



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Maritime Area Consent (MAC) Information Notice

Phase One projects

December 2022

Prepared by the Department of the
Environment, Climate and Communications
[gov.ie](https://www.gov.ie)

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1 Important information on Phase One MACs

Ireland's first Maritime Area Consents (MACs) have been granted to Phase One projects by the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, with a commencement date of 23 December 2022.

The Maritime Area Consent (MAC) is a first step in a new and streamlined planning process set out under the Maritime Area Planning Act (2021).

Developers who have been assessed for, and are subsequently awarded, a Maritime Area Consent (MAC) can then proceed to apply for development permission (planning permission) from An Bord Pleanála, where the project proposals will undergo environmental assessment.

The grant of MACs to Phase One projects is a significant milestone and follows the opening of an application window on 25th April for an eight-week period.

Upon receipt of MAC applications, all Phase One projects were assessed in key areas, including financial and technical competency, in order to ensure that only the most viable offshore projects can apply for development permission from An Bord Pleanála.

Any project that has been awarded a Maritime Area Consent is eligible to partake in the ORESS 1, the first auction for offshore wind under the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme. The Government approved the Terms and Conditions of ORESS 1 on 9 November 2022.

Phase One MACs have been carefully drafted to ensure the speedy progression of only the most viable offshore wind energy projects to meet Ireland's energy targets, while protecting the State's interest in its valuable maritime resource.

Some of the key features of the Phase One MACs are:

- The MAC is a right to occupy the maritime area (the consent area) on a non-exclusive basis for a specific purpose, known as the “permitted maritime use”.
- The permitted maritime use of the Phase One MACs is the construction and operation of an Offshore Wind Farm and associated infrastructure (including decommissioning and other works required on foot of any Development Permission for such Offshore Wind Farm).
- The occupation of the consent area must be in accordance with the conditions attached to the consent and the requirements of the Maritime Area Planning (MAP)

Act 2021. The conditions attaching to all Phase One projects have been published on the DECC website.

- The holder of a MAC cannot occupy the consent area until planning permission has been obtained. Projects which have been granted a MAC must apply for planning permission within 18 months.
- Phase One MACs have been granted for a term of 45 years in respect of the array area and infrastructure corridor.
- Phase One MAC holders must obtain a route to market for their project on or before 31 December 2025. The route to market could be an offer from an offshore renewable energy support scheme (ORESS), or an alternative route to market as defined in the MAC conditions.
- Holders of MACs must pay an annual levy to the State, and the calculation model for the levy framework has been published on the DECC website.
- Spatial representations of all Phase One projects have been provided as Annex 2 of this document.
- The “subsidiary areas” shown in the Phase One maps are the areas needed by each project for their cable routes. Once a project lays/builds these cables on foot of planning permission, the projects are required to submit new maps for only the actual areas the cables occupy. At this point, the original subsidiary area will terminate, and the MAC will only cover the much smaller area within, where the infrastructure is actually laid. This new area is called the “infrastructure corridor” in the MAC.

Under transition arrangements set out in the MAP Act, the Minister for the Environment has the powers to assess these first MAC applications until the establishment of the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA). Once that new agency has been established in early 2023, as set out in the Climate Action Plan, MARA will assume responsibility for management of these Phase One MACs. The establishment of the MARA is of the highest priority for Government.

Table 1: Information on the Phase One projects to be successfully granted a Maritime Area Consent

MAC number	Project	Developer
2022-MAC-001	Oriel Wind Park	Oriel Windfarm Limited
2022-MAC-002	Arklow Bank II	Sure Partners Limited
2022-MAC-003 and 004	Bray Bank and Kish Bank	Bray Offshore Wind Limited and Kish Offshore Wind Limited
2022-MAC-005	North Irish Sea Array	North Irish Sea Array Windfarm Limited
2022-MAC-006	Codling Wind Park (Codling I and Codling II)	Codling Wind Park Limited
2022-MAC-007	Skerd Rocks	Fuinneamh Sceirde Teoranta

2 Appendix One: Further information on the Phase One MAC process

Ireland's increased climate and energy ambition is reflected in Government's recent agreement to increase our 5GW ambition for offshore wind energy, with an additional 2GW dedicated to green hydrogen production by 2030. There is further commitment in the Programme for Government to develop a longer-term plan to harness the potential 30GW of offshore floating wind power in our Atlantic waters. Subsequent cost-effective deployment of renewables to take advantage of Ireland's offshore renewable energy resources, should be increasingly feasible through future advances in technology.

