

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE  
AND COMMUNICATIONS**

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**Irish Offshore Strategic Environmental  
Assessment 6**

**Strategic Environment Assessment - Environmental Report**

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# APPENDIX A

## Plans, Programmes and Policy Review

**Table A-1 Summary of Regulatory Context**

| Plan / Policy or Programme Name  | Intent  | Implications for the Plan   |
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| <b>International</b>   |   |   |
| <p>IMO International Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, 1972, as updated by the Protocol of 1996 (London Convention/Protocol)</p> | <p>To promote the effective control of sources of marine pollution and to take steps to prevent pollution of the sea by dumping of wastes and other matter. Three annexes list which substances are prohibited or require special care when dumping.</p>  | <p>The 1996 protocol prohibits the dumping of all substances except those on its Annex I (“the reverse list”).<br/>                     Oil and gas activities resulting from licensing must comply with ratified London Convention and Protocol annexes and implementing national legislation.</p>   |
| <p>The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (1992 OSPAR Convention).</p>   | <p>The OSPAR Convention is the current legal instrument guiding international cooperation on the protection of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic. Currently five annexes in force:<br/>                     I: Prevention and elimination of pollution from land-based sources.<br/>                     II: Prevention and elimination of pollution by dumping or incineration.<br/>                     III: Prevention and elimination of pollution from offshore sources.<br/>                     IV: Assessment of the quality of the marine environment.<br/>                     V: Protection and conservation of the ecosystem and biological diversity of the maritime area.</p> | <p>Ireland is one of 16 contracting parties to the 1992 OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic. As an OSPAR contracting party, Ireland has a responsibility to adopt, and comply with, programmes and measures for reduction of environmental impact from Offshore Oil and Gas activity.<br/>                     OSPAR has obligations to monitor the quality of the marine environment and its compartments (water, sediments, and biota), the activities and inputs that can affect that quality, and to assess impacts of contaminants on the marine environment as a basis for identifying priorities for action.<br/>                     Oil and gas activities resulting from licensing must comply with mandatory or accepted OSPAR decisions, agreements and recommendations.</p> |
| <p>Strategy of the OSPAR Commission for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic 2030 (OSPAR Agreement 2021-01).</p>  | <p>The N.E. Atlantic Environment Strategy sets out OSPAR’s vision, objectives, strategic directions and action for the period up to 2030. The Offshore Oil and Gas Industry thematic Strategy (Offshore Strategy) sets the objective of preventing and eliminating pollution and taking the necessary measures to protect the OSPAR maritime area against the adverse effects of offshore activities so as to safeguard human health, conserve marine ecosystems and, when practicable, restore marine areas which have been adversely affected.</p>  | <p>Oil and gas activities resulting from licensing must comply with mandatory or accepted OSPAR decisions, agreements and recommendations. There are a number of relevant measures which are relevant to this strategy which require compliance from any offshore activity.</p>   |
| <p>OSPAR Recommendation 2006/5 on a Management Regime for Offshore Cuttings Piles</p>  | <p>OSPAR agreed Recommendation 2006/5 on a Management Regime for Offshore Cuttings Piles which required all cuttings piles to be assessed against set criteria to determine if any were of immediate environmental concern.</p>   | <p>All cuttings piles will need to be assessed on a case by case basis in relation to any exploratory drilling activities that take place as part of this programme. Clarification is required as to any</p>  |

| Plan / Policy or Programme Name  | Intent   | Implications for the Plan  |
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|  |  | specific assessment in relation to any cuttings derived from exploratory drilling.   |
| OSPAR Offshore Industry Strategy   | <p>The OSPAR Commission’s strategic objective with regard to offshore oil and gas activities is to prevent and eliminate pollution and take the necessary measures to protect the OSPAR maritime area against the adverse effects of offshore activities by setting environmental goals and improving management mechanisms, so as to safeguard human health and to conserve marine ecosystems and, when practicable, restore marine areas which have been adversely affected.</p> <p>Contains targets and recommendations for offshore industry.</p>  | Oil and gas activities resulting from licensing must support this strategy and reduce oil discharged into the sea and avoid discharge of offshore chemicals (OSPAR Recommendation 2006/3) and prevent significant acute pollution from drilling activities (OSPAR Recommendation 2010/18). |
| OSPAR Hazardous Substances Strategy  | <p>The OSPAR Commission’s strategic objective with regards to hazardous substances is to prevent pollution of the OSPAR maritime area by continuously reducing discharges, emissions and losses of hazardous substances (as defined in Annex 1), with the ultimate aim to achieve concentrations in the marine environment near background values for naturally occurring substances and close to zero for man-made synthetic substances. Actions:</p> <p>a. to achieve concentrations of contaminants at levels not giving rise to pollution effects, and contaminants in fish and other seafood for human consumption not exceeding levels established by EU legislation or other relevant standards, and finally;</p> <p>b. to move towards the targets of the cessation of discharges, emissions and losses of hazardous substances by the year 2020.</p> <p><sup>1</sup> Defined in the OSPAR Convention as “activities carried out in the maritime area for the purpose of the exploration, appraisal or exploitation of liquid and gaseous hydrocarbons”.</p> | Oil and gas activities resulting from licensing must support this strategy by reducing discharges, emissions and losses of hazardous substances.   |
| The Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, (The Bern Convention, 1979)                  | The principal aims of the Convention are to ensure conservation and protection of wild plant and animal species and their natural habitats, to increase cooperation between contracting parties, and to regulate the exploitation of identified species.   | Avoid significant impacts on species through assessment of especially vulnerable areas and potentially damaging activities.  |
| International Finance Corporation (2015) Environmental, Health, and Safety Guidelines for Offshore Oil and Gas Development | The Environmental, Health, and Safety (EHS) Guidelines are technical reference documents with general and industry specific examples of Good International Industry Practice (GIIP).   | Oil and gas activities resulting from licensing must follow EHS guidelines.  |

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| The World Heritage Convention, 1972   | <p>The World Heritage Convention 1972, which Ireland ratified in September 1991, “defines the kind of natural or cultural sites which can be considered for inscription on the World Heritage List. The Convention sets out the duties of States Parties in identifying potential sites and their role in protecting and preserving them. By signing the Convention, each country pledges to conserve not only the World Heritage sites situated on its territory, but also to protect its national heritage.” (UNESCO, 2014).</p> <p>In effect, the World Heritage Convention aims to promote cooperation among nations to protect heritage around the world that is of such outstanding universal value that its conservation is important for current and future generations. It is intended that properties on the World Heritage List will be conserved for all time.</p> | <p>The convention sets out a requirement to integrate heritage protection within comprehensive planning, applicable to all heritage inclusive of submerged sites and features. This requirement is underscored in the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (Firth, 2013).</p> <p>The resulting World Heritage Sites are included within the Cultural Heritage assessment. However, the Seascope and Visual assessment consultant would collaborate with the Cultural Heritage consultants in respect of issues of setting and potential visibility.</p> |
| UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, adopted in 2001  | <p>Produced in 2001, the UNESCO Convention seeks to afford greater protection to wrecks and underwater cultural heritage lying in international waters. Rule 1 recommends “the protection of underwater cultural heritage through in situ preservation ....as the first option”. In addition, Rule 6 states that “Activities directed at underwater cultural heritage shall be strictly regulated to ensure proper recording of cultural, historical and archaeological information”.</p>  | <p>The convention entered into force in 2009; the Republic of Ireland is currently considering the case for ratification. Whilst not yet ratified by Ireland, Oil and gas activities resulting from licensing should seek to ensure their activities comply with the details of the Convention to ensure the ongoing and future protection of the underwater cultural heritage resource.</p>  |
| IMO International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978 (MARPOL 73/78).  | <p>Prevent marine pollution from ships and in part from oil rigs and production platforms. Six annexes covering pollution by oil, noxious liquids carried in bulk, harmful substances in packaged form, sewage, garbage and air pollution.</p>   | <p>Oil and gas activities resulting from licensing must comply with ratified MARPOL annexes and implementing national legislation.</p>  |
| International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (IMO 2003), adopted February 2004 (entry into force September 2017).  | <p>Prevent, minimise and ultimately eliminate the transfer of harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens through the control and management of ships' ballast water and sediments.</p>  | <p>Consider potential effects of non-native species introductions in ballast water discharges.</p>  |
| International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation (OPRC) 1990, entered into force 1995. Ireland became a Party to OPRC in 2001 following the enactment of the Sea Pollution (Amendment) Act 1999; | <p>Provides a framework for international co-operation in combating major incidents or threats of marine pollution.</p>  | <p>Consider potential effects of major oil spill effects and associated damage to habitats and ecosystem function.</p>  |

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| <p>many of the functions set out in OPRC for the national competent authority had been carried out by the Coast Guard since 1991.</p>    |  |   |
| <p>United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Concluded in 1982, UNCLOS came into force in 1994.</p>                      | <p>Defines the rights and responsibilities of nations in their use of the world's oceans, establishing guidelines for businesses, the environment, and the management of marine natural resources (DCENR, 2011). Terms such as territorial waters, exclusive economic zones and continental shelf are defined.</p> <p>Article 222 defines enforcement with respect to pollution from or through the atmosphere in respect of Article 212. The Convention describes 'pollution of the marine environment' as...<i>the introduction by man, directly or indirectly, of substances or energy into the marine environment, including estuaries, which results or is likely to result in such deleterious effects as harm to living resources and marine life, hazards to human health, hindrance to marine activities, including fishing and other legitimate uses of the sea, impairment of quality for use of sea water and reduction of amenities (our emphasis)</i></p> <p>The Convention also specifies that 'States have the duty to protect objects of an archaeological and historical nature found at sea and shall co-operate for this purpose'. It sets out the right for all governments to have the right to enact legislation and regulations for the protection and preservation of underwater cultural heritage lying in their marine areas (Quinn, 2005).</p> | <p>Establishes the rights of foreign nations on issues such as navigation, overflight and cable/pipeline installation.</p> <p>The Authority shall adopt appropriate rules, regulations and procedures for the prevention, reduction and control of pollution and other hazards to the marine environment, including the coastline and of interference with ecological balance of the marine environment, particular attention being paid to the need for protection from the harmful effects from activities such as drilling, dredging, excavation and disposal of waste.</p> <p>Oil and gas activities resulting from licensing must comply with environmental guidelines set out in UNCLOS with respect to avoiding pollution of the marine environment and the protection of archaeological sites and implementing relevant national legislation.</p> |
| <p>United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (Rio Convention), which entered into force in 1993.</p>                       | <p>To promote: the conservation of biological diversity; the sustainable use of its components; the sharing of the benefits of genetic resources. Specific programmes are required for the identification of important components of biodiversity and their understanding and protection.</p>  | <p>Avoid significant impacts on habitats and species through assessment of especially vulnerable areas and potentially damaging activities.</p>   |
| <p>Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (the Bonn Convention 1979), which entered into force in 1983.</p> | <p>Conserve terrestrial, marine and avian migratory species throughout their range through international co-operation. Ireland is party to the Convention since 1983 and to two agreements concluded to date under the auspices of the Convention.</p>   | <p>Avoid significant impacts on species through assessment of especially vulnerable areas and potentially damaging activities. A number of species listed on Annex II of the convention have been recorded in the IOSEA6 Study Area.</p>  |
| <p>Convention on wetlands of international importance especially as waterfowl habitat (the Ramsar</p>                                    | <p>Provides framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.</p> <p>Key measure includes designation of Ramsar sites.</p>  | <p>Avoid significant impacts on habitats and species through assessment of especially vulnerable areas and potentially damaging activities. There are Ramsar sites on the coast adjacent to the IOSEA6 Study Area.</p>  |

