

EIA SCREENING ASSESSMENT T09/093	
November 2021	
1. Applicant Details	
Name	Marine Institute
Address	Rinville, Oranmore, Co. Galway, H91 R673
2. Characteristics of Project	
	Application by the Marine Institute for the renewal and review of Aquaculture Licence number AQ176. The application is for the continued use of Site T09/093A for the cultivation of multi-species for research purposes. This project involves the cultivation of;
	Finfish (cod, salmonids and cleaner fish of the wrasse family (Labridae) and lumpsucker (<i>Cyclopterus lumpus</i>)), Molluscs (bivalves including blue mussels, flat oyster, King scallop, Queen scallop), Echinoderms (including sea urchins and sea cucumbers), crustaceans (including lobster) and macroalgae (including seaweed species in the families Chlorophyta, Rhodophyta and Phaeophyta which are naturally occurring in Ireland).
a) Species cultivation proposed	Cages and Longlines (not more than 24 structures)
b) Method	No
c) Production in intertidal zone	Yes
d) Production beyond intertidal zone	Stock will be sourced from authorised licensed commercial/research sources.
e) Source of seed/spat etc	No
f) Is a non-native species to be cultivated?	Year 1 N/A, for research purposes only - maximum biomass < 100 tonnes of all species in total (annual harvest not to exceed 50 tonnes of finfish)
g) Annual Production Estimates - Tonnes	Year 2 “
	Year 3 “
	Year 4 “
3. Location of Project	
a) File No.	T09/093
b) No. of sites	1
c) Location	Lehannah Pool, Beirtreach Buí Bay
d) Hectares	21.761 ha

e) Shellfish Waters Designation

If yes, identify area as per S.I. 268 of 2006/S.I. 55 of 2009

If yes, Name of designated area - Map No. & Date of Map

f) Natura 2000 site

If yes, identify site and type

4. Development Plan

a) County Development Plan

If yes, identify relevant sections

If yes, period covered

b) Local Area Plan

If yes, identify relevant sections

c) Other

If yes, please specify and identify relevant sections

No
N/A
N/A
No
N/A
Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021
Objective AFF 8 – Aquaculture The Council shall support and promote the sustainable development of the aquaculture sector in order to maximize its contribution to employment creation and growth in coastal communities whilst balancing environmental considerations. Special consideration should be made to gradually enforce a policy that would encourage onshore fish farming practices and special consideration would be given when granting planning for on shore farms to areas that are already involved in the fish farming industry.
2015–2021
Galway County Council – The Gaeltacht Local Area Plan has been replaced with Variation No.2(b) to the Galway County Development Plan 2015–2021 - Adopted 28 th May 2018
N/A
No

T09/093		
EIA SCREENING CHECKLIST		
Is it an ANNEX II project?	Yes	
Is the project located on or adjacent to a Natura 2000 area?	<p>Yes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Connemara Bog Complex SPA (004181) – a large site encompassing much of the south Connemara lowlands of Co. Galway. This SPA is located approximately 6km from the licensed site under consideration. * Slyne Head to Ardmore Point Islands SPA (004159) – Inishlackan and Freaghillaun are the closest islands in the SPA to the licensed area under consideration (approximately 7km). * Inishmore Island SPA (004152) – this SPA is located approximately 27km from the licensed site under consideration. * Connemara Bog Complex SAC (002034) – this SAC is located approximately 1km from the licensed site under consideration. * Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC (002111) – the SAC is located just north of Galway Bay and extends from Keeraun Point, south of Carraroe, westwards to Mace Head, west of Carna, all in Co. Galway. This SAC is located approximately 12km by sea from the licensed site under consideration. * Cregduff Lough SAC (001251) –this SAC is located approximately 3.5km due west from the licensed site under consideration. * Dog's Bay SAC (002324) - this SAC is located approximately 5kmwest southwest from the licensed site under consideration. * Lough Nageeron SAC (002119) - this SAC is located approximately 5km south from the licensed site under consideration. * Maumturk Mountains SAC (002008) - this SAC is located approximately 4.5km north east from the licensed site under consideration. * Murvey Machair SAC (002129) - this SAC is located approximately 7kmdue west from the licensed site under consideration. 	