Work is underway to deliver on 2030 Offshore Renewable Energy targets through projects on the east and southern coasts which are already well advanced. The Maritime Area Planning (MAP) Act provides the legal underpinning for an entirely new marine planning system. This planning system strikes a balance between harnessing Ireland's huge offshore wind potential and protecting our rich and unique marine environment. The Maritime Area Planning (MAP) Act 2021 provides a legislative basis to harness the potential of offshore renewable energy in Ireland's entire Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and beyond the 12 nautical mile coastal zone provided for in the Foreshore Act (1933). The Maritime Area Planning (MAP) Act 2021 provides the legal authority for the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications to assess Maritime Area Consent (MAC) applications from a set of pre-qualified 'Phase One' offshore renewable energy projects.

Under special transition provisions in the Act, the Minister for the Environment, Climate Communications has the responsibility for assessing and granting Maritime Area Consents (MACs) for this first batch of offshore projects. These Phase One projects are the projects which satisfy the definition of "relevant maritime usage" under the legislation.

A significant milestone was reached this year, with the receipt of MAC applications from these Phase One projects. This followed the opening of an application window on 25th April for an eight-week period.

Upon receipt of MAC applications, applicants were assessed in key areas, including financial and technical competency, in order to ensure that only the most viable offshore projects can apply for permission from An Bord Pleanála, thus helping to expedite the route to commencement.

Following the completion of the application assessment, the Minister issued letters to all Phase One projects in September 2022, along with draft MAC terms and conditions, setting out his initial intention in respect of granting MACs to Phase One projects.

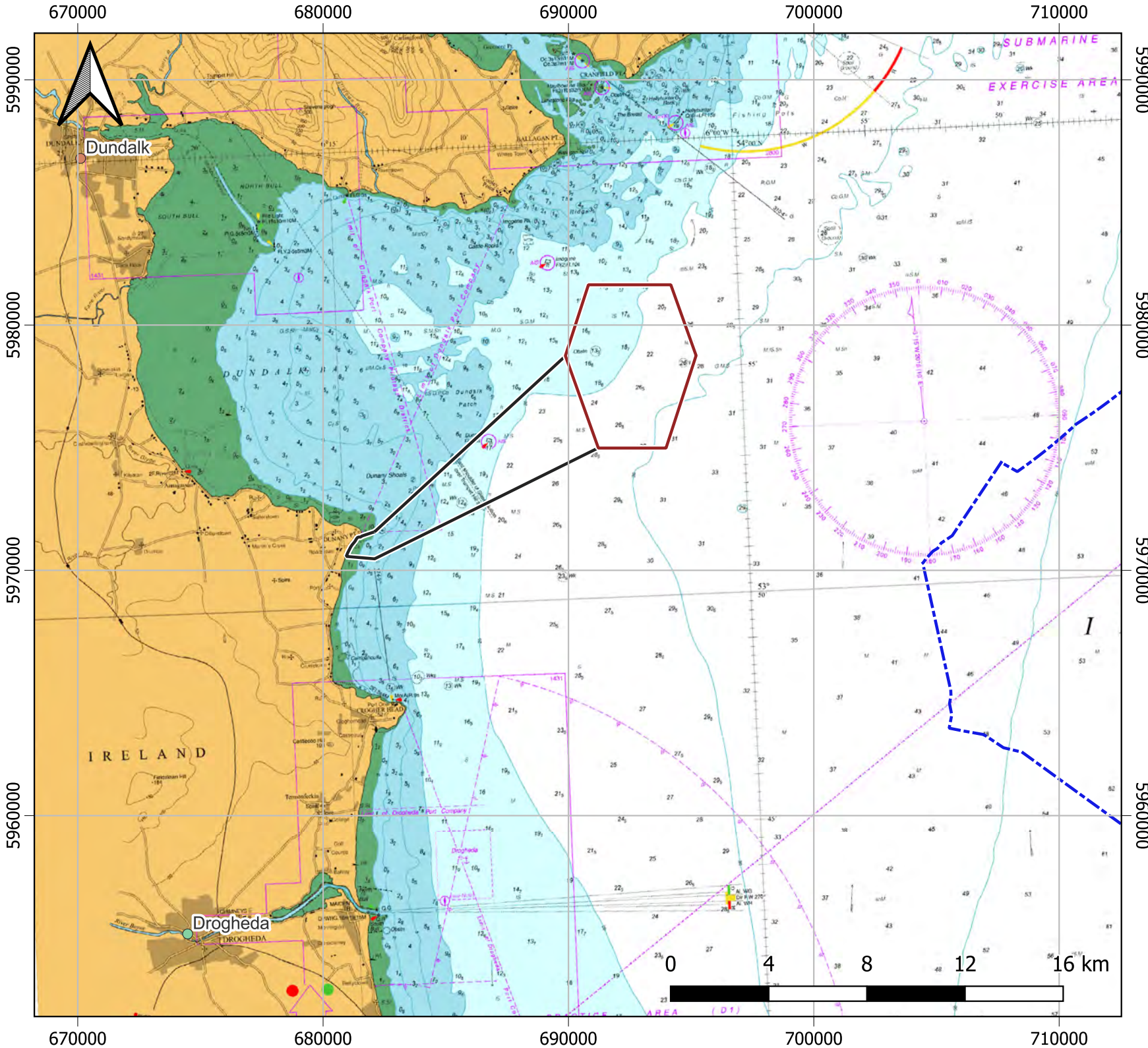
Following the issuance of these letters, applicants were given a three-week period to submit any supplemental material for further consideration, before final MAC determinations were made.