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| Convention 1971), came into force in 1975.  |  |   |
| OSPAR Decision 2000/3 on the Use of Organic-Phase Drilling Fluids (OPF) and the Discharge of OPF-contaminated cuttings.   | No such fluids used without prior authorisation.<br>Discharge of cuttings to sea with a concentration >1% by weight of oil-based fluids on dry cuttings prohibited.  | Potential effects of onshore disposal of cuttings and the likelihood of re-injection.   |
| OSPAR Decision (2005/1) and Recommendations (2000/4, 2005/3 and 2020/02) for a Harmonised Mandatory Control System for the use and reduction of the discharge of offshore chemicals | Harmonised system of testing, risk assessment and approval for offshore chemicals across the OSPAR area.<br>Objective is reduction in harm from such use and discharge.  | Implemented through regulation on the PUDAC required for the use of drilling, production, utility and other chemicals offshore.   |
| OSPAR Recommendation 2003/3 (recommendation 2010/2) on a Network of Marine Protected Areas.   | OSPAR will complete by 2010 a joint network of well managed marine protected areas that, together with the Natura 2000 network, is ecologically coherent. OSPAR recognises that further efforts are required by contracting parties to ensure the ecological coherence, particularly in deeper waters, and that that the sites are successfully managed. | Avoid significant impacts on habitats and species through assessment of especially vulnerable areas and potentially damaging activities. A number of species and habitats recommended by OSPAR for MPA designation e.g. carbonate mounds occurring adjacent to the IOSEA6 Study Area. |
| OSPAR Decision 2007/2 on the Storage of Carbon Dioxide Streams in Geological Formations   | To ensure that CO2 streams stored in geological formations are retained permanently and will not lead to significant adverse consequences for the marine environment, human health and other legitimate uses of the maritime area.   | CO2 may potentially be stored in geological formations in the IOSEA6 Study Area. Potential interactions with oil and gas activities need to be considered at the time of licensing.   |
| UN Kyoto Protocol. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Kyoto Protocol 1997  | Alleviate the impacts of climate change and reduce global emissions of Green House Gases.  | Oil and gas licensing should meet the general aim of a reduction in carbon emissions.   |
| World Health Organisation (WHO) Air Quality Guidelines (1999) and Guidelines for Europe (1987)  | Seek the elimination or minimisation of certain airborne pollutants from protection of human health.   | Oil and gas licensing should meet the general aim of a reduction in the number of airborne pollutants that are produced.  |
| Montreal Protocol (UN September 1987)   | Sets out the protection of the ozone layer and the phasing out of ozone depleting substances and Hydrofluorocarbons (HFC) climate gases under the Kigali amendment to the Protocol.  | Oil and gas licensing should meet the general aim of a reduction in ozone depleting substances and HFC climate gases.   |

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| OSPAR Recommendation 2005/2 on Environmental Goals for the Discharge by the Offshore Industry of Chemicals that Are, or Contain Added Substances, Listed in the OSPAR 2004 List of Chemicals for Priority Action. | Reduction of the discharge of chemicals from offshore activities to the marine environment, including the degradation and transformation products.   | Offshore chemicals mean all chemicals intentionally used in connection with offshore exploration and production activities in the maritime area, including both substances and preparations. |
| The UNECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP Convention) (1979)  | Sets out to limit, reduce, and eventually prevent air pollution including long-range transboundary air pollution. Amendments in 2012, 2015 and 2017 saw amendments to include protocols aimed towards ground-level ozone, heavy metals, persistent organic pollutants and particulate matter.  | Oil and gas licensing should meet the general aims to reduce air pollution.  |
| OSPAR List of Threatened and/or declining species and habitats Agreement 2008-06 as amended   | Sets out to prioritise the conservation and protection of marine biodiversity. OSPAR recommendation 2010-05 aims to have a level of protection from new human activities, of which the list of threatened and/or declining species and habitats are considered within EIAs of human activities.  | Oil and gas activities are required to consider the species and habitats within the OSPAR list during EIA.   |
| United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development  | The agenda identifies 17 sustainable development goals and 169 targets to overcome poverty, equality and protecting the planet up to 2030.   | The oil and gas licensing must maintain an awareness of the sustainable development.   |
| OSPAR Comprehensive Atmospheric Monitoring Programme (CAMP)   | The programme aims to assess and report deposition of selected airborne and precipitation-based contaminants and nutrients, into the marine environment around the North Sea and North Atlantic.   | Oil and gas activities may produce the deposition of one or more of the selected contaminants.   |
| The Paris Agreement on Climate Change   | Adopted by 196 parties at COP 21, the goal for this agreement is to limit global warming to below 2°C, although preferably to 1.5°C.<br>The adopting parties seek to reach a global peak of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible in order to achieve 'climate neutral' by 2050.  | Oil and gas licensing should meet the general aims to reduce global warming and greenhouse gas emissions.  |
| UN Framework agreement on climate change (UNFCCC)   | The ultimate goal of the Convention is the “stabilisation of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system” within a timeframe that allows people and planet to adapt and economies to develop sustainably. In joining the Convention, Parties acknowledge the existence of the threat of climate change and agree to undertake efforts to combat it. | Oil and gas licensing should meet the general aims to reduce global warming and greenhouse gas emissions.  |
| ESPOO Convention and Kyiv (SEA) Protocol  | The Protocol is an initiative of the second meeting of the Parties to the Convention, which in February 2001 created an Ad hoc Working Group to develop the Protocol.  | This protocol provides a legal and procedural framework for SEA's. The SEA should seek to meet these.  |

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|   | The objective of the protocol is to provide for high level protection of the environment including health.   |   |
| State of Global Climate – Provisional Report 2021                     | This published report provides a summary on the state of the climate indicators in 2021 including global temperatures trends and its distribution around the globe, greenhouse gas findings, and other factors.  | The plan should take into consideration the latest climate status when developing limits on oil and gas licensing.  |
| <b>National</b>   |  |   |
| Wildlife Act 1976 and Amendment 2000                                  | Protects certain wildlife (including game) and flora, with provisions relating to land, inland waters and territorial waters. Amendments have sought to manage, conserve, and protect birds.   | Provisions extend to foreshore and territorial waters, and include otters, seals and cetaceans. Sea angling; marine mammal and bird watching, many of which are protected under the Wildlife Act, are valuable recreation and tourism activities.   |
| Development Plans (via Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended) | The Development Plan establishes the statutory framework for development within individual counties in Ireland. It is the framework against which all applications for planning permission area assessed. Development Plans for the coastal counties Louth, Meath, Fingal, Dublin City, Dunlaoghaire, Rathdown, Wicklow, Wexford, Waterford, Cork, Cork City and Kerry all apply.  | Development Plans for each county plan area sets out zonings for development use and also include, as appropriate, economic development, reference to recreational and tourism potential; to designated / sensitive areas, landscapes and coasts/seascapes; to protected views, scenic drives, etc. |
| The Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act 2006      | Development which is strategic economic or social importance to the state or a region. Applications are direct to An Bord Pleanala (The Planning Board).   | Can cover significant port and port-related development and activity.   |
| Harmonised Offshore Chemical Notification Format (HOCNF) Scheme       | This scheme is derived from an Oslo and Paris Commission (OSPARCOM) initiative having the aim of harmonising the measures and criteria used by the signatory states to regulate chemicals management by the offshore oil and gas industry. The objective of the HOCNF Scheme is to prevent unacceptable damage to the marine environment as a consequence of use, discharge and accidental loss of exploration and production chemicals. | All chemicals used in exploration drilling activity will require disclose to, and assessment and acceptance by the Marine Institute. Part of the assessment relates to the sediment toxicity of the substances (as well as aquatic toxicity and bio-accumulative properties).                       |
| The Sea Pollution Act (1999)  | The Act requires ships and offshore installations to prepare plans for preventing and minimising oil pollution damage and emergency plans for the event of spillage.   | Identifies the requirement for minimisation of pollution from any vessels involved in exploration activities, via both preventative measures and in the event of spills.  |
| Foreshore and Dumping at Sea (Amendment) Act 2009                     | The Dumping at Sea Act 1996 as amended, prohibits the dumping at sea from vessels, aircraft or offshore installation of a substance or material unless permitted by the Environmental Protection Agency.   | Any waste dumped from seismic survey vessels or drilling installations will require a permit unless permitted by the Environmental Protection Agency.   |
| Protection of the Environment Act 2003                                | Puts in force the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control Directive (96/61/EC). This Directive (“the IPPC Directive”) requires a permit for industrial and agricultural  | In order to receive a permit the following conditions must be met: use all appropriate pollution-prevention measures, namely  |

