

Ministerial Determination in relation to Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) requirements for an aquaculture licence renew and review application (AQ. 176) to change the species cultivated from cod to finfish, shellfish and seaweed for research purposes by the Marine Institute in Lehannah Pool, Beirtreah Buí Bay, Co. Galway

I, Charlie McConalogue, Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine in accordance with the requirement of Regulation 5(2) of the Aquaculture (Licence Application) Regulations, 1998 have considered whether this Aquaculture Licence Renew and Review application to culture finfish, shellfish and seaweed for research purposes is likely to have significant effects on the environment and would require the submission of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).

I have considered the proposed aquaculture activity and determined that it is not likely to have significant effects on the environment and that an EIAR is not required in relation to this application for the reasons outlined below.

REASONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

I had regard to the provisions of:

- (i) Regulation 5 of the Aquaculture (Licence Application) Regulations, 1998;
- (ii) EIA Directives (codified by Council Directive 2011/92/EU);
- (iii) The criteria specified in Annex III of Directive 2011/92/EU
- (iv) The guidance contained in the European Commission document entitled “Guidance on EIA, Screening” (2001) and the “Interpretation of definitions of project categories of annex I and II of the EIA Directive” (2015).

and also to the report and recommendations of the Department’s Screening Group with particular reference to:

- 1) the nature and scale of the proposed aquaculture activity - The site is small in scale in the context of the body of water in which it is located. Low impact cages and longline floats (not more than 24 structures) will be used in accordance with best practice.
- 2) the limited magnitude and extent of the direct impacts arising from the proposed aquaculture activity.
- 3) the absence of any protected structures or recorded monuments in the area of the proposed aquaculture activity per the Galway County Development Plan No disturbing impacts on protected species, aquaculture in the bay is at a low level (3%) and there is no spatial overlap on any features that are protected under international or national or local legislation for their ecological, landscape, cultural or other value.
- 4) the current impact on visual amenity is not significant as designated scenic routes do not overlook the site and the population density is low.
- 5) the minor risk of accidents occurring as result of the proposed aquaculture activity.
- 6) the impact on navigation will be mitigated by appropriate navigation markings.
- 7) no significant impact on recreational use of the adjoining foreshore.

DATED: 18th January 2022