Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

Political Indifference to National Security, causing a Naval Service which had NINE ships only has ONE ship available to patrol out of a total of six.
Global Instability
Russia / NATO Hybrid Warfare affect CNI
USA Instability effecting Trade Routes
Chinese Espionage using third level institutions as cover (why is a certain Chinese high tech company should be interested in supplying "underwater acoustic" equipment to an Irish Third Level Institution)
Global Climit change affect Irish national resources

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

A regional war effecting the North Allantic.

It is no currincidence that the large amount of shipwrecks in the Irish EEZ have dates that match both WW1 and WW2, and show that our neck of the woods would be a hive activity.

In WW2 Ireland was cought napping in regards to being and Island nation looking inwards instead of outwards and ended up lacking any sort of Naval (Military or Merchant) when it was needed resulting in a scramble to find sutible tonnage, while those in government still had grand notions of War of Independence style guerrilla warfare against U boats and Blitzkrieg.

The same is happening now except that the Grand Notion is now a radicalised idea behind what Neutrality. instead of making the same mistakes, or even whole new ones, actually fund the Naval service to have a Minimum of 4-6 Offshore Patrol Vessels, 2-3 Inshore Patrol Vessels, 2-3 Anti-Submarine Frigates, 1 Multi role Logistics vessel and 1-2 multi-role Auxiliary vessel to under take Dive Support and Hydrographic, and Mine Warfare duties. Increase the Air Corps Maritime Patrol Aircraft to 3/5 aircraft and introduce a New Zealand style naval support helicopter SQN, where the Air Corps look after the engineering support and the Naval Service operate them.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland's maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

That large wet blue area that borders the east, south and west coasts of Ireland.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland's maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Fund the Naval service to have a Minimum of 4-6 Offshore Patrol Vessels, 2-3 Inshore Patrol Vessels, 2-3 Anti-Submarine Frigates, 1 Multi role Logistics vessel and 1-2 multi-role Auxiliary vessel to under take Dive Support and Hydrographic, and Mine Warfare duties. Increase the Air Corps Maritime Patrol Aircraft to 3/5 aircraft and introduce a New Zealand style naval support helicopter SQN, where the Air Corps look after the engineering support and the Naval Service operate them.

Also let the defence forces control their deployments instead of them having to ask nicely some civil servant who may not have the quilifaction or Idea what the defence forces do.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

YES - TAX MONEY!!

Aircraft fling over Ireland have to pay dues to ATC
Ships sailing into Ireland have to pay dues to Irish Lights.

Why should'nt they make a controbutiion to their security

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

Alot,

Since the stupid descion taken first not to replace LE Eithne sonar, then to put its actual replacement vessel on the long fingure. Ireland does not have the expertise required to train and man such equipment. So yes go to NATO and the EU, only this time don't take an empty bowl and ask "please sir can i have some more". We are a rich country that should be ashamed to beg for for help on the cheap.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

How about a DoD that actualy does it's job of enabling the Defence Forces and not spent all its time writing up yet more reports to gather dust in Newbridge.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

Not do what you are currently doing, and actully do the Job required!

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

Contact

Contact Form

Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

Lack of Air and naval resources to police and take action if presented with a threat from Russia or an unstable united States.
It is difficult to invest in off shore green energy that is so vulnerable to attack.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

High visibility offshore policing by naval and air services for undersea cable protection and fishery protection

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

west and south West coastline are most vulnerable and open.
A solid air surveillance fleet supported by a rapid response naval service is essential

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Aireal surveillance and rapid response maritime fleet.

Military grade radar and sonar.

Cooperation with UK in the interim is needed

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

No

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes cooperation is our only short to medium term option.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes.

The plan should contain short medium and long term objectives.
Short- cooperation
Medium- growth of independent security by our armed forces
Long complete or near complete security independence

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

Contact

Contact Form

Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

The vulnerability of sub sea cables to sabotage.

The transiting of drugs through the seas off Ireland's coasts by organised crime groups.

The lack of sufficient equipment and skilled personnel to enable Ireland's defence forces to counter the above threats.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

The threat posed by Russian air and sea forces and covert activity by that nations military intelligence services.

In order to counter present and future threats the current recruitment and training of recruits to Ireland's defence forces must be ongoing.

There must also be improvement in pay scales and incentives to retain personnel especially in those fields which have reached crisis levels.

There must be participation with friendly nations in order to learn from their experience.

New vessels must be commissioned that are equipped adequately to discharge the role for which they are required.

Purchasing vessels that are at the end of their service life must be discontinued

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

No

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

New vessels.

New aircraft particularly rotary and in adequate numbers.

Aerial and maritime remotely operated equipment.

Military spec radar and sonar and compatible and capable weapons systems

Adequate and secure communications equipment.

To name a few ....

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

No

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

International co-operation with EU/EEA/NATO nations should be continued and expanded.

Members of Ireland's defence forces at all levels should be consulted and canvassed for their opinions and recommendations. This should include retired members and Irish citizens who are active duty and retired from the defence forces of other countries.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Obviously an action plan is required. What is really required is action.

I feel that the main element of any plan should focus on retention of personnel and the recruitment and training of new recruits.

Ireland's maritime and aviation resources are so depleted at present that the security of Ireland and friendly nations is seriously threatened.

I believe that serving and retired members of the defence forces and officials in the Department of Defence are well aware of what is required.

What is required is funding. I believe that there would be support at government level to fund the required maritime strategy.

The time for action is long overdue.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

It has been suggested that the Irish Aer Corp should be equipped with fighter aircraft in order to intercept aerial threats.

I think this would be unwise.

I feel that the naming of ships should revert to the practice that prevailed previously whereby vessels were named after mythical female figures should be resumed with immediate effect and applied retrospectively to the current vessels which departed from this long established practice.

I feel that the naval service should not be involved in patrolling commercial activities such as those associated with Lucas Film for example or the proposed yacht race for example.

I suggest that Aer Corp na h-Éireann as a title for Ireland's aviation wing should be maintained.

I believe the title Naval Service should be retained rather than Navy which I understand has been mooted.

I suggest that Forza Cosanta Aitiúil should be revived as a name for the army reserve.

Ditto Slua Muiri

The reserve elements of naval service, army and aer corp should be encouraged among our secondary school pupils and the age requirement lowered.

Contact

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Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

Geo political change of the rules based order.

Threat from Russia and possibly china

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

Foreign bad actors damaging our infrastructure.
We need to Prepare by resourcing our navy and having back up strategy

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

I think it’s logical to strategize protection for the areas where there is infrastructure whether security, communication or commercial

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

I feel I am unqualified dance with this question

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes, I believe the private sector should be included in the strategy as long as any companies involved aren't owned by foreign agencies

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

I believe Ireland should try and integrate its defenses as much as possible with NATO and the EU. This is logical because we have near to 0% protection on our own.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes, I believe there should be an action plan accompanying in the strategy. And I think a key element should be the ability to intervene military with bad actors within our Maritime zone.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

Contact

Contact Form

Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

Ireland does not have a defence force which makes us extremely vulnerable to full or partial attack from the likes of Russia. The topic of invading Ireland during world wars has always been discussed by the likes of Germany and the UK. Russian has already shown its presence in waters close to Cork where they went undetected for some time. EU unity and a single army will strengthen these lands and waters.
Russia carried out "Training Exercises" off the Cork/ Kerry waters a few years back and who knows what they have planted in that area. Ireland Defence forces do not have the manpower of capabilities to find out.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

Lack of a defence system, lack of technology and lack of ability to detect a threat to the country. The Irish army are too weak to hold back even the smallest of invasions which make us the No1 vulnurable country in Europe.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland's maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes. We need to close the loop on Europe. We are on the fringes of the EU. There needs to be a joint operation between Portugal, Spain, France, UK, Ireland, Norway and Sweden to erect a naval barrier to the west of EU.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland's maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Like I said Radar, Stealth detection and the ability to respond quickly to potential threats. Response time is key and is what the Russians practice all the time testing each nations ability to repond to a close encounter. This will involve the use of military jets which Ireland does not have.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes, They maybe key players in rolling our this technology. Ireland has 3 naval ships but can only man 1 at a time. With the exception of recruiting more navy personnel frequent trawlers and ships to key areas off the west coast could also have these capabilities of detecting possible invasions which feeds back this information back to our defence forces and beyond. This technology doesnt need to be operated by the vessel owner but rather be positioned on there vessel and operating at all times when out a sea. A radar extension if you like. But with multiple ships having these devices will create a web like picture out at sea.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

As above unity between Sweden Norway, UK, Ireland, France, Spain and Portugal to act like a single entity using the same technology protecting the seas off the west of Eurpoe.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes, otherwise whats the point. If one of the fore mentioned countries rejects the proposal then it will not be successful unless boundaries can be pushed.
Resources, Assets, investment, responsibility, willingness, support, management and control, response procedures.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

Russia already know how vulnerable Ireland is, so do does North Korea and China. We have 1 vessel on our Irish seas and an old fleet at that. We have technology not capable of detecting modern vessels of aircraft. We are on the brink of a world war and now is the time to seek support from our fellow EU members and build an alliance.

Contact

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Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

Our inability to command our seas - to know what is going on in our extensive economic zone and to mitigate threats. The total command task is beyond our available resources (especially under Ambition LevelTwo) but to engage the full co-operation of our neighbours (principally UK and France) we will need a maritime capability that is a credible response to the threats.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

Interference, either physical or electronic, to our energy interconnectors, cables connecting us to European and North American systems and cables running through our waters and off-shore wind generators.
Some regard also has to be had with the protection of commercial surface sea-lanes.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

The issue is not, perhaps, specific geographic areas as activities being carried out in certain parts of Ireland's maritime domain that a risk assessment exercises have shown to be vulnerable. Surveillance/monitoring /identification of interference with critical activities and the protection of those activities is more important than areas, although, of course, concern with specific areas will, arise from the risk assessment exercise - its an iterative process.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Maritime interests cannot be safeguarded by just one state arm, such as the navy. An integrated approach to the security of Ireland has to be established which embraces hardware, cyber security systems and people. The temptation for every service to have its own independent capability, e.g. in cyber security, has to be resisted and historic barriers taken down, e.g. almost certainly integrate the navy and the air force under one command.

It is easy enough to identify hardware needs, such as the number of naval vessels and their capability specification. Much more difficult is attracting and retaining the high quality manpower needed to operate them.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

Essential - they and their interests are being protected by the state and they need to have defined roles, especially in the provision of surveillance and information to the state.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

All of the above and they need to be broadened and deepened to the extent that the evolving risks demand. Popular and political acceptance of deepening cooperation will require continuous production of as much public information and analysis as the security situation permits.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

What's the point of an NMSS without an Action Plan?
The AP needs to put more flesh on Ambition Level Two and deal with the wider security environment and how the various state entities will create an integrated security environment. Confining a maritime strategy and action plan just to the matters currently under the purview of the Department of Defence will not ,meet the case. What we are going to do about personnel should be front and centre of the AP. Security is now becoming so high priority that wages, conditions, etc for essential personnel probably need to be taken out of the conventional public service framework.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

Ireland needs an integrated security strategy of which the maritime is only part. That the Department of Defence has taken an initiative in the maritime areas is welcome and commendable but not sufficient; we need joined up strategy and execution that uses our resources efficiently.