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|   | <p>activities with a high pollution potential. This permit can only be issued if certain environmental conditions are met, including companies bearing the responsibility for preventing and reducing any pollution they may cause. Integrated pollution prevention and control concerns new or existing industrial and agricultural activities with a high pollution potential, as defined in Annex I to the Directive (energy industries, production and processing of metals, mineral industry, chemical industry, waste management, livestock farming, etc.)</p> | <p>the best available techniques (which produce the least waste, use less hazardous substances, enable the substances generated to be recovered and recycled, etc.); prevent all large-scale pollution; prevent, recycle or dispose of waste in the least polluting way possible; ensure accident prevention and damage limitation; return sites to their original state when the activity is over. In addition, the decision to issue a permit must contain a number of specific requirements, including: any soil, water and air protection measures required; waste management measures; measures to be taken in exceptional circumstances (leaks, malfunctions, temporary or permanent stoppages, etc.); minimisation of long-distance or transboundary pollution; release monitoring.</p> |
| <p>The Bathing Water Quality (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (S.I. No. 163 of 2016)</p> | <p>To protect or improve bathing waters in order to provide bathing areas that safeguard public health.</p>  | <p>Applies only to designated waters, which generally occur in the coastal and transitional water.<br/><br/>Restrictions apply for microbiological requirements for designated bathing waters</p>  |
| <p>Foreshore Acts 1933 - 2014</p>   | <p>The Foreshore Acts require that before the commencement of any works or activity (including the erection of any structures) on State-owned foreshore a licence or lease must be obtained from the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine for specified works undertaken on the foreshore.</p>  | <p>Consideration of adjacent or conflicting uses during the assessment of foreshore licences/leases.</p>   |
| <p>Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006</p>                               | <p>Establishes the legal jurisdiction of the Irish Maritime area and additionally regulates the permitting and operating of sea fisheries.</p>   | <p>Consideration of adjacent or conflicting uses during licensing of aquaculture or fisheries.</p>   |
| <p>National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015 - 2025</p>                            | <p>This seeks to implement the requirements of the European Landscape Convention (ELC) within Ireland (see under International Regulatory context above).</p>  | <p>As with the ELC, the National Landscape Strategy for Ireland seeks to provide a policy framework that will put in place measures at national, sectoral (including agriculture, tourism, energy and marine) and local level, together with civil society, to manage, protect and properly plan through high quality design for the sustainable stewardship of our landscape.</p>   |
| <p>Guide to Best Practice in Seascape Assessment Hill et al., 2001</p>                | <p>Differentiation of seascape areas according to their distinct characters. The aim is to identify what areas, characteristics and qualities are important to conserve.</p>   | <p>Seascape Character Types shall be confirmed against the guidance.</p>   |

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| Air Quality Limit Value Regulations (NI) 2003 (SR No. 2121 of 2003) and amendments | Sets out air quality limit or guide values for specified pollutants to be achieved by local authorities.  | Controls and limits the levels of airborne pollutants. Oil and gas licensing should meet the general aim of a reduction in the amount of airborne pollutants that are produced.  |
| National Monuments Acts, 1930-2004.  | The National Monuments Act 1930-2004 are the primary legislation that ensure the protection of the archaeological heritage in Ireland. The 1987, 1994 & 2004 (Amendment) Acts specifically address the protection of underwater archaeology. Section 3 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1987 makes specific provision for the protection of underwater archaeology. Specifically, wrecks or archaeological objects more than 100 years old are protected under the National Monuments (Amendments) Acts 1987 and 1994. In addition wrecks and objects less than 100 years old may also be designated on the basis of special historical, archaeological or artistic importance. RMS Lusitania, sunk May 1915 off the Old Head of Kinsale, was placed under such an order in 1995 (DCENR, 2011) | These primary legislation place restrictions on certain activities directed at or that may affect archaeological sites and underwater cultural heritage. For example, all diving and investigation activities directed at known protected wreck sites is subject to licensing. Any shipwrecks or objects of potential archaeological interest should be reported to the Director of the National Museum of Ireland within 4 days of the discovery. Furthermore, any person who finds a wreck more than 100 years old or an archaeological object, must report the discovery to the Underwater Archaeology Unit of the National Monuments Service, and the Garda Síochána within 4 days. Oil and gas activities resulting from licensing must ensure they fully comply with all the requirements set out in the Acts to ensure the ongoing protection of the archaeological heritage. |
| DECC Statement of Strategy 2021-2023   | Sets out DECC's vision of a climate neutral, sustainable and digitally connected Ireland. It focuses on the transition to a net zero emissions and sustainable future in line with the ambitions set out in the Programme for Government.   | Specifies commitment to low carbon energy and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.   |
| Merchant Shipping (Salvage and Wreck) Act, 1993                                    | Sections 44, 45 and 49 of the Merchant Shipping (Salvage and Wreck) Act of 1993, set out the obligation for recovered objects of archaeological or historical potential that constitute vessels or wreck to be reported to the Receiver of Wreck and to the Director of the National Museum of Ireland within 4 days.   | Oil and gas activities resulting from licensing must ensure they fully comply with the requirements of the Act in the event of any unexpected archaeological discoveries   |
| Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (OREDP) (2014 & 2019)                   | Sets out Ireland's long-term vision for the development of offshore renewable energy and identifies scenarios for delivering offshore renewable energy by 2030 with a review of progress provided in 2020.  | Potential spatially and/or temporally competing interests. There are potential cumulative impacts between renewable energy and oil and gas operators in the marine area which should be considered as part of the assessment.  |
| Grid25 Study   | Sets out Ireland's strategic commitments for the development, upgrade and maintenance of the electricity transmission system.   | There are a number of offshore wind projects which are within close proximity of the IOSEA6 Study Area.  |
| Offshore Grid Study  | Looks at how electricity generation from offshore renewable sources will be integrated into the existing transmission system and whether a second (offshore)  | Considers a variety of scenarios in the Irish Sea, overlapping with the IOSEA6 Study Area.   |

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|   | transmission grid should be developed. The study also explores options for an offshore grid in terms of how and where this would be developed.  |  |
| National Biodiversity Plan  | The Plan forms part of Ireland’s commitment to protect biodiversity for the benefit of future generations through a series of targeted strategies and actions. The vision is to ‘that biodiversity and ecosystems in Ireland are conserved and restored, delivering benefits essential for all sectors of society and that Ireland contributes to efforts to halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystems in the EU and globally.’ | Avoid significant impacts on habitats and species through enhanced survey and research on marine biodiversity, and enhanced pollution control and monitoring of coastal and marine ecosystems.   |
| Various Draft River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) 2022 2027   | These plans forms part of a suite of plans to ensure delivery of Ireland’s commitments under the EU Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC.   | Includes transitional waters and the coastal zone and specifically identifies a number of coastal habitats as under threat and requiring protection through the RBMPs, - including coastal floodplain, coastal saltmarsh and coastal sand dunes. Many of these habitats within or adjacent to IOSEA6 Study Area. |
| Pollution Reduction Programmes (PRPs) for Shellfish Waters. Specifically (but not limited to): Adrigole Harbour; Baltimore Harbour/Sherkin Island; Ballymacoda; Cork Great Island North Channel; Kinsale; Oyster Haven; Roaringwater Bay; Rostellan (North, South and West) | These programmes cover various shellfish growing waters around the coast. Established by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in order to protect and improve water quality in the designated shellfish growing areas, to ensure compliance with Article 5 of Directive 2006/113/EC of the European parliament and of the Council on the quality required for shellfish waters.  | Consideration should be given to these shellfish growing waters within the context of possible pollution incidents associated with the proposed exploration activities within the IOSEA6 Study Area.   |
| Regional Planning Guidelines for the South-East Region (2010- 2022) (South-East Regional Authority)   | These guidelines implement the requirements of the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) (2002) for the south-east Region covering Waterford City, and counties of Carlow, Kilkenny, South Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford.  | Identifies the importance of the coastline to the economy of the region and sets out a requirement for a common approach across local authorities to the protection of inter alia coastal and estuaries water bodies through Integrated Coastal Zone Management.   |
| Regional Planning Guidelines for the South-West Region (2010 – 2022) (South-West Regional Authority)  | These guidelines implement the requirements of the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) (2002) for the south-west Region covering Cork City and the counties of Cork and Kerry.  | Identifies the value of the coastal natural environment and the importance of the coastline to the economy of the region and sets out a requirement to promote integrated coastal management strategies which will inter alia promote coordinated land and maritime zone spatial planning.                       |

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| Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area (2010-2022) (Dublin Regional Authority) | The Regional Planning Guidelines set out the planned direction for growth within the Greater Dublin Area up to 2022 by giving regional effect to national planning policy under the National Spatial Strategy (NSS).  | Identifies the importance of Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Coastal Flood Protection.  |
| Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021                                   | This will provide support and set targets for Ireland’s step towards a climate neutral economy and its transitions to net zero emissions no later than 2050. The key elements of this Act include 5-year carbon budgets, the reduction of carbon emissions and local climate action plans.<br><br>The Act provides commitment to amendments (2021) to the Petroleum and Other Minerals Development Act 1960 to end the issuing licensing of new exploration and extraction of gas.  | Identifies the targets to meet net-zero emissions and reduce reliance of fossil fuels.   |
| Climate Action Plan 2021   | The Plan provides a detailed plan for taking decisive action to achieve a 51% reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and setting us on a path to reach net-zero emissions by no later than 2050, as committed to in the Programme for Government and set out in the Climate Act 2021. The Plan lists actions needed to deliver on Ireland’s climate targets and sets indicative ranges of emissions reductions for each sector of the economy. It will be updated annually, including in 2022, to ensure alignment with Ireland’s legally binding economy-wide carbon budgets and sectoral ceilings. | Identifies the targets to meet net-zero emissions and reduce reliance of fossil fuels.   |
| National Development Plan 2021-2030  | The Plan sets out Government’s over-arching investment strategy and budget for the period 2021-2030 and focuses on improving delivery of infrastructure projects. Also sets out carbon tax allocation.  | The Plan must take into account climate actions and the best practice principles for a green recovery plan. Decarbonising is a key action. |
| National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) 2021-2030  | The Plan sets out Irelands energy and climate policies in detail for the period from 2021 to 2030 and looks onwards to 2050. The NECP is a consolidated plan which brings together energy and climate planning into a single process for the first time. It should be noted that the NECP was drafted in line with the current EU effort-sharing approach, before the Government committed to this higher level of ambition, and therefore does not reflect this higher commitment.   | The Plan must take into account objectives and targets in relation to energy and climate planning.   |
| Petroleum Exploration and Production Activities as part of Ireland’s Transition to a Low Carbon  |   | The Plan must take into account aims and objectives of the Policy Statement and goals for Irelands decarbonation.                          |