The Minister carefully reviewed and considered these submissions, and wrote to the applicants in December 2022, explaining his basis for agreeing to or not agreeing to the requested MAC amendments. The letter also explained that the Minister had decided to agree to make certain other changes to the MAC terms and conditions on foot of requests received by other MAC applicants. In the interests of procedural fairness, and in circumstances where this is the first tranche of applications for a MAC to be considered under the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021, as amended, the Minister considered it appropriate to afford all Phase One projects the opportunity to have these amendments included in the MACs should the applicants wish to do so.

Applicants were advised to revert within seven days in order to clarify whether they wished to avail of some or all of these amendments. Following receipt of these confirmations, the Minister issued MACs to all Phase One projects on 23 December 2022.

Phase One projects that obtain a MAC will still be required to apply for all of the requisite consents and planning permission and will be subject to the full assessment procedures by our national planning regulator.

3 Appendix Two: Spatial Representations of Phase One MACs



Oriel Offshore Wind Farm

MAC Assessment

2022-MAC-001

Legend

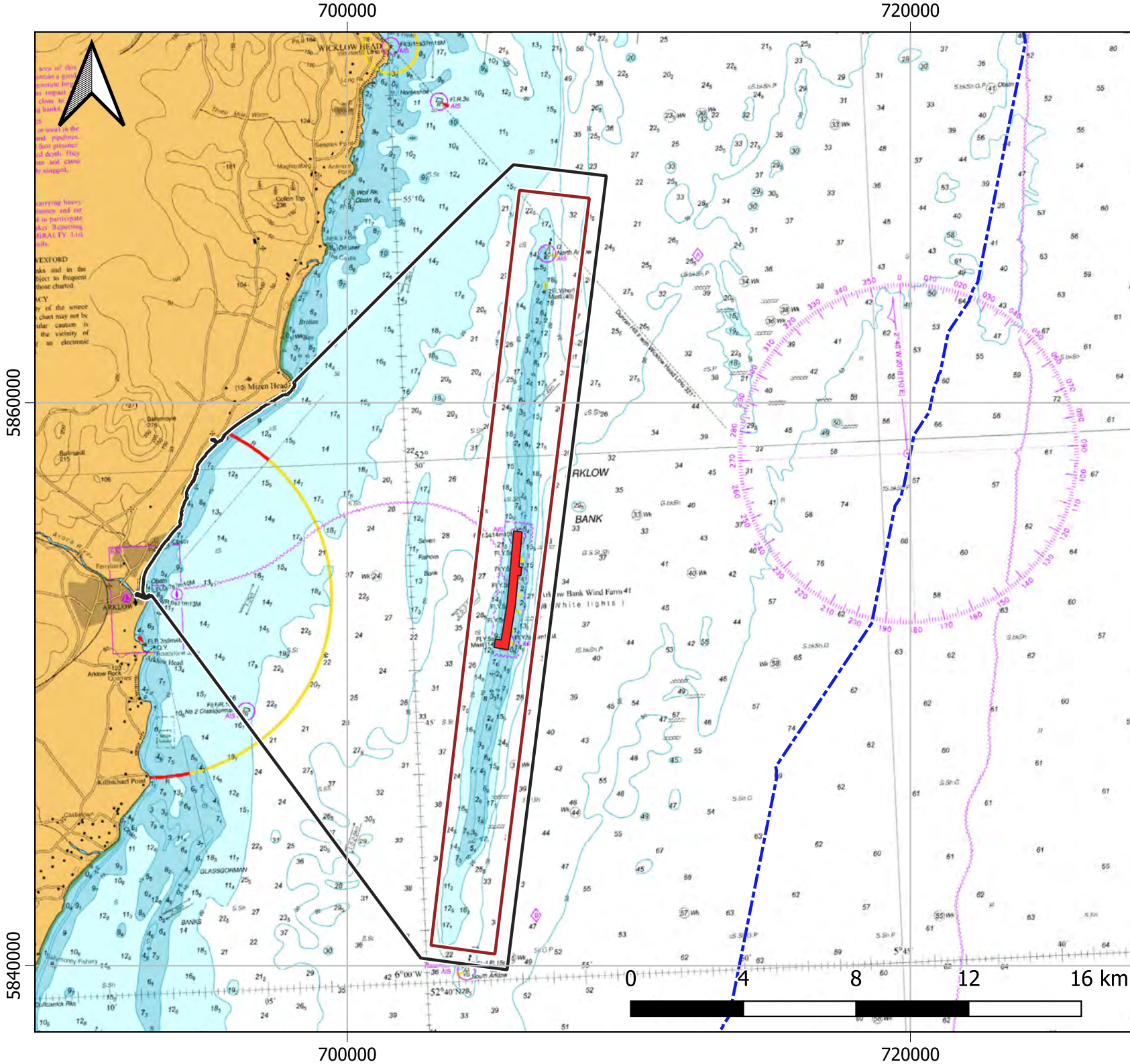
- 12 Nautical Mile Limit
- ▭ Oriel OWF Array
MAC Application Area
- ▭ Oriel OWF Cable Corridor
MAC Application Area