Contact

Contact Form

Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

Undersea cables, any wind farms that are built. Any significant product that has a value to the State should be properly monitored and protected with the relevant Naval assets.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

There will always be a potential threat to any state maritime asset. Whether anything happens or not is irrelevant. The State should have a proper intelligence organisation that can put together a threat assessment. Then the State should properly resource their Navy so that they can monitor and protect the States assets. By force if necessary.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

The State should concentrate on being able to properly patrol all its maritime domain. There will be areas of importance that would need special attention, but that should not mean other areas get neglected. Especially through lack of resources.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

All Naval vessels should be properly equipped to monitor Irelands sovereign waters both above and below the water line. Proper long-term planning and investment should be put in place to ensure this capability remains in the long term.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

No. National Maritime Security should be the responsibility of the Navy and no one else.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

The National Maritime Security Strategy should involve working alongside our EU partners. If there was ever a situation where our navy had to take part in a security operation with our EU partners or a situation where they had to help us out in a major security operation, we would all need be operating off the same hymn sheet. The same would apply to our army and air corps.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

I do think there should be an Action Plan and there should be no ambiguity in it. As for the key elements, talk to the military personnel still serving, who are up to date with today's technology and equipment.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

I spent my life in the military, and I would love to see the Defence Forces finally being properly equipped so that they can do the job that's expected of them in a neutral country. Monitor, patrol and protect our land sea and air. In my opinion we are not a neutral country, never have been and we don't know what being a neutral country means.

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Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland’s maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

Looking at what is happening in the Baltic, where the new method of conflict seems to be based on disruption to energy and communication services, there are a few significant threats;

(1) Damage to subsea gas pipes. We are reliant on gas coming from the UK for our energy supply. Should these pipes, which run side by side, get damaged, we have no means of importing or storing gas in Ireland.

(2) Internet Cables. There are several internet and communication cables off Ireland's coast connecting the country to the US, the UK, and Europe. Should these cables get damaged, we run the risk of having reduced or no internet services, which many Irish businesses rely on. We have already had a ship called the Arne entering the Shannon in March, suspected of trying to damage cables.

(3) Drug Imports. There have been several high-profile cases of ships entering Irish ports carrying significant quantities of drugs over the past few years.

(4) GNSS systems spoofing and jamming. There have been increased incidents of GNSS systems being spoofed and jammed throughout the Baltic, the Eastern Mediterranean, and the Red Sea, leading to accidents. Having a pilot onboard is critical, ensuring our pilots are trained to a high standard, so they can identify when satellite systems are being spoofed is key. We need pilots capable of manoeuvring and navigating ships in and out of our ports without electronic aids. GNSS signal jammers are readily available online, and anyone can disrupt ships' navigational systems.

(5) Pilot Exemption Certificates. Pilot exemption certificates grant the ship's Captain or officer the authority to enter a port without the presence of a pilot onboard. Although Pilot Exemption Certificates are important in the maritime industry, they can leave critical national infrastructure, such as piers and bridges, vulnerable to ships being used as a weapon by crews whose backgrounds are unknown. Implementing background security checks for individuals granted pilot exemption certificates for Irish ports should become standard practice.

With all of the above problems we face, maritime pilots from Irish ports may have been on these vessels. Working closely with pilots throughout our ports will add another layer of security.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland’s maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

In an era where foreign states use service and energy disruptions as tactics to sow chaos, safeguarding our subsea gas pipelines and cables is more crucial than ever. A single damage to the Irish Sea gas pipes could halt our entire nation, highlighting the urgent need for protective measures. We must act now to defend our energy security and ensure stability for our future.

(1) We need to have our Naval vessels fully crewed and patrolling areas with subsea cables and pipelines, watching for suspicious actions by merchant vessels.

(2) Our naval service needs to be equipped with sonar capable of detecting submarine activity.

(3) Greater oversight on foreign-flagged vessels entering our ports, ensuring they are not linked to the Russian Shadow Fleet.

(4) Use maritime pilots in Irish ports as a crucial first line of defence. These pilots could serve as an invaluable resource for our defence forces in identifying and responding to potential threats to our nation, including the illegal importation of drugs. Providing specialised training to maritime pilots by our defence forces to ensure they are equipped to recognise suspicious activities onboard the ships they are guiding in and out of our ports. Maintaining continuous communication between pilots and authorities will significantly enhance our ability to respond swiftly and effectively. Harnessing the expertise of maritime pilots is a strategic move that can bolster Ireland's security and border protection.

(5) Conduct background checks on ships' Captains and officers being granted pilot exemption certificates for Irish ports. We have had at least one vessel calling at Irish ports where the crew were suspected of damaging or trying to damage subsea cables.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

It depends on what is considered a priority. I would say that our gas pipelines, subsea internet, and communication cables are critical and must be prioritised. After that, drug trafficking is a serious problem, but this could happen in any port, harbour or pier on our island.

Highlighting key berths and terminals at our ports involved in the import and export of oil products, with enhanced security measures on both water and land sides. Oil products are vital for the functioning of our country, supporting transportation and electricity generation. Establishing strict protocols to protect our energy security is paramount.

When security drills and training are taking place in these terminals, it is crucial to incorporate maritime pilots into this training.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

We have a good fleet of naval vessels, but we lack the personnel to crew them. Ireland needs to prioritise investing in its people. We could have the most advanced equipment on the planet, but without the people to operate, interpret, and act on the information supplied by the equipment, it is useless.

The naval/coastguard service should have greater capability of surveillance craft to patrol our territorial waters. Aircraft can patrol a far greater sea area than naval vessels. They could then liaise with the naval vessel to direct them to a particular area or merchant/fishing vessel causing concern.

Our naval vessel should be equipped with sonar equipment capable of detecting submarines.

Although not solely focused on security, establishing a national emergency towage service aligned with those of our neighbouring countries is necessary. The introduction of emission control areas, along with sanctions on Russia, has led to an increase in vessel traffic off Ireland's west coast and the Irish Sea. Many vessels, often from the so-called shadow fleet sailing from Russian ports, are frequently characterised as substandard, pass regularly off our coast. If one of these vessels experiences a breakdown, it could potentially lead to a significant environmental disaster.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

In my previous answers, I have highlighted the role of pilotage as a service on the public interest, how pilots are mandated under Irish and European law to report ship defects to our national authority.

Pilotage services are deemed a safety service, and I cannot see why they cannot serve as a security service. Highlighting the role of pilots in Europe, we have been exempted from competition from Chapter 2 of the EU Port Services Regulation EU 2017/352 and SI 128 of 2019. The reason given by the rapporteur to not open pilotage to competition is as relevant to safety as it is to security. The reason given was "Pilotage provides an essential and unique service to the shipping industry, which if open to competition would jeopardise maritime safety and security, the protection of the environment and the efficiency of ports."

IMaritime Pilots play a crucial role in supporting our national security objectives. Unlike commercial operations, our primary focus is the safety of navigation and environmental protection. We are the first to board arriving vessels, allowing us to conduct thorough assessments of the ship and its crew. Our responsibility is to determine whether it is safe to proceed. With additional briefing from security agencies, the role of pilots could be expanded to identify any suspicious activities onboard that may need to be reported to the authorities.

The following link shows a multi-jurisdictional approach to the security of seaports in the US: https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/news/testimony/covering-the-waterfront-a-review-of-seaport-security-since-september-11-2001. This demonstrates that maritime pilots have cooperated and do cooperate with national authorities when it comes to national security.

Pilots in many ports in the Baltic and Eastern Mediterranean have to operate without the use of satellite navigational systems, whether shipboard systems or portable systems brought onboard, due to spoofing and jamming. AIS signals are also being spoofed. Having highly trained pilots onboard ships is critical to ensuring the safe movement of ships in and out of our ports. We need our pilots to be familiar with technological advancements and their potential weak points, as well as traditional methods of navigation and ship handling, so our ports remain open.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

Working with European Bodies is key.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

A plan that demonstrates how any investment in our naval services will avert the security issues we currently have. The integration of critical services, such as pilotage services, should also be highlighted in this plan.

As maritime pilots are the first to board vessels entering our ports, our role in Ireland's security should be incorporated into this plan. We should be incorporated into the plan's development, and participate in all training and drills carried out.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

Establishing a national working group composed of industry professionals, stakeholders, and relevant experts would be highly advantageous. Such a group would facilitate a coordinated approach to maritime safety and policy development. Additionally, it is noteworthy that our Association may have missed this important national consultation, potentially risking the loss of valuable insights we could have offered regarding how maritime pilots can play a crucial role in enhancing Ireland's maritime security and safety measures.

Contact

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Please answer the below questions in the boxes provided. There is a 3,000 character limit per question. When you have completed your answers please hit the submit button at the bottom of the page.

Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

1. Malicious attacks and unauthorised interaction with [redacted] and other maritime infrastructure, both physical and cyber.

2. Electricity interconnectors to Great Britain (c. 1000 MW - EWIC, and Greenlink Interconnectors), and in future France (700 MW – Celtic Interconnector).

a. Marine surveys and remediations: The mobilisation of specialised vessels and equipment such as side scan sonars, multi-beam sonar, magnetometer, cone penetration cores and such to perform geophysical and geotechnical surveys offshore with the intent to map the seabed and determine soil types and characteristics and rectify any exposures or breaches.
b. Telecommunications / fibre infrastructure: The provision of communications cables alongside our subsea energy interconnectors is a practice that has been deployed by [redacted] to date, both for operational reasons and for commercial use. The East West Interconnector (EWIC) has embedded communications cables.

3. Gas interconnectors: Supplying gas-fired generators on the Irish power system (circa 60% of our electricity generation is produced from gas).

4. Shipping and fuel storage: The ability to replenish liquid fuel in the event of a gas emergency (NORA stocks would need to be replenished in support of national requirements in the context of gas fired power generation operating on secondary fuel). The importation of electricity infrastructure is also at risk from attacks on shipping.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

1. Malicious attacks on gas infrastructure:
a. Gas interconnectors: Resulting in the need for gas-fired generators to move to secondary fuel. Loss of both interconnectors would require all of Ireland's gas generators to operate on secondary fuel.
b. Future strategic gas storage: The State has approval to develop a strategic gas emergency reserve in the form of a Floating Storage and Regassification Unit, which will be owned by Gas Networks Ireland.

2. Malicious attacks on electricity interconnectors – impacting support to and from GB (and in the future France) in the event of system security concerns. With further interconnection to the Irish system this will become more consequential.

3. Malicious attacks to offshore renewable generation with a primary focus on submarine cables. While submarine cables are protected by burial underneath the seabed, such assets can be damaged rather easily by dragging an anchor of a standard vessel over a cable route. Multiple occurrences of such events have been recorded over the last months in the Baltic Sea.

4. Intrusions on above water offshore infrastructure such as the offshore substations that will be used to connect Ireland's future offshore wind farms to the grid. While these platforms will be equipped with intrusion detection and access control systems, malicious actors with access to a vessel can forcibly enter these installations. Given typical response and sail times, the mobilisation to site of personnel might take 2 hours or more.

5. Telecommunications / fibre infrastructure: Following the example of EWIC, the Celtic Interconnector will have embedded communications cables. Offshore wind generation infrastructure will also have embedded communications cables and will be susceptible to malicious attacks.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland's maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

- The electricity and gas interconnector paths and associated landing points in the Irish Sea.

- The path for the Celtic Interconnector and associated landing point.

- The areas surrounding planned Offshore Wind Generation, which include Offshore Phase 1 and the specifically the Celtic Sea for Offshore Phase 2.