| Plan / Policy or Programme Name                                       | Intent   | Implications for the Plan   |
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| Economy Policy Statement (DECC, 2019)                                 |  |   |
| Programme for Government - Our Shared Future                          | The Programme sets a clear pathway towards less reliance on fossil fuels across every sector of society and specifically contains a commitment to end the issue of new licences for the exploration and extraction of gas on the same basis as the decision taken in 2019 by the previous Government in relation to oil exploration and extraction.  | The Plan must take into account aims and objectives of the Policy Statement and goals for Irelands decarbonation.   |
| Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2021  | The Act revises maritime jurisdiction law and provides definitions of Irelands maritime zones in accordance with UNCLOS.   | Take into account the relevant definitions of maritime jurisdictions.   |
| National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) Project Ireland 2040        | The NMPF brings together all marine-based human activities, outlining the Governments vision, objectives and marine planning policies for each marine activity. It set a new way of looking at how Ireland uses the marine area and planning how best use it in the future.  | NMPF sets out policies for Petroleum and states that there is likely to be a reduction in oil and gas exploration and production.<br><br>NMPF Ports, Harbours and Shipping (Chapter 18) also sets out policies for proposals in the vicinity of port limits and requirements for the applications. Licencing at a project level should meet these requirements.           |
| Petroleum and Other Minerals Development Act 1960 - 2021 (as amended) | The act sets out the statutory basis for the issuing of authorisations and for environmental impact assessment of plans for the working of petroleum.  | Oil and gas developments resulting from licensing will likely require EIA.  |
| Policy Statement Petroleum Exploration and Production (DECC, 2022)    | This Policy Statement replaces the 2019 Policy Statement in order to reflect the current policy and legislative position of the Government on Petroleum Exploration and Production, and to provide clarity to stakeholders in relation to future authorisations which may be granted under legislation following the Programme for Government – Our Shared Future commitment to end the issuing of new licences for the exploration and extraction of gas on the same basis as the decision taken in 2019. | The Plan must take into account aims and objectives of the Policy Statement and goals for Irelands climate action plan in relation to petroleum exploration and production. The future development management framework for the exploration and production of natural gas, as a transition fuel, in Ireland's offshore and the energy security rationale for natural gas. |
| Monuments and Archaeological Heritage Bill                            | The Bill will replace the National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2014 and other related legislation and sets out stronger protection for archaeological sites and underwater wrecks.  | This will place stronger protection on cultural heritage features. Oil and gas activities resulting from licensing must ensure they fully comply with all the requirements set out in Bill to ensure the ongoing protection of the archaeological heritage.   |

| Plan / Policy or Programme Name   | Intent  | Implications for the Plan  |
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| Developing and Assessing Alternatives in Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)                 | This guidance provides a good practice approach in the form of a Toolkit for plan-/programme-makers and SEA practitioners on the alternatives stage of SEA in three clear steps: identification and development; assessment and comparison; and selection and reporting of alternatives. It provides recommendations, as well as good practice examples, resulting from a review of current practice, for improving the development and consideration of alternatives in SEA. | The SEA follows the good practice approach set out in this guidance for development and assessment of alternatives.  |
| Good practice note on SEA for the Energy Sector   | This report aims to provide good practice guidance and ideas on how to carry out SEAs of energy plans in Ireland. It responds to a recommendation by the Second Review of the Effectiveness of SEA in Ireland (EPA, 2020a).   | The SEA follows the good practice guidance and ideas on how to carry out SEA of energy plans in Ireland.   |
| Guidance on SEA Statements and Monitoring   | This report provides stand-alone guidance on SEA Statements and monitoring. It is included as part of the EPA-funded project Second Review of SEA Effectiveness in Ireland (González et al., 2020). It is specific to the Irish context but has wider international applicability. The monitoring recommendations include guidance on indicators to facilitate a more consistent and coherent approach at this SEA stage.   | The plan should follow the good practice guidance and ideas on how to carry out strategic environmental assessments (SEAs) in an Irish context and create SEA Statements.                      |
| Integrating Climatic Factors into Strategic Environmental Assessment in Ireland - A Guidance Note | The guidance provides updated climate-related information and sets out mitigation for SEAs.   | The SEA follows the good practice guidance on integrating climatic factors into SEA.   |
| National Climate Policy Position  | The commitment by Ireland to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its ultimate objective of achieving stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system  | The plan should focus on achieving stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system |
| National Planning Framework   | The National Planning Framework (NPF) is the Government's high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of our country out to the year 2040.  | The plan should help to aid Ireland's energy need in the future as part of the 2040 NPF plan.  |
| Prioritised Action Framework 2021-2027 (NPWS)   | Prioritised Action Frameworks (PAFs) are strategic multiannual planning tools, aimed at providing a comprehensive overview of the measures that are needed to implement the EU-wide Natura 2000 network and its associated green infrastructure, specifying the financing needs for these measures and linking them to the corresponding EU funding programmes.   | The plan should follow the measures recommended in the Action Framework.   |

| Plan / Policy or Programme Name  | Intent   | Implications for the Plan   |
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| National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021  | The Plan sets out actions through which a range of government, civil and private sectors will undertake to achieve Ireland’s ‘Vision for Biodiversity’, and follows on from the work of the first and second National Biodiversity Action Plans.   | The plan should follow the actions set out in the national biodiversity action plan when undertaking seismic and drilling activities.   |
| Draft Seafood Development Programme 2021-2027 (DAFM, in prep)  | The Programme aims to support a diverse range of activities within the marine area, such as fisheries and aquaculture.   | The plan should take into consideration the programmes aims and not hinder them from being met.   |
| Management plans for relevant Natura 2000 sites (NPWS / JNCC)  | Supporting documents for individual Natura 2000 sites setting out information on their conservation objectives and targets. These are not available for all sites.   | At a project level licencing should consider the management plans for relevant Natura 2000 sites when undertaking Screening for Appropriate Assessment.   |
| <b>EU Directives and Programmes</b>  |  |   |
| A Blueprint to Safeguard Europe’s Water Resources  | <p>The Blueprint to Safeguard Europe’s Water Resources is based on an evaluation of existing policy and on a wealth of information and analysis including the EEA State of Water report, the Commission assessment of the Member States River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) and Review of the Policy on Water Scarcity and Droughts, and the Fitness Check of EU Freshwater Policy. It is accompanied by an Impact Assessment.</p> <p>The Blueprint recognises that the aquatic environments differ greatly across the EU and therefore does not propose any one solution. It emphasises key themes which include: improving land use, addressing water pollution, increasing water efficiency and resilience, and improving governance by those involved in managing water resources</p> | The “Blueprint” outlines actions that concentrate on better implementation of current water legislation, integration of water policy objectives into other policies, and filling the gaps in particular as regards water quantity and efficiency. The objective is to ensure that a sufficient quantity of good quality water is available for people’s needs, the economy and the environment throughout the EU.   |
| Council Directive 97/11/EC of 3 March 1997 amending Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment. | Requires an environmental impact assessment (EIA) and a public consultation document, an environmental statement (ES), to be submitted for certain projects considered likely to have an environmental effect, inclusive of impacts on cultural heritage, maritime archaeology and impacts on soils (which is taken to mean sediments in the marine environment).  | <p>Oil and gas developments resulting from licensing are likely to require EIA. The EIA Directive requires a description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the proposed project. The EIA should fully consider the potential impacts;</p> <p>to underwater cultural heritage and maritime archaeology.</p> <p>to sediments. (Changes to ocean circulation can have indirect effects on flora, fauna and human activities and changes to oceanographic properties is therefore an important</p> |

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|  |  | consideration as a forcing mechanism for wider environmental change)<br><br>to population. ('Population' is widely interpreted to include impacts on human health)  |
| Directive 2002/84/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 November 2002 amending the Directives on maritime safety and the prevention of pollution from ships. | This Directive aims to improve the implementation of Community legislation on maritime safety, on the prevention of pollution from ships and on shipboard conditions. The Directive is closely linked to Regulation 2002/2099/EC establishing a Committee on Safe Seas and the Prevention of Pollution from Ships and amending the Regulations on maritime safety and the prevention of pollution from ships.  | Oil and gas activities resulting from licensing must comply with this Directive in relation to maritime safety, prevention of pollution and on shipboard living and working conditions.   |
| Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU (EIA Directive)   | This Directive amends the previous EIA Directive on the assessment of certain public and private projects on the environment. It introduces changes in EIA requirements. The main changes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ extended coverage of environmental issues required in the EIA,</li> <li>▪ requirements for assessment of cumulative effects in greater detail,</li> <li>▪ assessment of reasonable alternatives and public participation.</li> </ul>   | Oil and gas developments resulting from licensing are likely to require EIA. The amended EIA Directive requires: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Boarder consideration of reasonable alternatives</li> <li>Detailed assessment of cumulative effects</li> <li>Wider coverage of environmental issues such as climate change and biodiversity</li> <li>Greater public participation and access to information.</li> </ul> |
| EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030   | The Biodiversity Strategy, published in May 2020 headlines a target to protect nature, to reverse ecosystem degradation and put Europe's biodiversity on a recovery path by 2030. The strategy will also support a green recovery post-covid pandemic.   | Avoid significant impacts on Annex I habitats and Annex II species through assessment of especially vulnerable areas and potentially damaging activities. Also, adoption of management measures in relation to Annex IV species.  |
| Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014; on the Prevention and Management of the Introduction and Spread of Invasive Alien Species  | Provides set measures related to invasive species included on the list of Invasive Alien Species of Union concern. The regulation sets out three main aims: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To <b>prevent</b> the introduction of invasive species of Union concern into the EU.</li> <li>▪ To have a surveillance system to detect presents of invasive species of Union concern as soon as possible and to take <b>early rapid eradication</b> measures to prevent establishment. Already established invasive species must be <b>managed</b> to prevent further spread and to minimise harm caused.</li> </ul> | Consider potential effects of non-native species introductions in ballast water discharges.   |

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| European Climate Law, Regulation 2021/1119  | Sets out aims to meet the global adaptation goal set out by the Paris Agreement. The regulation further commits to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and reaching climate neutral by 2050.   | Oil and gas licensing should meet the general aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.  |
| European Green Deal (2019)  | This strategy aims to transform the EU into a modern, resource efficient and competitive economy. One of the main aims of the European Green Deal is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to become climate neutral by 2050. In 2021 the EC published the “Fit for 55” Package, which includes a suite of legislative initiatives across various sectors, including energy, transport and buildings, which is intended to fundamentally overhaul the EU’s climate policy framework and put the EU on track to deliver on its 2030 climate target of 55%.                                 | Oil and gas licensing should meet the general aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and take into account any relevant initiatives for climate and energy.  |
| Directive 2009/31/EC on the Geological Storage of Carbon Dioxide                            | The objective of this Directive is to establish a legal framework for environmentally safe geological storage of carbon dioxide in order to contribute to tackling climate change.   | CO2 may potentially be stored in geological formations in the IOSEA6 Study Area. Potential interactions with oil and gas activities need to be considered at the time of licensing.   |
| European Landscape Convention   | The Council of Europe’s European Landscape Convention (ELC) was published in 2000 and came into force in Ireland on 1 March 2004 (Council of Europe Treaty Series no. 176. The convention’s aim is to promote European landscape (and seascape) planning, protection and management. Landscape is defined as an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors (Firth, 2013). As such the convention is applicable in a marine context and of relevance to the protection of submerged cultural landscapes. | The ELC requires Ireland to integrate landscape into its regional planning policies. The ELC applies to the entire territory of the Republic of Ireland (ROI) including the land and all marine areas. Potential requirements for an EIA, including a Seascape/Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for development likely to have significant effects by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location. |
| The European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (revised) 1992     | The primary aim of the convention is ‘to protect the archaeological heritage as a source of European collective memory and as an instrument for historical and scientific study’ (DAHGI, 1999). A broad definition of archaeological and cultural heritage is applied, to include sites or objects on land and underwater.   | The Valletta Convention requires Ireland, which ratified in 1997, to provide for archaeology in planning policies and development plans. As such Oil and gas activities resulting from licensing must comply with the details of the convention with respect to the protection and investigation of archaeological sites and implementing national legislation.   |
| European Commission (EC) Directive 2008/105/EC Directive on Environmental Quality Standards | This directive sets the environmental quality standards (EQS) of surface waters for priority substances and eight other pollutants within EU member states. The directive limits the concentration and limits the threshold in order to meet a good chemical status.   | All chemicals used in exploration drilling activity will need to meet EQS.  |