	<p>* The Twelve Bens Mountains/Garraun Complex SAC (002031) - this SAC is located approximately 4km due north from the licensed site under consideration.</p> <p>* Slyne Head Islands SAC (000328) – this SAC is located approximately 24km from the licensed site under consideration.</p> <p>* Inishmore Island SAC (000213) – this SAC is located approximately 28km by sea from the licensed site under consideration.</p> <p>* West Connaught Coast SAC (002998) - the southern component of this SAC is located approximately 37km by sea from the licensed site under consideration.</p> <p>The cumulative assessment indicates no disturbing impacts on protected species, aquaculture in the bay is at a low level (3%) and there is no spatial overlap on any protected features.</p>	
If yes, has the appropriate assessment been carried out?	Screening Statement (2016 BIM)	
1. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROJECT - ANNEX III (1)	Yes/No - Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes/No? - Why
(a) Size of project		
Will the project be out of scale with the existing environment?	No. The site is small in scale in the context of the body of water in which it is located.	No. Low impact cages and longline floats (not more than 24 structures) will be used in accordance with best practice.
Will it lead to further consequential development or works (e.g. new roads, landing facilities, provision of new water supply)?	No. Existing infrastructure will be used, and no additional infrastructure developments are needed.	
(b) Cumulation with other development		
Are there potential cumulative impacts with existing aquaculture projects or with other licensed aquaculture projects but which have not yet begun?	<p>Yes. There are other aquaculture projects in the bay including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • four salmon sites (inclusive of AQ176); • three oyster sites. • Shellfish Order – Connemara Co-Operative. 	No. The impact on the benthos will be localised and limited to the area under the cages and longlines and will be small due to the non-commercial character of the site. The overall area involvement is not

	There are potential navigational, visual and benthic impacts.	considered significant. The impact on navigation will be mitigated by appropriate navigation markings. It is not anticipated that there will be a significant impact on other sensitive receptors e.g., air, water, cultural heritage and visual amenity.
Are there potential cumulative impacts with existing foreshore projects or with foreshore projects licensed but which have not yet begun?	No.	
Should the application for this project be regarded as an integral part of a more substantial project? If so, can related projects which are subject to separate applications proceed independently?	No.	
(c) Use of natural resources		
Will installation or operation of the project use natural resources such as land, water, materials or energy, especially any resources which are non-renewable or in short supply? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> land (especially undeveloped or agricultural land)? water? energy including electricity and fuels? any other resources? 	Yes. The proposed shellfish will use naturally occurring marine phytoplankton present in the seawater. The finfish will be fed on commercially formulated feed depending on the species being cultivated.	No. High levels of plankton occur naturally at the location – cultivation at this scale will not result in limiting plankton growth in abundance.
(d) Production of waste		
Will the project produce wastes during installation or operation or decommissioning?	Yes. The cultivation of shellfish will produce faeces and pseudo faeces. Grading and removal of mortalities will result in shells being discarded. Finfish will produce faeces and mortalities.	No. The amount of produced faeces and pseudo faeces will not be significant, and the impacted area will be limited to the area directly beneath the

