

Marine Institute Comments on Foreshore Licence Application by SAIPEM S.A – Site Investigations at the AMETS test site, off the coast of Mayo (FS007062)

SAIPEM S.A. has submitted an application for a Foreshore Licence to carry out site investigations, in partnership with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), at the Atlantic Marine Energy Test Site (AMETS) off the west coast of Mayo.

The overall aim of the site investigations is to collect the necessary data and information required to inform the engineering and detailed design for the possible future deployment of a floating wind turbine of up to 6MW in the area and also to acquire baseline data on the benthos in the area. The possible installation of a floating wind turbine in the area in the future would be the subject of a separate Foreshore Lease / Licence application and is not the subject of this current application.

The location of the proposed site investigation area is shown in the following drawings submitted by the applicant:

- Drawing No. VB-000450-01-D460-002-001, Rev2 “Foreshore Site Investigation Map”, dated 27/01/20
- Drawing No. VB-000450-01-D460-001-000, Rev2 “AFLOWT Site – Primary Foreshore Site Investigation Area Admiralty Chart”, dated 07/01/20

It is proposed that the site investigations will include:

- **Geophysical Survey** - involving the use of multibeam echo sounder, sub-bottom profiler and side scan sonar. Details of the equipment to be used and the survey locations are set out in the following document submitted by the applicant:
 - “AFLOWT Site Investigation - Report to Accompany Foreshore Licence Application for Site Investigation” Document Reference No. VB-000450-01-G460-001-002-001.
- **Geotechnical survey** – involving cone penetration testing. Details of the equipment to be used and the survey locations are set out in the following document submitted by the applicant:
 - “AFLOWT Site Investigation - Report to Accompany Foreshore Licence Application for Site Investigation” Document Reference No. VB-000450-01-G460-001-002-001.

It is intended that the Geophysical and Geotechnical survey works will be undertaken in Test Site A, Test Site B and along the cable route corridor, all areas contained within the AMETS Foreshore Lease area

- **Ecological Surveys** – to include subtidal and intertidal benthic ecology. Benthic samples will be collected using a range of standard sampling methods including grabs and cores. Details of the equipment to be used and the survey locations are set out in the following document submitted by the applicant:
 - “AFLOWT Site Investigation - Report to Accompany Foreshore Licence Application for Site Investigation” Document Reference No. VB-000450-01-G460-001-002-001.

It is considered likely that twenty-five (25) random stations from Test area A, Test area B and the cable route and fifteen (15) random stations from appropriate control locations for

each test area and the cable route will require to be sampled for macrofauna particle size and organic content. This gives a total of forty (40) subtidal grab stations. It is considered likely that a further six (6) intertidal sediment stations will be required to characterise Belderra Strand, the proposed cable landfall location.

It is anticipated that the Site Investigations would be completed within 1 month, subject to weather conditions. At the time of the submission of the Licence Application it was anticipated that the Site Investigations would be carried out between May and September 2020 but clearly this anticipated timing is now not possible.

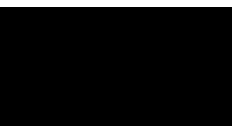
There will be impacts on the seabed resulting from the Geotechnical surveys involving cone penetration testing and from the collection of grab and core samples. Given the number of sampling sites proposed and the nature and scale of the sampling methods proposed, significant impact on the seabed, including species and habitats, are not considered likely.

There will be no direct discharges of material to the marine environment during the survey works and water quality will not be impacted.

There are no licenced aquaculture sites in or immediately adjacent to the proposed Site Investigation area on the Foreshore and therefore significant impacts on the aquaculture activity are not considered likely

On the basis of the above and considering the nature, scale and location of the proposed site investigations the Marine Institute is satisfied that the site investigations as proposed will not have a significant impact on the marine environment in the survey area and will not have a significant impact on other legitimate uses / users of the area and therefore has no objections to a licence being granted. It is recommended that the following specific conditions should be attached to any licence that may issue:

1. The Licensee shall use that part of the Foreshore the subject matter of this licence for the purposes as outlined in the application and for no other purposes whatsoever.
2. The Licensee shall ensure that the works are carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application.



3 June 2020