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| Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC)   | Sets out to prevent and remedying environmental damage, establishing a framework based on the 'polluter pays principle'.  | Oil and gas licensing should support the principles of the directive.   |
| Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)                   | Enacted through the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations SI 94 of 1997, as amended through SI 378 of 2005. Key measure is the setting up of the Natura 2000 network of special areas of conservation (SACs) composed of sites hosting habitats listed in Annex I and habitats of the species listed in Annex II.   | <p>Avoid significant impacts on Annex I habitats and Annex II species through assessment of especially vulnerable areas and potentially damaging activities.</p> <p>Also, adoption of management measures in relation to Annex IV species.</p> <p>SACs are present throughout the IOSEA6 Study Area. Directive enforces requirement for Appropriate Assessment.</p>   |
| Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) | The Directive aims to protect more effectively the marine environment across Europe by achieving and maintaining Good Environmental Status (GES) of the EU's marine waters by 2020 and to protect the resource base upon which marine related economic and social activities depend. It enshrines an ecosystem approach to management of human activities having an impact on the marine environment. | <p>The IOSEA6 Study Area falls within the North-East Atlantic Ocean sub region of the marine environment governed under the Marine Strategy Framework. A marine strategy for the Irish marine waters, has been developed which includes: targets and associated environmental indicators, a development programme of measures designed to achieve or maintain Good Environmental Status.</p> <p>Any oil and gas exploration activities resulting from licensing within the IOSEA6 will have to comply with measures set within the strategy framework and will need to consider the need to achieve and maintain GES including the need to consider sediment contamination and movement as well as the potential for secondary effects on flora and fauna caused by changes to physical properties of the ocean. Sediments are referred to in the Directive in relation to characterisation of marine waters, identification of GES and in relation to pressures and impacts.</p> |
| Shellfish Waters Directive (06/12/EC)            | <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Protect or improve shellfish water in order to support shellfish life and growth</li> <li>▪ Protect the aquatic habitat of bivalve, gastropod and molluscs</li> <li>▪ Provides for pollution reduction programmes for designated waters</li> </ul>  | Applies only to designated waters, which generally occur in the coastal and transitional water. Restrictions apply for physical, chemical and microbiological requirements for designated shellfish waters.   |

| Plan / Policy or Programme Name   | Intent   | Implications for the Plan   |
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| Bathing Waters Directive, (2006/7/EC)   | Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Protect or improve bathing waters in order to provide bathing areas that safeguard public health</li> </ul>   | Applies only to designated waters, which generally occur in the coastal and transitional water. Restrictions apply for microbiological requirements for designated bathing waters.  |
| Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control Directive (IPPC) (96/61/EC)   | The IPPC is a regulatory system that employs an integrated approach to control the environmental impacts of certain industrial activities.<br><br>The Directive requires a permit for industrial and agricultural activities with a high pollution potential. This permit can only be issued if certain environmental conditions are met, including companies bearing the responsibility for preventing and reducing any pollution they may cause.   | Sets out requirements for a permit.   |
| Council Directive 79/409/EEC of 2 April 1979, codified by Directive 2009/147/EC of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (Birds Directive) | Key measure is the setting up of the Natura 2000 network of special protection areas (SPAs).<br><br>Enacted through the European Communities (Conservation of Wild Birds) Regulations SI 291 of 1985. The Directive covers the protection, management and control of all species of naturally occurring birds in Member States. Key measure is the creation of Special Protection Areas (SPAs), part of the Natura 2000 site network.  | Avoid significant impacts on birds and their habitats through assessment of especially vulnerable areas and potentially damaging activities.<br><br>Coastal SPAs have been established adjacent east and south coast.<br><br>The watching of birds, which is supported by these designated sites, is a valuable recreation and tourism activity.  |
| Directive 2013/30/EU on the safety of offshore oil and gas operations   | The objective is to set minimum requirements to reduce as far as possible the occurrence of major accidents related to offshore oil and gas operations and to limit their consequences.<br><br>The Directive was implemented by Member States in July 2015.  | Oil and gas activities resulting from licensing must comply with this Directive in relation to safety and prevention of pollution.  |
| Maritime Spatial Planning Directive (2014/89/EU) establishing a Framework for Maritime Spatial Planning   | Sets out the requirement for EU member states to establish and implement maritime spatial planning within their national jurisdictions. The main aim of the directive is to establish a common set of principles and requirements to ensure Member States set up maritime spatial plans which identify the spatial and temporal distribution of relevant existing and future activities and uses in their marine waters. A key objective of this requirement is to facilitate and contribute to sustainable growth and to the preservation, protection and improvement of the marine environment, inclusive of underwater cultural heritage.<br><br>All coastal EU countries established maritime spatial plans by 2021 with a ten-year review of said maritime spatial plans. | The Directive recognises the increasing demand for maritime space for different purposes, including inter alia, tourism. Tourism is listed as a possible activity and use under Article 8(2). Article 5(2) concludes with <i>...In addition, Member States may pursue other objectives such as the promotion of sustainable tourism and the sustainable extraction of raw materials.</i><br><br>Oil and Gas activities resulting from licensing should maintain an awareness of the need for compliance with all relevant heritage policies that may be set out in future marine plans. |

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|   | Ireland established the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) May 2021 in requirement of EU Directive 2014/89/EU.  |   |
| European Commission (EC): The eighth Environment action programme to 2030 (proposed 2020)   | Sets out the EU's environmental aims up to 2030 with a focus on a transition towards a resource-efficient, climate-neutral regenerative economy.<br>The EAP builds onto the European Green Deal with six primary objectives.   | Oil and gas activities resulting from licensing must comply with relevant EC Directives.  |
| Council Directive 2003/87/EC of 13 October 2003 establishing a scheme for greenhouse gas emission allowance trading within the Community and amending Council Directive 96/61/EC. | Promotes reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.<br>Involves the allocation of greenhouse gas emissions permits and allowances which can be traded.   | Regulations currently address combustion emissions of CO2.<br>Consider implications of CO2 emissions as a result of licensing on ETS thresholds.  |
| Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC).   | Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Protect and enhance status of aquatic ecosystems.</li> <li>▪ Promote sustainable water use.</li> <li>▪ Reduce aquatic pollution</li> </ul>  | Applies to coastal and transitional waters only. In these areas, it covers:<br>Contamination by soluble and dispersed marine discharges<br>Potential impact of oil spills on water, sediments and biota.  |
| The Air Framework Directive. Directive on Air Quality Assessment and Management (Framework Directive) (1996/62/EC)  | Prevention and reduction of airborne pollutants for the protection of human health and the environment.  | Controls the levels of airborne pollutants. Oil and gas licensing should meet the general aim of a reduction in the amount of airborne pollutants that are produced.  |
| Directive on national Emission Ceilings for Certain Atmospheric Pollutants (2001/81/EC)   | Limitation of national emissions of certain airborne pollutants for the protection of human health and the environment.  | Controls the levels of airborne pollutants. Oil and gas licensing should meet the general aim of a reduction in the amount of airborne pollutants that are produced.  |
| National Strategic Aquaculture Plan   | The national strategic aquaculture plan aims to ensure that the Irish seafood industry will become a "sustainable, profitable, competitive and market focused industry making the maximum long term economic and social contribution to coastal communities and to Ireland as a whole", in compliance with Ireland's obligations under the Common Fisheries Policy and in accordance with Article 15 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1198/2006 | The strategy plans to develop the aquaculture sector, within the context of clearly defined national policies, output targets and environmental targets. The plan should take into consideration the national strategy's aims and not hinder them from being met. |
| Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth – An Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland   | Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth is an Integrated Marine Plan (IMP), setting out a roadmap for the Government's vision, high level goals and integrated actions   | The targets within this document are:   |

| Plan / Policy or Programme Name   | Intent  | Implications for the Plan  |
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|   | across policy, governance and business to enable Ireland's marine potential to be realised. Implementation of this Plan will by means of an integrated system of policy and programme planning for marine affairs.  | To double the value of Ireland's ocean wealth to 2.4% of GDP by 2030.  |
| Climate and Energy Governance Regulation (2018/1999)                              | This Regulation establishes a governance mechanism to:<br>1) implement strategies and measures designed to meet the objectives and targets of the Energy Union and the long-term Union greenhouse gas emissions commitments consistent with the Paris Agreement, and for the first ten-year period, from 2021 to 2030, in particular the Union's 2030 targets for energy and climate;<br>2) stimulate cooperation between Member States, including, where appropriate, at regional level, designed to achieve the objectives and targets of the Energy Union;<br>3) ensure the timeliness, transparency, accuracy, consistency, comparability and completeness of reporting by the Union and its Member States to the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement secretariat;<br>4) contribute to greater regulatory certainty as well as contribute to greater investor certainty and help take full advantage of opportunities for economic development, investment stimulation, job creation and social cohesion | Ireland's Oil and Gas plan should be designed to meet the objectives and targets of the EU and the long-term Union greenhouse gas emissions commitments.   |
| European Commission (EC) Industrial Emissions Directive 2010/75/EU (under review) | Industrial production processes account for a considerable share of the overall pollution in Europe, for emissions of greenhouse gases and acidifying substances, wastewater emissions and waste. The Directive aims to achieve a high level of protection of human health and the environment taken as a whole by reducing harmful industrial emissions across the EU, in particular through better application of Best Available Techniques (BAT).  | The plan should seek to apply BAT in the review and issuing of oil and gas licencing and meet the mandatory requirements on environmental inspections and other requirements.  |
| A new Industrial Strategy for Europe  | The EU aims to make its industry more competitive globally, and increase its autonomy and resilience.   | The plan should be in line with the EU strategy and help in the transition towards climate neutrality and digital leadership. The plan should aid EU industry to become an accelerator and enabler of change, innovation and growth. |
| EU 2020 Climate and Energy Package  | The package is a set of laws which are passed to ensure the EU meets its climate and energy targets by 2020.  | The plan must aim to meet the targets of the laws which are part of the package.   |
| EU 2030 Climate and Energy Framework  | The 2030 climate and energy Framework include EU-wide targets and policy objectives for the period 2021 to 2030. The EU set a binding target to cut emissions   | The plan should seek to aid Ireland in meeting the target of cutting emissions by 40% on 1990 levels by 2030.  |