- Consideration in the Strategy should be given to the formation of future Designated Maritime Area Plans for Offshore Renewable Energy, which we expect will cover areas throughout Ireland's maritime domain.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland's maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

• Investment in and provision of detection technologies, such as radar and sonar, should be prioritised. This would enhance monitoring of our maritime areas and critical infrastructure therein. We would also support a central marine monitoring unit for dark vessels.

• Prioritisation should be given to measures that act as a visual deterrent against attacks on infrastructure, such as increased naval patrolling.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

• Offshore wind farms as well as some Interconnectors will be privately owned infrastructure and as a result, these private owners should be involved in the National Maritime Security Strategy.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

- Regarding energy we're facing the same threat as our neighbours on interruption to supply through malicious action. [redacted] views cooperation with our colleagues in other TSOs to identify mitigation procedures as an appropriate measure. Likewise, we'll need to have agreed processes in place with Réseau de Transport d'Électricité (RTE) & the National Energy System Operator (NESO) on the interconnections to France & Great Britain, respectively.

- The sharing of information collected by maritime asset owners to better understand marine traffic for authorised and unauthorised vessels, for example Distributed Acoustic Sensing from embedded fibre in subsea cables.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

• [redacted] would welcome engagement with the Department to support the drafting of an action plan on the National Maritime Security Strategy by providing expert advice on electricity infrastructure needs.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

• [redacted] already conducts several measures relating to security of our maritime infrastructure: geophysical inspection surveys, cable burial remediations, online monitoring in own concession area, effective response to damage, repair preparedness plans.

• [redacted] would welcome collaboration with other utilities on potential synergies and sharing of learnings.

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Department of Defence

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Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

Underseas cables. Lack of technology to perceive and evaluate threats.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

Submarine warfare. No capacity to survey undersea realm for threats, from whatever quarter.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

Specific areas should include areas proximal to transatlantic communication cabling

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Ships and aircraft to monitor transport.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

I would be worried at leaving important national security in the hands of commercial interests who may not always align with our national interests.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

This is crucial. We cannot assure our own security on our own, but should align closely with EU partners in mutual defense and co-operation.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Military assets.
IT preparedness for cyber attack
Training of our population for what actions would be needed in the event of attack.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

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Department of Defence

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Please answer the below questions in the boxes provided. There is a 3,000 character limit per question. When you have completed your answers please hit the submit button at the bottom of the page.

Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

The consultation call notes that the most recent Defence Policy Review, prepared in 2024, found that "there is a need to give a particular focus on maritime security given: the assessed threat level; our geographic position; and our responsibility and commitment to support the security and defence of Europe." If this task is to be undertaken it is imperative to be clear what and who this strategy is being developed in the service of. A sober assessment is required of who stands to benefit from this strategy, and how, and who will bear its cost, and how. These are questions that deserve democratic scrutiny and wide public debate and should not be quarantined behind the closed doors of government, let alone be dictated by international interests, whether those of other states or private business actors.

Notably the Consultation notes that The Defence Policy Review called for the National Marine Security strategy "to be prepared in cooperation with national and international stakeholders." There are serious concerns here about what "international stakeholders" are involved and how this will impact upon (i) Ireland's neutrality in international affairs and (ii) the transparency of government decisions on foreign policy and public spending. The current Irish government is insisting that the changes it is driving in foreign and defence policy leave Ireland' s neutrality intact. However, the need to monitor and protect subsea cables is acting as a key vector for the increasing cooperation between Ireland's Defence Forces and both EU military operations and cooperation with NATO projects. This is threatening Ireland's neutrality with serious consequences.
For example, In September 2024, Irish naval vessels took part in the 'Passex' exercises with NATO ships off the Irish coast (The Journal 2024). The latter was designed to enhance interoperability in support of the Individually Tailored Partnership Programme (ITPP) Ireland established with NATO to protect against threats to subsea infrastructure the same year (The Journal 2024a). The Irish government brazenly claims that the partnerships with NATO established under ITPP, and the earlier Partnership for Peace (PfP) agreement, are in keeping with Ireland's neutrality. Further, in April 2025, just one week after the spy ship incident we opened this article with, the Irish government announced the state would join the EU's Common Information Sharing Environment (CISE), a new military alliance set up to share intelligence around maritime security threats in European waters (The Irish Examiner 2025a). In addition, there are questions here about the influence of arms lobbyists on government defence policy, notably due to the influence of the Irish Defence and Security Association (IDSA) who The Ditch have revealed are having monthly "secret meeting" with the Department of Defence (The Ditch, 2025).

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

Indeed, in the case of Ireland, this process has developed at pace with the need to monitor and protect subsea cables forming a key vector for the increasing cooperation between Ireland and NATO and EU military operations. Increased public spending on procuring military equipment and security infrastructure is of clear interest to the arms and security sectors, and it is notably that public funds are already being channeled towards protecting maritime infrastructure. In June 2025 in the form of a contract awarded to the French arms manufacturer Thales to provide a sonar system for monitoring subsea cables (The Journal 2025). Transparency is needed over what role these private "international stakeholders" are playing in setting the National Maritime Security Strategy and their involvement in the Maritime Security Unit established in late 2024. Such organisations perhaps play no role, but transparency is needed on this and if this is the case there should be no hesitation in making this information public.

The consultation call notes that "Ireland's most recent National Risk Assessment, coordinated on a whole-of-government basis by the Department of Defence, identified Damage to Undersea Infrastructure as one of the 22 key risks facing the country." However, whilst the risk of sabotage, highlighted throughout here, presumably by hostile state actors, may be one source of potential damage but the majority of the damage to subsea cables is due to the vulnerability of fragile infrastructures to dynamic natural forces of marine environments. Further, in a recent meeting of the IIEA Camino Kavanagh (Research Fellow, UNIDIR Security and Technology Programme), author of Achieving Depth: Subsea Telecommunications Cables as Critical Infrastructure, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) noted that one of the serious risks regarding subsea cables was that confrontational security stances around these infrastructures could raise international tensions and in fact become a driver of conflict.

The consultation call notes that "Ireland has one of the largest maritime Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) in the European Union with a maritime area that is 7 times our land area." Extensive environmental responsibility to protect marine biodiversity, including for the "80% of our population [that] live in coastal counties" as the call notes. This is where our national resources would be better spent – in protecting our communities and our economy from the very real existential threat posed by climate change and biodiversity loss.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland's maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

However, environmental and military agendas are increasingly being dangerously conflated with regard to Ireland's maritime territory. This convergence of "green" and military agendas in Ireland is perhaps most explicit along the country's Atlantic coast, and particularly the south west coast (Counties Galway, Clare, and Kerry), which has become the object of a particularly intensive set of practices that aim to integrate Ireland more fully into the structures of international military alliances and geoeconomic dependency via infrastructural development. The state has long been framing Ireland's Atlantic waters as a frontier for the expansion of the blue economy, with INFOMAR - a joint government programme to survey Ireland's unmapped marine territory involving the Geological Survey Ireland and the Marine Institute (2019) - producing what they referred to as "the real map of Ireland" in 2019, showing the full hitherto unknown extent of Ireland's marine territory.

The state has been particularly invested in promoting the potential of this newly expanded marine territory for developing offshore wind energy and securing Ireland's place at the forefront of European markets for renewable energy. In order to help develop the sector, the previous coalition government established the Offshore Wind Delivery Task Force as part of the Climate Action Plan introduced in 2020. In 2024 this Task Force published Powering Prosperity, the country's first offshore wind industrial strategy. Speaking at the launch the former Minister for Enterprise Trade and Employment Simon Coveney said in April 2024: "Ireland's marine territory is approximately 10 times the size of its land area, with some 450,000 square kilometres of this territory falling into our Exclusive Economic Zone, and … Ireland can make a real impact in the offshore renewable energy space - and there is a particular opportunity to establish Ireland as a world leader in floating offshore wind energy" (Coveney 2024).

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland's maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Whilst the bonanza of offshore wind development the state has promoted has thus far failed to materialise - largely due to a lack of private investment - the need to expand marine wind infrastructure is increasingly being framed in relation to European energy security. Offshore wind is no longer simply a green alternative to fossil fuels but a geopolitical alternative to Russian gas. Indeed, the economic imperatives driving the Irish state to expand offshore wind development in Irish waters are now being supped up with security imperatives emerging from the EU and other European bodies to which Ireland is a party such as the North Sea Energy Cooperation group (NESC). Under the umbrella of the latter group the energy ministers of Belgium, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands in May 2022 declared the North Seas to be a “Green Power Plant of Europe”. They were joined by their ministerial counterparts in France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Norway and the United Kingdom for The Ostend Declaration in April 2023, which stated: ‘In response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine and attempts of energy blackmail against Europe we will accelerate our efforts to reduce fossil fuel consumption as well as dependence on fossil fuel imports and promote the rapid upscaling and deployment of renewable energy for an energy resilient Europe’ (Ostend Declaration 2023).

The Ostend Declaration, signed as part of the North Sea Summit, attended by then Irish Taoiseach Leo Varadkar and EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, committed Ireland to rapidly accelerating the development of offshore wind in the Atlantic Ocean, the Celtic Sea, and the Irish Sea. That the new urgency for developing European wind energy was emerging from shifts in the energy geopolitics after the Russian invasion of Ukraine was stressed by then Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte (now NATO Secretary General) who said the North Sea Energy Cooperation group needed to ensure Russian President Vladimir Putin ‘no longer has the means to exert pressure on us by turning off the gas tap’ (Breaking News 2023). Ireland also agreed under the terms of The Ostend Declaration to amplify efforts to complete the Celtic Interconnector with France and to explore new energy interconnectors with the UK as part of an attempt to build “energy hubs” to secure European energy supplies - highlighting the way that European institutions view the interconnectedness of Ireland’s marine infrastructures and their importance for not only Irish but principally European security.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

The fusion of green and geopolitical drivers in The Ostend Declaration were further supported at the EU level by the European Wind Power Action Plan launched in October 2024 as part of the EU Wind Power Package announced by Ursula von der Leyen in September 2024. The European Wind Power Action Plan seeks to boost the scale and speed of European wind energy development by providing a common regulatory framework to facilitate rapid planning decisions (read deregulation) and a variety of financial mechanisms to support member states and industry, although little in the way of direct EU funding. A variety of factors are highlighted as to why this Action Plan is necessary. The green imperatives are foregrounded but it is also made abundantly clear that the EU's interest in developing wind energy is driven by geopolitical factors. 'In a world going through a fast green and digital transition', it states, 'clean technologies are central to European open strategic autonomy.'

It is also noted that the 'objective of this action plan is to support EU companies in the wind sector and improve their competitiveness to ensure that the EU wind industry can continue to play a key role in the green transition.' The "green transition" here doesn't simply refer to the decarbonisation of Europe but to securing a leading place in global markets for green technologies. The Action Plan foregrounds a decline in European market share in global wind energy markets from 42% in 2020 to 35% in 2022, which it notes is 'to a large extent … due to the rapid deployment of wind energy in China which relies primarily on its growing domestic manufacturing sector.' It is further noted that of the 'world's 10 largest wind turbine manufacturing companies (covering over 80% of demand for wind turbines globally), 4 have their headquarters in the EU, while 4 are located in China.'