Cities

- Drogheda
- Dundalk



Coordinate Reference System: EPSG: 32629
Date: 18/08/2022
Author: KZ
Revision: 00



Arklow Offshore Wind Farm

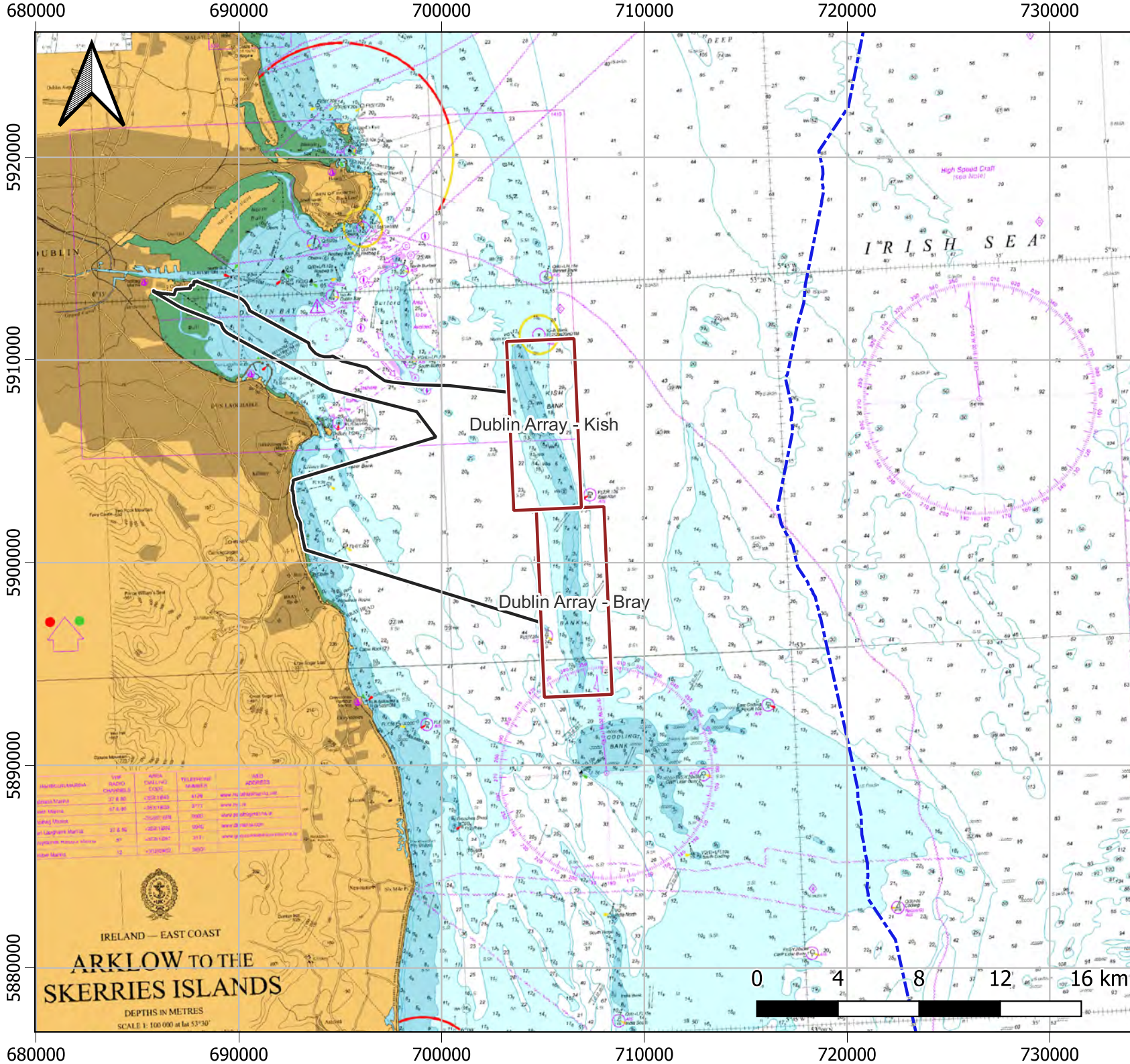
2022-MAC-002

Legend

- 12 Nautical Mile Limit
- Arklow OWF MAC Array Area
- Arklow OWF MAC Cable Corridor