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • municipal waste (household and/or commercial)? • surplus product? • construction or demolition wastes? • redundant machinery or equipment? • any other solid wastes? • liquid or solid wastes in suspension? 	<p>The mortalities will be removed for disposal. Cages and ropes associated with the growing process may need to be replaced.</p>	<p>structures. The integrated multi-trophic nature of the project will mean that the impacts of the waste being produced will be mitigated by the uptake of the shellfish and seaweed of the increased nutrients in the local area.</p> <p>The site is well flushed and the build-up of excess organic matter on site is not considered likely. Discarding of damaged old equipment will not be permitted.</p> <p>There will be a requirement to implement a Benthic Impacts Monitoring Protocol.</p> <p>Fallowing will be undertaken in line with the Integrated Pest Management Plan for the site</p>
(e) Pollution and nuisances		
<p>Will the project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air?</p> <p>Emissions from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • combustion of fossil fuels from stationary or mobile sources? • construction activities including plant & equipment? • any other sources? 	<p>Yes. There will be emissions associated with husbandry and harvesting finfish, shellfish and seaweed from boats.</p>	<p>No. Emission levels will not be significant.</p>
<p>Will the project cause noise and vibration or release of light?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • from operation of equipment e.g. engines? • from blasting or piling? 	<p>Yes. There will be noise associated with the husbandry and harvesting of the finfish, shellfish and seaweed e.g. use of boats and other machinery.</p> <p>Lighting, if used, will comply with navigational safety.</p>	<p>No. Noise levels will not be significant.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • from construction or operational traffic? • from lighting or other systems? • from any other sources? 		
(f) Risk of accidents, having regard in particular to substances or technologies used		
Will there be any risk of accidents during installation or operation of the project which could affect human health or the environment?	Yes. There will be a minor risk of physical injury while working on the site but no risk to human health.	No. There is a minor risk to the environment from on-site accidents.
Will the project lead to risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants onto the ground or into surface waters, groundwater, coastal waters or the sea?	No.	
Will the project involve use, storage, transport, handling or production of substances or materials which could be harmful to people or the environment (flora, fauna, water supplies)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of hazardous or toxic substances? • potential changes in occurrence of disease or effect on disease carriers (e.g. insect or water borne diseases)? 	No.	
(g) Will installation, operation or decommissioning of the project involve actions which will cause physical changes in the locality (topography, land use, changes in waterbodies, etc)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dredging? 	Yes. Moorings will consist of two mooring grids to accommodate a maximum of 24 structures (cages and longlines as appropriate). As the site is for research purposes it is stated that the size and configuration of the structures will be smaller than those of commercial equivalents.	No. This can be considered as minor and reversible as all structures can be removed.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • coastal structures (seawalls, piers)? • offshore structures? • facilities for storage of goods or materials? • facilities for treatment or disposal of solid wastes or liquid effluents? • new road, rail or sea traffic during construction or operation? • new road, rail, air, waterborne or other transport infrastructure including new or altered routes and stations, ports, airports etc? • closure or diversion of existing transport routes or infrastructure leading to changes in traffic movements? • new or diverted transmission lines or pipelines? • transport of personnel or materials for construction, operation or decommissioning? • decommissioning or restoration works? • introduction of alien species? • loss of native species or genetic diversity? any other changes? 	<p>Transport. Yes. Personnel and materials will be transported across the foreshore by boat from Wallace Quay.</p> <p>Site access will be along designated routes.</p>	<p>No. The transport operations are limited and of short distance and duration and dependent on tides.</p>
(h) Inherent social changes		
Will the project result in social changes, for example, in demography, traditional lifestyles, employment?	No.	
2. LOCATION OF THE PROJECT - ANNEX III (2)	Yes/No - Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes/No? - Why

(a) Existing land use		
Are there existing land uses on or around the location which could be affected by the project, e.g., homes, gardens, other private property, industry, commerce, recreation, public open space, community facilities, agriculture, forestry, tourism, water catchments, functional floodplains, mining or quarrying?	No. Terrestrial land uses will not be affected and there is no spatial overlap with other users of the foreshore. The site is currently licensed for the cultivation of finfish, shellfish and seaweed for research purposes (not exceeding total production of 100 tonnes in total of all species).	
Are there any areas on or around the location which are occupied by sensitive land uses e.g. hospitals, schools, places of worship, community facilities, which could be affected?	No.	
Is the project located in a previously undeveloped area?	No. The site is currently licensed for the cultivation of finfish, shellfish and seaweed for research purposes (not exceeding total production of 100 tonnes in total of all species).	
(b) Relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area		
Are there any areas on or around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources which could be affected by the project? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • groundwater resources • surface waters • fisheries • tourism 	No.	
(c) Absorption capacity of the natural environment		
Are there any areas on or around the location which are protected under international or national or local legislation for their ecological, landscape, cultural or	Yes. * Connemara Bog Complex SPA (004181) – a large site encompassing much of the south Connemara lowlands of Co.	No. The cumulative assessment indicates no disturbing impacts on protected species, aquaculture in the bay is at a low level (3%) and there is no spatial overlap on any protected features.

