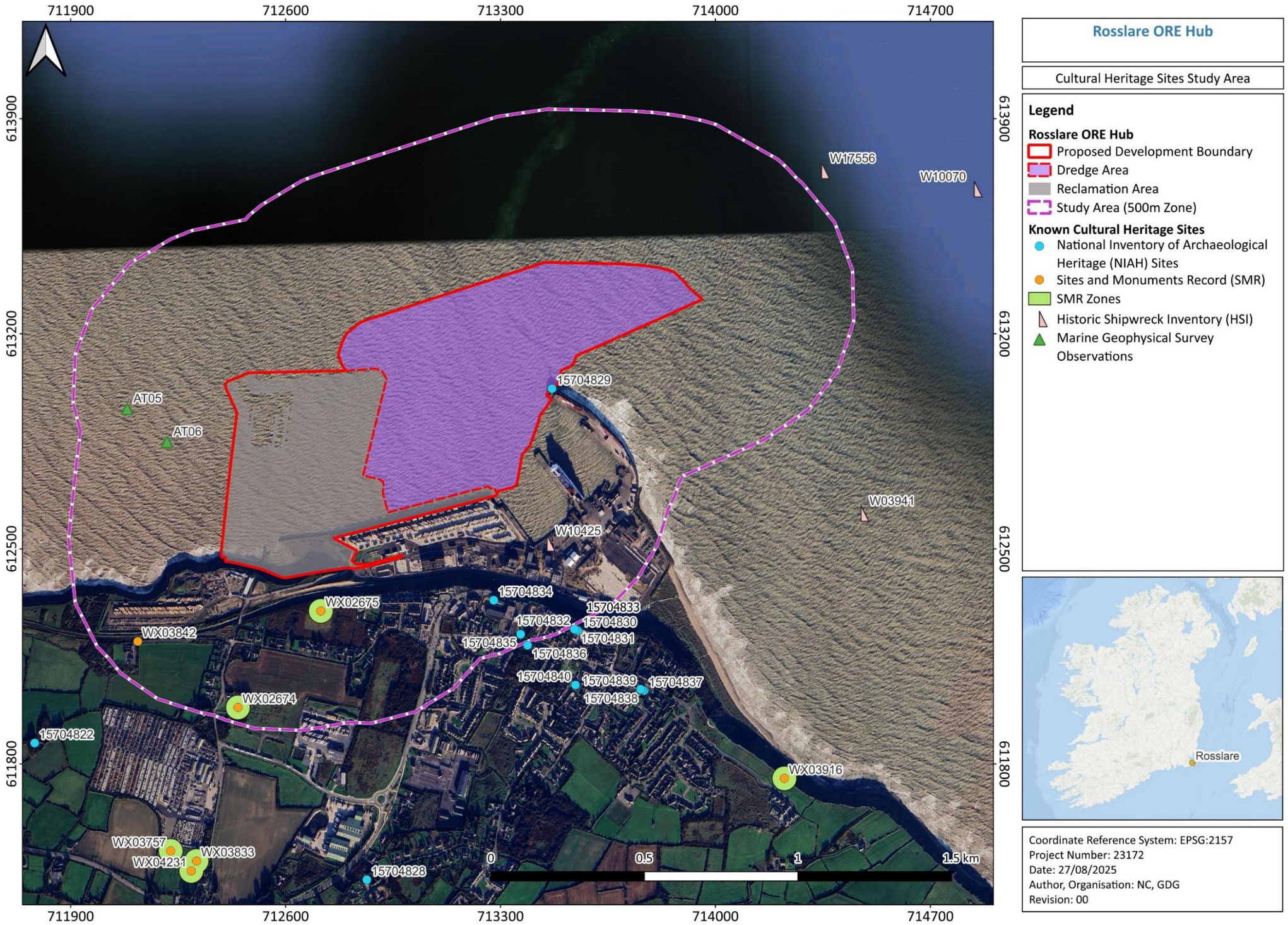


Figure 4.4: Rosslare ORE Hub and cultural heritage features

4.8 PLANNING HISTORY

A planning history search of the Proposed Development Boundary and adjoining areas lying within the port confines was undertaken through a search of the following databases on 20th October 2025:

- Myplan.ie
- Wexford County Council
- An Coimisiún Pleanála
- Government of Ireland – Foreshore Applications
- Maritime Area Regulatory Authority
- Government of Ireland – EIA Portal

The relevant period for the planning history search starts in 2010, which is the year from which Myplan.ie holds records. The Foreshore Applications database was accessed and applications for marine development granted since 2010 were reviewed.

The planning history is confined to the Proposed Development Boundary and Rosslare Europort as the port is separated from the wider Rosslare area by the Dublin to Rosslare railway line which has been in existence since the early 1900s providing a long-time delineation between the port area and the village of Rosslare Harbour.

The planning history is as would be expected for a port development with almost all records relating to either the ongoing operations of the port (e.g. hydrographic surveys, dredging, quay upgrades) or the evolving nature of operations (e.g. new border post). Recent developments have been progressed in line with Phases 1 to 4 under the Rosslare Europort Infrastructure Masterplan including the following:

- the installation of the new perimeter access road, new entrance roundabout, security fencing along the perimeter, new freight check in area and the central spine access road.
- the paving of areas from the new central spine road to the northern quay including the areas for the bulk storage, export trailer area and trade car areas.
- alteration around the main loading and unloading areas at the berths
- completion of areas for the import trailer storage, upgrade to the passenger vehicle check in and completion of the secure fencing.

These projects were progressed by IÉ as the port Authority of Rosslare Europort.

There is a small number of developments and/or applications for development from other organisations falling within or partially within the port confines. These relate to other transport infrastructure and include the proposed new access road for the port from Wexford County Council (ACP case ref: 314015) and restoration of the existing garage building by Bus Éireann (Wexford Co Co case ref: 20101349).

The relevant planning history is summarised in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Planning History for the Proposed Development Boundary and adjoining port confines

Case ID	Description	Location/Address	Decision	Decision Date	Planning Authority
314015	Development of the N25 Rosslare Europort Access Road.	Townlands of Ballygerry, Ballygillane Little & Churchtown, St. Helen's, Rosslare, Co. Wexford	Approved with conditions	10th March 2023	An Bord Pleanála
20200725	Permission for a new main access road, roundabout, internal road and freight entrance plaza.	Ballygerry, Ballygillane Little, Ballygillane Big, St. Helen's	Approved with conditions	30th September 2020	Wexford County Council
20211322	Permission for the construction of Rosslare Europort Terminal 7, a new Border Control Post (BCP) at Rosslare Europort.	Ballygillane Little, St. Helen's	Approved with conditions	9th November 2021	Wexford County Council
20241607	Permission for the provision of new sculpture on roundabout on port access road to west of Rosslare Europort.	Ballygerry, St Helens	Approved with conditions	19th March 2025	Wexford County Council
20211971	Permission for A) the relocation of the existing pet-check portacabin, B) the erection of new directional signage, C) the creation of a new lay-by, pedestrian path and additional parking spaces, together with all associated site works.	Ballygillane Little, St. Helen's	Approved with conditions	2nd March 2022	Wexford County Council
20211672	Permission for an extension to the existing Berth 3, the replacement of the existing linkspan at Berth 3 with a new linkspan and support	Ballygillane Little, St. Helen's	Approved with conditions	21st January 2022	Wexford County Council

Case ID	Description	Location/Address	Decision	Decision Date	Planning Authority
	structures, and the demolition and removal of the existing Berth 4 linkspan within Rosslare Europort.				
20181280	Permission for development consisting of the installation of a new corporate logo on the south-west elevation.	Ballygillane Little, St. Helen's	Approved with conditions	12th December 2018	Wexford County Council
FS007509	Foreshore licence application for site investigation activities to establish the detailed site parameters to inform the design of port facilities to support offshore renewable energy.	Rosslare Europort	Granted with conditions	28th July 2023	Minister for Climate Energy and the Environment
FS007224	Foreshore lease application for an extension to the existing Berth 3 at Rosslare Europort, the replacement of the existing linkspan at Berth 3 with a new linkspan and support structures, the demolition and removal of the existing Berth 4 linkspan and associated works.	Rosslare Europort	Granted with conditions	10th December 2024	Minister for Climate Energy and the Environment
FS007219	Foreshore licence application for maintenance dredging of the approach channel, inner harbour and Ballygeary Harbour at Rosslare Europort.	Rosslare Europort	Granted with conditions	28th July 2023	Minister for Climate Energy and the Environment

Case ID	Description	Location/Address	Decision	Decision Date	Planning Authority
FS007222	Foreshore licence for marine site investigations to support berth upgrades.	Rosslare Europort	Granted with conditions	5th July 2022	Minister for Climate Energy and the Environment
FS007265	Foreshore licence for a Benthic Survey.	Rosslare Europort	Granted with conditions	21st September 2022	Minister for Climate Energy and the Environment
MAC20230005	Maritime Area Consent for the ORE Operation and Maintenance facility.	Rosslare Europort	Granted with conditions	2nd July 2025	Maritime Area Regulatory Authority
20101319	Surfacing works to facilitate the storage and handling of shipping containers with provision of electrical services for accommodation of refrigerated containers.	Rosslare Europort	Granted subject to conditions	18 March 2011	Wexford County Council
20101349	Restoration of the existing garage building with minor alterations and external works consisting of new footpaths, car spaces, fencing and repositioning of the truck wash plant room.	Rosslare Europort (applicant Bus Eireann)	Granted subject to conditions	21st February 2011	Wexford County Council

5 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The Proposed Development includes capital dredging to achieve navigable depths for vessels delivering ORE components; land reclamation to create a storage area for these components; and construction of two new berths to facilitate loading and unloading of ORE components. The land reclamation works include infilling the existing small boat harbour, after the construction of a new small boat harbour. The Proposed Development also includes the installation of a new slipway and facility for local clubs, such as the Sea Scouts.

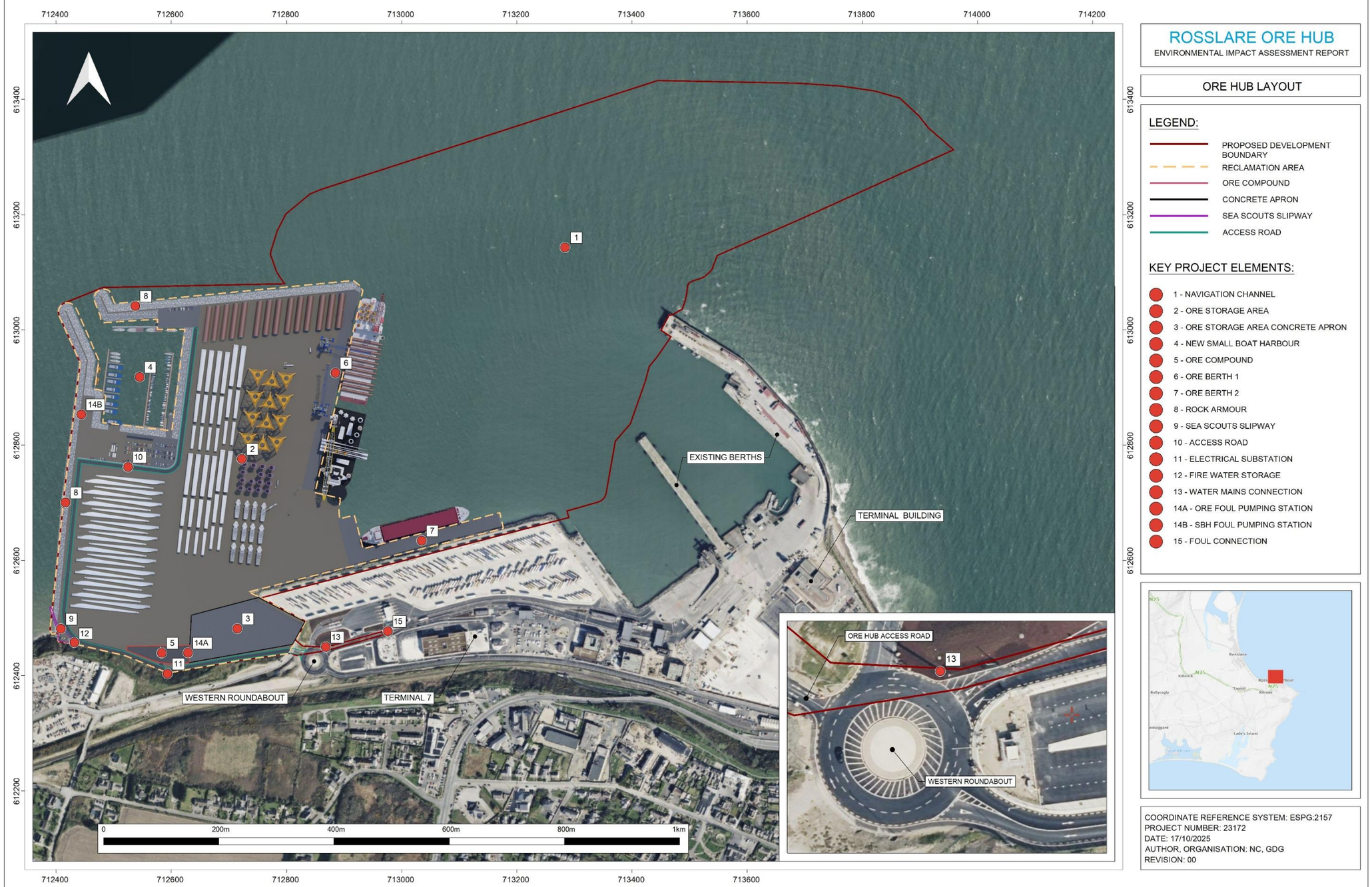
The purpose of the Proposed Development is to provide a facility for the efficient handling and storage, marshalling, staging and integration of ORE components to facilitate installation of offshore wind energy projects by ORE developers and operators. The Proposed Development is designed to provide facilities that accommodate a wide range of infrastructure uses, both for current requirements and anticipated future needs. For instance, the Proposed Development could be used for traditional port activities if required, including during periods of reduced ORE-related activity. Refer to EIAR Chapter 6: Project Description for further detail.