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|   | in the EU by at least 40% below 1990 level by 2030. This target is expected to be revised upwards.  |  |
| EU Climate Adaptation Strategy 2021   | The EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change has the objective of setting out the pathway to prepare for the unavoidable impacts of climate change.  | The plan must meet the EU strategy on adapting to climate change.  |
| Impact assessment for the European Climate law - Stepping up Europe's 2030 climate ambition | The EC has proposed to increase the EU's ambition on reducing greenhouse gases and set this more ambitious path for the next 10 years. The assessment shows how all sectors of the economy and society can contribute, and sets out the policy actions required to achieve this goal.                         | The plan must meet the EC's plan on stepping up Europe's 2030 climate plan.  |
| <b>Plans and programmes in adjacent States with potential transboundary implications</b>    |   |  |
| Northern Ireland Offshore Renewable Energy Strategic Action Plan (ORESAP)                   | This plan sets out the framework for the development of offshore wind and marine renewable energy in Northern Ireland.  | Oil and Gas activities resulting from licensing should remain aware of the potential transboundary implications of the Plan and any resulting requirements to protect and mitigate for impacts to marine archaeology and cultural heritage.  |
| Northern Ireland Marine Plan (draft) 2018   | The draft Marine Plan for Northern Ireland is being prepared by the DOE Marine Plan Team in accordance with Article 51 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 and equivalent provisions of the Marine (Northern Ireland) Act (2013).   | The oil and gas sector in Ireland must maintain an awareness of the potential transboundary implications of the draft Marine Plan and be used for planning decisions which may impact Northern Ireland and take into account all relevant policies, taking account of economic, environmental and social considerations. |
| Welsh National Marine Plan (2019)   | The aim of the Plan is to manage marine activities more sustainably by providing important information and guidance to those who wish to use or undertake development in Welsh inshore or offshore waters and to guide decision making on proposals that may affect it.                                       | The oil and gas sector in Ireland must maintain an awareness of the potential transboundary implications in the Irish Sea of a Welsh National Marine plan, including requirements set out in any relevant heritage policies.   |
| Integrated Coastal Zone Management Strategy for Northern Ireland 2006-2026                  | This strategy is intended to set out long-term objectives for achieving sustainable coastal management, through improvements to existing management systems, the development of new management systems and identifying and dealing with potential areas of conflict.  | The oil and gas sector in Ireland must maintain an awareness of coastal zone management in the transboundary waters.   |
| Marine Strategy Framework Directive (08/06EEC) – UK waters                                  | The intent is to achieve Good Environmental Status (GES) of the EU's marine waters by 2020 and to protect the resource base upon which marine related economic and social activities depend. It enshrines an ecosystem approach to management of human activities having an impact on the marine environment. | The UK have developed a Marine Strategy for the marine waters surrounding the UK. Compliance with this strategy is necessary where transboundary implications from oil exploration are possible.   |

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| <p>Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment<br/><i>Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), 2013</i></p> | <p>UK guidance on the assessment of potential landscape and visual effects arising from developments. This includes cumulative effects.</p>  | <p>Sets out the methods to be utilised in the assessment of the effects of developments upon landscape fabric, landscape character and visual amenity of a given study area.</p>   |
| <p>Marine Plan, South-West Offshore, England (Updated 2021)</p>   | <p>This is the 9th plan area in the English programme of marine planning development. In line with the main principles of marine planning, it will seek to enable sustainable development and protection of the environment by setting out priorities and directions for future development in the area.</p> | <p>The oil and gas sector in Ireland must maintain an awareness of the development of marine planning in the south-west region of England as there will be potential transboundary implications in the southern reaches of the IOSEA6 Study Area in the Celtic Sea. Oil and Gas activities resulting from licensing should ensure compliance with all relevant heritage policies that may be set out in this plan.</p> |
| <p>UK Offshore Energy Strategic Environmental Assessment 4 (OESEA4), Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), UK</p>   | <p>This SEA was prepared to assess the implications of and to enable future leasing for offshore wind, wave and tidal devices and licensing/leasing for seaward oil and gas rounds, hydrocarbon and carbon dioxide gas storage (DECC, 2021)</p>  | <p>Oil and Gas activities resulting from licensing in the IOSEA6 Study Area must be aware of the potential transboundary implications of certain elements of this plan pertaining to the Irish and Celtic Seas.</p>  |
| <p>UK Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland</p>  | <p>Strategic Framework for Air Quality Objectives for key air pollutants.</p>  | <p>Controls and monitors the levels of airborne pollutants. Oil and gas licensing should meet the general aim of a reduction in the amount of airborne pollutants that are produced.</p>   |
| <p>Crown Estates Offshore Wind Round 1 – 4 (UK Waters)</p>  | <p>Various historical and current licensing rounds for offshore wind development in UK waters.</p>   | <p>In-combination effects should be considered, particularly in relation to possible impacts on sensitive species (including marine mammals).</p>  |
| <p>Geneva Convention on Long-Range Trans-boundary Air Pollution 1979</p>  | <p>Controls and reduces environmental damage caused by transboundary air pollution.</p>  | <p>The Convention was the first international legally binding instrument to deal with problems of air pollution on a broad regional basis and remains the overarching policy. Oil and gas licensing should meet the general aim of a reduction in the amount of airborne pollutants that are produced.</p>   |
| <p>UK Marine Policy Statement</p>   | <p>This Marine Policy Statement (MPS) is the framework for preparing Marine Plans and taking decisions affecting the marine environment. It has been prepared and adopted pursuant to section 44 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.</p>  | <p>The MPS will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK marine area. Any oil and gas activities in</p>  |

| Plan / Policy or Programme Name   | Intent  | Implications for the Plan  |
|---|---|--|
|   | An update in 2021 states that The European Union Withdrawal Act 2018 will reinstate and convert EU measures into UK laws.   | the transboundary areas must observe the provisions of the MPS and subsequent marine plans.  |
| Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (UK)                                   | The MCAA provides the framework for the UK marine licensing system. It also designated Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in Scotland. | The plan should seek to review the nature conservation requirements and ensure they are followed in relation to transboundary impacts, including impacts on MCZs and MPAs. |
| Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013  | The act sets out provisions for marine planning in Northern Ireland.  | The plan should review and take into consideration the plan which is created from the act in relation to potential transboundary implications.                             |
| Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985                                    | The order sets out environmental protection for certain species of plants and animals.  | Oil and gas licencing should not intentionally kill or injury the protected species in Northern Ireland.   |
| Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 | The regulations protect species and habitats and make it an offence to deliberately capture, injure or kill a wild animal of a European protected species included in Schedule II of these Regulations.       | Oil and gas licencing should not intentionally kill or injury the protected species in Northern Ireland.   |

# APPENDIX B

## Consultation Responses

**Table B-1 Summary of scoping comments received from the consultation and how the comments were taken into account in the production of the Environmental Report**

| Consultation Authority  | Summary of Response   | Action Taken  |
|---|---|---|
| CIL   | <p>Reviewed this consultation and have no objections from a safety of navigation perspective.</p> <p>National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) Ports, Harbours and Shipping Ch18:<br/>                     Proposals within ports limits, beside or in the vicinity of ports, and / or that impact upon the main routes of significance to a port, must demonstrate within applications that they have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- been informed by consultation at pre-application stage or earlier with the relevant port authority;</li> <li>- have carried out a navigational risk assessment including an analysis of maritime traffic in the area; and</li> <li>- have consulted Department of Transport, MSO and Commissioners of Irish Lights. Applicants must continue to engage parties identified in pre-application processes as appropriate during the decision-making process.</li> </ul> <p>NMPF Ports, Harbours and Shipping Ch18: Irish Lights Risk Assessment processes can identify any increase in navigational risk and potential mitigation measures. Issues include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The protection of the use of the shortest routes to ports, thus the most economic route with the least carbon footprint.</li> <li>- Supporting the tourist, leisure and fishing sectors, promoting safety at sea, and encouraging safe development of coastal infrastructure and commercial activity, such as offshore exploration and renewable energy.</li> </ul> <p>NMPF Safety at Sea Ch19: Establishing, changing or disestablishing Aids to Navigation (AtoN) must be sanctioned, in advance of works, by the Commissioners of Irish Lights.</p> | <p>The PPS review has been updated to note requirements of the NMPF in relation to navigation.</p>  |
| CRU - Commission for Regulation of Utilities                            | <p>CRU remit for upstream (offshore and onshore) petroleum exploration/extraction, environmental role under the Petroleum Safety Act 2015 including major environmental incidents resulting from major accidents. Given the limited environmental remit as per these conditions CRU have no comments on the ongoing consultation.</p>   | <p>Noted.</p>   |
| DAFM - Department Agriculture, Food and the Marine and Marine Institute | <p>The evaluation of potential impacts on any commercial sea fishing activities needs to be given consideration as part of any planning/proposal process and during the development process itself.</p> <p>It is imperative that engagement should be sought with the fishing industry and other relevant stakeholders at as early a stage as possible to discuss any changes that may affect them to afford a chance for their input. Fishers' interests and livelihoods must be fully recognised, supported, we recommend consulting the fisheries Producer Organisations. Contact details for number of organisations provided.</p> <p>The list of consultees on page 36 of the Scoping Report includes the Federation of Irish Fishermen. This organisation is defunct, and instead we recommend consulting the fisheries Producer Organisations. These organisations are listed below:<br/>                     Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation<br/>                     Irish South and East Fish Producers Organisation</p>   | <p>Impacts on commercial fishing activities is considered in the environmental assessment.</p> <p>Suggested fisheries Producer Organisations added to list of consultees on the ER.</p> |