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

Ireland, along with all other EU member states and 300 private sector actors, signed an EU Wind Charter in December 2024 committing the state to pursuing the Action Plan objectives as priorities. However, the Irish state's attempts to accelerate wind energy development, including offshore as committed under The Ostend Declaration, has largely stalled. There are a number of reasons for this, principally the fact that Ireland's plans - like those of the EU as a whole - depend upon private sector investment, which has not been forthcoming. Some have attributed this reluctance to environmental regulation, with offshore wind projects having been refused planning over the last two years in Counties Cork, Dublin, and Louth on the basis of environmental impacts and another €1.4 billion project off the coast of Counties Clare and Galway currently facing objections.

However, the Chief Executive of Wind Energy Ireland, a lobby group promoting the sector in Ireland, has argued that 'overwhelmingly the number one issue' across Europe regarding offshore wind is the security of infrastructures, although this discussion is relatively absent in Ireland (The Irish Examiner 2024). He argued that this is something Ireland 'needs to be thinking about much more.' However, the government has apparently been listening to these concerns and are developing a new National Maritime Security Strategy. A public consultation on this strategy is currently open and notes that 'The 2025 Programme for Government also recognises the increasing importance of maritime security given our significant and expanding sub-sea data cabling infrastructure and emerging offshore energy sector.'

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

It should be emphasised here that the wind energy infrastructure that the Irish state hopes to see develop in Irish waters is not in any usually understood sense “Ireland’s wind energy”. Rather these are infrastructures of extraction built, owned and maintained by private investors and large international energy companies. Indeed, a recent investigation by The Journal found that not only is Ireland’s offshore wind sector dominated by international capital (only two Irish companies having a minor stake in the sector) but controlling stakes in proposed projects are owned by companies such as BP, the German energy giant RWE, and the French-state owned energy company EDF, all of which have long standing and ongoing investments in fossil fuels (The Journal 2025).

In other words, whilst the profits of Ireland’s largest energy resource may be extracted by these international investors, whilst the Irish public will bear the cost of providing military protection for their infrastructures. This is in effect establishing a massive transfer of public funds from socially useful purposes and ‘real’ crises (housing, health, mental health climate change and biodiversity loss) into private hands (arms companies) to protect the assets of private companies in the wind energy and technology sectors. This should be profoundly concerning development for anyone concerned about the welfare of the Irish public, the future security of the country and the protection of the environment, at the local and planetary level.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

Finally, the consultation call notes that “this consultation marks a critical opportunity to shape Ireland’s approach to safeguarding our waters,” however it is less clear if this is about protecting “our waters” than the interests of “international stakeholders” – both state and private – whose interests may not be those of the Irish public.

Finally, the Consultation call notes that the “use of Ireland’s maritime domain as a conduit for illicit activities by organised crime groups is also noted as a risk in the maritime domain.” This suggests an extremely worrying militarization of civil policing matters and drug policy enforcement, and the use of criminal matters of wide public concern (drugs) to justify changes in defence policy that stand to benefit international business interests (energy, technology, arms and security) at the expense of Irish tax payers.

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

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Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

The complete lack of a presence or monitoring of our near shore never mind our exclusive economic zone.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

The monitoring and protection of our EEZ Fisheries and critical infrastructure such as under sea cables, wind power generation etc

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

Protection of our near shores should be a very small first step

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

To be able to monitor, effectively deter and if necessary apply force on bad actors operating, causing damage or preparing an attack on Ireland or our partners. This could be achieved by ensuring adequate sonar, rador, naval and air core assets are available and coordinated.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

The control of strategic and critical infrastructure should be state controlled or in the hands of trusted Irish partners.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

Ireland should have strong cooperation with both our EU and NATO allies. Neutrality does not have to be forgotten but we are already culturally, politically and economically aligned with these partners.
A country cannot consider itself truly neutral unless is can adequately defend itself.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Increased cooperation with our European Partners.
Self sufficiency in defence
A national strategy including critical infrastructure, private partners
Resilience built into gas, oil and other strategic reserves

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

A country must protect its sovereign territory especially in the current political environment and the decline in the rules based order. If the world goes back to "might is right" Ireland will be vulnerable.

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Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

[redacted]
The Irish state has a limited and very fractured approach to security in the maritime sphere .the state lack s the capability to monitor and deterr state and non state actors conducting activities which are damaging to the society ,the interests and secretly of the state .This would and could include environmental, military , narcotics and interference with energy and communication security.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

[redacted]
The regeneration of the naval service is of critical importance . The vessels need there equipment to be upgraded , The recruitment of personal is critical as is the retention . The merchant fleet needs to be reviewed as at present in the event of a substantial hostile situation the state and Europe as a whole would severely struggle to find and man vessels to supply the country . A reserve of professional seamen could be stood up . these could be at various levels s, some highly integrated with the naval service reserve , some more integrated with the coastguard . The skills and professional resources would be available to the state in times of emergency . The carrot to seamen could be along the lines of the 183 tax rule in the UK , or maybe a requirement to serve a number of weeks as an auxiliary officer in either the navy or coastguard to qualify each year .

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland's maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

[redacted]
The strategy should first prioritize the monitoring surface and sub surface activity . Once this is understood actions to deter unwanted activity can be put in place . The new wind farms offer an interesting opertuinty for surface and subsurface monitoring equipment for security and environmental activity to be located .

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland's maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

[redacted]
First invest in capable vessels ,
Consolidated all vessels capabilities and ensure they come under a unified control in Emergency situation .
Ensure the state has a qualified available and well trained maritime professional corp . This would be military and merchant crew with relevant shore side experienced logistics support .
Without the people the tech and capabilities will take longer and be ineffective in case of emergency .
The Researh and development of an indigenous capability to install and maintain and service wind farm and sub sea cable would be critical going forward .
This is lacking at present and the state is not supporting local shipping as all wind farm ,subsea cable construction is been handed to European large players.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

[redacted]
Yes but there has to be Irish control of critical infrastructure in emergency .
In the case of vessels they could be taken up for service .in the case of cables and pipeline they could be reserved for controlled government use . Port facilities would be required to allow movement of essential resources .
Monitoring and actively determining activity in Irish waters could be done with equipment installed on offshore structures along with a back up. Navigation system for coastal and harbour traffic .

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

International cooperation with the UK and our European partners are critical as we can leverage their equipment ,skills and intelligence . We can also allow access to Irish waters which will benefit both parties until we have built our own capacity .

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

[redacted]
The action plan is the real world implementation of the information identified in the strategy . Both need to be done .
The action plan should broadly cover
Risks , economic , environmental, military ,
To respond to the risks identified ,
Government actions , legislation, organisation
People , military ,merchant marine , support ,
Available assets use and gap analysis to identify assets to acquire , either naval , public private or as part of semi state .
Technology ,research ,future requirements, threats from technology .

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

[redacted]
A reserve of professional merchant officers was proposed to be set up within the naval service , these would assist and advise on merchant shipping ,bringing a diverse range of skills and support to the state with little cost . This would also support the regeneration of the naval service .The nmci should set up a naval reserve unit of the cadets .this would expose potential officer to the naval service and enable a base level of naval k owledge in future officers .
It might be considered that officers in say marine institute and Irish lights be offered reserve commission in the navy ,in the event of an emergency if the vessel is taken up by the state the manning is already in place .
The state should consider sending or ensuring the availability of a core team with foc joiniting skills to allow the capability to repair service and maintain the subsea systems . They also need to ensure spare jointing kits and cable for each critical system is available .

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Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

As an island nation we do not appear to allocate adequate resources to monitor and police our coasts and waters.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

Fishing is becoming a scarce resource. Trafficking and smuggling are a major threat. Offshore cables are vulnerable. We need to have an adequately funded and Stafford Coast Guard and navy.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland's maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

Although it's a major job to cover Ireland extensive coastline, I think it would be unwise to focus on specific areas as this will inevitably shift the attention of those wishing to threaten Ireland militarily or criminally to non-protected areas.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland's maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Acquiring and installation of technology which would allow the active monitoring of Ireland coastal waters and airspace is vital while at the same time investing in our Navy and the creation of a well funded Coast Guard should be prioritised.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

I think matters of national security should be totally within the control of government agencies. I do not think there is a role for private investment in this area.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

I think any action or proposed actions should be linked in to European and British agencies. I think Ireland should join NATO or, at the very least, liaise closely with NATO organisations in disregard.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Of course, a plan and strategy followed by an action plan would need to be developed to move forward in these important areas. However, I think it is vital that a schedule and deadline for the completion of any planning process be set so that action is not postponed indefinitely. Separately we should begin to create a ring fenced fund so that implementation of such a plan is not constrained by budget worries

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

The use of the citizens assembly should be considered as a useful tool to examine and recommend actions in this area.

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Questions

Please answer the below questions in the boxes provided. There is a 3,000 character limit per question. When you have completed your answers please hit the submit button at the bottom of the page.

Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

In recent times I have seen and heard a well-orchestrated media campaign for Ireland to wake up to the threats that exist [by 'foreign actors'] to 'our' undersea communications cables that are essential to our national security and economy. These views have been expressed by 'experts' who have appeared on all of our media; disturbingly, their tone and phraseology is amazingly similar.

I have heard no alternative views expressed as to the reality of these threats, the impact on the economy, the number and relative importance of the cables in so-called Irish waters or the redundancy factor in the system and its relationship with the myriad of other undersea cables in UK and other EU cable links with the USA and elsewhere.

However, I am aware of the fact that undersea drone and other modern modern technology have made protection of undersea cables virtually impossible [note successful attacks in super-protected Baltic zone]. It is also worth noting that the undersea environment actually limits explosive damage and repairs are in fact manageable; cable damage - accidental and otherwise - is frequent, numbering c.150 worldwide annually. It follows that in place of big spending attempts to prevent the unpreventable it would make more sense to put in place a fast-acting service to repair the repairable [which in turn should discourage those 'actors' who might consider cable interference in the first place].

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

In the grand scheme of things it is extremely difficult to rationally place Ireland as pivotal in any strategic move by the power players currently strutting the world stage.

Offstage the USA and China arm-wrestle, not over territory but for financial and political power; neither side is willing to engage in direct conflict.

In the Middle East the shadow of the Ottoman Empire continues to exist in terms of unsettled territory and religious differences, not helped by the presence of Israel, a troublesome American cat's-paw in the region.

The old Empires of 20th Century Europe have yet to settle cultural divides to allow inhabitants to live in peace and harmony. Central Europe nations have differences that are incomprehensible to people with a rational mindset and the region is a powder-keg that could explode at any time. With the NATO alliance at a funding crossroad the we see cracks that further divide; adding to the confusion is a self-serving secretary (his pension at stake) outrageously suggesting that we gun-up or learn Russian!

As it has during two great wars, Ireland remains semi-detached on the western periphery of old Europe. There it is and there it should remain. We have no skin in the European power game and as the arms factories of Germany and its neighbors power-up the best we can hope for is to hunker down and hope for a peaceful outcome while trying to inject common sense into neighbors with a long history of settling accounts through the barrel of a gun!

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

The recent focus on 'Ireland's maritime domain' is somewhat of a curiosity. Up to the recent establishment of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS) in 1994, Ireland was content with surrounding waters with a manageable three-mile nautical mile limit. Fortuitously, UNCLOS gifted us with extended coastal seabed and ocean territory which now covers some 800,000 square kilometers.