- Existing GE Site



Coordinate Reference System: EPSG: 32629
Date: 19/10/2022
Author: KZ
Revision: 01



Dublin Array Offshore Wind Farm

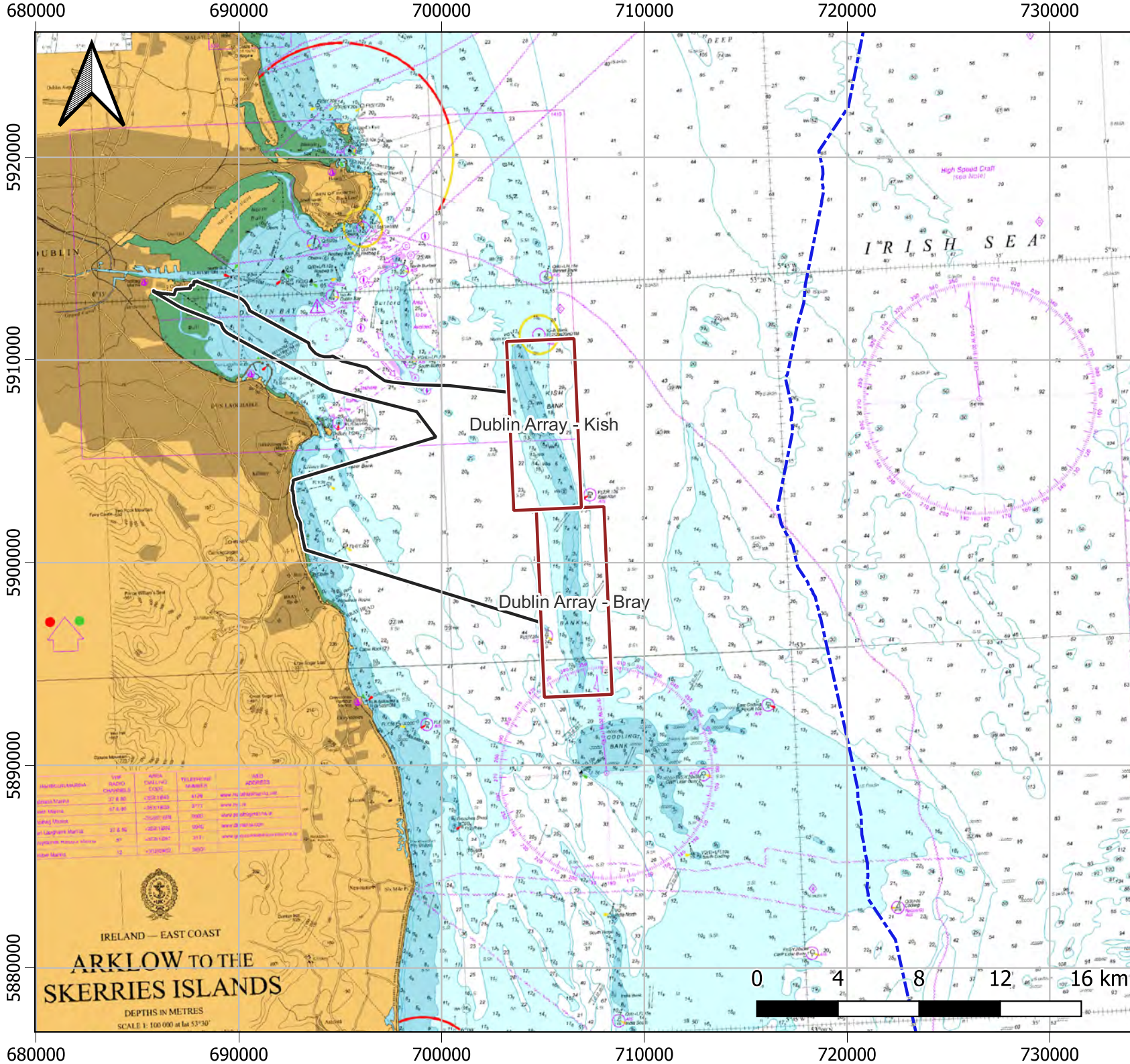
2022-MAC-003

Legend

- 12 Nautical Mile Limit
- Dublin Array OWF
MAC Cable Corridor
- Dublin Array OWF
MAC Array Area



