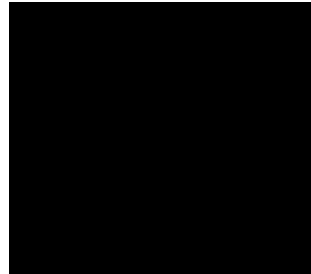


# Submission HLG 00042-23: Screening for Appropriate Assessment Determination on Foreshore Application FS007354 Kinsale Offshore Wind Ltd, Site Investigations

TO: Minister  
STATUS: Completed  
PURPOSE: For Decision and Signature

AUTHOR:  
OWNER:  
REVIEWERS:



DIVISION: Foreshore  
DECISION BY:

## Final comment

Minister approved / signed AA Screening Determination 8 March 2023.

## Action required

Ministerial determination on the Screening for Appropriate Assessment, and signing of the Screening for Appropriate Assessment Determination statement, if approved

## Executive summary

Kinsale Offshore Wind Ltd require an SI licence to survey a new area for a proposed fixed foundation offshore wind project in the Celtic Sea. The objectives of the works is to undertake surveys and gather information to inform this project.

As part of the assessment the Minister is required to make a Screening for Appropriate Assessment Determination in accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) and Regulation 42(1) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended ('The Regulations').

Having considered all relevant material a recommendation has been made that the Minister adopts the Screening for AA report and reaches the following Screening for AA determination:

In accordance with Regulation 42(6) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 SI 477 as amended, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage has made a determination following screening that an **Appropriate Assessment is required** as the project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have a significant effect on European sites. The risk of likely significant effects on European sites cannot be excluded on the basis of objective evidence. This determination is based on the location, scale, extent and duration of the proposed development, including temporary works, and has not taken account of measures intended to avoid or reduce significant effects on European sites.

## Detailed information

### Overview

Inis Offshore Wind (funded by the Temporis Aurora Fund, backed by ISIF) with the support of Warwick Energy has identified projects that could support the Irish Government's Climate Action Plan and 5 GW capacity targeted for 2030.

An extensive site selection process and feasibility study was undertaken in late 2020 (including analysis of water depth, wind data, existing wind farms, oil and gas, munition dumps, designated sites, protected habitats and species, seascape, shipping, aviation, fisheries, cables and pipelines, military areas, shipwrecks and aggregate resource constraint considerations) and through this site

selection process, this site was identified. This site has been selected with the intention of achieving first power before 2030, namely that fixed bottom foundations can be used at this location.

The application for a foreshore licence for Kinsale Offshore Wind Limited is to survey a new area for a proposed fixed foundation offshore wind project (the "Kinsale Project") in the Celtic Sea approximately 13km off the coast of Cork at the nearest point. The Kinsale Project would be for a development of an offshore wind farm.

The objectives of the works proposed under this Foreshore Licence application include gathering further information on seabed and sub-seabed conditions, sufficient geotechnical data, wind and metocean (wave, current, tide and water levels) information, baseline information on the environmental conditions at the site, including marine ecology, bird, mammals and benthos and information on the archaeological conditions.

The proposed offshore wind farm is expected to have capacity of around 1000MW. The capacity is not finalised and is subject to further detailed design work including investigation into grid and turbine technologies. The site will use fixed foundation technology (either XXL Monopiles, Jacket/Tripods or a mixture of both). These technologies are proven, fundable and available now.

The Foreshore Licence application is to undertake the surveys and site investigations to inform development and project design for the proposed site.

The proposed foreshore licence area covers the wind farm array area only. A separate Foreshore Licence will be applied for to cover transmission requirements (e.g. export cables and landfall – **FS007575**).

The proposed activities of the site investigation are to undertake the following surveys:

- Geophysical surveys e.g. multibeam echosounder (MBES), magnetometer, sub-bottom profiler, ultra-short baseline (USBL), side scan sonar (SSS);
- Archaeological surveys (covered by geophysical surveys above);
- Subtidal surveys e.g. grab sampling for sediment type and sediment quality (contaminants) analysis;
- Marine benthic ecology flora and fauna surveys e.g. grab sampling at locations determined by the marine ecology survey, drop-down video, still photographs;
- Seabird and marine mammal boat based and aerial surveys, although these do not fall under the Foreshore Act (including elasmobranchs, turtles and jellyfish);
- Deployment of wind and current resource measurement devices e.g. metocean and floating LiDAR, Acoustic Doppler Current Profilers (ADCP) and Wave Buoys and marker buoys at each location; and
- Geotechnical surveys and investigations (boreholes, cone penetration testing and vibrocores or grab samples).