The key elements of the Proposed Development are listed in Table 5.1 and shown on Figure 5.1.

Table 5.1: Summary of the Proposed Development

11	Description
Site preparation and mobilisation	Site clearance involving removal of the existing small storage sheds, pontoons, gangways, timber mooring posts and timber structures at the small boat harbour; and establishment of a temporary site compound.
Capital dredging	The navigation channel will be dredged to a depth of -10 metres Chart Datum (m CD). The berth pocket for ORE Berth 1 will be dredged to a depth of -12m CD. The total area to be dredged is 48.4 hectares (ha).
Land reclamation	Land reclamation including infilling of the small boat harbour, using the marine dredged material and imported rockfill to create 27.7ha of land for the Proposed Development. Installation of rock armour revetments around the perimeter of the reclamation area
ORE Storage Area	Creation of an ORE Storage Area of 19.7ha, within the reclaimed lands, for the handling and storage, marshalling, staging and integration of ORE components.
ORE Berth 1	Construction of ORE Berth 1, a heavy lift berth with a continuous open piled quay length of 330 metres (m).
ORE Berth 2	Construction of ORE Berth 2, with a continuous open piled quay length of 240m.
ORE Compound	A compound area of 0.2ha for installation of temporary modular buildings for site offices, welfare, logistics, and parking to service ORE developers.

11	Description
New Small Boat Harbour	Construction of a new Small Boat Harbour consisting of: a 50m long fixed quayside berth and an 80m long floating pontoon a 2.4m wide pontoon to provide 64 no. berths a 127m long floating pontoon with 10 no. berths 1 no. fixed berth for emergency service vessels 10 no. single storey storage sheds a slipway for launching and recovery activities marine enabling works and installation of services to provide for potential future uses.
Sea Scouts Facility	Construction of a slipway to the western flank of the newly reclaimed lands with a new storage shed and parking to accommodate local clubs, such as the Sea Scouts.
Ancillary works	Site access to the Proposed Development and a new access road and footpath/cycle track to the proposed new Small Boat Harbour. A medium voltage single storey electrical substation and switch room Lighting Fencing and security measures Parking Waste management facilities Fire water network and storage Landscaping Foul water network and pumping infrastructure Water mains network Surfacing and drainage Environmental enhancements



ROSSLARE ORE HUB

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

ORE HUB LAYOUT

LEGEND:

- PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARY
- RECLAMATION AREA
- ORE COMPOUND
- CONCRETE APRON
- SEA SCOUTS SLIPWAY
- ACCESS ROAD

KEY PROJECT ELEMENTS:

1. 1 - NAVIGATION CHANNEL
2. 2 - ORE STORAGE AREA
3. 3 - ORE STORAGE AREA CONCRETE APRON
4. 4 - NEW SMALL BOAT HARBOUR
5. 5 - ORE COMPOUND
6. 6 - ORE BERTH 1
7. 7 - ORE BERTH 2
8. 8 - ROCK ARMOUR
9. 9 - SEA SCOUTS SLIPWAY
10. 10 - ACCESS ROAD
11. 11 - ELECTRICAL SUBSTATION
12. 12 - FIRE WATER STORAGE
13. 13 - WATER MAINS CONNECTION
14. 14A - ORE FOUL PUMPING STATION
15. 14B - SBH FOUL PUMPING STATION
16. 15 - FOUL CONNECTION

COORDINATE REFERENCE SYSTEM: ESPG:2157
PROJECT NUMBER: 23172
DATE: 17/10/2025
AUTHOR, ORGANISATION: NC, GDG
REVISION: 00

Figure 5.1: General layout of the Proposed Development

Table 5.2Table 5.2 provides a breakdown of areas for the Proposed Development.

Table 5.2: Table of areas for works in Proposed Development

Boundary	Elements	Area (ha)
Proposed Development Boundary	**All**	**80.3**
	Dredging area (includes side slopes and berth pockets)	48.4
	Marine reclamation area (includes enclosed water in new Small Boat Harbour)	27.7
	Terrestrial reclamation and existing land area	4.2
Proposed Development Operational Area	**All** (excludes rock armoured revetments, perimeter landscaping, pontoons, berths and enclosed water in new Small Boat Harbour)	**24.5**
	ORE Storage Area (includes concrete apron area of 1.6ha)	19.7
	ORE office and parking compound	0.2
	ORE quays	2.0
	Access roads, new Small Boat Harbour and Sea Scouts Facility	2.6
New Small Boat Harbour Enclosed Water	Enclosed water in New Small Boat Harbour (includes area taken by pontoons and navigable berths)	2.2

5.2 CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES

The principal construction works are listed below.

- Mobilisation and Establishing the Temporary Site Compound
- Dredging and Reclamation Works
- Piling Works
- Construction of Rock Armour Revetments
- Concrete Works
- Ancillary Works

Construction works (excluding dredging and reclamation) will be undertaken between 7am to 7pm Monday to Saturday. Work outside of these hours may be required on an infrequent basis to suit tides and vessel movements. If, in exceptional circumstances, works are required outside of these hours, the relevant statutory authorities will be notified in advance.

Dredging activities are expected to be ongoing for up to 24 hours per day, 7 days per week (24/7). The dredged material needs to be continually transported to the reclamation area to enable

continuous dredging activities. For this reason, the reclamation activities will also need to be carried out on the same schedule.

It is expected that the construction phase will span 24 months from commencement to completion.

5.3 OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The Proposed Development will allow for efficient handling and storage, marshalling, staging and integration of ORE components to facilitate the installation of ORE projects. The Proposed Development will be used as the final staging point between globally distributed supply chains and the offshore wind farm sites.

The anticipated number of project vessels using the ORE berths is relatively low, with peak traffic numbers during an Offshore Wind Farm lifecycle of up to one large vessel every two days to ORE Berth 1. Vessels will typically range from 160m to 250m in length and will either rely on steel legs that are lowered into the seabed for stability or be dynamically positioned to hold station in the water.

Vessels which will use ORE Berth 2 will typically range from 160m to 180m in length and will deliver components by Load-on Load-off (LoLo) or RoRo methods, depending on the size and weight of components being delivered.

The proposed berth sizes provide sufficient space for the typical range of anticipated vessels, with an additional safeguarded allowance for potential future increases in the size of vessels engaged in ORE activities.

The heavy-lift quayside will be used for the temporary assembly of towers and preparation for integration of ORE components, prior to out-loading onto installation vessels. Component Transfer Vessels will be used to transport components to the Proposed Development, and these components will be brought on to the quayside by crane for transport to the storage area.

Assembly activities will include the preassembly of certain tower elements, turbine and transition piece elements, as well as other specific welding activities as required. Partially erected towers and components such as blades and turbines being transited from the ORE Storage Area, awaiting out-loading to the installation vessels, will be temporarily stored on the ORE Berth 1 quay during this time. Components will then be loaded by crane onto the Turbine and Foundation Installation Vessel for deployment to the offshore windfarm sites.

Electrical testing and commissioning of assembled components will also be undertaken within the Proposed Development.

Both ORE Berth 1 and ORE Berth 2 will be used to facilitate the delivery of incoming components without hindering the integration and out-loading of components onto an installation vessel.

While the primary function of the ORE Storage Area is for ORE-related activities, it will be capable of serving as an overflow for traditional port activities if required, such as during less busy times for ORE activities.

The new Small Boat Harbour will be used by up to 64 no. local boat owners and local fishermen. The Small Boat Harbour also includes 8 no. berths to be used by Crew Transfer Vessels and a berth for

use by the RNLI. The personnel using these facilities are anticipated to travel to and from the SBH by land-based vehicle. They will use the fixed berths, pontoons and slipway provided to set sail and dock their vessels, as well as loading and unloading of equipment and materials.

The slipway and associated parking area (6 no. spaces) at the proposed Sea Scouts Facility will also be used by local groups, including the Sea Scouts, for training young seafarers. The local groups will use the proposed storage shed for their equipment.

The number of staff at the Proposed Development will fluctuate depending on installation activity and weather and depending on the construction logistics and methodology used by each ORE developer utilising the Proposed Development. At any one time, there will typically be between 40 to 60 personnel at the Proposed Development (comprising 20 to 30 compound/office based staff and 20 to 30 quayside staff), with an anticipated maximum peak scenario of 150 personnel considered for more intense operations over short-durations i.e. when the installation vessel is in port there will be a short-term peak (e.g. 24-hour period) with incoming and outgoing crew, and vessel replenishment and possibly service technicians coming to do maintenance on the vessel.

An example of operational layout for ORE marshalling and assembly is shown in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2: Example of operational layout for ORE marshalling and assembly

6 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The need for the project is supported by international, European, national, regional and local polices related to climate change, renewable energy development and decarbonisation, spatial planning and port policy. An overview of these policies is provided in this chapter and demonstrates how the Proposed Development aligns with and supports the achievement of objectives set out in these policies. Further information on the legislation and policy context of the Proposed Development is contained in EIAR Volume 2 Chapter 2: Legislation and Policy Context that accompanies this application for development permission.

The policies are discussed on a thematic basis as follows:

- Climate Change, Renewable Energy and Decarbonisation
- Spatial Planning
- port Policy
- Other Policy

6.2 CLIMATE CHANGE, RENEWABLE ENERGY AND DECARBONISATION

Ireland is party to a number of conventions, protocols and agreements that places an onus on Ireland to implement certain plans, policies and procedures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to the climate change response. These international instruments influence European Climate and Energy policy which in turn feeds into national, regional and local regulations, plans and policies.

The various instruments which support or are supported by the development of the Rosslare ORE Hub are discussed herein include:

- International:
    - The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
    - The Kyoto Protocol
    - The Paris Agreement
- European
    - The European Green Deal
    - Renewable Energy Directive (RED) III
    - RePowerEU
    - EU Offshore Renewable Energy Strategy
- National
    - Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act, 2021 including sectoral emissions ceilings

- Climate Action Plan
- National Energy and Climate Plan 2021 – 2029
- Future Framework on Offshore Renewable Energy

- Local
  - Wexford County Council Climate Action Plan 2024 to 2029

6.2.1 UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC)

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is an international treaty aimed at preventing dangerous human interference with the climate system which came into force on 21st March 1994. The UNFCCC outlines how specific international treaties (called "*Protocols*" or "*Agreements*") may be negotiated to set binding limits on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The convention enjoys near universal membership, with 198 countries listed as being Parties to the Convention. The Kyoto Protocol of 1997 and the Paris Agreement of 2016 shape the responsibilities of the UNFCCC Secretariat. A key responsibility of the UNFCCC is the organisation of the Conference of Parties (COP) which is hosted annually. Ireland is currently considered an Annex I party within the UNFCCC which legally obliges Ireland to reduce overall GHG emissions.

Project Response:

Development of the Rosslare ORE Hub aligns with the UNFCCC through contributing to GHG emissions reduction by facilitating deployment of offshore renewable energy (ORE).