| Consultation Authority | Summary of Response   | Action Taken  |
|------------------------|---|---|
|                        | Irish Fish Producers Organisation<br>Clogherhead Co-op<br>National Inshore Fisheries Forum<br>Irish Fish Processors and Exporters Association<br>Irish South and West Fish Producers Organisation<br>IrishSouthAndWest<br>Irish Islands Marine Resource Organisation  |   |
|                        | The IOSEA6 report is an excellent overview of fish, shellfish and fisheries in Irish waters. Number of small recommendations made for baseline section.<br><br>Section C.8.9.1 and C.5.7.1 are not an accurate representation of the current overfishing situation and are based on non-official or not peer reviewed sources and should be removed or modified.  | Section C.8.9.1 has been mortified, section C.5.7.1 has been removed.                     |
|                        | Section C.2.3: Few minor points like herring is misplaced in the demersal fish section, horse mackerel and boarfish are also important pelagic species in the area.   | Section C.2.3 has been updated to include species mentioned and herring statement edited. |
|                        | Section C.8.1.1: While it is made clear in the figure legends for Figures C-36 to C-38 it could also be stated in the text that the maps represent fishing effort for >12m vessels.   | A note has been made within section C.8.1.1 regarding fishing vessels greater than 12m.   |
|                        | Section C.8.9.1: is stated that “Ireland has a significant problem with overfishing” which is probably something that DAFM would contest. is true to say that overfishing was a historical problem in the past in the IOSEA6 area significant progress has been made to end overfishing and bring down fishing mortality rates to sustainable levels. The latest ICES fisheries overview for the Celtic Seas (ICES, 2021) clearly shows declining levels of overfishing for many stocks and species groups especially since around 2000. The Marine Institute Stockbook also indicates that fishing pressure has declined on many stock and many are no longer considered over fished (Marine Institute, 2021).   | This section has been updated as per the ICES and Marine Institute reference’s.           |
|                        | Section C.5.7.1: Similar comments to C.8.9.1, Bird Watch Report just quoting New Economics Foundation Reports   | Section C5.7.1 has been removed, and sections C.8.9.1 has been updated.                   |
|                        | Section C.8.11 Table C-36: section identifies overviews of commercial fish distributions and the fisheries that exploit them as a key data gap. The VMS linked logbook information in the Atlas of commercial fisheries is available for the years 2019-2022 with a lag of around 1 year due to data transmission delays. So it is not a data gap per se the data is available from the Marine Institute but is just not published. Caveat is that VMS data biased to species. Ground fish survey and other MI fisheries surveys are conducted annually (Nephrops UWTV and acoustic survey). Main data gap lack of species distributions models and up to date synthesis of knowledge on essential fish habitats. | The data gaps sections has been updated taking into account the consultation response     |

| Consultation Authority | Summary of Response  | Action Taken   |
|------------------------|--|--|
| EPA                    | <p>This submission highlights some key environmental issues to consider in preparing the Plan and SEA. Our State of Environment Report, Ireland’s Environment - An Integrated Assessment 2020 (SOER2020) identifies thirteen Key Messages for Ireland. Delivering Ireland’s long term sustainable development and environmental protection goals will require a concerted effort by government departments to address these key actions. The report recognises the need for full implementation of existing environmental legislation and review of governance/coordination on environmental protection across public bodies.</p> <p>The SOER2020 messages are also linked to a number of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Climate Action, Life on Land and Life below Water. Addressing and implementing these actions will be important in delivering environmental protection and promoting sustainable development in Ireland. In finalising the Plan and integrating the findings of the SEA into the Plan, the relevant recommendations, key issues and challenges described in the EPAs SOER2020 should be taken into account.</p>   | <p>The State of Environment Report, Ireland’s Environment - An Integrated Assessment 2020 report has been reviewed in the preparation of this SEA.</p>   |
|                        | <p>The integration of the SEA process into the Plan should reflect the overall objective of the SEA Directive “to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes”.</p> <p>All recommendations from the SEA, including mitigation measures, should be integrated into the Plan. Fully integrating the findings and recommendations of the SEA into the Plan will be key to strengthening its overall positive commitments while ensuring that any significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan are mitigated. The SEA Environmental Report should include a chapter outlining how the recommendations and mitigation measures from the SEA, and any other environmental assessments, have been incorporated into the Plan. We recommend that, the SEA Environmental Report includes summary tables outlining the key findings of the SEA and linking the significant environmental effects identified to the proposed mitigation measures, monitoring programme and, where relevant, Plan policies/measures.</p>  | <p>The SEA has helped define the limits of the Draft Plan and identify suitable mitigation to be considered at project level to minimise and avoid the potential effects on the environment.</p> |
|                        | <p>SEA requires that significant environmental effects of implementing a plan are monitored in order, inter alia, to identify at an early stage unforeseen adverse effects and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action. The SEA environmental report must include a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring. The Plan should include a commitment to implement SEA-related environmental monitoring requirements and the associated reporting.</p> <p>The SEA-related monitoring should address positive, negative and cumulative effects where they are likely to occur and should include provision for on-going review to facilitate an early response to any unforeseen environmental issues that may arise. The SEA Environmental Report should specify the monitoring frequency and responsibilities and include provisions for reporting on the monitoring.</p> <p>The Plan should include a commitment to monitor the Plan over its lifetime to determine how well and effective the environmental-related objectives of the Plan are being met in implementing the Plan. The Plan should also take account of the SEA-related monitoring programme and associated reporting aspects also. We suggest including a separate section on ‘Monitoring, Implementation and Reporting’ in the Plan, setting out the provisions for monitoring (including SEA-related</p> | <p>Section 5 of the ER presents the approach to monitoring. Monitoring will be undertaken at Project level and used to inform the effectiveness of the Plan.</p>                                 |

| Consultation Authority | Summary of Response  | Action Taken   |
|------------------------|--|--|
|                        | <p>monitoring) and reporting considerations. It would be helpful also to specify the frequency of monitoring or periodic reviews of the Plan over its lifetime.</p> <p>There may be merits in aligning the periodic reviews of the Plan with existing cyclical reporting.</p> <p>The Environmental Report should specify the monitoring frequency and responsibilities and include provisions for reporting on the monitoring. To avoid duplication in data collection, the same indicators should be used for the plan-related and SEA-related monitoring where possible.</p> |  |
|                        | <p>We recommend including schematics in the SEA Environmental Report, showing the links and key inter-relationships between the Plan and other key relevant national, regional, sectoral and environmental plans/programmes (e.g. the National Marine Planning Framework, Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan, Seafood Development Programme 2021-2027 etc.) and legislation.</p>   | <p>This was considered in the preparation of the report but not implemented.</p>   |
|                        | <p>Appendix I provides info on next steps and available guidance and resources.</p>  | <p>These guidance documents have been reviewed in the preparation of this ER.</p>  |
|                        | <p>Scoping report should consider whether there is potential for likely significant effects perceived on neighbouring Member States. Additionally, we advise that consultation should be undertaken at a minimum with the relevant ministries/agencies in Northern Ireland and the UK. The relevant requirements of the SEA protocol<sup>1</sup> under the ESPOO Convention should be taken into account, for any possible transboundary consultations with non-EU Member States.</p>  | <p>We note that effects of the plan may impact transboundary waters. Transboundary consultation has been undertaken.</p>   |
|                        | <p>Section 3.4, it would be useful to consider the extent to which waste management associated with aspects such as drilling muds and other materials are considered in the SEA.</p> <p>Given the amount of seismic survey activity planned, a more comprehensive review of the MSFD Descriptor 11 (Underwater Noise) would be useful to consider.</p>   | <p>MSFD Descriptor 11 was considered in the environmental assessment.</p>  |
|                        | <p>Welcome that the scoping report acknowledges the "Developing and Assessing Alternatives in Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)"</p> <p>Reasons for selecting the alternatives considered should include a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information.</p> <p>Summary of alternative scenarios considered and the justification for selection of the preferred scenario/ combination of scenarios should also be provided.</p>  | <p>This guidance was reviewed in preparation of alternative options for the Plan. Reasons for not selecting certain options are listed in Section 4.1. The guidance on good practice on SEA for the Energy Sector was also utilised.</p> |

| Consultation Authority | Summary of Response  | Action Taken   |
|------------------------|--|--|
|                        | <p>Suggest that the EPA Good Practice note for on SEA for the Energy Sector (EPA, 2021) may be useful to consider at this time also.</p> <p>The EPA has published Guidance on SEA Statements and Monitoring, which should be considered in the preparation of the SEA statement.</p> <p>In addition, the DECC is required to publish a newspaper notice inviting submissions/observations from the public on both the Plan and the SEA environmental report. The SEA regulations refer to a public consultation period of not less than 4 weeks, however, given the national aspect of this Plan it is suggested that allowing a longer consultation period, 8-12 weeks, would be more appropriate.</p> <p>In accordance with Article 16 of the SEA Regulations DECC is required to publish a SEA Statement alongside the adopted Plan, summarising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan;</li> <li>• how the environmental report and consultation comments on it have been taken into account;</li> </ul> <p>Under the SEA Regulations, you should consult with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental Protection Agency;</li> <li>• Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage;</li> <li>• Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications;</li> <li>• Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine</li> <li>• the reasons for choosing the Plan as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with (in the Environmental Report and the associated consultation);</li> <li>• the measures decided concerning monitoring.</li> </ul> <p>We note the environmental objectives set out in Table 6.1 – Draft SEA Objectives for the assessment of the Plan. With regards the Climatic Factors objective, there is merit in clarifying how the Plan will ‘contribute to the delivery of the green economy’.</p> <p>Under the ‘Economy and Material assets’ topic, objective 5 (Protect and enhance existing infrastructure) could be amended to clarify the type of infrastructure covered, i.e. national/international and the various relevant sectoral infrastructure contained in the marine environment.</p> <p>The objective associated with the Water topic, could be amended to refer to supporting achievement of the objectives of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.</p> | <p>The consultation period of 6 weeks is considered appropriate for the ER and Plan.</p> <p>An SEA statement will be produced upon adoption of the Plan.</p> <p>The SEOs have been revised to take into account comments provided.</p> |

| Consultation Authority           | Summary of Response   | Action Taken   |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
|                                  | <p>The Plan should identify any significant data and knowledge gaps, including commitments to help address these on a priority basis during the implementation phase of the Plan. This is with a view to strengthening the evidence base for future reviews and iterations of the Plan.</p>   | <p>The ER includes data gaps in Section 3.5.</p>   |
|                                  | <p>The SEA Environmental Report should refer to the full range of effects and of the area likely to be affected. This assessment should consider the duration and frequency of effects as well as short, medium and long-term, cumulative and synergistic effects of the legislation.</p>   | <p>The environmental assessment includes consideration of these effects.</p>   |
|                                  | <p>The geographical scope of the SEA is limited to the effects of the Plan within Ireland. The spatial coverage of the SEA should include both our coastal waters and offshore islands. The scoping report should consider whether there is potential for likely significant effects perceived on neighbouring Member States. Additionally, we advise that consultation should be undertaken at a minimum with the relevant ministries/agencies in Northern Ireland and the UK. The relevant requirements of the SEA protocol<sup>1</sup> under the ESPOO Convention should be taken into account, for any possible transboundary consultations with non-EU Member States.</p>                                    | <p>We note that effects of the plan may impact transboundary waters. Transboundary consultation has been undertaken.</p>       |
|                                  | <p>Following the completion of the public consultation on the SEA environmental report and the Plan, the final stages of the SEA process are to integrate and document the environmental considerations of the SEA environmental report into the Plan, as appropriate. The EPA has published Guidance on SEA Statements and Monitoring, which should be considered in the preparation of the SEA statement.</p>   | <p>Noted.</p>  |
|                                  | <p>Appendix II sets out some additional plans and additional resources that may be useful to consider.</p>  | <p>The PPS review has been updated to include PPS and legislation recommended.</p>   |
| <p>Geological Survey Ireland</p> | <p>Geological Survey Ireland would encourage use of and reference to our datasets. This data can add to the content and robustness of the SEA process.<br/>                     Provided list of datasets.</p>  | <p>Recommended datasets were reviewed and used to update the baseline data sections of the ER for relevant topic sections.</p> |
|                                  | <p>Geological Survey Ireland have provided advice and information on particular topics which can add to the content and robustness of the SEA process.<br/>                     This advice includes:<br/> <b>Marine and Coastal Unit</b> - Geological Survey Ireland's Marine and Coastal Unit in partnership with the Marine Institute, jointly manages INFOMAR, Ireland's national marine mapping programme; providing key baseline data for Ireland's marine sector. Demonstrated applications for the use of INFOMAR's suite of mapping products include Shipping &amp; Navigation, Fisheries Management, Aquaculture, Off-shore Renewable Energies, Marine Leisure &amp; Tourism and Coastal Behaviour.</p> | <p>All advice that has been recommended by the GSI has been taken into account within the ER.</p>                              |