We seem to have done little or nothing to benefit from the wealth of sea creatures, minerals and plant life in these valuable waters since then [indeed, the reverse may be true]. Q: why are we are suddenly obsessing with ways and means of expending tax-payer resources on protecting highly profitable communication cables we do not own? More to the point, the owners of these cables pay no rent nor contribute in any way to the protection of their investments! In this new 'Transactional Age' where 'Pay your Way' is such a central theme, how can taxpayer funded expenditure be justified. Indeed it is difficult not to be reminded of the banking crisis..... when push came to shove in that era of failed 'financial instruments' the burden quickly fell on taxpayers! By assuming protection of costs directly related to investment-overreach and failure to anticipate threats by multinationals to their vulnerable undersea assets have we failed to learn the lesson of historic failures?

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

I have seen or heard of no plan, scheme or strategy by any nation that can guarantee protection of undersea asserts of any kind. In fact, these products of world dominance of communications and is something of a 'Wild West' by individuals, and the corporations they control, to accept risk and hope for State support and intervention to protect their profits. Plainly, they should be putting in place either protection of their investments and/or fast response repair services.

In the case of gas pipelines which underpin essential power supplies etc there is a case for monitoring the systems and, more importantly, ensuring that rapid maintenance/repair services are in place, up to date and well practiced.....in the manner of any properly managed emergency service!

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

We are told and have come to believe that the Market regulates itself. You own it.....you profit from it and making it secure is - or should be - part of the business plan! It's a business and like any other similar enterprise it should know and install risk-protection. Should a the business wishes to outsource the protection of its investment [be it to a State or other organization] it should be prepared to pay for the service.....just as business demands payment for the service it renders. It's that simple and the way business should work and no fuzzy logic or complex argument can alter the fact!

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring

countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

This elaborate question sounds like an answer in search of a question.

We have a well practiced survival strategy that reflects our size and capability. A reality check would show that we have neither the will or the way to influence event on the wider stage. Factually, resulting from UNCLOS, we are accidental players in the 'Territorial Waters' game. As they did in WW2, those with games to play in this watery space will do so whether we like it or not. If global business has undersea investments to protect and have the power and influence to do so, action will emerge in short order. Ireland's response should be 'Let them at it'.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

In any game you play the hand you're dealt. Whichever way you look at it we have a very weak hand in the extraordinary situation we find ourselves in. Bluff and bluster is the realistic play in such a no-win game so there is no need for a plan that would possibly alter the direction of travel that has served the nation so well to date. Any proposed changes to our traditional stance should therefore be the subject of a national referendum.

Incidentally, the very mention of a 'Action Plan' and 'Implementation' suggest that decisions have already been made in relation to this 'Consultation' exercise.

Importantly, the Irish people have shown on numerous occasions that they are not minded to take sides in disputes that are not rooted in the general betterment of humanity.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

The multinational investment race to control the world's communications network and systems has deliberately ignored the obvious vulnerabilities of undersea cabling; risk assessment is, after all, a basic determinant of their operations. Instead they have chosen rely on the "Too big to Fail" strategy that has worked so well in the recent past.

Effectively, this is a challenge to Nation States and it's up to elected representatives to make decisions, however tough, that prioritizes the national interest and protects the hard earned wealth of the citizenry. It should not be forgotten that other factors [cultural, economic and political] are tied into the ownership and control of what lies beneath the seas. This is not a time for knee-jerk responses but an opportunity to examine the bigger picture with view to bringing the fruits of scientific progress to the betterment of the many rather than power and more wealth to the few.

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

Contact

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Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

We have an enormous patrol area and limited reources to patrol it, with those resources concentrated in one small part of the coast. We also have the Maritime Institute which has two research vessels but is based a long way from our naval facilities. We have Coast Guard helicopters in strategic locations who are not equipped to respond to security threats. Our Aer Corps have limited patrol capability and are based near Dublin. Our customs and excise officials have resources at a limited number of locations. These resources are coordinated but are significantly limited in their ability to respond to security threats on a large scale.
The people who know our local coasts best are fishermen whose industry is contracting significantly. For environmental, ecological, economic and political reasons the fishing fleet is reducing and the crews leaving the business. This means that there are fewer Irish eyes at sea to notice potential threats.
We have no modern sonar defences.
We have only limited air defence capability despite there being a significant manufacturer of missile systems in Northern Ireland.
Parts of our vital infrastructure have already come under cyber attack (HSE) and the potential for similar or worse attacks are keeping IT department staff in vital facilities awake at night.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

Once a command is established to set up and oversee the integration of our various agencies involved in their own solo and silo capacities, I suggest that the biggest challenge is that of observing and gathering information. Forewarned is fore-armed. Downsizing our patrol vessels was a smart move but providing sufficient crew is still an intractable problem. Part of that problem is the centralisation of all our naval resources in Cork harbour. I'm a proud Corkman but it seems less than optimal to not have local resources and personnel all around the coast. Every coastal town has people who have many years experience at sea in their local areas and also much farther afield and are well used to the difficult conditions in our seas.
The fishing fleet goes to sea as often as it can or as weather and regulations permit.
I suggest that the Naval Reserve be expanded to mobilise and recruit part time members from the fishing communities and hire their boats and crews, under permanent member supervision to engage in co-ordinated patrols and with modern military grade communications technology when it becomes available. There should be a financial incentive that would assist boat owners in retaining and improving their vessels as their fishing activities become curtailed. Whether or not these crews would be armed could be viewed as an operational matter.
The fishery protection duties of the Naval Service may have been a polarising influence in the past with fishermen on one side and the Naval Service on the other but it is hardly in insurmountable issue. The injection of investment to tackle a national security issue would be welcome in any struggling coastal fishing community.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland's maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes
Specific geographical areas of concern might be:
1. The Corrib Gas Field
2. The undersea connectors for gas, electricity and data.
3. Present and future offshore turbines (wind, wave and tidal)
4. Commercial harbour entrances: Dundalk, Dublin, Rosslare, Waterford, Cork, The Shannon Estuary, Galway, Sligo, Killybegs.
5. High value assets within those harbours such as power stations and energy storage facilities
6. Lighthouses, navigation buoys and weather buoys

As well as visual and sonar patrols to transect our sea areas to detect and monitor suspicious surface and undersea activity.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland's maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

With a unified and funded administration structure in place, strategic investments in the following might be prioritised:
1. Expanding, funding and training a naval reserve that projects the patrol capabilities to local coastal communities around the island by utilising the existing fleet and crews.
- The expansion could be achieved by establishing administrative offices in established fishing ports and recruiting part time reservists from the skippers and crews. This expansion would be more cost-effective, flexible and rapid than sourcing and buying second-hand patrol vessels from other countries or building new ones from scratch.
- Funding would be for the hire and use of vessels and pay for reservists when on active duty/patrols/training.
- Training would be provided by permanent members of the Naval Service/Aer Corps, co-ordinated by HQ, and would be an incentive for member retention as it could be a career progression for experienced members.
2. Most fishing fleets already use sonar fish finding technology. But even if not, boat-towed sonar arrays are more readily available and cheaper than advanced sonar buoys that are dropped from aircraft. The training for operating them is well established and they are easier to deploy than newer more complex and more expensive systems.
3. If we had long range drones, they could be stored, maintained and launched from our coastal communities while being operated remotely by HQ personnel whether Naval or Aer Corps. Having operators in mobile units that switch locations to make them harder targets would also be a good idea. Manufacturing them in Ireland would secure their sourcing and maintenance and potentially be an export opportunity for both military and non-military use. Mobile radar should be used for controlling the drones since fixed radar stations can be easily identified and attacked.
4. This new network of local patrol resources should have an Information and Communication Technology backbone of military grade security. Security enhancements should include built-in backup and redundancy to mitigate hybrid attacks, distributed rather than centralised control to reduce vulnerability to conventional and hybrid attack and artificial intelligence for collation and analysis to speed up response times.
5. All investments should involve all of the many parties involved but with a short and centralised command structure connected directly to the emergency response arm of government at the highest level.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes.
All of the specific geographical areas mentioned in the answer to Question 3 above involve private sector facilities. It is in their interest to have more security in an unstable international security situation.
Many of these facilities have personnel with skill sets and resources of great potential use in the application of an overall security strategy. They may have particular relevance as contributors on Information and Communications Technology to defend against hybrid attacks.
I have already mentioned how local coastal communities should be involved in patrolling our seas.
The security of gas electricity and data pipelines and cables is vital to commerce on the island but so is the security of our shipping lanes. Our navigation support infrastructure is vulnerable and deserving of vigilance and protection.
At a minimum, all potentially affected entities should be identified, consulted with and assessed as potential contributors, whether materially or financially, to the security strategy.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

We are members of the EU but not NATO. We share our island with a part of the UK. We contribute peacekeepers and observers to UN missions. We are already co-operating internationally. Geographically and historically we are a potential back door for those who would wish to do military harm to our neighbours. With global warming, the arctic is now a usable sea lane for much of the year with a straight line of access to potentially militarily hostile nations previously separated from us by a continental land mass or by sea ice. Annexing our island would provide those actors with a strategic Atlantic base with which to threaten both Europe and America. Should the talk of annexing Greenland not be fruitful, Ireland might be considered as an alternative location to threaten transpolar sea lane traffic.
We have successfully worked with other countries to apprehend international drug smugglers in our seas in operations that integrated our military, gardaí and customs apparatus.
It should not be beyond us to establish further co-operative relations with our neighbours and friends without becoming financially or politically compromised.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Action Plan - Yes.
In the plan:-
1. Establish a unified command structure with direct responsibility to the highest level of government for emergency response.
2. Put deadlines on all action items under the supervision of the relevant Dáil committees.
3. Campaign among the Fishing/Coastal communities and organisations, and with PDFORRA and RACO to get buy-in to expanding the Naval Reserve.
4. Prioritise the adoption and application of Drone technology with local research and manufacture encouraged.
5. Ring-fence funding.
6. Set up a range of mobile and fixed radar facilities to control/detect/disable drones and missiles.
7. Avail of existing and future sonar technology deployed on fishing vessels on hire to the Naval Reserve.
8. Purchase modern sonar equipment to future proof our maritime defences.
9. Set up an ICT network with military grade security, with built-in backup and redundancy systems, with artificial intelligence for data collation and analysis and with distributed rather than centralised control.
10. Establish a review and amend schedule to ensure progress and that the strategy can adapt in response to changing threat scenarios and newer challenges as well as benefitting from new developments in security tools and techniques.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

There are many home grown Irish companies in Engineering, IT and Tech that could be funded to develop Drone (Remotely Operated planes/boats/vehicles) technology that would be beneficial to our maritime operations. We have a Coast Guard network with helicopters and boats but if we were to fund the use of drones in search/rescue/recovery operations, we could develop an industry and expertise around the use of drones in this field.
We are on shifting sands in regard to international politics and our maritime security has been exposed as inadequate. Not only our neutrality, in whatever sense it may exist, but our independence is at risk. If we are not able to look after ourselves, some other actor may decide to do it for us.

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

Contact

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Please answer the below questions in the boxes provided. There is a 3,000 character limit per question. When you have completed your answers please hit the submit button at the bottom of the page.

Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

The economic value of subsea cables to Ireland is well-documented, in that they underpin and enable so much of the country's modern digital economy. Those same cables are also indispensable to wider Irish maritime security. They enable communication, improve cybersecurity, and facilitate international collaboration, all of which are essential for ensuring the safety of shipping lanes, protecting maritime infrastructure, and preventing illegal activities. Bolstering the security and resilience of subsea cable infrastructure should therefore be a prominent goal within Ireland's new National Maritime Security Strategy. That is particularly the case given that many existing telecommunication cables, upon which much of the economy relies, will soon begin to reach the conclusion of their natural lifespan.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

Maritime authorities across the world are increasingly concerned by the threats posed to subsea cables by deliberate sabotage and cybercrime. While it's important that authorities have the capacity to respond to such illicit activity, accidental damage caused by fishing activities (e.g. bottom trawling and dredging) and anchoring (e.g. anchor drags) remain bigger risks to subsea cable infrastructure in Irish waters. Data gathered by the International Cable Protection Committee, in fact, has established that 70-80% of all subsea cable damage is caused by anchoring or fishing. A key part of alleviating those risks is improving and quickening permitting procedures for such maritime infrastructure, thereby supporting the more rapid development of new subsea cables and mitigating any over-reliance on individual cables. This would have an added security benefit in that the more subsea cables there are in Irish waters, and the stronger the infrastructural redundancy becomes, the less attractive they will be as targets for any illicit activity (i.e. there is less incentive to damage a cable if it only causes minimal disruption).

Related to this, it's also important that Ireland's maritime regulatory regime allows not just for the efficient development of new subsea cable infrastructure but also its repair when damage – whether inadvertently caused by fishing activities or otherwise – occurs. Remedial works to damaged cables should not be inordinately delayed by overly complex licensing requirements.

Separately, increased demands on seabed space, including those associated with the development of offshore renewable energy projects, will present challenges to maritime security into the future. A long-term and coherent plan – and ideally one that is drawn up in consultation with stakeholders and adjacent States – for marine spatial planning is therefore needed to strengthen wider maritime security. Such a plan should facilitate the co-existence of offshore renewable energy and telecommunications infrastructure, including by allowing for geographically diverse subsea cable routes.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland's maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

Insofar as the Strategy addresses risks to subsea cable infrastructure, it should prioritise areas traversed by those cables.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland's maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

As alluded to in the response to question two, streamlining Ireland's national approach to maritime licensing and permitting will be key to strengthening subsea cable redundancy and, in turn, maritime security. That is why investments should be made to strengthen the capabilities of those bodies – including the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) and An Coimisiún Pleanála (ACP) – that are responsible for the licensing and permitting of subsea cable projects.

Moreover, AWS considers it critical that, in implementing relevant maritime-related legislative provisions (such as those set out in the MAP Act of 2021), MARA and ACP adhere to timebound and efficient decision-making processes. Uncertainty in connection with the timelines of such decision-making by MARA and ACP is already significantly complicating business-planning for new cables – particularly given complexities in contracting specialised vessels – and may even deter investment in new Irish subsea infrastructure by private firms altogether.

Conversely, steps taken to improve the efficiency of Ireland's permitting processes can improve the likelihood of investment and ultimately support the delivery of new subsea telecommunications cables, thereby improving redundancy and resilience. That dynamic was recognised in the European Commission's recent recommendation on secure and resilient submarine cable infrastructures (C(2024)1181 final), in which Member States were encouraged to "process applications related to the planning, acquisition, construction, operation, maintenance and repair of such infrastructure online and as fast as possible".

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes. Subsea cable developers are already responsible for the operation and maintenance of subsea cables and can have an important role with respect to the National Maritime Security Strategy. Those developers have technical and operational expertise that can be leveraged to gain critical insights into early warning of cable damage and fault patterns. We would encourage cooperation between the private sector and Government in a formalised and structured manner.

The Irish Government should also consider joining industry bodies such as the European Submarine Cable Association (ESCA) and the International Cable Protection Committee. These bodies are well established forums that actively discuss strategies for cable protection.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

As far as international cooperation is concerned with respect to subsea cable infrastructure and security, there should be alignment – insofar as possible – between different jurisdictions on maritime licensing arrangements and marine spatial planning. The less divergence there is between licensing regimes and plans, the more efficiently such infrastructure can be developed and installed. This is turn enhances infrastructural redundancy and strengthens maritime security.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes – an Action Plan would complement the forthcoming Security Strategy.

The Action Plan should include specific steps that will be taken to improve to improve the operation of Ireland's maritime permitting and licensing regime. In particular, it should set out how the decision-making process by MARA in respect of both Maritime Usage Licenses and Maritime Area Consents will be streamlined and quickened.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

No response

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

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Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland’s maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

Threats:
-Poor attitude to security in Harbours in Ireland, Harbours infrastructure, training, awareness, surveillance, the security, all help give unauthorised access to anyone to the state.
- *Undersea Cable Sabotage*: Malicious activities targeting fibreoptic cables could severely disrupt Ireland's economy and communication networks.
- *Pipeline Attacks*: Sabotage or attacks on gas pipelines from Scotland could compromise Ireland's energy security and economic stability.
- *Terrorism and Piracy*: Ireland's maritime domain may be vulnerable to terrorist or pirate activities, particularly in the context of global security threats.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland’s maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

Ireland's marine security faces several emerging threats,
- *Threats to sub-sea cables*: Sabotage or damage to undersea cables could severely disrupt Ireland's economy and communication networks. Ireland has taken steps to address this by joining NATO's Individually Tailored Partnership Programme to safeguard undersea infrastructure. But not developing its own security capability. Ireland needs acoustic monitoring 24/7 Yes, acoustic underwater monitoring can be done 24/7, providing continuous surveillance and detection capabilities. This is particularly important for:
1. *Real-time threat detection*: Continuous monitoring enables swift response to potential threats or anomalies.
2. *Infrastructure protection*: 24/7 monitoring helps safeguard critical underwater infrastructure, such as cables and pipelines.

Advanced underwater acoustic monitoring systems can operate autonomously, transmitting data in real-time or storing it for later analysis. This allows for:

1. *Persistent surveillance*: Continuous monitoring without interruptions.
2. *Early warning systems*: Rapid detection and alerting of potential threats.

The specific capabilities and deployment of 24/7 acoustic underwater monitoring systems depend on the application, location, and technology used.

- *Terrorism and piracy*: Attacks on commercial shipping lanes and ports pose a significant risk to Ireland's maritime security. the UK had to retake the ship the Nave Andromeda in the English Channel 5k from the main land after Terrorists from Africa who where in hid, took the ship by force on the 6th Oct 2020.
Off shore platforms are vulnerable to attack from states that consider Irelands political interference as hostile. KGB, MOSAD. Further develop Ireland special forces capability's.

- *Cyber attacks*: Ireland's reliance on maritime infrastructure makes it vulnerable to cyber threats, particularly given the vast area of its territorial waters and the density of critical infrastructure. Navigation, port operations, lighthouses, buoys, cargo information.

- *Illegal and unregulated fishing*: Unregulated fishing activities can compromise the sustainability of marine resources and undermine Ireland's economic interests.

- *Environmental degradation*: Acts that harm the maritime environment, such as oil spills or pollution, can have devastating consequences for Ireland's ecosystems. (Dumping of Russian nuclear waist)

- *Hostile states and organized crime*: Ireland's strategic location on Europe's western flank makes it potentially vulnerable to threats from hostile states and organized crime groups. The use of surface and sup surface drones that can cross the Atlantic is becoming easier for everyone to access. Would be used to carry drugs into the state

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland's maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes, the strategy should prioritize its focus on certain areas based on risk assessments and threat analysis. Here are some potential areas to consider:

High-Risk Areas
- *Major ports and terminals*: Focus on securing major ports and terminals, such as the Port of Dublin or the Port of Cork, which handle significant volumes of cargo and passenger traffic.
- *Critical infrastructure*: Prioritize the security of critical infrastructure, such as oil and gas facilities, power plants, and communication systems.
- *Shipping lanes and routes*: Focus on securing shipping lanes and routes, particularly those used by high-value or high-risk vessels, such as oil tankers or passenger ships.

Emerging Threats
- *Cybersecurity*: Prioritize cybersecurity measures to protect maritime infrastructure and systems from cyber threats.
- *Drones and unmanned systems*: Consider the potential threat posed by drones and unmanned systems, and develop strategies to detect and respond to them.

Geographic Focus
- *Coastal areas*: Focus on securing coastal areas, particularly those with high concentrations of maritime activity.
- *Border regions*: Prioritize the security of border regions, particularly those with high volumes of trade and travel.

Stakeholder Engagement
- *Collaboration with industry stakeholders*: Engage with industry stakeholders, such as shipping companies, port operators, and terminal managers, to develop effective security strategies.
- *Public-private partnerships*: Foster public-private partnerships to leverage expertise, resources, and technologies to enhance maritime security.

By prioritizing focus on these areas, the strategy can effectively allocate resources and efforts to mitigate potential threats and enhance maritime security.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

To enhance Ireland's maritime security, strategic investments should focus on the following areas:

Technology Investments
- *Advanced Surveillance Systems*: Invest in cutting-edge surveillance technologies, such as drones, satellite imaging, and acoustic sensor systems, to monitor Ireland's coastal waters and detect potential security threats.
- *Cybersecurity Measures*: Develop robust cybersecurity capabilities to protect maritime infrastructure and systems from cyber threats.
- *Data Analytics*: Leverage data analytics and artificial intelligence to analyze maritime traffic patterns, identify anomalies, and predict potential security threats. Ships might be over subsea cables.

Infrastructure Investments
- *Secure Communication Networks and Gas pipelines. Invest in equipment to inspect the subsurface network along with acoustic sensors to detect any attack.
- *Port and Terminal Security. Enhance security measures at ports and terminals, including access controls, screening, and surveillance systems.

Capability Investments
- *Maritime Domain Awareness*: Develop advanced maritime domain awareness capabilities, including real-time tracking and monitoring of vessels, to enhance situational awareness and response times.
- *Training and Exercises*: Invest in training programs and exercises for maritime security personnel to ensure they are equipped to respond to emerging threats and security incidents.
- *International Cooperation*: Foster partnerships with international organizations, law enforcement agencies, and industry stakeholders to share intelligence, best practices, and coordinate efforts to address maritime security
- the ability to get eyes on a potential threat asap (jet) and live stream footage back to decision makes.

The Ireland Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF) can play a key role in supporting these investments, leveraging its "double bottom line" mandate to drive economic growth while addressing strategic challenges.[3]

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes, the strategy should involve the private sector, particularly the owners and operators of critical infrastructure. Here's why:

Private Sector Involvement
- *Expertise and Resources*: Private sector companies bring specialized expertise, resources, and experience to maritime security, which can complement government efforts.
- *Critical Infrastructure Ownership*: Many critical infrastructure assets, such as ports, terminals, and shipping companies, are owned and operated by private sector entities.
- *Risk Management*: Private sector companies have a vested interest in protecting their assets and operations from security threats.

Role of Private Sector
- *Security Measures Implementation*: Private sector companies can implement security measures, such as access controls, surveillance, and screening, to protect their assets and operations.
- *Information Sharing*: Private sector companies can share information and intelligence with government agencies and other stakeholders to enhance situational awareness and response times.
- *Collaboration and Partnerships*: Private sector companies can collaborate with government agencies and other stakeholders to develop and implement effective maritime security strategies.
- *Investment in Security Technologies*: Private sector companies can invest in security technologies, such as cybersecurity measures, to protect their assets and operations.

Potential Private Sector Partners
- *Port and Terminal Operators*: Companies that operate ports and terminals, such as Dublin Port Company or Shannon Foynes Port Company.
- *Shipping Companies*: Companies that own and operate ships, such as Irish Ferries or P&O Ferries.
- *Infrastructure Owners*: Companies that own critical infrastructure, such as oil and gas facilities or communication networks.