Coordinate Reference System: EPSG: 32629
Date: 30/08/2022
Author: KZ
Revision: 00



Dublin Array Offshore Wind Farm

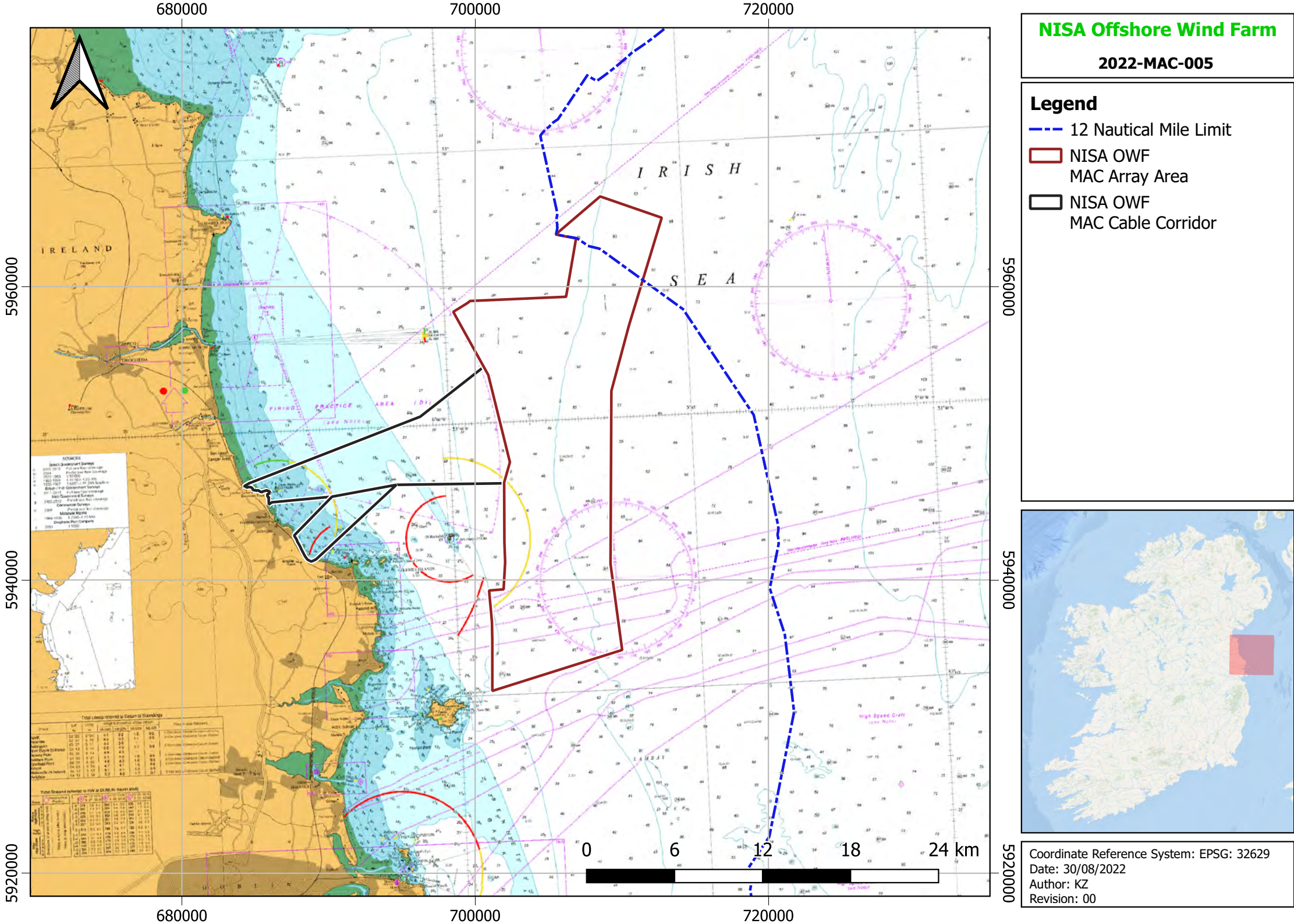
2022-MAC-004

Legend

- 12 Nautical Mile Limit
- Dublin Array OWF
MAC Cable Corridor
- Dublin Array OWF
MAC Array Area