6.2.2 KYOTO PROTOCOL AND THE PARIS AGREEMENT

The Kyoto Protocol, adopted on 11th December 1997, is an international agreement that commits its parties to reducing GHG emissions. Under the agreement, the EU agreed to achieve a significant reduction in total GHG emissions of 8% below 1990 levels in the period 2008 to 2012.

Ireland signed the Kyoto Protocol on 29th April 1998 and ratified it on 31st May 2002. Ireland agreed to a legally binding target to limit the increase in its GHG emissions relative to 1990 levels to no more than 13% for the period of 2008-2012. Ireland was successful in meeting the Kyoto Protocol targets under the European Union (EU) burden-sharing agreement.

The Kyoto Protocol was superseded by the Paris Agreement which was adopted on 12th December 2016. The Agreement is a global treaty that seeks to limit global warming to below 2°C, ideally 1.5°C, by reducing GHG emissions. A further commitment is for countries to submit national Climate Action Plans to demonstrate national commitments to limit GHG emissions. In 2023, COP 28 explicitly addressed the need to end global reliance on fossil fuels and to triple the renewable energy capacity by 2030. Ireland signed the Paris Agreement on 22nd April 2016 and ratified the Agreement on 4th November 2016.

Project Response:

Offshore renewable energy is a critical component in the plan to reduce GHG emissions in the fight to limit global warming to below 2°C as committed to under the Paris Agreement. The Proposed

Development aligns with the objectives of this agreement by facilitating the development of offshore renewable energy which will contribute to the targets of the Paris Agreement, which supersedes the Kyoto Agreement, and the Doha amendment to the Kyoto Protocol, which was adopted on 21st December 2012, extending the commitment under the Kyoto Protocol.

6.2.3 THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL

In 2019, the European Commission (EC) presented the European Green Deal (EGD) (European Commission, 2019) - a plan to make the EU's economy sustainable by reducing GHG emissions, promoting resource efficiency, and fostering a green economy. The EGD sets out a series of policy initiatives with the overarching goal of making the EU climate neutral by 2050, and an intermediate step of a 55% reduction (compared to 1990 levels) of EU GHG emissions by 2030.

The EGD aims to achieve this through a review of a range of existing policies and directives in a number of sectors, including energy supply, industry and the economy, consumption, large-scale infrastructure, agriculture, food, transport, construction, taxation and social benefits. Within the EGD are targets for reducing renewable energy targets, including for ORE, reducing transport related GHG emissions and plans to revise the TEN-T policy document all of which are relevant to the Proposed Development.

Project Response:

The development of the Rosslare ORE Hub aligns with the plans under the European Green Deal by facilitating the development of renewable energy at scale in Ireland which will help to reduce GHG emissions in the Irish energy sector.

6.2.4 RENEWABLE ENERGY DIRECTIVE (RED) III

The Renewable Energy Directive (European Commission, 2023) is the EC's legal framework for the development of clean energy across all sectors of the EU economy, supporting cooperation between EU countries towards this goal. RED III is the third version of the Renewable Energy Directive, updating previous directives (RED I and RED II) to align with more ambitious climate and energy targets, and entered into force on 20th November 2023. It includes legislation to increase the share of renewable energy in the EU's energy mix, setting an overall renewable energy target of at least 42.5% binding at EU level by 2030 - but aiming for 45%. RED III includes targets for ORE and targets for the reduction of transport emissions in the EU.

RED III was recently transposed (12th August 2025) with respect to renewable energy development and related grid and storage infrastructure through the European Union (Planning and Development) (Renewable Energy) Regulations 2025 (S.I. No 274 of 2025). These regulations specify that when considering legal matters with respect to renewable energy developments, such developments should be considered to be of imperative overriding public interest (IROPI). The transposition into Irish legislation of the IROPI status for renewable energy development emphasises the importance of progressing renewable energy development in Ireland.

Project Response:

The Rosslare ORE Hub is not itself a Renewable Energy Directive (III) project however the Rosslare ORE Hub aligns with this Directive as it is being developed with the primary use of supporting the development of offshore wind energy projects. The Rosslare ORE Hub, therefore, directly supports the development of projects which are deemed to be of imperative overriding public interest under the RED III.

6.2.5 REPOWEREU

The REPowerEU (European Commission, 2022) plan was launched in 2022 in response to the hardships and global energy market disruption caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. It is an initiative to reduce the EU's dependence on Russian fossil fuel imports by helping the EU save energy, accelerate its transition to clean energy and diversify energy supplies. It outlines ambitious targets for scaling up renewable energy, including ORE, which are relevant to the Rosslare ORE Hub.

The plan acknowledges that offshore wind represents a significant future opportunity due to the abundant supply. It also highlights that supply chains need to be strengthened and permitting drastically accelerated to deliver the volume of renewable energy required to achieve the objectives under the plan.

Project Response:

RePowerEU not only highlights the importance of accelerating the deployment of renewable energy but also the importance of strengthening the renewable energy supply chain. The Rosslare ORE Hub is designed specifically to facilitate the development of offshore renewable energy and will form a critical element of the supply chain infrastructure for Ireland. It will directly support the achievement of objectives under REPowerEU including diversification of energy supply, increase in energy security (reduction of EU's dependence on imported Russian fossil fuels) and transition to clean energy by facilitating the development of offshore renewable energy.

6.2.6 EU OFFSHORE RENEWABLE ENERGY STRATEGY

The EU Offshore Renewable Energy Strategy (European Commission, 2020), published in 2020, is a strategy to expand offshore renewable energy capacity, including wind, wave and tidal energy, to support the EU's climate goals and energy security. It outlines offshore renewables as being a main pillar of Europe's future electricity mix, identifying the EU countries' regional cumulative offshore goals of around 111GW by 2030 and 317GW by 2050. The EU strategy proposed pathways to support the long-term sustainable development of the sector, setting targets for 2030 and 2050.

Project Response:

The EU Offshore Renewable Energy Strategy highlights the important role that ports can play in the delivery of offshore wind. The Rosslare ORE Hub is designed specifically to facilitate the development of offshore renewable energy and will provide infrastructure necessary to deliver Ireland's contribution to the European Union's 2030 and 2050 offshore renewable energy targets.

The Strategy strongly supports the development of the Rosslare ORE Hub to facilitate the deployment of offshore wind energy at scale.

6.2.7 CLIMATE ACTION AND LOW CARBON DEVELOPMENT ACT 2021

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 (Irish Government, 2021b), which amended the Climate Action and Law Carbon Development Act 2015, was enacted in 2021 with the aim of supporting Ireland's transition to net zero and achieving a climate neutral economy by no later than 2050. The amended Act establishes a legal framework for Ireland to achieve a low-carbon, climate-resilient, and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050, including the creation of climate action plans and carbon budgets. The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2021 includes several key elements, including:

- Embedding the process of carbon budgeting into law, with Government required to adopt a series of economy-wide five-year carbon budgets, including sectoral targets for each relevant sector, on a rolling 15-year basis, starting in 2021.
- Actions for each sector which will be detailed in the Climate Action Plan, updated annually.
- Obligation to prepare a National Long Term Climate Action Strategy every five years.

Ireland's National Climate Objective is included as part of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended. The National Climate Objective is stated as:

> *"The State shall, so as to reduce the extent of further global warming, pursue and achieve, by no later than the end of the year 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy."*

To enable the State to pursue and achieve the national climate objective, the following measures have been implemented:

a) carbon budgets,
b) a sectoral emission ceilings,
c) a climate action plan,
d) a national long term climate action strategy, and
e) a national adaptation framework.

Ireland's Sectoral Emissions Ceilings (Irish Government, 2022b) were agreed by Government in July 2022. They are legally binding limits on GHG emissions for different sectors (e.g., electricity, transport, agriculture) aimed at achieving Ireland's climate targets, with specific reduction goals set for each sector.

Project Response:

The development of the Rosslare ORE Hub supports the achievement of objectives under the Climate Action And Low Carbon Development Act 2021 including the achievement of sectorial emissions ceiling in the areas of transport and electricity by facilitating the deployment of offshore

wind at scale in the Irish and Celtic Seas and the National Climate Objective through facilitating the deployment of offshore renewable energy infrastructure.

6.2.8 CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

The finalised version of the fifth annual update to Ireland's Climate Action Plan (CAP25) was approved in April 2025. This is a comprehensive plan outlining Ireland's strategy to reduce GHG emissions by 51% by 2030 (relative to 2018 levels) and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. CAP25 sets out measures across electricity, built environment, transport, agriculture, industry, land use, land use change and forestry. Amongst other targets, this plan includes a target for the construction of 5GW of offshore wind projects by 2030, and a longer-term ambition for over 37GW of ORE projects to be delivered before 2050. Offshore wind remains the only renewable technology capable of being deployed at a suitable scale to meet Ireland's ambitious renewable energy targets, thus sufficient facilities and infrastructure is required to support this sector.

Project Response:

The Rosslare ORE Hub supports the achievement of objectives under the Climate Action Plan as it is in a prime location to facilitate the deployment of offshore wind at scale including the Phase One projects expected to be operational by 2030. These projects will contribute to the achievement of 5GW of offshore wind projects by 2030. The Rosslare ORE Hub will also contribute to the achievement of the plan's objectives over the longer term including the delivery of 37GW of ORE projects by 2050 by facilitating the further deployment of offshore wind in the Irish and Celtic Seas. This includes the Tonn Nua site within the South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan (SC-DMAP) which is expected to be operational c. 2034, the three remaining SC-DMAP sites and further offshore wind development sites expected to be defined within the Irish and Celtic Seas under the ongoing National DMAP process.

6.2.9 NATIONAL ENERGY AND CLIMATE PLAN 2021-2029

The National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) 2021 – 2029 was first published in 2020 (Irish Government, 2020a). A draft updated NECP 2021 – 2030 (Irish Government, 2024c) was submitted to the European Commission in July 2024. It outlines the government's energy and climate policies in detail for the period from 2021 to 2030 and looks onwards to 2050. This includes a strategic plan that details Ireland's approach to achieving its 2030 climate and energy targets, focusing on renewable energy, energy efficiency, emissions reduction, and research and innovation. The draft plan includes policies relevant to ORE and port development including reiterating the target of 5Gw of offshore wind by 2030 and the importance of a multiport approach to the provision of port infrastructure to facilitate ORE and the potential for supply chain clusters to be developed in and around ports.

Project Response:

The Rosslare ORE Hub supports the achievement of objectives under the NECP as it is in a prime location to facilitate the deployment of offshore wind at scale including the Phase One projects expected to be operational by 2030. These projects will contribute to the achievement of 5GW of

offshore wind projects by 2030. In addition, as the Rosslare ORE Hub is in a prime location to facilitate further deployment of offshore wind in the Irish and Celtic Seas including sites within the SC-DMAP and offshore wind development sites expected to be defined within the Irish and Celtic Seas under the ongoing National DMAP process, it can act as a catalyst for the establishment of an ORE supply chain hub to support the offshore wind industry over the longer term.

6.2.10 THE OFFSHORE RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Irish Government published the Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (Irish Government, 2014) (OREDP) in 2014. The OREDP outlined a framework to support the sustainable development of ORE, such as wind and wave power, to meet Ireland's renewable energy targets and reduce reliance on fossil fuels. Many of the targets of the OREDP have now been increased or have changed, reflecting the evolution of Ireland's ORE landscape. For example, in the OREDP there was a target to "*achieve the high scenario of 4,500 MW from offshore wind and 1,500 MW of wave and tidal devices*" (page 30) by 2030. The current target for offshore wind is 5GW of grid-connected offshore wind capacity installed by 2030. The Phase One Projects were an integral element of the OREDP with a combined planned installed capacity of c. 3,799 MW (current stated capacity in 2025) of renewable electricity. The plan also highlighted the dependency of ORE on critical enabling infrastructure including port infrastructure.

The intention was for the OREDP to undergo revision and a second Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (OREDP II) to be published. A draft version of this second Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (OREDP II) (Irish Government, 2023) was published for consultation in February 2023 and marked a shift to a plan-led approach, where the government would have more control over the designation of areas suitable for development. OREDP II was not implemented and has been superseded by the Future Framework for Offshore Renewable Energy. Much of the work that went into OREDP II has informed the policies in the Future Framework.

Project Response:

The targets of 4.5GW included in the OREDP for offshore wind has been superseded by a series of more ambitious targets including 5GW of grid connected offshore wind by 2030. The majority (3,799 MW) of the 5GW target will be delivered by the Phase One projects located in the Irish Sea under the OREDP. The Rosslare ORE HUB has been designed to meet the needs of the offshore wind industry and will provide a critical piece of enabling infrastructure for the Phase One Projects. It will contribute to the achievement of 5GW of offshore wind by 2030 by facilitating the deployment of the Phase One Projects in the Irish Sea which are being progressed under the OREDP.