| Consultation Authority | Summary of Response   | Action Taken |
|------------------------|---|--------------|
|                        | <p><b>Coastal Vulnerability index</b> - Geological Survey Ireland is undertaking a new coastal vulnerability mapping initiative. Maps produced by this project will provide an insight into the relative susceptibility of the Irish coast to adverse impacts of sea-level rise through the use of a Coastal Vulnerability Index (CVI).</p> <p><b>Geoheritage –</b><br/>                     Geological Survey Ireland is in partnership with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage), to identify and select important geological and geomorphological sites throughout the country for designation as geological NHAs (Natural Heritage Areas). This is addressed by the Geoheritage Programme of Geological Survey Ireland, under 16 different geological themes, in which the minimum number of scientifically significant sites that best represent the theme are rigorously selected by a panel of theme experts. County Geological Sites (CGSs), as adopted under the National Heritage Plan, include additional sites that may also be of national importance, but which were not selected as the very best examples for NHA designation. All geological heritage sites identified by Geological Survey Ireland are categorised as CGS pending any further NHA designation by NPWS. CGSs are now routinely included in County Development Plans and in the GIS of planning departments, to ensure the recognition and appropriate protection of geological heritage within the planning system. CGSs can be viewed online under the Geological Heritage tab on the online Map Viewer. There are numerous coastal and island County Geological Sites. We would recommend consultation of the Geological Heritage viewer as there may be potential impacts on the integrity of current CGSs envisaged by potential offshore petroleum activities, (including associated onshore site works and cable/pipeline installation), should these sites not be assessed as constraints. These sites are listed in the corresponding county development plans with protection and promotion objectives attached to them. Ideally, the sites should not be damaged or integrity impacted or reduced in any manner due to proposed developments under the plan. However, this is not always possible, and in this situation appropriate mitigation measures should be put in place to minimize or mitigate potential impacts.</p> <p><b>Geotechnical Database resources –</b><br/>                     Geological Survey Ireland continues to populate and develop our national geotechnical database and viewer with site investigation data submitted voluntarily by industry. The current database holding is over 7500 reports with 134,000 boreholes; 31,000 of which are digitised which can be accessed through downloads from our Geotechnical Map Viewer. We would encourage the use of this database as part of any baseline geological assessment of the proposed development as it can provide invaluable baseline data for the region or vicinity of proposed development areas.</p> <p><b>Geological Mapping-</b><br/>                     Geological Survey Ireland maintains online datasets of bedrock and subsoils geological mapping that are reliable and accessible. These sets include a national coastal geology compilation map combining our bedrock and subsoils geology data and our geoheritage datasets.<br/>                     We would encourage you to use these data which can be found here, in your future assessments. Our 3D models can help stakeholders visualize, understand and characterise geology. Our 3D models offer a key element of geotechnical risk management by identifying areas requiring further site investigation.</p> |              |

| Consultation Authority        | Summary of Response   | Action Taken  |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Historic Environment Scotland | <p>We note from the provided SEA scoping report that the historic environment has been scoped into the assessment. However, we note that Appendix C: Baseline Data does not include specific baseline information for the historic environment in Scotland. As a result, we have assumed that it is your consideration that transboundary effects on the historic environment in Scotland are not considered to be significant. On the basis of the information contained within the scoping report we are content with the approach and are satisfied with the scope and level of detail proposed for the assessment.</p> <p>We note that it is proposed to consult on the Environmental Report for a 6-week period between October and November 2022 and we agree with this timescale.</p> <p>Please note that, for administrative purposes, we consider that the consultation period commences on receipt of the relevant documents by the SEA Gateway.</p>  | Noted.  |
| JNCC                          | <p>JNCC acknowledges that the IOSEA 6 scoping report has adequately scoped in the sensitivities of marine mammal species to pressures arising from the plan, namely underwater noise resulting from seismic surveys.</p> <p>Section C.2.5.1: Black guillemot distribution need to clarify if sighted frequently or infrequently</p> <p>Table C-10 Razorbill/guillemot, cormorant/shag, herring/common gull, arctic/common tern have not been separated in the table. Please confirm whether this was accounted for in distribution estimates, and if so, how.</p> <p>Page 55 Para 2: A study conducted by Waggit et al. (2020) provides seabird distribution maps at basin and seasonal scales and provides a representation of the distribution patterns of seabirds within the IOSEA6 Area from January to July (Figure C-15).” This sentence needs clarification as the maps are for distribution in January and July not between those months, this was done correctly in figure title.</p> <p>Page 57 C.2.6.2: Mention highly mobile seabird species in transboundary protected areas. Sites need to be taken into consideration</p> <p>Page 59 Map of IOSEA6 Area: MCZs not included on the map</p> <p>Page 70 Table C-12: Birds have not been considered under the collision above and below water with static or moving objects not naturally found in the marine env. If activities are occurring at night, lit up vessels there is the potential to attract certain species and therefore collisions are more likely to occur. References: Merkel, F.R. and Johansen, K.L., 2011. Light-induced bird strikes on vessels in Southwest Greenland. Marine Pollution Bulletin, 62(11), pp.2330-2336.<br/>                     Montevicchi, W.A., 2006. Influences of artificial light on marine birds. Ecological consequences of artificial night lighting, pp.94-113.<br/>                     Ryan, P.G., 1991. The impact of the commercial lobster fishery on seabirds at the Tristan da Cunha Islands, South Atlantic Ocean. Biological Conservation, 57(3), pp.339-350</p> | <p>Noted.</p> <p>Relevant sections of Appendix C Section 2 have been updated.</p> |

| Consultation Authority               | Summary of Response   | Action Taken  |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
|                                      | Page 73 Pressure: Hydrocarbon and PAH contamination Would this pressure not also have the potential to affect species/habitats outside the IOSEA6 area as well?   |   |
| Nature Scot                          | We agree with the inclusion of all SEA topics for further consideration and consider that the proposed assessment approach is satisfactory.<br>We also note the intention for a 6 week consultation period on the Environmental Report. Please submit this consultation via the Scottish Government SEA gateway.  | Noted.  |
| Natural England                      | The only comment Natural England wishes to make is in respect to the protected sites within English waters. We welcome the inclusion of Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Ramsar sites, however please note that there are additional Marine Protected Areas in the form of Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) in both inshore and offshore waters.   | MCZs have been added into the baseline in Section C.2.6.2 and added MCZ to figure.  |
| SEPA                                 | It is noted that all SEA topics have been scoped into the assessment at this stage. We agree that in this instance all environmental topics should be scoped into the assessment and are satisfied with the proposed assessment approach. We are satisfied with the proposal for a 6 week consultation period for the Environmental Report.<br>On completion, the Environmental Report and the plan to which it relates should be submitted to the Scottish Government SEA Gateway (SEA_Gateway@gov.scot) which will forward it to the Consultation Authorities.  | Noted.  |
| NIEA - Marine and Fisheries Division | Note that DAERA is not listed in Section 3.6 Stakeholder Consultation but is listed in Section 7.1 SEA Consultations.<br><b>Table 4-1:</b> recommends consideration of the following plans, programmes and legislation:<br>- Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009<br>- Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013<br>- Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985<br>- Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995<br><b>Table 3-2:</b> Recommends that disturbance to marine mammals should include underwater noise from seismic surveys, drilling and associated vessels.<br><b>Table 3-3:</b> believe Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna has a potential inter-relationship with Cultural, Architectural and Archaeological Heritage as marine species such as seaweed, hydroids etc. often grow on archaeological features such as shipwrecks and can create feeding grounds and 'hiding' places for fish and other species, establishing an ecosystem around these ship wrecks.<br><b>Table 5-1:</b><br>-Marine Mammals: MCA highlights the importance of considering cetaceans and pinnipeds regarding marine noise pollution | The PPS review has been updated to include PPS and legislation recommended.<br><br>The inter-relationship between Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna and Cultural Heritage has been recognised in Table 3-5.<br><br>Section C2.8 has been updated. |

| Consultation Authority | Summary of Response  | Action Taken  |
|------------------------|--|---|
|                        | <p>associated with seismic surveys, drilling and associated vessels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Designated Habitats and Species: MCA recommends considering the transboundary MPAs.</li> <li>- Invasive Non-Native Species: MCA highlights the importance of having good biosecurity measures associated with all vessels and equipment utilised</li> </ul> <p><b>Section C.2.8:</b> MCA recommends using the DAERA Marine Map Viewer to view additional INNS records</p> <p><b>Section C.6.5:</b> MCA recommends considering the potential impacts of seismic exploration activities to marine mammals in Section C.6.5 Potential Sensitivities to the Plan.</p> <p>useful to consider those relevant LDPs and their contained policies for Council areas which have a coastal remit - Derry City &amp; Strabane District Council; Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, Mid and East Antrim District Council Belfast City Council; Ards and North Down; and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.</p> |   |
|                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Avoid damage to the biodiversity, flora and fauna of Ireland and its seas, particularly EU designated sites and protected species. MCA recommends this section also considers transboundary waters.</li> <li>3. Contribute to the delivery of the green economy. MCA recommends consideration is also given to the 'blue economy' and 'blue carbon'.</li> <li>7. Protect the quality of the seabed, coastline and its sediments. MCA welcomes this objective.</li> <li>8. Protect the landscape/seascape character and visual amenity. MCA welcomes this objective.</li> </ul>   | <p>The SEOs have been revised to take into account comments provided.</p> |