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

Aquaculture Licence Application

Marine Engineering Division Report

Site T-Reference:	T09-199A
Application ID:	35139
Report Prepared By:	Rosalie Scanlon
Date:	20 May 2024

Application Details

Applicant(s)	Killary Fish Farm Co-op Ltd.
Location	Killary Harbour, Co. Galway
Application Type	Aquaculture/Foreshore Licence - Renew and Review
Site Area (Ha)	5.0
Species	Blue Mussels – Mytilus Edulis
Cultivation Method	Rope longlines
Source of stock	Mussel seed will be naturally settled seed on collection mesh and rope on longlines within Killary Harbour.
Annual Production Estimates	100 Tonnes (Year 1 to 5)
Shellfish Waters Designation	Yes - Killary Map X
Development Plans	• Galway County Development Plan 2022 – 2028; Objective AF1 – Marine Aquaculture • Mayo County Development Plan 2022 – 2028; EDP 31 - Marine Economy Policies
Pre-Consultation Meeting	Yes - Various dates in 2022 and 2023

Site Description

Site Location

This site is located on the southern shore of Killary Harbour, Co. Galway. Killary Harbour is a naturally occurring fjord on the boundary between counties Galway and Mayo. The site is located close to the shore in water depth in excess of 10m in a sheltered location.

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 April 2022. 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. Under this review, the applicant proposes to reconfigure the site boundary, to align with existing mussel longlines on the site and based on pre-consultation with MED. The review will allow the longlines remain in an orientation that is parallel to the shore.

Mussels will be grown on double head ropes longlines using mussel seed from within Killary Harbour. The rope mussel will be harvested by harvesting equipment on board a mussel workboat, and packed into either 1 tonne or 20 kg bags before being brought onshore to pier for onward transport to processing factory or direct to fresh market.

Site Layout and Structures

The applicant has submitted details of proposed site layout and site structures. The application drawing indicates 10 x longlines 110m length for suspended culture arranged in two blocks. The max number of barrels is indicated on the drawing with the total proposed flotation volume at a maximum of 17,928 litres / hectare (which is within previously set limit of 18,000 l / Ha for Killary Harbour). Additional flotation above 18,000 litre / hectare, temporary or otherwise, should not be permitted, at any stage in the growing cycle.

The proposed site layout allows for adequate spacing between longlines, between the site structures and the site boundary. The site layout allows for navigation around and through the site.

Site Access

The proposed access route is indicated on the applicant's Site Access drawing. The proposed access is by boat from Bundorragha Pier, Co. Mayo, which is accessible via public road. This local authority pier is suitable as an access point to the proposed site.

Potential Impacts

Navigation

The site will not impact on navigation in Killary Harbour. An existing Special Uniform Marking Scheme (SUMS) is in place in Killary Harbour and this site lies within that.

Landscape and Visual

The Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 defines the adjacent coastline as Coastal Landscape (and Landscape Character Unit of Hard Shore Coastal) with the Landscape Sensitivity defined as Special.

The seascape is defined as fully enclosed coast with protected views on the shoreline. The national route N59 and adjoining local road to the south of the site is part of the Maritime Scenic Route and is part of the Wild Atlantic Way. The Wild Atlantic Way winds around Killary Harbour following local roads from Rossroe Pier to the N59 along the southern shore in Co. Galway into Leenaun and onto Asleagh and the R335 on the northern shore in Co. Mayo.

Killary Harbour identified as Viewpoint 16 in the Development Plan's Landscape Character Assessment, which has a 180 degree view of Killary and is considered of national significance, is located on the N59. This viewpoint overlooks general aquaculture activity in the Inner Harbour. The subject aquaculture site is located in Outer Killary Harbour approximately 5km to the east of this viewpoint. The old Killary Famine Road (Green Road) is a hiking trail overlooking the western end of Killary Harbour (Middle and Outer Harbour).

Under the Landscape Appraisal part of the Mayo County Development Plan the area immediately north of Killary Harbour is defined as South-West Mountain Moorlands (Area N). The Area Designation for Killary Harbour is "The Coastline" categorised as vulnerable land use sensitivity. The regional road (R335) at the eastern extent of Killary Harbour is identified as a scenic route and a major feeder route and tourist route for the area. Whilst these routes will provide views over Killary Harbour, there are no designated scenic view points overlooking Killary Harbour.

This application is for review and renew of existing aquaculture activity in Killary Harbour. The long established practice of aquaculture farming and the presence of longlines is embedded in the seascape. The proposed farm layout adheres to the best practices outlined in the Guidelines

for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of Marine Aquaculture, 2001. The licence conditions of any licence, if issued, will specify the orientation of the structures on the sites to minimise the visual impact. All floats should be battleship grey in colour.

Due to the distance from the shoreline and nature of the development and structures, the visual impact of the development will be slight.

Environmental

Whilst the site in not within a Natura site, it is immediately adjacent to The Twelve Bens/Garraun Complex SAC (00203) to the south and the Mweelrea/Sheeffry/Erriff Complex SAC (001932) to the north.

Other Beneficial Uses

There is tourism, fishing and marine leisure in the area and aquaculture activities here should not interfere with these usages.

Cumulative Impact

There is a long-established history of aquaculture farming in Killary Harbour. The proposal is in line with existing activity and takes into account flotation limits set out in the previous licence conditions. The application is for renew and review of existing licensed activity in the area; there is no increase in area of aquaculture activity.

Conclusion

Marine Engineering Division has no objection to the licencing of this site based on the proposal submitted and subject to the following condition:

Flotation shall be limited to 18,000 litres / hectare. Additional flotation above this limit, temporary or otherwise shall not permitted at any stage in the growing cycle.