6.2.11 FUTURE FRAMEWORK FOR OFFSHORE RENEWABLE ENERGY

The Future Framework for Offshore Renewable Energy (Future Framework) (Irish Government, 2024b) was published on 1st May 2024. It outlines Ireland's long-term ambitions for 20GW of ORE by 2040 and 37GW by 2050, laying down objectives and a roadmap to achieving these targets. It includes 29 key actions to develop Ireland's long-term, plan-led approach to offshore wind.

Under the Future Framework Ireland's first Designated Maritime Area Plan (DMAP) for Offshore Renewable Energy identifies marine areas for development of fixed bottom offshore wind. This first DMAP is the South Coast DMAP (SC-DMAP) (Irish Government, 2024e), and within it are identified four maritime areas A-D for offshore wind development (shown in Figure 6.1). The four areas which are located off the coast of Waterford and Wexford are:

- Area A: Tonn Nua – 900 MW
- Area B: Li Bann – 1,000 MW
- Area C: Manannan – 1,000 MW
- Area D: Danu – 1,000 MW

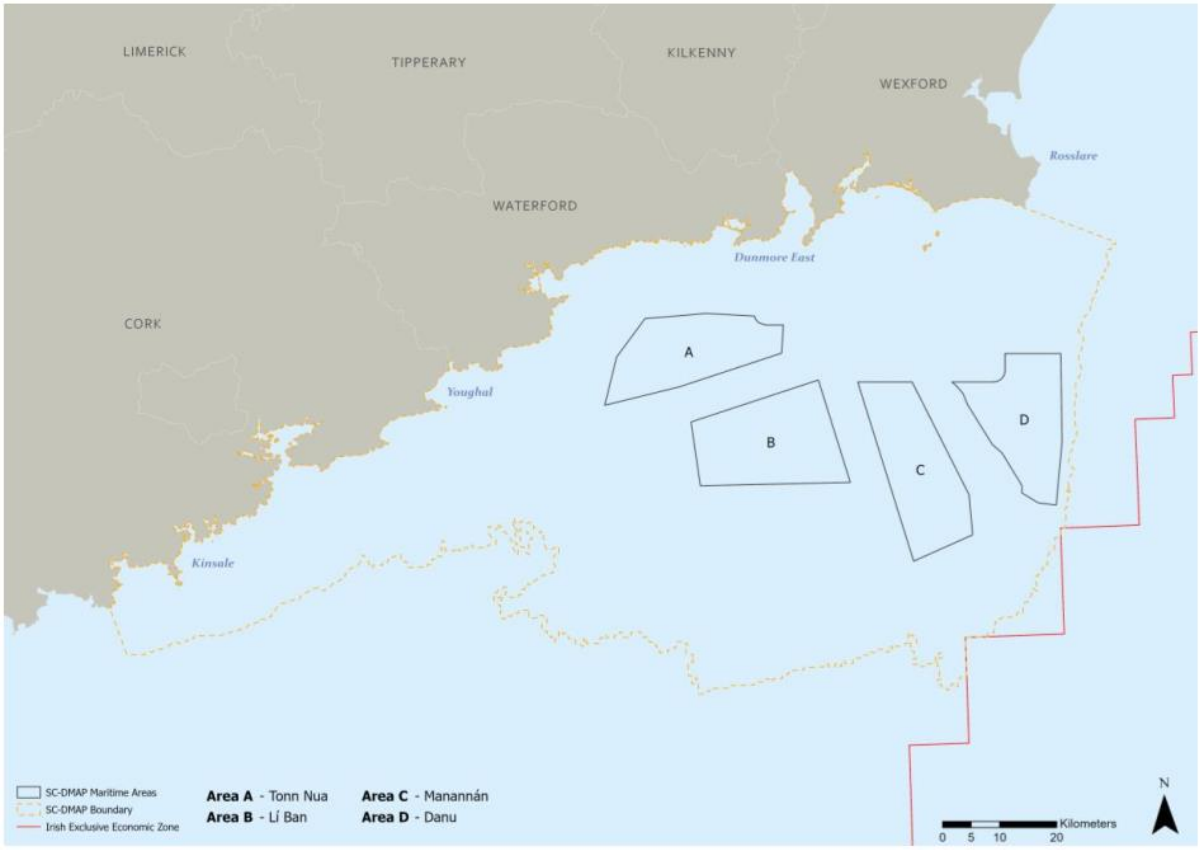


Figure 6.1: Maritime Areas A – D proposed for offshore wind development in the South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan

Tonn Nua which will be grid connected is due to be auctioned for development under the Offshore Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (ORESS) in Q4 2025 with operation expected c. 2034 based on a grid delivery date by Eirgrid in late 2033 (Eirgrid, 2025). An announcement in relation to an auction for Site B: Li Bann is expected before the end of 2025 with an expected auction date sometime in 2026. Further programmes of deployment will take place within Maritime Areas C and D over the next appropriate 10-year period. The deployments will happen under the Future Framework.

In addition, work has commenced on a National DMAP for offshore wind. Through this work further areas for fixed offshore wind development are expected to be designated by the end of 2027. This is

expected to include areas in the Irish Sea for development to support 2040 renewable electricity targets.

Project Response:

The Rosslare ORE Hub aligns with this policy as it is in a prime location to facilitate the installation of these developments and to act as a hub for subsequent O&M activities. The Rosslare ORE Hub will support the delivery of offshore wind under the Future Framework by facilitating the deployment of offshore wind at scale in the Irish and Celtic Seas. This includes the sites located in the SC-DMAP and those sites expected to be designated for offshore wind development in the Irish and Celtic Seas under the ongoing National DMAP process.

6.2.12 WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL CLIMATE ACTION PLAN 2024-2029

The Wexford County Council Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029 (Wexford County Council, 2024) has been developed in line with the Government's overall National Climate Objective. It sets out how Wexford County Council (WCC) will be responsible for enhancing climate resilience, increasing energy efficiency, and reducing GHG emissions across its own assets, services, and infrastructure, to which it is fully accountable for, whilst also demonstrating a broader role of inspiring, leading and facilitating, other sectors, to meet their own climate targets and ambitions.

The plan includes a key objective (2.1) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from its housing, offices, infrastructure and transport fleet in line with national 2030 and 2050 targets and a commitment (Goal A5, p51) to a reduction in fossil fuel-based travel by 25% by 2029 including through (Goal B3, p58) maximizing the EV fleet and continuing to upgrade existing older fleet to modern efficient vehicles. Transport currently accounts for 21% of GHG emissions from Wexford County Council and 24% of energy consumption.

The plan also recognises the significance of Rosslare Europort for its existing role, and potential for the offshore wind industry through development of the Rosslare ORE Hub to facilitate the deployment of offshore wind in the Irish and Celtic Seas.

Project Response:

The development of offshore wind at scale is a critical element of Ireland's strategy to move to a net zero carbon economy, both for reducing the reliance on fossil fuels for electricity generation and meeting increased demand from increased electrification across transport and industry. The Wexford County Council Climate Action Plan includes targets in relation to increasing the electrification of its fleet. To ensure that a move to electric vehicles contributes fully to decarbonisation the increased electricity demand should be met from renewable resources. The Rosslare ORE Hub aligns with these objectives and goals by facilitating the development of a renewable source of electricity, i.e. offshore wind at scale in the Irish and Celtic Seas.

6.2.13 CLIMATE CHANGE, RENEWABLE ENERGY AND DECARBONISATION SUMMARY PROJECT RESPONSE

The Rosslare ORE Hub is aligned with climate change, renewable energy and decarbonisation policy across all policy levels. Through the facilitation of the deployment of offshore wind at scale the Rosslare ORE Hub will support the achievement of local, national and European targets related to increasing the percentage of electricity generated from renewable resources, decreasing reliance on fossil fuels and decreasing GHG emissions from energy generation and use. The achievement of these targets is viewed as critical to the achievement of the overarching aim of limiting global warming and meeting legal obligations concerning the reduction of GHG emissions under the United Nations Framework Convention On Climate Change.

6.3 SPATIAL POLICY

Project Ireland 2040 (Irish Government, 2018) is the Irish government's long-term overarching strategy for 2040. By 2040, there will be approximately one million additional people living in Ireland. This population growth will require hundreds of thousands of new jobs, new homes, heightened cultural and social amenities, enhanced regional connectivity and improved environmental sustainability.

Project Ireland 2040 consists of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and its equivalent for the marine area, the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF), with the framework for implementation set out in the National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030. Both the National Planning Framework and National Development Plan have been subject to review and are discussed in Section 6.3.1 (NPF) and Section 6.3.3 (NDP). Policies within the NPF, NMPF and NDP relevant to the development of the Rosslare ORE Hub are discussed in the following sections.

6.3.1 NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The NPF is the primary Irish planning policy guiding spatial, planning and land use in Ireland. It is the topmost level of policy in the Irish planning hierarchy, from which certain policies and frameworks are derived. It includes an ambition to create a single vision, with a shared set of goals for every community across the country. These goals are set out as National Strategic Outcomes (NSO) to be delivered through developing a region-focused strategy for managing growth, use public and private lands for certain strategic purposes with a more active approach to the management of land and support this with strengthened, more environmentally focused planning at local level. It also includes a set of National Policy Objectives (NPO) with which regional and local planning policy must align.

The NPF, which was originally published in 2018 (Irish Government, 2020b), has undergone its first revision and has been superseded by the National Planning Framework First Revision (NPF 2025), published in April 2025 (Irish Government, 2025a).

Of particular relevance are the NSO concerning:

- Transition to a Carbon Neutral and Climate Resilient Society (NSO 8)
- A Strong Economy, supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills (NSO 6)

- Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities (NSO 3)
- Enhanced Amenities and Heritage (NSO 7)
- High-Quality International Connectivity (NSO 4)

The NSOs are underpinned by:

- Sustainable Land Management and Resource Efficiency - Adopting the principles of the circular economy to enable more sustainable planning and land use management of our natural resources and assets.
- Climate Neutral Economy - Our need to accelerate action on climate change.
- Renewable Energy - Our transition to a climate neutral energy future.

Chapter 7 of the NPF 2025 "*Realising our Island and Maritime Potential*" addresses Ireland's approach to integrated land and maritime planning, including in relation to our Maritime Economy, Ports, Coastal Environment and Planning for Climate Change and Offshore Renewable Energy.

Of particular relevance are the following National Policy Objectives:

- National Policy Objective 50: Ensure that the strategic development requirements of Tier 1 and Tier 2 Ports, ports of regional significance, State Fishing Harbours and smaller harbours are addressed as part of Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and plans at local level to ensure the effective growth and sustainable development of the city regions and regional and rural areas, in accordance with National Ports Policy.
- National Policy Objective 51: Support the sustainable delivery of port and harbour infrastructure to facilitate the development, maintenance and operation of offshore renewable electricity generating developments.
- National Policy Objective 55: To support the progressive development of Ireland's offshore renewable energy potential, the sustainable development of enabling onshore and offshore infrastructure including domestic and international grid connectivity enhancements, non-grid transmission infrastructure, as well as port infrastructure for the marshalling and assembly of wind turbine components and for the operation and maintenance of offshore renewable energy projects.

Project response:

Transition to a Carbon Neutral and Climate Resilient Society

As stated previously the primary purpose of the Rosslare ORE Hub is to provide a facility for the efficient handling and storage, marshalling, staging and integration of ORE components to facilitate installation of offshore wind energy projects by ORE developers. Offshore renewable energy has strong Government support with a target of at least 5GW of offshore wind projects by 2030 or as soon as possible thereafter. This target will be achieved through the deployment of fixed offshore wind farms in the Irish and Celtic Seas. There are five offshore windfarm projects progressing through the planning process in the Irish Sea and a site in the Celtic Sea due undergoing an auction process with the winning bid expected to be announced in Q4 2025. The Rosslare ORE Hub is in a

prime location to facilitate these developments (refer to EIAR Volume 2 Chapter 3: Need for the Project), supporting the transition to a carbon neutral and climate resilient society.

A Strong Economy, supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills / Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities

The Proposed Development will generate direct employment opportunities during both its construction and operational phases for the immediate community, wider Wexford county and Southeast region. The Rosslare ORE Hub can act as a catalyst for ORE supporting industries. The potential for ports to maximise the value of ORE to local communities by driving economic development through co-location of ORE supply chain clusters is recognised by Government (NECP) and a policy framework to support this is expected to feature in the forthcoming revised Ports Policy. Through its facilitation of offshore wind development, the Rosslare ORE Hub will contribute to a strong economy and strengthen the local largely rural economy.