The detail of each type of survey proposed is provided in the subsections below and further details of examples of likely vessels and equipment, the indicative locations of the proposed geotechnical surveys and metocean equipment and the indicative locations of benthic sampling sites can be viewed in Application Schedule of Works (**TAB 07**).

The size of the application area is 16,683ha (167 km<sup>2</sup>) and sits off the coast from Kinsale, Co. Cork. The nearest Natura 2000 sites (i.e. Special Protection Area (SPA) or Special Area of Conservation (SAC) are Old Head of Kinsale SPA located approximately 14km from the survey area and Courtmacsherry Estuary SAC, approximately 20km from the survey area. The closest licenced aquaculture operation is over 20km away from the foreshore licence survey area.

This Foreshore Licence Application is for site investigation activities only. There will be no permanent structures erected as part of the proposed activities.

## **Environmental Assessment**

As part of the foreshore licence application, the Department's Marine Advisor (Environment) undertook a Screening for Appropriate Assessment (stage 1 screening), and if required, an Appropriate Assessment (stage 2) of the likelihood of significant impact on European Sites from the application for a Foreshore Site Investigation Licence.

Application documents submitted by Kinsale Offshore Wind Ltd informed the Screening for Appropriate Assessment. These are:

- Application Form. **(Tab 04)**
- Foreshore Licence Map. **(Tab 05)**
- Supporting Information for Screening for AA (SISAA). **(Tab 06)**
- Schedule of Works **(Tab 07)**
- Natura Impact Statement. **(Tab 08)**
- Non-Statutory Environmental Report. **(Tab 09)**
- Statement of Compliance with National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF). **(Tab 10)**

The Department's Foreshore Notice website, currently containing the application form and map is at:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/foreshore-notice/8c642-fs007354-kinsale-offshore-wind-ltd-site-investigations-for-the-proposed-kinsale-offshore-wind-farm-off-county-cork/>

## Environmental Report

The Screening for Appropriate Assessment Report(technical review) **(Tab 02)** was completed by the Department's Marine Advisor (Environment) on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2023. It concluded that likely significant effects as a result of this project, alone or in-combination with other plans and projects, on the conservation objectives of European sites cannot be excluded and therefore an Appropriate Assessment is required.

### **The following recommendation has been made in relation to the Screening for Appropriate Assessment by the Minister:**

*In accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) and Regulation 42(1) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended ('The Regulations'), the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage has undertaken Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge and the conservation objectives of relevant European sites, if the site investigations off the coast of County Cork, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have a significant effects on any European site.*

*In accordance with Regulation 42(6) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 SI 477 as amended, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage has made a determination following screening that an Appropriate Assessment is required as the project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have a significant effect the integrity of European sites, in view of the said sites' conservation objectives.*

*This determination is based on the location, scale, extent and duration of the proposed site investigations, and has not taken account of measures intended to avoid or reduce significant effects on European sites.*

**Tab 01** contains the **Screening Determination for Appropriate Assessment** statement, prepared by the Department's Marine Advisor (Environment), for **Ministerial Determination and signing**.

**Tab 02** contains the Screening for Appropriate Assessment Report prepared by the Department's Marine Advisor (Environment).

**Tab 03** Contains the Marine Advisor Environment Screening Stage Report prepared by the Marine Advisor (Environment).

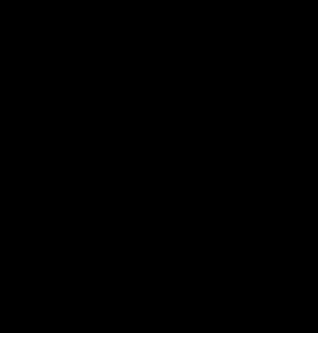
Submitted for Decision and signature

## Related submissions

There are no related submissions.

## User details

INVOLVED:



READ RECEIPT:

