An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

Aquaculture Licence Application

Marine Engineering Division Report

Site T-Reference:	**T05-053N4**
Application ID:	**35425**
Report Prepared By:	Jerome Mc Carthy
Date:	19th September 2024

Application Details

Applicant(s)	West Cork Seafoods Ltd.
Location	Bantry Bay, Co. Cork
Application Type	Renew and Review
Site Area (Ha)	2.56
Species	Blue Mussels – Mytilus Edulis
Cultivation Method	Rope longlines
Source of stock	Natural spat collection on collection rope.
Annual Production Estimates	Increasing from 40 to 96 tonnes between years 1 to 4. 96 tonnes annually thereafter.
Shellfish Waters Designation	Yes – Bantry Shellfish Waters Directive Area, SI200 of 1994
Development Plans	Cork County Development Plan 2022, Sections 7.26 and 8.20.
Pre-Consultation Meeting	No

Site Description

Site Location

The application is for the renewal and review of an existing site located in a relatively sheltered location in Inner Bantry Bay, Co. Cork. The aquaculture in this part of Bantry Bay has been in existence for many years, which indicates that the hydrodynamic regime is suitable for this type of aquaculture.

Appropriate site location maps and relevant details have been submitted with this application.

Site History

This is an existing licensed mussel site which was inspected by MED in June 2023. There are currently longlines on this site. A renew and review application for this site has been received.

Proposed Development

Site Management

This is a renew and review application for an existing mussel site, which was inspected by MED in June 2023.

Under this review, the applicant proposes to reconfigure the site boundary, to align with adjacent sites.

Site Layout and Structures

Structures have been in place on this site for a number of years and consist of the floating longline method. The existing licence for the site allows for the placement of 8 no. 110m longlines. The newly submitted licence proposes the installation of 6 no. 110m longlines and 2 no. 75m longlines, which overall gives 70m less longlines than is currently licenced for the site.

The flotation barrels should be battleship grey in colour - any white or non grey barrels must be changed as required.

Site Access

The proposed access route is indicated on the application drawings as being by boat from Bantry Pier, which is accessible via public road. This pier is used by mussel farmers on a daily basis to access sites and carry out operations associated with the aquaculture industry, and is suitable as an access point for this site.

Potential Impacts

Navigation

The proposed site does not impact significantly on navigation routes. There is commercial shipping including cruise liners, oil tankers and fishing as well as marine leisure in the area. The site lies within the existing Special Uniform Marking Scheme (SUMS) for the area operated by BIM and this SUMS reduces the impact of the aquaculture on navigation in the area.

Landscape and Visual

This site and the other aquaculture sites in Inner Bantry Bay can be seen from the adjacent N71 route approaching Bantry from the south, and between Bantry and Glengarriff. This route forms part of the Wild Atlantic Way and is designated as scenic route S111 in the Cork County Development Plan 2022. The surrounding area is designated as high value landscape. In general, the sea views are obscured and limited from the scenic route. The aquaculture in Bantry Bay has been in place for some time and has become embedded in the landscape.

The proposed farm layout and type of structures adheres to the best practices outlined in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of Marine Aquaculture, 2001.

Environmental

The site is not within a Natura site.

Other Beneficial Uses

There is commercial shipping including cruise liners, oil tankers and fishing, as well as marine leisure activity in the area. The focus of marine leisure in this area is mainly around Whiddy Island and Bantry Harbour. The group marking scheme reduces the impact of the aquaculture on navigation in the area.

Cumulative Impact

There has been aquaculture activity in Inner Bantry Bay for many years. The proposal is in line with existing activity. The application is for renew and review of existing licensed activity in the area and there is no increase in area of aquaculture activity.

Conclusion

Marine Engineering Division has no objection to the licencing of this site.