Enhanced Amenities and Heritage

An integral element of the Rosslare ORE Hub is the provision of a new Small Boat Harbour with enhanced access in deeper water for the users of the existing Small Boat Harbour, which will be infilled as part of the reclamation works for the Proposed Development. The new Small Boat Harbour will provide enhanced facilities for the existing users of the Small Boat Harbour and Fisherman's Quay including berths, quay wall, parking and storage sheds. In addition, a new separate facility for the local Sea Scouts will be provided including a slipway, parking and storage shed. Both facilities will be securely separated from the main port and ORE related activities and will provide enhanced amenities to the users.

High-Quality International Connectivity

While the primary purpose of the Rosslare ORE Hub is to support ORE development, it has been designed as a multi-use facility. There may be times when the facility is not fully utilised for ORE operations, for example between ORE projects or due to ORE project delays. At such times, the facility may be used for traditional port activities. This occasional secondary use of the Rosslare ORE Hub supports the position of Rosslare Europort as a port offering high-quality international connectivity.

National Policy Objectives

The Rosslare ORE Hub is supported by and aligns with the relevant National Policy Objectives under Chapter 7: Realising our Island and Maritime Potential. Section 7.3 of the NPF 2025 discusses ports and states:

"in line with the Climate Action Plan 2024, the transport sector will continue to support plans to facilitate the development of at least 5GW of installed offshore wind capacity by 2030, and the longer- term ambition for over 37GW of offshore renewable energy (ORE) to be delivered before 2050. The Irish Commercial State Ports can act as positive contributors to the ORE Industry."

The Rosslare ORE Hub has been designed specifically to facilitate the development of offshore windfarms in the Irish and Celtic Seas and will contribute to the achievement of Ireland's immediate and longer-term targets for offshore wind development.

6.3.2 NATIONAL MARINE PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) (Irish Government, 2021) is Ireland's first marine spatial plan, published in 2021 which works in parallel to the NPF. It has been developed in compliance with the Marine Spatial Planning Directive (2014/89/EU) (European Commission, 2014), and brings together all marine-based human activities, outlining the government's vision and objectives for marine planning policies for all marine activities. It sets a clear direction for managing Ireland's seas, clarifies objectives and priorities and directs stakeholders towards strategic, plan-led, and efficient use of Ireland's marine resources.

The NMPF has been prepared using an ecosystem-based approach and informed by best available knowledge. The NMPF has a number of objectives, policies and supporting actions to support the '*effective management of marine activities and more sustainable use of our marine resources*'. It sets out Overarching Marine Planning Policies (OMPPs) which apply to both marine activities or developments, and developments outside the marine area that could impact on it. The OMPPs are supported by Sectoral Marine Planning Policies (SMPPs). Plans for development or activities in the maritime area may have to consider a range of both OMPPs and SMPPs and in most cases demonstrate that the development or activity will, in order of preference:

a) avoid

b) minimise, or

c) mitigate

significant adverse impacts on the subject matter of the policy.

Overarching Marine Planning Policies

The OMPPs are grouped under a number of themes as follows:

- Environmental (Chapter 5), including ocean health, biodiversity, underwater noise, climate change).
- Economic (Chapter 6) based on a thriving maritime economy comprising policies on co-existence and infrastructure.
- Social (Chapter 7) which addresses our engagement with the sea (includes access, employment, rural coastal and island communities, social benefits).

Project Response (Overarching Marine Planning Policies):

Ocean health, climate change, biodiversity

The Rosslare ORE Hub will directly contribute to Ireland's response to the climate emergency by ensuring that offshore wind can be deployed at scale in the Irish Sea and Celtic Sea, contributing to the achievement of ambitious renewable electricity and decarbonisation targets.

Climate change is acknowledged as being one of the largest threats to the biodiversity of our oceans and ocean health with recent research indicating that climate change may account for up to half of

the combined impacts on marine ecosystems[5]. Through facilitating the deployment of offshore wind at scale, the Rosslare ORE Hub is contributing to the fight against climate change induced biodiversity loss and ocean health degradation.

In relation to ocean health, the Rosslare ORE Hub has, firstly through an iterative design process aimed to avoid impacts to the marine environment and where not possible to avoid impacts, it has aimed to minimise and mitigate any impacts to ensure that they are not significant. This includes in relation to water quality, underwater noise, air quality and marine litter.

Economic (co-existence)

Co-existence is an Overarching Marine Planning Policy Objective of the NMPF with Co-existence Policy 1 stating:

> *"Proposals should demonstrate that they have considered how to optimise the use of space, including through consideration of opportunities for co-existence and co-operation with other activities, enhancing other activities where appropriate. If proposals cannot avoid significant adverse impacts (including displacement) on other activities they must, in order of preference: a) minimise significant adverse impacts, b) mitigate significant adverse impacts, or c) if it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts, proposals should set out the reasons for proceeding."*

In alignment with OMPP Co-existence Policy 1 the Rosslare ORE Hub has been designed as a multiuse facility to provide for the secondary use of traditional port activities and to incorporate enhanced facilities for users of the existing small boat harbour into the new facility.

The Proposed Development includes the provision of a new Small Boat Harbour to replace the existing small boat harbour which will be infilled as part of the land reclamation works for the Rosslare ORE Hub. The new Small Boat Harbour will provide 64 No. berths of varying sizes for users of the existing small boat harbour as well as a new quay for existing users of Fisherman's Quay together with parking and storage for gear. The new Small Boat Harbour will be securely separated from the ORE Hub, providing safe access to the facility and the sea for its users and will be accessible at all stages throughout the tidal cycles.

Services (water, wastewater, electricity, etc.) for future uses will also be included in the new Small Boat Harbour during its construction to provide for the possible future uses of ORE operations and maintenance and a new RNLI base. Including these safeguarding measures as part of the Proposed Development ensures construction and environmental efficiencies, by avoiding abortive work or duplication of excavations at a given location where possible. However, buildings for these possible future uses are not included in the Proposed Development at this time and will be subject to their own application for development permission at the appropriate point in the future.

The Proposed Development will also include a separate facility for the local Sea Scouts, comprising of a new slipway together with parking and a storage shed which will be installed between the

[5] https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/publications/how-climate-change-impacts-marine-life

Rosslare ORE Hub and the western shore, providing safe access to the sea for the Sea Scouts away from the operations of Rosslare Europort.

In addition, while the primary use is facilitating ORE, there may be periods when the facility is not fully utilised for ORE operations, for example between ORE projects or due to ORE project delays. At such times, the facility may be used for traditional port activities. This potential occasional use for traditional port activities has been assessed as appropriate in the relevant chapters of the EIAR.

Social (Engagement with the sea)

The provision of the new Smal Boat harbour and Sea Scouts facility has been designed in consultation with the various user groups (refer to EIAR Volume 2 Chapter 4: Scoping and Consultation) and will provide socio-economic benefits to the groups that will use the new facilities. These facilities are being provided adopting co-existence as a core principle, however they will also have a positive outcome for other social OMPPs including the provision of enhanced facilities with safe access to the sea for the users of the existing small boat harbour and the Sea Scouts and increased employment for the local community and wider South East region, both during the construction of the Rosslare ORE Hub itself and subsequently through the facilitation of ORE operations and maintenance.

Sectoral Marine Planning Policies

The NMPF also includes a range of objectives and policies under Chapter 13: Energy - Offshore Renewable and Chapter 18: Ports, Harbours and Shipping that are relevant to the Rosslare ORE Hub. Chapter 13: Energy Offshore Renewable includes a range of objectives that broadly support the establishment of an offshore renewables industry including the following objectives:

- Support the development of ORE in Ireland as a driver to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and accelerate the move to cleaner energy in line with national and EU policy.
- Increase the sustainable ORE use of our extensive marine resource in an efficient and co-ordinated manner identifying, where possible, potential for synergies and opportunities for multi-use of our shared maritime area.
- Support Ireland's decarbonisation journey through increased use of ORE while delivering significant and sustained benefits, import substitution, fiscal return, national and local economic development and technology learning.
- Support the strategic growth of the ORE industry recognising the potential to derive benefits particularly for Ireland's coastal communities.
- Provide enhanced security of energy supply for Ireland in the short and medium term, in accordance with the Climate Action Plan.

Project Response (Sectoral Marine Planning Policies):

The Rosslare ORE Hub is aligned with the Sectoral Marine Planning Policy Objectives as outlined above. As a purpose designed facility to support the efficient handling and storage, marshalling, staging and integration of ORE components to facilitate installation of offshore wind energy projects the Rosslare ORE Hub is a critical element of enabling infrastructure required to support the development of Ireland's offshore wind industry. The facility is in a prime location to facilitate ORE development in the Irish and Celtic Seas and will contribute to the achievement of targets for offshore wind to 2030 and beyond under the OREDP and Future Framework policy frameworks.

It will enable the development of projects that will contribute to the reduction of GHG emissions from electricity generation, reducing our reliance on imported fossil fuels, thereby increasing our energy security.

The objectives under Chapter 18: Ports, Harbours and Shipping, show strong support for the sustainable development of Ireland's ports and highlight their importance to Ireland as an island nation. They include objectives to/for:

- Safeguard the operation of ports as key actors in the economic wellbeing of the State through the provision of safe and sustainable maritime transport.
- Facilitate a competitive and effective market for maritime transport services.
- The sustainable development of the ports sector and full realisation of the National Ports Policy with a view to providing adequate capacity to meet present and future demand, and to adapt to the consequences of climate change.
- Ensure that the strategic development requirements of Tier 1 and Tier 2 Ports, ports of regional significance, and smaller harbours are appropriately addressed in regional and local marine planning policy.

Project Response:

The Rosslare ORE Hub will provide a purpose-built facility to support ORE development and can act as a catalyst for ORE associated industries such as logistics, planning, environmental and engineering and research services which could provide additional job creation, benefiting the region economically and placing the port as the centre. The objectives stated above show the strong support for this development which is at the heart of port related policies within the NMPF.

6.3.3 NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The NDP, first published in 2018, revised in 2021, and further updated in 2025, provides the enabling investment to implement the strategies set out in the NPF and the NMPF. It is the largest NDP delivered in the history of the Irish state – with plans for €275.4 billion of public capital investment to 2035 and aims to deliver transformational investment to safeguard our future. It has a particular focus to:

- deliver transformative, critical and growth-enhancing infrastructure;

- scale up and strengthen our water, energy and transport systems;
- unlock housing supply;
- improve the living standards of the people of Ireland; and
- boost our international competitiveness.

It highlights the ambitious national climate goals under the Climate Action Plan (CAP) and the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, committing Ireland to transition to a climate-resilient, biodiversity-rich, environmentally sustainable, and climate-neutral economy by 2050 and a reduction of 51% in GHG emissions by 2030, compared to 2018 levels.

Project Response:

The National Development Plan does not include any specific objectives or planned expenditure in relation to port facilities for offshore wind development, however the Rosslare ORE Hub will deliver transformative, critical and growth-enhancing infrastructure by providing a purpose-built facility for the efficient handling and storage, marshalling, staging and integration of ORE components to facilitate installation of offshore wind energy projects by ORE developers and operators.

6.3.4 WEXFORD COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2022-2028)

The Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028 (Wexford County Council, 2022) was adopted by the Elected Members of Wexford County Council at the Special Meeting of the Council held on Monday, 13th June 2022. The Plan sets out the policies and objectives for the development of County Wexford until 2028.

The Wexford County Development Plan includes plans and objectives across a range of areas, including energy strategy, settlement plans (including for Rosslare Europort), environmental management, landscape character assessments and more. It commits to supporting the sustainable growth and development of the maritime area and the maritime economy in accordance with relevant objectives contained within the plan. It also commits to supporting proposals that will result in an increase in marine related employment subject to compliance with the Habitats directive and normal planning and environmental criteria and recognises the potential for Rosslare Europort to develop a centre to support the renewable energy industry.

Project Response:

The recognition of the potential for Rosslare Europort to support the renewable energy industry is a strong endorsement of the need for the Rosslare ORE Hub which will facilitate the deployment of offshore wind at scale in the Irish and Celtic Seas.

The provision of the facility will also contribute to an increase in the maritime economy, both during the construction of the Proposed Development and afterwards through the facilitation of offshore wind development.

6.3.5 SPATIAL POLICY SUMMARY PROJECT RESPONSE

The Rosslare ORE Hub is aligned with spatial policy across all policy levels. Through the facilitation of the deployment of offshore wind at scale the Rosslare ORE Hub will support the achievement of a range of national and local planning policies including overarching National Strategic outcomes under the National Planning Framework in relation to the transition to a carbon neutral and climate resilient society, the development of a strong economy, supported by enterprise, innovation and skills, a strengthened rural economy and community, enhanced amenities and high-quality international connectivity.

In the context of marine planning, the Rosslare ORE Hub aligns with overarching marine planning policy objectives under the National Marine Planning Framework in relation to the environment, economy and social aspects of interaction with the sea.

A key aspect of the Rosslare ORE Hub is the adoption of co-existence as a core principle during the design of the facility. Co-existence is one of the underpinning policies within the NMPF. In alignment with this principle, the Rosslare ORE Hub has been designed as a multi-use facility and will facilitate ORE and traditional port activities and will provide a new Small Boat Harbour with enhanced facilities for existing users of the small boat harbour at Ballygeary and a separate facility for the local Sea Scouts.

In alignment with the principles of forward planning under the NMPF, the small boat harbour will also include services for the possible future uses for ORE operations and maintenance and the RNLI.

Finally, the Rosslare ORE Hub is also strongly supported at a local level with recognition of the potential for Rosslare Europort to support the renewable energy industry being included in the Wexford County Development Plan.

6.4 PORTS POLICY

6.4.1 PORTS: TRANS-EUROPEAN NETWORK

The EU's Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) policy aims to create a unified, efficient, and sustainable transport infrastructure across the EU. It includes both a core network (to be completed by 2030) and a comprehensive network (by 2050), with Rosslare Europort included in the latter.

The policy supports:

- Efficient transport of people and goods
- Access to jobs and services
- Economic growth and trade
- Environmental sustainability and climate resilience

Project Response:

Rosslare Europort is listed as a comprehensive port in Annex II. The designation of Rosslare Europort as a "*comprehensive port*" supports the development of Rosslare ORE Hub as a multi-use facility with the primary use of supporting the development of ORE. As a comprehensive port, Rosslare is integrated into the broader European transport network, benefiting from improved access to EU

funding, streamlined regulatory support, and enhanced connectivity with other key infrastructure nodes across Europe. The Rosslare ORE Hub has already been awarded funding under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) funding programme with a total of €2.5 million awarded for the planning phase of the project. Calls for funding under CEF are extremely competitive. The success of the project under CEF is a strong endorsement of the project by the European Commission.

The Proposed Development at Rosslare Europort aligns with TEN-T goals by:

- Enhancing transport efficiency and connectivity by providing a multi-use facility capable of supporting traditional port operations and during periods where the Rosslare ORE Hub is under utilised for ORE, such as between ORE projects or due to ORE project delays.
- Supporting economic and social cohesion by providing a multi-use facility integrating a new Small Boat Harbour and a Sea Scouts Facility into the Rosslare ORE Hub. These will provide enhanced facilities to replace the existing small boat harbour, which will be infilled as part of the reclamation works, benefitting the local maritime community.
- Contributing to environmental goals by serving as a hub for ORE.

The Proposed Development will help meet TEN-T infrastructure standards, including improved mobility and freight capacity, as outlined in Regulation (EU) 2024/1679.

6.4.2 NATIONAL PORTS POLICY

Ireland's National Ports Policy (NPP) (Irish Government, 2013), published in 2013, is a strategic framework that guides the development, management, and operation of Ireland's ports. The framework sets out the likely requirements in the future for port infrastructure, focussing on ensuring that port infrastructure supports economic growth, trade, and connectivity while addressing environmental and sustainability considerations.

Project Response:

The Rosslare ORE Hub will support economic growth through the facilitation of offshore wind development in the Irish and Celtic Seas. port infrastructure is a critical component of the offshore wind supply chain with the Rosslare ORE Hub in a prime location to facilitate development of the Phase One Projects, expected to be operational by 2030 and further offshore wind development in under the Future Framework policy.

The Rosslare ORE Hub will generate direct employment opportunities during its construction and throughout its operational phase through the facilitation of offshore wind development for the immediate community, wider Wexford county and Southeast region.

6.4.3 REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL PORTS POLICY 2013– ISSUES PAPER

In October 2023, the first phase of public consultation on the NPP was announced for review of the National Ports Policy – the consultation being based on an issues paper (Irish Government, Department of Transport, 2023) published at the same time. The public consultation period ended on the 15th of January 2024, the results of which will inform a revised National Ports Policy now due in 2026. The issues paper highlights many aspects worth considering for a revised NPP, including

putting more focus on areas such as climate change, the development of ORE, increasing ports capacity, Brexit and the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Project Response:

The NPP Review Issues Paper included the issue of the Irish Ports Capacity Study which evaluates the capacity of the port system to address current, and future demands up to 2040. With this in mind, the Rosslare ORE Hub has been designed as a multi-use facility that can support traditional port activities, maximising infrastructure utilisation and supporting regional and national economic resilience. There may be periods when the facility is not fully utilised for ORE operations, for example between ORE projects or due to ORE project delays. At such times, the facility may be used for traditional port activities.

6.4.4 POLICY STATEMENT: FACILITATION OF OFFSHORE RENEWABLE ENERGY BY COMMERCIAL PORTS IN IRELAND

The Department of Transport released a policy statement focussed on the Facilitation of Offshore Renewable Energy by Commercial Ports in Ireland in December 2021 (Irish Government, 2021). This statement outlines a strategic approach for commercial ports to support the development and deployment of offshore renewable energy projects, providing clarity to ORE operators about the use of Irish ports.

The policy statement positioned Ireland as a significant contributor to the EU's strategy on ORE. Ireland will contribute 5 GW of the EU's target of 60 GW of offshore wind capacity by 2030. The statement was informed by extensive engagement with the ORE sector to ascertain its needs.

Project Response:

The Rosslare ORE Hub supports the delivery of this objective by providing a purpose-built facility for the efficient handling and storage, marshalling, staging and integration of ORE components to facilitate installation of offshore wind energy projects by ORE developers and operators.

6.4.5 PORTS POLICY SUMMARY PROJECT RESPONSE

Rosslare Europort is listed as a comprehensive port in Annex II of the European Union's TEN-T policy framework which supports the development of Rosslare ORE Hub as a multi-use facility with the primary use of supporting the development of ORE. Development of the Rosslare ORE Hub has received strong endorsement from the European Commission through funding awarded under the very competitive Connecting Europe Facility.

The Rosslare ORE Hub will support economic growth, generating direct employment opportunities during its construction and throughout its operational phase through the facilitation of offshore wind development in the Irish and Celtic Seas. The development of the Rosslare ORE Hub for this purpose represents the evolving nature of port activity in Ireland, aligning perfectly with the policy statement on the facilitation of offshore renewable energy by commercial ports in Ireland.

6.5 OTHER POLICY

6.5.1 NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2023-2030

Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP), published in January 2024 (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2024), sets the national biodiversity agenda for the period 2023-2030. It implements actions within the framework of five strategic objectives:

- Objective 1 - Adopt a Whole of Government, Whole of Society Approach to Biodiversity
- Objective 2 - Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs
- Objective 3 - Secure Nature's Contribution to People
- Objective 4 - Enhance the Evidence Base for Action on Biodiversity
- Objective 5 - Strengthen Ireland's Contribution to International Biodiversity Initiatives

Section 5 of Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2023, which inserted section 59B into the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000, provides that public authorities are required to have regard to the National Biodiversity Action Plan and/or other relevant strategies and plans relating to biodiversity including Ireland's marine environmental targets established under the MSFD, and WFD.

Project Response:

The Rosslare ORE Hub has integrated the marine environmental targets established under the WFD and, where relevant, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) (Directive 2008/56/EC) into its development to guarantee the sustainable use of marine resources and conservation of marine biodiversity.

Compliance with the WFD is detailed in the WFD Compliance Assessment which accompanies this application for development permission.

Compliance with the MSFD is considered in relevant topic specific chapters, namely Volume 2 EIAR Chapter 7: Soils, Geology, Hydrogeology and Contamination, Volume 2 EIAR Chapter 8: Coastal Processes, Volume 2 EIAR Chapter 9: Water Quality and Flood Risk, Volume 2 EIAR Chapter 11: Benthic Ecology, Volume 2 EIAR Chapter 12: Fish Ecology, volume 2 EIAR Chapter 13: Marine Mammals, Volume 2 EIAR Chapter 14: Ornithology and Volume 2 EIAR Chapter 15: Commercial Fisheries.

7 PLANNING APPRAISAL

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This Section of the Planning Report provides a high level planning assessment which identifies the matters for consideration by ACP when making a decision on the application for development permission relating to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area to which the application relates; and in reaching a reasoned conclusion on the significant effects of the Proposed Development on the environment with respect to EIA; and a reasoned determination with respect to the Habitats and Birds Directives, WFD and Floods Directive.

7.2 NEED FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The Rosslare ORE Hub is part of Iarnród Eireann's (IÉ) strategic vision for Rosslare Europort and aligns with relevant policy and legislative drivers at international, European, national, regional and local scales (as set out in EIAR Chapter 2: Legislation and Policy Context of the EIAR and summarised in Section 6 of this Planning Report). The primary purpose of the Proposed Development is to provide a facility for the efficient handling and storage, marshalling, staging and integration of ORE components to facilitate installation of offshore wind energy projects.

Offshore wind farms being progressed in Ireland are proposed in direct response to Ireland's Climate Action Plan 2025 target to have 5GW of offshore wind operational by 2030, with further aims of 20 Gigawatts (GW) of ORE generation by 2040 and 27GW by 2050 set out in the *Future Framework for Offshore Renewable Energy* (Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment, 2024) and in *Powering Prosperity Ireland's Offshore Wind Industrial Strategy* (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2024).

There are currently five applications for consent for offshore wind farms in the Irish Sea (Ireland's east coast) targeting for deployment by 2030. Further developments are planned for the Celtic Sea (Ireland's south coast) under the South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan. The Proposed Development seeks to make an important contribution in terms of the construction of such developments. Given the above timeframes and offshore wind targets, there is an urgent need for the Proposed Development to be constructed and operational in line with the targets for delivery of ORE projects in the Irish Sea and Celtic Sea.

In 2021, the Minister for Transport undertook an assessment of the options for Irish State ports to facilitate the ORE sector, and published its *Policy Statement on the facilitation of Offshore Renewable Energy by Commercial Ports in Ireland* (Department of Transport, 2021) wherein it is stated that a multiport approach will be required to address the needs of the ORE industry, to deliver on the ORE targets set out in national policy, and to take advantage of the economic opportunity created by the roll out of fixed and floating offshore wind in Irish waters.

While the primary purpose of the Proposed Development is to facilitate offshore wind development, adopting a multi-use approach follows one of the underlying principles of the National Marine Planning Framework which encourages co-existence between marine activities. The proposals for the Rosslare ORE Hub facilitate efficient use of port infrastructure well into the future, thereby maximising investment in the facilities. This is achieved by undertaking marine enabling works and

installing services for anticipated future uses such as an operations and maintenance (O&M) base for offshore wind farms; by facilitating the use of the ORE storage area for traditional port activities, including Roll-on, Roll-off (RoRo) trailer parking; and by providing improved and safe facilities for existing users at Rosslare Europort at the new Small Boat Harbour and Sea Scouts facility.

By providing facilities that support various uses of infrastructure both currently and in the future, the proposed Rosslare ORE Hub meets the policy imperatives of the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) (Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment, 2021) regarding maritime economic development and demonstrates alignment with overarching marine planning policies related to environment, economic (co-existence) and social themes.

7.3 NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The Proposed Development consists of a range of integrated infrastructure elements designed to support the full lifecycle of offshore renewable energy projects. The Proposed Development includes capital dredging to achieve navigable depths for vessels delivering ORE components; land reclamation to create a storage area for these components; and construction of two new berths to facilitate installation vessels for offshore wind. The land reclamation works include the infilling of an existing small boat harbour, which will be incorporated into the Rosslare ORE Hub at a new location in deeper water, and installation of a new slipway and facility for the Sea Scouts.

The primary purpose of the Proposed Development is to provide a facility for the efficient handling, storage, marshalling, staging and integration of ORE components to facilitate installation of offshore wind energy projects by ORE developers and operators. The Proposed Development is designed to provide facilities that accommodate a wide range of infrastructure uses, both for current requirements and anticipated future needs. For instance, the Proposed Development could be used for traditional port activities if required, including during periods of reduced ORE-related activity. Refer to EIAR Volume 2, Chapter 6: Project Description for further detail.