<p>other value, which could be affected by the project?</p>	<p>Galway. This SPA is located approximately 6km from the licensed site under consideration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Slyne Head to Ardmore Point Islands SPA (004159) – Inishlackan and Freaghillaun are the closest islands in the SPA to the licensed area under consideration (approximately 7km). * Inishmore Island SPA (004152) – this SPA is located approximately 27km from the licensed site under consideration. * Connemara Bog Complex SAC (002034) – this SAC is located approximately 1km from the licensed site under consideration. * Kilkieran Bay and Islands SAC (002111) – the SAC is located just north of Galway Bay and extends from Keeraun Point, south of Carraroe, westwards to Mace Head, west of Carna, all in Co. Galway. This SAC is located approximately 12km by sea from the licensed site under consideration. * Slyne Head Islands SAC (000328) – this SAC is located approximately 24km from the licensed site under consideration. * Inishmore Island SAC (000213) – this SAC is located approximately 28km by sea from the licensed site under consideration. * West Connaught Coast SAC (002998) - the southern component of this SAC is located approximately 37km by sea from the licensed site under consideration. <p>The cumulative assessment indicates no disturbing impacts on protected species, aquaculture in the bay is at a low level (3%) and there is no spatial overlap on any protected features.</p>	<p>Site T09/093A is not located within a designated SPA. The desktop review of potential linkages and analysis of spatial overlap indicate with high confidence that the renewal and review of the aquaculture licence will not have any significant impact on any SCI bird species of the adjacent SPAs.</p> <p>Site T09/093A is not located within a designated SAC. The desktop review of potential linkages and analysis of spatial overlap indicate with high confidence that the renewal and review of the aquaculture licence will not have any impact on the protected features and species of the adjacent SACs.</p>
<p>(c) Absorption capacity of the natural environment cont'd</p>		
<p>Are there any other areas on or around the location which are important or sensitive for reasons of their ecology?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wetlands, watercourses, or other waterbodies? • the coastal zone? 	<p>No.</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mountains, forests or woodlands? • nature reserves and parks? 		
Are there any areas on or around the location which are used by protected, important or sensitive species of fauna or flora e.g. for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, overwintering, migration, which could be affected?	<p>No. It is regarded as extremely unlikely that any interactions with aquaculture activities at Site T09/093A will be of any significant level.</p> <p><i>Salmo salar</i> – sufficiently far removed such that interactions with aquaculture activities at Site T09/093A are highly unlikely.</p>	
Are there any inland, coastal, marine or underground waters on or around the location which could be affected?	Yes, the development is located in coastal waters which are of Good Ecological Status according to Water Framework Directive reports for West Galway.	No. The development is small in scale in the context of coastal waters in the area.
Are there any groundwater source protection zones or areas that contribute to the recharge of groundwater resources?	No.	
Are there any areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location which could be affected?	Yes. The adjacent landscape has a high landscape sensitivity rating.	No. The development is small in scale in the context of the surrounding landscape.
Are there any routes or facilities on or around the location which are used by the public for access to recreation or other facilities, which could be affected?	Yes. Marine leisure activities occur in coastal waters adjacent to the development.	No. Navigation markings will identify the presence of the structures and public access to recreation and other activities will not be significantly impacted by the project.
Are there any transport routes on or around the location which are susceptible to congestion or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected?	Yes. The transport route to the access pier is via a local county road.	No. Given the scale of production the amount of additional traffic generated will not be significant.
Is the project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people?	<p>Yes. The “Connemara” stage of the Wild Atlantic Way passes to the north and southeast of the site. Galway County Council has designated scenic routes 30 (local road), 67 (R342) and 70 (R340) in the vicinity of the development.</p> <p>The population density of the surrounding area is low.</p>	No. The site does not have a significant visual impact as it is not directly overlooked by these scenic routes. The residual visual impact on local residents is not significant. Road users will have a fleeting duration of the view.
Are there any areas or features of historic, cultural or archaeological importance on or	No protected structures as per the County Development Plan.	

around the location which could be affected?		
Are there any areas on or around the location which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage e.g. where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded, which could be affected?	No. There is a Shellfish Order (Connemara Co-Operative) and the area is of Good Ecological Status according to Water Framework Directive reports for West Galway.	
Is the area densely populated?	No.	
Is the location of the project susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, flooding or extreme or adverse climatic conditions e.g. temperature inversions, fogs, severe winds, which could cause the project to present environmental problems?	No. The location is sheltered from significant hydrodynamic events.	
On the basis of the above, the consensus of the Screening Group is that the proposed aquaculture research project <u>does not</u> require an Environmental Impact Assessment Report		
EIA SCREENING GROUP COMPRISES OF MEMBERS FROM: THE DEPARTMENT'S MARINE ENGINEERING DIVISION. BORD IASCAIGH MHARA; DR. BRENDAN O'CONNOR, AQUAFAC INTERNATIONAL SERVICES LTD., GALWAY. REPRESENTATIVES OF THE DEPARTMENT'S AQUACULTURE AND FORESHORE MANAGEMENT DIVISION.		DATED: 2nd December 2021