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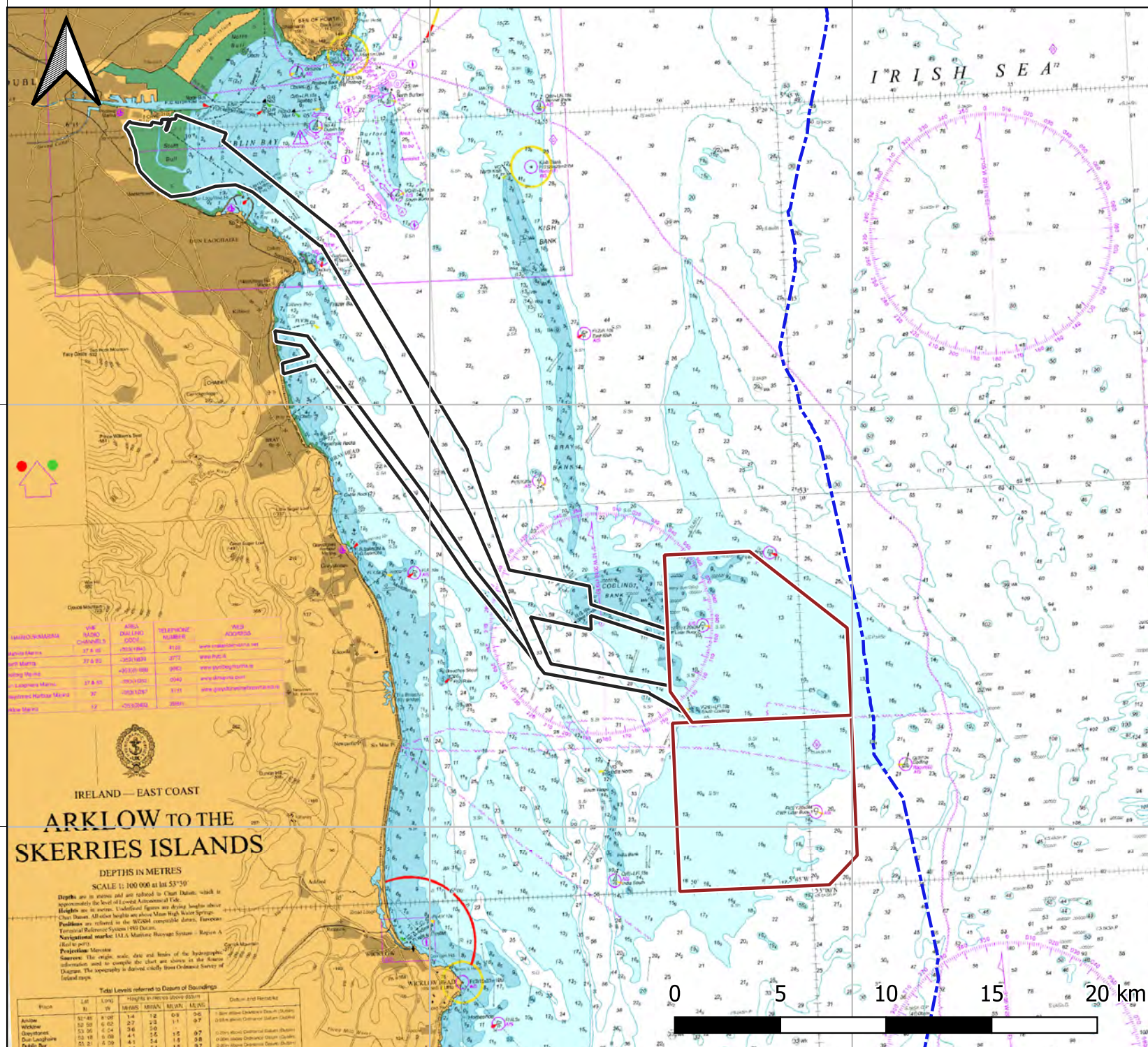
Codling Offshore Wind Farm**2022-MAC-006****Legend**