The site location and Proposed Development Boundary are shown on Figure 1.2.

The Proposed Development Boundary (i.e., the area where planning permission is sought to construct and operate the Proposed Development) encompasses a total area of 80.3ha, lying mostly within the maritime area, and includes an area for capital dredging of 48.4ha and 27.7ha of reclamation from the sea providing operational area for the storage, marshalling, staging and integration of ORE components, traditional Ro-Ro port activities and a new replacement '*Small Boat*' harbour.

The proposed new Small Boat Harbour will accommodate users of the existing Small Boat Harbour at Ballygeary (small fishing and leisure boats) which will be infilled as part of the Proposed Development. The proposed new Small Boat Harbour includes marine enabling works and installation of services for potential future developments which may include Operations and Maintenance (O&M) facilities and a new RNLI base. Safeguarded capacity has been included in the Proposed Development for these potential future installations, as have ducting and pipework as necessary to accommodate them. Including these safeguarding measures as part of the Proposed Development ensures construction and environmental efficiencies, by avoiding abortive work or duplication of excavations at a given location where possible. The buildings and facilities required for

these potential future uses are not included in the Proposed Development. The new Small Boat Harbour will be securely separated from the much larger vessels and operations in the main ORE facility.

7.4 CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES

EIAR Chapter 5: Assessment of Alternatives and Project Design describes a robust assessment of alternative locations, including the environmental effects thereof, that was undertaken as the design of the ORE Hub progressed.

Once the preferred location option was identified, an iterative process was undertaken to develop the layout and design of the development. The design of the layout within the identified footprint, started with the outer perimeter where the berths are located, and where the facilities for community uses were to be accommodated. The remaining reclaimed land in the central areas of the ORE Hub was then configured to provide the ORE Storage Area, and the ORE Compound, ensuring sufficient space for safe and efficient access by sea and on land. The layout was then iteratively refined to reflect the outcomes of the subsequent design development tasks, culminating in the design solution which is presented in the Planning Drawings, and which was assessed throughout the EIAR.

7.5 PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

The Proposed Development supports the achievement of a number of policy and planning objectives across several areas including:

- Renewable electricity targets, decarbonisation targets and Ireland's response to the climate change emergency

  Development of the Rosslare ORE Hub will support the deployment of offshore wind at scale by facilitating the development of offshore wind in the Irish Sea and Celtic Sea. This will directly contribute to the achievement of Ireland's renewable electricity and sectoral decarbonisation targets and support Ireland's response to the climate change emergency. International, European, national, regional and local legislation and policies are discussed in EIAR Volume 2, Chapter 2: Legislation and Policy Context and summarised in Section 6 of this Report.

- Marine planning and terrestrial planning policies and targets

  Development of the Rosslare ORE Hub supports and is supported by marine and terrestrial planning frameworks, plans and policies at national, regional and local scales. The Proposed Development has been designed and developed in line with relevant objectives under the National Planning Framework and National Marine Planning Framework. Through the facilitation of the deployment of offshore wind at scale, the ORE Hub will directly support a number of National Strategic Outcomes underpinning the National Planning Framework, including:

  - Transition to a Carbon Neutral and Climate Resilient Society
  - A Strong Economy, supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills
  - Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities

- Enhanced Amenities and Heritage
- High-Quality International Connectivity

The Proposed Development also supports the achievement of underlying and sectoral policies within the National Marine Planning Framework. In keeping with the underlying premise of coexistence within the Framework, the Proposed Development has been designed as a multiuse facility with the ability to provide for traditional port activities and the provision of enhanced facilities for users of the Small Boat Harbour, local fishers and the local clubs, such as the Sea Scouts.

National, regional and local planning frameworks, plans and policies are discussed in EIAR Volume 2, Chapter 2: Legislation and Policy Context and summarised in Section 6 of this Report.

- Ports Policy

  National Ports Policy supports the ongoing development of Rosslare Europort. Under National Ports Policy Rosslare Europort is classified as a Tier 2 port of National Significance under the national ports policy. In addition, the Department of Transport released a policy statement focussed on the Facilitation of Offshore Renewable Energy by Commercial Ports in Ireland in December 2021. This statement outlines a strategic approach for commercial ports to support the development and deployment of offshore renewable energy projects and supports the development of the Rosslare ORE Hub top facilitate the deployment of offshore wind at scale in the Irish and Celtic seas.

  National ports policy is discussed in EIAR Volume 2, Chapter 2: Legislation and Policy Context and summarised in Section 6 of this Report.

7.6 SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

7.6.1 REUSE OF DREDGE MATERIAL

The Proposed Development proposes beneficial reuse of the material from the capital dredging required to deepen the approach channel and create the ORE Berths as fill within the Land Reclamation Area that will provide a storage area for ORE components. The Rosslare ORE Hub has been designed with a cut and fill balance that has been optimised to minimise the use of imported fill material.

7.6.2 MULTI-USE OF FACILITIES

7.6.2.1 NEW SMALL BOAT HARBOUR

The proposed new Small Boat Harbour will accommodate users of the existing Small Boat Harbour at Ballygeary (small fishing and leisure boats) which will be infilled as part of the Proposed Development. The new Small Boat Harbour will provide enhanced facilities in deeper water which will be accessible at all stages of the tidal cycle. The new Small Boat Harbour will be securely separated from the much larger vessels and operations in the main ORE facility. It will also provide facilities for the users of Fisherman's Quay.

7.6.2.2 SEA SCOUTS FACILITY

A new facility for local clubs such as the Sea Scouts will be constructed to the western flank of the newly reclaimed port site with a relocated storage shed and parking to accommodate the training boats and equipment of the local Sea Scouts. This will be securely separated from the much larger vessels and operations in the main ORE facility.

7.6.3 ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENTS

As Black Guillemots are known to nest in the existing port infrastructure (see EIAR Chapter 14: Ornithology), nest boxes will be integrated into the inner and outer ends of ORE Berth 1 and ORE Berth 2 to provide safe, secure nesting places for Black Guillemots.

Proposals also include the planting of salt tolerant native trees and shrubs, which will provide opportunities for nesting birds and other wildlife, and to soften hard edges of the reclaimed area to help it blend into the existing environment, especially on the landward side.

7.7 OTHER CONSENTS AND APPROVALS

7.7.1 MARITIME AREA CONSENT

IÉ applied for and was granted a MAC (Ref.: 20230005) on 2nd July 2025. The MAC has an expiry date of 1st July 2085. At the appropriate future date IÉ will engage with MARA with the intention of obtaining a new MAC to ensure that the facilities permitted by the development consent can continue in use. Refer to Section 7.8 of this Report.

7.7.2 WATER AND WASTEWATER CONNECTION

Where it is proposed to connect the development to the public water and wastewater network, evidence must be provided that Uisce Éireann has confirmed the feasibility of making the connections and the network has the necessary capacity to service the development.

In accordance with the requirement of article 22, sub-article (2A)(a) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, a Confirmation of Feasibility has been provided by Uisce Éireann and this is submitted with the application documentation. This Confirmation of Feasibility states that Uisce Éireann has reviewed the pre-connection enquiry from IÉ for the Rosslare Europort ORE Hub and concluded that both connections to the water and wastewater network are feasible without infrastructure upgrades by Uisce Éireann.

7.7.3 DUMPING AT SEA

The Proposed Development proposes to use dredge material as fill within the Proposed Development Reclamation Area. The Rosslare ORE Hub has been designed with a cut and fill balance as such that there will be no requirement to dump dredged material at sea. Therefore, a licence under the Dumping at Sea Act, 1996, as amended is not required.

7.8 DURATION OF PERMISSION

A 10-year planning permission is required due to the scale and maritime nature of the Proposed Development and the need to ensure that Rosslare Europort can continue to operate effectively

during construction of the ORE Hub, requiring works to be delivered in distinct phases. The approach to construction sequencing also ensures that existing community uses such as at the new Small Boat Harbour and the Sea Scouts facility are accommodated and can continue safely. EIAR Chapter 6: Project Description contains further detail on the overall delivery programme and an indicative construction sequencing programme.

7.9 DECOMMISSIONING

The EIAR considers a project design life of 50 years from completion of construction of the Proposed Development. All port facilities developed for the ORE Hub will be retained and required by IÉ for ORE, traditional port activities and community use beyond this time period (with ongoing maintenance and repairs undertaken). Therefore, it is not considered necessary to plan for decommissioning and reinstatement or for closure of the quays, storage areas, new Small Boat Harbour or parts of the ORE Hub once they are in-place.

IÉ considers that this approach complies with Section 96.(2)(d) of the MAP Act 2021, as amended, which states:

"96.(2) Without prejudice to the generality of the obligation under subsection (1) on the holder of a MAC to rehabilitate a part of the maritime area, that obligation may be or include one or more than one of the following:

(d) the re-use of infrastructure for the same or another purpose;"

By email dated 23rd July 2025, agents for Iarnród Éireann – Irish Rail informed An Coimisiún Pleanála of Iarnród Éireann – Irish Rail's intention to proceed on this basis. An Coimisiún Pleanála responded to the agent by email dated 27th August 2025 stating that the contents of the 23rd July email were noted and raised no issues.

7.10 THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

The EIAR provides a comprehensive account of the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Development, the significance of effects on receptors, and any mitigation measures and monitoring proposed. Each topic of environmental assessment is considered as a separate chapter of the EIAR and has been prepared by competent experts. The structure of the EIAR and the lead author for each technical chapter is identified in EIAR Chapter 1: Introduction and Methodology. Baseline surveys were undertaken to provide up-to-date information on the environment. A list of proposed mitigation measures and monitoring is provided in EIAR Chapter 26: Summary of Mitigation Measures and Monitoring. The EIAR is submitted to inform the Commission, as the competent authority, in its EIA of the Proposed Development, as required by the EIA Directive.

The EIAR concluded that for all but one element of the receiving environment assessed, following the implementation of mitigation measures, there would be no significant residual effects. The Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (SLVIA) (EIAR Chapter 23) concluded that there would be residual visual effects of significance ranging between '*Substantial*' and '*Imperceptible*', with those effects considered Significant in EIA terms (i.e., substantial and above) principally located in the immediate surrounds of the Proposed Development. Viewpoints, VP3 and VP5, were classified with a residual significance of visual effect of '*Substantial*', and both represent some of the clearest

and nearest views afforded of the Proposed Development and its operational phase activities. Whilst the physical area of land reclamation and the proposed ancillary structures will have a notable visual effect on surrounding receptors, it is important to note that in almost all instances, the operational phase activities and associated structures and vessels, generate some of the most notable visual effects. Indeed, these extensive and sizable structures result in the development having a higher degree of visual exposure on the surrounding landscape. These operational phase activities and components also present with a strong anthropogenic character and will be some of the most prominent built features in the immediate and wider surrounds of the site. Nevertheless, these operation phase activities within the PDB will fluctuate over time, and thus, the assessed visual effects represent the worst-case residual effects.

Overall, whilst the Proposed Development will generate some highly localised significant visual effects, its character and physical composition, along with its operational activities, will not appear incongruous within the context of the surrounding busy, working port setting which is adjacent. In summary, whilst the Proposed Development represents a marked increase in the quantum of built development along these coastal environs, it presents as an extension to the already highly modified port facility.

7.11 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

7.11.1 AA SCREENING

The AA Screening Report and NIS submitted with the application for development permission have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive and the European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended. In accordance with the stepped process under AA, a Screening for AA was first undertaken to determine, if the Proposed Development, alone or in combination with other plans and projects would have a significant effect on the protected species and habitats of the Natura 2000 sites falling within the Zone of Influence (ZoI) of the Proposed Development in light of their conservation objectives. The AA screening was undertaken without consideration of any mitigation measures to prevent or reduce the significant effects on each receptor and adopted the source-pathway-receptor model to identify those receptors which could be affected by the Proposed Development. Where significant effects could be ruled out at the screening stage, the receptor was screened out. Where significant effects could not be ruled out in the absence of mitigation measures, the receptor was screened in and proceeded to Stage 2 AA.

The SACs and their associated Qualifying Interests (QIs) which were screened in for Stage 2 AA are listed in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1: Natura 2000 sites screened in for Stage 2 AA

Natura 2000 Site	QI / SCI	Effect
Carnsore Point SAC	Harbour porpoise	Mortality, injury, displacement and/or disturbance from underwater noise

Natura 2000 Site	QI / SCI	Effect
Blackwater Bank SAC	Harbour porpoise	Mortality, injury, displacement and/or disturbance from underwater noise
Slaney River Valley SAC	Harbour seal	Mortality, injury, displacement and/or disturbance from underwater noise

The following projects and plans were screened in for Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment of potential in-combination effects on the Natura 2000 Sites listed in Table 7.1.