Benefits of Private Sector Involvement
- *Enhanced Security*: Private sector involvement can enhance the security of critical infrastructure and maritime operations.
- *Improved Efficiency*: Private sector expertise and resources can improve the efficiency of maritime security efforts.
- *Increased Investment*: Private sector investment in security technologies and measures can reduce the financial burden on government agencies.

By involving the private sector in maritime security efforts, Ireland can leverage their expertise, resources, and experience to enhance the security of critical infrastructure and maritime operations.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

International cooperation is crucial for enhancing maritime security, and Ireland should prioritize collaboration with its partners in the EU and NATO. Here's why:

Benefits of International Cooperation
- *Information Sharing*: International cooperation facilitates the sharing of intelligence, best practices, and lessons learned, enabling countries to stay ahead of emerging threats.
- *Coordinated Response*: Cooperation enables countries to respond to security incidents in a coordinated and effective manner, reducing the risk of duplication of efforts.
- *Capacity Building*: International cooperation can help build capacity and enhance the capabilities of countries to address maritime security challenges.
- *Deterrence*: Cooperation can deter potential threats by demonstrating a united and strong response to security challenges.

EU Cooperation
- *EU Maritime Security Strategy*: Ireland should engage with the EU's Maritime Security Strategy, which provides a framework for cooperation and coordination among EU member states.
- *EU Agencies*: Ireland can work with EU agencies, such as the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) and the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), to enhance maritime security.

NATO Cooperation
- *NATO's Maritime Security Strategy*: Ireland's program with NATO can provide opportunities for cooperation on maritime security issues, such as counter-piracy and counter-terrorism.
- *Partnership and Cooperation*: NATO's partnership framework can facilitate cooperation between Ireland and other NATO member states on maritime security issues.

Increased Focus on International Cooperation
- *Enhanced Security*: International cooperation can enhance Ireland's maritime security by leveraging the expertise, resources, and experience of its partners.
- *Global Reach*: Cooperation with international partners can help Ireland address global maritime security challenges and threats.
- *Strategic Partnerships*: Building strategic partnerships with key countries and organizations can help Ireland advance its maritime security.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

an action plan could outlines specific steps, timelines, and responsibilities for implementation. Here are the key elements of an action plan:

Key Elements of an Action Plan
- *Objectives*: Clearly defined objectives and outcomes that align with the national maritime security strategy.
- *Priorities*: Identification of priority areas for action, such as enhancing surveillance, improving cybersecurity, or increasing international cooperation.
- *Tasks and Activities*: Specific tasks and activities to be undertaken, including timelines and milestones.
- *Responsibilities*: Clear assignment of responsibilities to relevant government agencies, departments, and stakeholders.
- *Resources*: Identification of resources required to implement the action plan, including funding, personnel, and equipment.
- *Monitoring and Evaluation*: Mechanisms for monitoring progress, evaluating effectiveness, and adjusting the action plan as needed.

Action Plan Components
- *Short-term Actions*: Immediate actions to address pressing maritime security concerns, such as enhancing port security or improving cybersecurity.
- *Medium-term Actions*: Actions to be taken within a specified timeframe (e.g., 2-5 years) to build capacity and enhance maritime security, such as training programs or infrastructure upgrades.
- *Long-term Actions*: Strategic initiatives to be taken over a longer period (e.g., 5-10 years) to achieve sustainable maritime security, such as research and development or international cooperation.

Benefits of an Action Plan
- *Clear Direction*: An action plan provides a clear direction for implementation, ensuring that efforts are focused and effective.
- *Accountability*: An action plan promotes accountability among responsible agencies and stakeholders.
- *Progress Tracking*: An action plan enables tracking of progress, identification of challenges, and adjustment of strategies as needed.

By developing a comprehensive action plan, Ireland can ensure effective implementation of its national maritime security strategy and achieve its objectives.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

Some additional thoughts on Ireland's maritime security strategy and action plan:

Additional Considerations
- *Whole-of-Government Approach*: Ensure a whole-of-government approach to maritime security, involving relevant departments and agencies.
- *Stakeholder Engagement*: Engage with industry stakeholders, academia, and civil society to leverage expertise and build partnerships.
- *Flexibility and Adaptability*: Ensure the strategy and action plan are flexible and adaptable to respond to emerging threats and changing circumstances.
- *International Best Practices*: Draw on international best practices and lessons learned to inform Ireland's maritime security strategy and action plan.
- *Review and Update*: Regularly review and update the strategy and action plan to ensure they remain relevant and effective.

Opportunities for Growth
- *Maritime Security as a Growth Area*: Position maritime security as a growth area for Ireland's economy and industry.
- *Innovation and Technology*: Leverage innovation and technology to enhance maritime security, such as through the use of drones, AI, and data analytics.
- *International Leadership*: Establish Ireland as a leader in maritime security, contributing to international efforts to address global security challenges.

By considering these additional thoughts, Ireland can further strengthen its maritime security strategy and action plan, ensuring a safe and secure maritime environment.

Contact

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Please answer the below questions in the boxes provided. There is a 3,000 character limit per question. When you have completed your answers please hit the submit button at the bottom of the page.

Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

The most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security are the immediate vulnerability of our subsea gas interconnectors and our subsea fiber optic linen, Detailed below
Russian intelligence activities inclusive of incidents with the Yantar and Viktor Lonov operating in Irish waters.
https://www.rte.ie/news/ireland/2025/0414/1507478-ireland-maritime-alliance/
Irelands subsea infrastructure with over 95% of our data transiting through subsea cables in Irish waters earmarks Ireland's digital economy as solely dependable on this subsea infrastructure.
https://carnegieendowment.org/europe/strategic-europe/2023/11/why-ireland-matters-for-european-security?lang=en
Irelands dependence on the current 2 gas interconnectors 1 & 2from Scotland providing 40,00GWH annually or approximately 50% of our power generation
https://www.statista.com/statistics/1294025/quarterly-gas-in-storage-in-the-european-union/
Our current naval inability to deploy one or two ships to sea due to staff shortages, encompassing an area of over 450,000 KM^2. Coupled with the lack of monitoring technology or trained personnel.
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09662839.2023.2248001

In summary.
Our inability to effectively police and monitor the subsea assets for suspicious or dark vessels
Our inability to conduct close quarter inspection of the subsea assets if indeed a suspicious object has been detected

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

Ireland's non-NATO status creates lower diplomatic risk for hostile operations, with experts noting Russia chose Irish waters for naval exercises precisely due to "lack of comprehensive deterrence" Russian intelligence ship monitored off Irish coast. Ireland is increasingly viewed as both a "core part of global tech architecture and the soft underbelly of European security"
https://www.rte.ie/news/ireland/2025/0410/1506999-russian-intelligence-ship-irish-waters/
https://carnegieendowment.org/europe/strategic-europe/2023/11/why-ireland-matters-for-european-security?lang=en
Our current subsea infrastructure Power & Communication coupled with our emerging subsea renewable power grid needs a comprehensive monitoring solution.
Within the framework for government there is the scope to develop and foster emerging technologies and entities which will bolter our subsea monitoring capabilities.
It would be prudent to explore existing technological groups and utilise their knowledge with the view to the establishment of a national laboratory focused on maritime technology
https://cris.ie/

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland's maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

The areas containing our subsea assets and infrastructure would take priority
Presently our Subsea gas interconnectors 1 and 2, Our electrical inter connectors and subsea data cables.
In the near future we will need to monitor our renewable energy offshore static and floating wind inter array and export conductors.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland's maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

As mentioned earlier the current gap in technology is one of the greatest challenges facing us as a maritime nation. To effectively safeguard Ireland's maritime interests we need to utilise existing technological centres with decades of experience in both technological out and in real world field operations.
https://cris.ie/
The formation a National Labatory focusing on the development and implementation of new technologies and practices.
This will effectively stream line and optimise technological and innovation across defence and multiple "Blue light agencies".
What we need to safeguard against when utilising new and emerging technologies is similar development of similar technologies across multiple agencies.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

The National Maritime Security Strategy should involve the private sector .
they are key stakeholders and operators of critical marine infrastructure.
There is a necessity fort open communications involving potential vulnerabilities, best practices and potential risks,
critical framework, regulation and protection standards is essential to ensure that all parties are working towards the same end.
https://www.rte.ie/news/2025/0321/1503209-new-maritime-security-unit/

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

NATO
In 2024, the Republic of Ireland joined NATO's Individually Tailored Partnership Programme (ITPP) in order to increase its capabilities at countering potential threats to undersea infrastructure. The Individually Tailored Partnership Programme (ITPP) will allow for greater information and intelligence sharing with the military alliance in areas such as peacekeeping, maritime security and tackling cyber and hybrid threats. Ireland in new agreement with Nato to counter potential threats to undersea infrastructure This framework preserves neutrality while enabling crucial intelligence sharing.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ireland%E2%80%93NATO_relations
he Individually Tailored Partnership Programme (ITPP) will allow for greater information and intelligence sharing with the military alliance in areas such as peacekeeping, maritime security and tackling cyber and hybrid threats. Ireland in new agreement with Nato to counter potential threats to undersea infrastructure This framework preserves neutrality while enabling crucial intelligence sharing.
https://www.thejournal.ie/ireland-nato-agreement-cyber-threats-undersea-infrastructure-6295188-Feb2024/

EU cooperation

Ireland has real maritime and cyber vulnerabilities that could have important impacts beyond the country. The EU, NATO, and other European states need to work with Ireland in addressing these threats. Why Ireland Matters for European Security | Carnegie Endowment for International Peace EU cooperation through mechanisms like PESCO projects and the European Hybrid Threats Centre provides frameworks for shared capability development and threat assessment.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

The National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by a comprehensive Action Plan. Strategic documents without detailed implementation frameworks often remain aspirational rather than operational. Given Ireland's current maritime security gaps and the urgency of emerging threats, an Action Plan is essential for translating policy into measurable capability improvements.
1. Capability Development Timeline
Clear phased development of maritime security capabilities with specific milestones. Although there are plans to procure new equipment, there are concerns over a lack of specialist personnel needed to operate them The Action Plan must sequence capability acquisition with personnel development.
2. Resource Allocation Framework
Detailed budget allocations across all maritime security domains. The Government plans to ramp up spending to €1.8bn annually by 2028, but this requires structured distribution across naval capabilities, technology development, personnel recruitment, and infrastructure protection.
https://www.rte.ie/news/2025/0321/1503209-new-maritime-security-unit/
3. Institutional Coordination Mechanisms
Recommendations focus on investment in smart technologies and capacity building, updating legislation, increased public/private cooperation, the creation of a single agency with responsibility for maritime security within the state Full article: The Action Plan should establish clear governance structures and accountability chains.
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09662839.2023.2248001

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

Ireland urgently requires a dedicated National Maritime Security Laboratory to address the critical vulnerabilities identified in our maritime domain. The Centre for Robotics and Intelligent Systems (CRIS) at University of Limerick, with its two decades of pioneering research, provides the ideal foundation for this essential national capability.