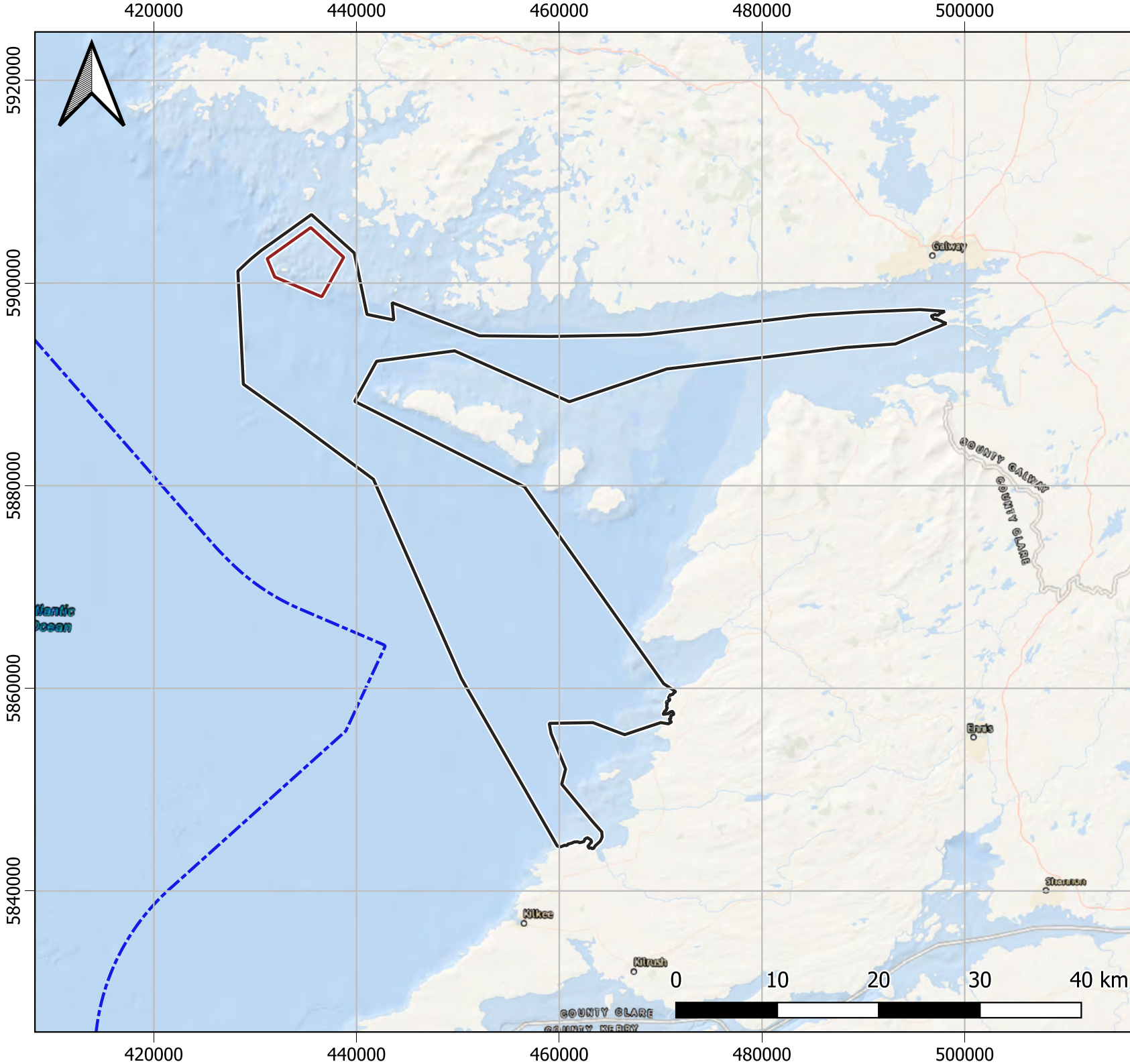
- 12 Nautical Mile Limit
-  Codling Wind Park OWF MAC Array Area
-  Codling Wind Park OWF MAC Cable Corridor

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Date: 30/08/2022
Author: KZ
Revision: 00

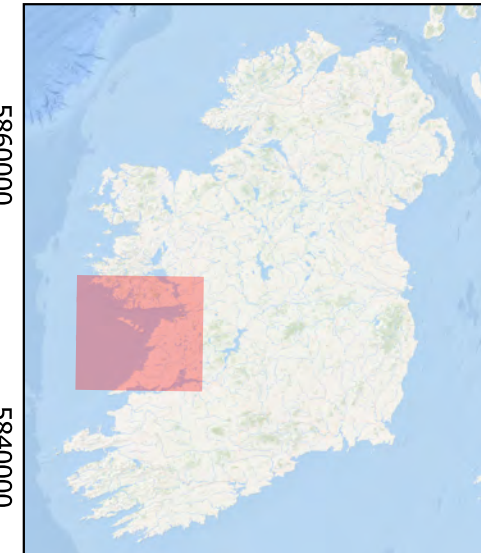




Sceilde Rocks Offshore Wind Farm 2022-MAC-007

Legend

- 12 Nautical Mile Limit
- ▭ Sceilde Rocks OWF
MAC Array Area
- ▭ Sceilde Rocks OWF
MAC Cable Corridor



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Date: 30/08/2022
Author: KZ
Revision: 00