- Iarnród Éireann - Rosslare Europort Maintenance Dredging

The AA Screening concluded that It cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the Proposed Development, individually and in combination with other plans or project, will have a significant effect on the following Natura 2000 sites:

- Carnsore Point SAC
- Blackwater Bank SAC
- Slaney River Valley SAC

7.11.2 NATURA IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The NIS considered the potential for adverse *in situ*[6] and *ex situ*[7] effects of the Proposed Development on three European sites and their QIs. The three SACs considered are:

- Carnsore Point SAC (Harbour Porpoise QI and SSCOs):
  - Injury, Disturbance and Displacement
- Blackwater Bank SAC (Harbour Porpoise QI and SSCOs):
  - Injury, Disturbance and Displacement
- Slaney River Valley SAC (Harbour Seal QI and SSCOs):
  - Injury, Disturbance and Displacement.

[6] ***In situ* effects** refer to any changes or pressures occurring within the physical boundary of the European site itself. These may include direct impacts to habitats, acoustic disturbance within the site, physical barriers to movement across the site, or any changes that undermine the Site-Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCOs) as defined by NPWS (e.g., access to suitable habitat, minimisation of disturbance, or maintenance of population and distribution of the QI species within the site)

[7] ***Ex situ* effects** refer to impacts that occur outside the site boundary, but which affect individuals belonging to the QI population that make functional use of areas beyond the designated site. For mobile marine species such as Harbour Porpoise and Harbour Seal, individuals may forage or transit widely beyond the SAC boundary. Therefore, any adverse impacts in these areas that lead to injury, sustained displacement, or disruption to critical behaviours (e.g., foraging, communication) can result in an indirect effect on the QI population, and may have implications for site integrity, particularly if those effects are of sufficient scale, duration, or frequency to undermine the SSCOs.

An in-combination effects assessment for cumulative effects was undertaken considering the potential for adverse effects arising from the Proposed Development in combination with the Iarnród Éireann - Rosslare Europort Maintenance Dredging campaign.

The assessment considered the Proposed Development both alone and in combination with other plans or projects. It has incorporated a precautionary approach using best available scientific knowledge, and applied relevant impact thresholds and guidance, including Southall *et al*. (2019) and NPWS (DAHG, 2014).

Integrated noise attenuation measures designed into the Proposed Development as risk minimisation measures include:

- Sequential outward extension of the bund, through which rotary piling and blasting will be conducted
- Blasting within the bunded area using pre-drilled copper pipes to ensure precise charge placement; the amount of explosive will be reduced and charge containment methods (i.e., within the bund and drilled boreholes) will be used to minimise underwater noise propagation
- Impact piling within the fully enclosed temporary lagoon created by the closure of the new Small Boat Harbour

Activity-specific mitigation measures include:

- Establishment of appropriate Monitored Zones for piling, blasting, and dredging
- Deployment of trained Marine Mammal Observers
- 30-minute pre-start watches prior to commencement of sound-generating activities
- Use of soft-start procedures for piling
- Deployment of Acoustic Deterrent Devices for piling and blasting
    - Implementation of real-time Static Acoustic Monitoring during the Harbour Seal breeding season (May–July) to ensure displacement thresholds are not exceeded during piling and dredging activities.

To minimise cumulative effects, Iarnród Éireann will not schedule maintenance dredging activities to occur simultaneously with the capital dredging required for the Proposed Development.

The effectiveness of these mitigation measures ensures that zones of impact for Permanent Threshold Shift[8], Temporary Threshold Shift[9], and displacement do not overlap with any SAC boundary, and *ex situ* QI individuals are protected, under realistic worst-case scenarios. Consequently:

- There is no risk of *in situ* adverse effects on the integrity of any SAC; and,

[8] Permanent Threshold Shift (PTS) is a form of injury to marine mammals which is permanent auditory damage
[9] Temporary Threshold Shift (TTS) is a form of injury to marine mammals which is temporary and reversible, although it may impair foraging and communication over periods from minutes to days

- There is no risk of *ex situ* adverse effects on QIs occurring outside SAC boundaries

Furthermore, these mitigation measures will ensure that there are no adverse effects to the SSCOs for all three SACs being met as a result of the Proposed Development activities.

The NIS concludes, based on complete, precise, and definitive findings using the best available scientific knowledge, and subject to full implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, it is concluded that the Proposed Development will not result in adverse effects, either *in situ* or *ex situ*, on the integrity of Carnsore Point SAC, Blackwater Bank SAC, or Slaney River Valley SAC, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

7.12 WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE COMPLIANCE ASSESSMENT

A WFD compliance assessment has been undertaken for the Proposed Development. The assessment is based on data and guidance from the Environment Protection Agency and UK Planning Inspectorate[10] and is undertaken in a staged approach to ensure that the key components of the Proposed Development and associated activities are assessed in the context of the quality elements that contribute to overall WFD status.

The principal aim of the assessment is to demonstrate that the proposed construction and operation activities, as set out within EIAR Chapter 6: Project Description, do not result in deterioration of current WFD status of water bodies within the WFD study area and to ensure that the Proposed Development does not compromise the achievement of the WFD objectives for the improvement in the overall status of these water bodies. The '*current*' status as referenced in assessment refers to the 2021 baseline as reported by the EPA based on the 2016 – 2021 WFD monitoring programme. The assessment also considered the designated areas which may be hydrologically linked to waterbodies.

The scoping stage of the WFD compliance assessment has concluded that there are components and activities associated with the Proposed Development that represent a risk to the WFD status and objectives. Therefore, these elements were scoped into the assessment. The relevant quality elements contributing to the overall status were then considered in addition to how each potential impact could affect these.

The potential impacts from the Proposed Development were assessed in the context of the environmental objectives for the potentially affected water bodies. Primary and tertiary mitigation measures will ensure that there will be no significant or above adverse effects on the WFD status of waterbodies within the WFD study area.

The overall conclusion of the WFD Compliance Assessment is that there will be **no risk of deterioration in status** of waterbodies from the Proposed Development, and that the Proposed Development prevent the relevant waterbodies from achievement of their WFD objectives.

[10] There is currently no prepared guidance on undertaking a WFD assessment specifically for Irish planning authorities. As such, this assessment follows the UK Planning Inspectorate Guidance Note 18: The Water Framework Directive (Planning Inspectorate, 2017).

7.13 FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

The flood risk associated with the Proposed Development has been assessed in accordance with the procedure outlined in '*The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities'* (Department of Environment, Heritage and local Government, 2009) and is described in EIAR Chapter 9: Water Quality and Flood Risk. Design measures have been incorporated into the Proposed Development to reduce flood risk from all sources (e.g., coastal, pluvial and fluvial) for the Proposed Development and downstream thereof. This includes adaptation measures to account for the predicted future impact of climate change in terms of flood risk.

8 CONCLUSIONS

As holders of a MAC (MAC20230005), granted 2nd July 2025 under the MAP Act for the purposes of developing and operating port infrastructure, IÉ are making an application for development permission for the proposed ORE Hub at Rosslare Europort. The primary purpose of the Proposed Development is to provide a facility for the efficient handling, storage, marshalling, staging and integration of ORE components to facilitate installation of offshore wind energy. The ORE Hub will facilitate the construction of ORE, thereby making an important contribution to meeting Ireland's legally binding targets under several international, European, and national conventions, protocols, agreements, legislation, policies and plans in relation to renewable electricity, decarbonisation of our energy supply and the transition to a net zero carbon economy.

The Proposed Development has been subject to an iterative design process. Detailed consideration has been given to the location and design of each element to ensure that the final design is fit for purpose. An outline of the alternatives considered and an indication of the main reasons for the design decisions, culminating in the final project design, including consideration of the environmental effects, are set out in EIAR Chapter 5: Assessment of Alternatives and Project Design.

The design of the Rosslare ORE Hub has been determined in consultation with a range of stakeholders including other users of the port, the existing users of the Small Boat Harbour and the users of Fisherman's Quay. The consultation and engagement undertaken in the process of designing the project and preparing the EIAR is described in EIAR Chapter 4: Scoping and Consultation.

An EIAR has been prepared in respect of the Proposed Development in accordance with the requirements of the EIA Directive (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU). The EIAR concluded that for all but one element of the receiving environment assessed, following the implementation of mitigation measures, there would be no significant residual effects. The SLVIA (EIAR Chapter 23) concluded that there would be residual visual effects of significance ranging between '*Substantial*' and '*Imperceptible*', with those effects considered Significant in EIA terms (i.e., substantial and above) principally located in the immediate surrounds of the Proposed Development. Viewpoints VP3 and VP5 were classified with a residual significance of visual effect of '*Substantial*'. Whilst the physical area of land reclamation and the proposed ancillary structures will have a notable visual effect on surrounding receptors, in almost all instances the operational phase activities and associated structures and vessels generate some of the most notable visual effects. Nevertheless, these operation phase activities will fluctuate over time, and thus the assessed visual effects represent the worst-case scenario in terms of residual effects. In summary, whilst the Proposed Development represents a marked increase in the quantum of built development along the coastal environs, it presents as an extension to the already highly modified port facility.

An AA Screening Report and a NIS have been prepared in respect of the Proposed Development, in accordance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive and the European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended. The NIS concludes that with the implementation of mitigation measures there will be no significant adverse effects on the integrity of any of the Natura 2000 screened in for a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment and there is no need to progress to Stage 3.

An assessment under the Water Framework Directive has been prepared in respect of the Proposed Development. The overall conclusion of the WFD Compliance Assessment is that there will be no risk of deterioration in status from the Proposed Development, and the Proposed Development will not prevent the relevant waterbodies from achieving the relevant WFD objectives.

In relation to flood risk, measures have been incorporated into design of the Proposed Development to reduce flood risk from all sources (e.g., coastal, pluvial and fluvial) within the PDB and downstream thereof. This includes adaptation measures to account for the predicted future impact of climate change.

The EIAR considers a project design life of 50 years from completion of construction of this project. All port facilities developed for the ORE Hub will be retained and required by IÉ for ORE, traditional port activities and community use beyond this time period (with ongoing maintenance and repairs undertaken) and therefore it is not considered necessary to plan for decommissioning and reinstatement works or for closure of the quays, storage areas, new Small Boat Harbour or parts of the ORE Hub once they are in-place. IÉ intends to engage with MARA with the intention of obtaining a new MAC at the appropriate point in the future prior to expiry of the MAC (Ref.: 20230005) in July 2085 to ensure that IÉ can continue to use the facilities.

The proposed ORE Hub is the next iteration of the Strategic Vision for Rosslare Europort which will secure a sustainable future for the port over the next 50 years and beyond. The Strategic Vision for Rosslare Europort is displayed in the drawing titled "ORE Hub Vision for Potential Future Uses" contained in the Appendix to this Planning Report. This drawing identifies areas within the existing and expanded port for potential future uses (i.e., expanded use of the ORE Storage Area and ORE berths for traditional port activities) and fully developed transport links for road and rail directly into the port.

It is submitted that in circumstances where the Rosslare ORE Hub is aligned with the Strategic Vision for development of Rosslare Europort into the future; and is a development which is supported at all levels of the planning policy hierarchy; the Proposed Development is in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area in which it is situated.

The proposed ORE Hub is in a prime location relative to the offshore wind farm projects currently in the pipeline and planned for the future in the Irish Sea (off Ireland's east coast) and Celtic Sea (off Ireland's south coast). The ORE Hub can serve as the primary port in Ireland for storage, marshalling, staging and integration of ORE components, and is perfectly placed to support an entire ORE project from construction through to operation and maintenance. By providing the facility to enable offshore wind development in the Irish Sea and Celtic Sea, the Proposed Development will support the construction of offshore renewable energy projects which will themselves contribute to achievement of the climate action objectives and energy security. The Proposed Development is therefore considered urgent and in the public interest.

It is further submitted that these interests of national and international importance far outweigh the visual effects of operational phase activities and associated structures and vessels generated by the Proposed Development on nearby receptors which are assessed as Significant in EIA terms. On this basis, the application for development permission should be granted.

Iarnród Éireann
Irish Rail

venterra | GDG GAVIN & DOHERTY GEOSOLUTIONS

NICHOLAS O'DWYER an RSK company

Co-funded by the European Union