The Centre for Robotics & Intelligent Systems CRIS is the only research centre in Ireland focused on robotic applications and development of marine robotics within the island of Ireland. Established in 2000 in University of Limerick by Director Assoc. Prof. Dr. Daniel Toal .
 CRIS has accumulated unparalleled expertise in marine robotics. CRIS is the only research centre focused on the application and development of field robotics (marine, airborne, land vehicles) in Ireland. It is made up of a team of 25 academic, post-doctorate and PhD researchers from engineering disciplines: electrical, electronic, computer, mechanical and aeronautical, ocean engineering backgrounds.
https://cris.ie/
Advanced Infrastructure and Capabilities

CRIS has three well equipped dedicated marine laboratories: a Dry Lab (C0-045) and a Wet Lab (CG-035) and our location in limerick Docks. The Subsea inventory includes MRE ROV, ROV LATIS, VideoRay Pro3 and VideoRay Pro4 mini ROVs, High Resolution Bathymetric Multibeam (Reson 7125 MBES), Forward Looking Multibeam Sonar (Reson 7128), Tritech Side Scan Sonar, Teledyne Blueview 900 Forward Looking Sonar, two TX60 Staubli arms, a subsea manipulator arm – FMC Schilling Titan2,.
The aerial inventory includes a series of drones and UAV's up to 5M VTOL fixed wing UAV,s
https://www.marine.ie/site-area/news-events/news/university-limerick-launches-robot-use-marine-renewable-energy-sector

Given Ireland's critical vulnerabilities - More than 95 per cent of international data and voice transfers are routed through undersea fibre optic cables and the majority of transatlantic data passes through cables situated in Ireland's EEZ - yet None of the vessels have the ability to scan sub-sea cables Ireland to consider expanding cooperation with Nato in areas of cyber-attacks and maritime intelligence, a national laboratory could leverage CRIS's capabilities to develop:

.Autonomous underwater vehicles for continuous cable monitoring
.AI-powered threat detection systems for maritime domain awareness
.Integrated surface-subsea-aerial surveillance platforms
.Rapid response robotic systems for infrastructure protection

Building on CRIS's proven track record - they recently launched a unique €2-million underwater robot with UL-developed advanced control software (OceanRings), precision navigation and flight control, state-of-the-art robotic imaging and sonar systems and fully automated manipulator systems a national laboratory would provide Ireland with indigenous maritime security capabilities

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

Contact

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Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland’s maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

The fact that the coastline and territorial seas are to a large extent 'unwatched'.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland’s maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

The threats to Ireland's maritime assets and security have been well reported and include:

* the landing of illegal and dangerous substances on our coastline;

*the vulnerability of surface sea-lanes to our ports

*the vulnerability of subterranean communications facilities

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

To prioritise scarce security resources there is sense in focussing on areas where intelligence suggests that threats are most acute and frequent. The approaches to significant ports, and the southern coastline with is proximity to the continent and shipping lanes, suggest themselves as priority zones for security awareness. That said, no part of the coastline should go 'unwatched".

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

There will no doubt be a high volume of proposals for technological and electronic surveillance and these tools have proven themselves useful - eg. by way of satellites and drones - in many instances.

However one of the most effective sources of intelligence and observation is human intelligence.

In that regard I would suggest consideration be given to enhancing the State's human resources cohort of trained eyes on the coastal space.

The following are three modest proposals in that regard:

1) Consider the expansion of the Slua Muiri (the Naval Service Reserve) to more locations on the coastline beyond the present centres of Dublin, Waterford, Cork and Limerick. There would be a case for a Slua unit on the north-east coast drawing from the Drogheda/Dundalk locations and a unit based on Galway.

2)Civil Defence units in coastal locations might be given a certain maritime observation role with the Warden service that was active regarding nuclear radiation observation in previous years being looked as a model for such a network.

3) Expanding on the previous proposal, perhaps some lessons could be drawn from the Coastwatching Service which was such an effective eyes and ears for the Irish state in an earlier time of threat to maritime security. This is not proposing that people be stationed in concrete huts around the country - rather that a trained volunteer network of people familiar with their local coastline and its characteristics be established to feed in observations and intelligence for analysis. Such a volunteer cohort would act as an effective force multiplier for the permanent maritime security establishment.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

The state must always be the primary security actor in any situation. However in the modern world it is recognised that private entities have the resources to apply technology, equipment and personnel to safeguard its assets. There needs to be a case-by-case assessment of the appropriate security relationships between private entitles and the state.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Emphatically, yes. There are too many strategies and reports which, in practice, are little more than wish-lists.

There needs to be an implementation plan which specifies achievable items and actions with a real-world assessment of the personnel and funding available to put the discrete Strategies into action.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

The focus of my submission is in response to Question 4, not to neglect the potential of human intelligence in the pursuit of enhanced maritime security.

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

Contact

Contact Form

Please answer the below questions in the boxes provided. There is a 3,000 character limit per question. When you have completed your answers please hit the submit button at the bottom of the page.

Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

Ireland's maritime security faces a combination of traditional and emerging threats that require a holistic, multi-agency response. From the perspective of [redacted], which engages with industry, research institutions, and innovation stakeholders across the country, the most significant current threats and vulnerabilities include:

1. Undersea Infrastructure Sabotage
Ireland's EEZ hosts a dense network of undersea telecommunications and energy cables that are vital not only to national interests but to global data traffic. These assets are vulnerable to physical sabotage or tampering by state and non-state actors. The Defence Policy Review rightly identifies suspicious activity around subsea infrastructure as a growing concern. The potential disruption to transatlantic data and internet traffic would have severe economic, political, and reputational consequences.

2. Energy Supply Disruption
Ireland's energy infrastructure, including LNG terminals, interconnectors, offshore wind platforms, and future hydrogen assets, is increasingly located offshore or along the coast. These are exposed to both physical and cyber threats. Any disruption,whether via technical failure, hostile interference, or natural hazard could have cascading impacts on national power supply, economic stability, and public confidence.

3. Cybersecurity Threats
Digital transformation across the maritime sector from autonomous vessels to smart ports has expanded the attack surface for cyber actors. Port operations, vessel navigation systems, and offshore installations are all at risk of malware, ransomware, and state-sponsored cyber-attacks. The maritime sector may lack standardised protocols for cyber hygiene, making coordinated defence more difficult.

4. Illicit and Transnational Criminal Activity
Organised crime groups continue to exploit Ireland's vast and lightly patrolled maritime area for drug trafficking, smuggling, and human trafficking. Increased maritime domain awareness and real-time intelligence sharing are needed to detect, intercept, and prosecute such activity.

5. Insufficient Surveillance and Domain Awareness
Ireland's EEZ is seven times the size of its landmass. Monitoring this vast area with limited physical assets remains a challenge. There is a need for enhanced surveillance using satellite monitoring, AI-driven threat detection, drones, and digital twins to provide persistent and integrated situational awareness.

6. Lack of Coordinated Multi-Agency Response
Ireland's maritime domain intersects defence, trade, transport, communications, energy, and environmental responsibilities. Any delay in coordinated decision-making or fragmented responsibilities can hinder timely responses to emerging threats. A joined-up strategy is essential.

7. Climate and Environmental Hazards
Increasingly frequent storms, sea level rise, and extreme weather events pose risks to coastal communities, offshore installations, and shipping operations.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

Ireland's maritime security will face increasingly complex and hybrid threats in the coming years. Many of these threats will be transboundary in nature, driven by geopolitical, technological, environmental, and economic shifts. From [redacted] perspective, the most pressing emerging threats and challenges include:

1. Geopolitical Tensions and Strategic Sabotage

As global competition intensifies, undersea infrastructure—especially transatlantic fibre optic cables and energy interconnector will become key targets in grey-zone warfare. Adversarial state and non-state actors may seek to disrupt communications or energy supply without triggering conventional conflict. This threat will grow in parallel with Ireland's role as a digital and energy bridge between Europe and North America.

Preparation:

Invest in persistent subsea infrastructure monitoring using drones, satellites, and AI.

Build international cooperation protocols for real-time incident response.

Develop contingency plans for critical communications and energy outages.

2. Cyber-Physical System Attacks

The convergence of digital systems in shipping, offshore energy, and port logistics increases vulnerability to cyber-physical threats. Autonomous vessels, smart ports, and offshore wind platforms are reliant on networked systems that can be targeted remotely.

Preparation:

Implement national maritime cybersecurity standards across critical infrastructure.

Establish a sector-specific threat intelligence hub for real-time sharing between government, ports, and industry.

Support indigenous innovation in maritime cyber defence.

3. Offshore Renewable Energy Protection

Ireland's offshore wind and future hydrogen infrastructure will be critical to meeting climate targets and ensuring energy security. As these installations grow in number and distance from shore, they become harder to protect.

Preparation:

Mandate integrated security-by-design in all new offshore infrastructure.

Enable real-time monitoring and predictive maintenance via digital twin technology.

Train a specialist blue economy security and resilience workforce.

4. Climate-Driven Maritime Disruption

Sea level rise, severe storms, and changing ocean currents may result in new shipping risks, displacement of marine infrastructure, and increased pressure on ports and coastal defences.

Preparation:

Incorporate climate resilience into port planning, infrastructure design, and emergency response frameworks.

Support R&D into adaptive maritime construction and coastal protection technologies.

5. Maritime Space Congestion and Conflict

As more actors compete for space in the EEZ including fishing, shipping, energy, data cables, and defence there is a growing risk of conflict, accidental damage, and regulatory overlap.

Preparation:

Develop a spatial governance framework for the maritime domain.

Use real-time spatial mapping and data analytics to support enforcement and conflict prevention.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland's maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes, the National Maritime Security Strategy should prioritise specific geographical areas within Ireland's maritime domain, based on critical infrastructure, strategic risk, and economic importance. While the entirety of Ireland's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) requires protection, a tiered, risk-based approach to prioritisation is essential to allocate resources effectively and ensure the greatest impact.

1. High-Risk Infrastructure Zones
Eastern and Southern Seaboard: This area is home to a concentration of subsea fibre optic cables and energy interconnectors critical to Ireland's communications and power supply. Dublin Bay and Cork Harbour, as major commercial and energy hubs, face both cyber and physical vulnerabilities.
Recommended Action: Establish persistent surveillance and situational awareness systems; prioritise cyber-physical protection measures for port, energy, and data infrastructure.

2. Offshore Renewable Energy Zones (OREZs)
With the rapid expansion of offshore wind developments (e.g. off the coasts of Wicklow, Wexford, and Cork), these areas will become critical to Ireland's energy independence and climate objectives. As offshore platforms expand further into the EEZ, protection will become more logistically challenging.
Recommended Action: Prioritise physical and cyber security frameworks within OREZs. Support R&D and SME involvement in real-time monitoring, asset tracking, and response technologies.

3. Western Approaches and Deepwater Cables
The western margin of Ireland's EEZ (off Galway, Clare, and Kerry) is strategically important as the landing point for transatlantic subsea cables. These routes connect Europe to North America and carry the majority of international data. The area is also remote and sparsely monitored.
Recommended Action: Prioritise development of long-range monitoring capabilities (e.g. satellite, UAV, and seabed sensors) and international data-sharing agreements for early threat detection.

4. Maritime Transit Corridors and Chokepoints
Key maritime corridors such as those through the Irish Sea, the entrance to Cork Harbour, and the approaches to Shannon and Dublin Ports are vital for trade, logistics, and ferry operations. These areas are also at risk of congestion, collision, and disruption.
Recommended Action: Prioritise situational awareness and coordinated emergency response systems. Implement AI-based traffic analysis and incident detection tools to reduce risk.

5. Border and Cross-Jurisdictional Waters
The north-east coast (e.g. Lough Foyle, Carlingford Lough) includes complex jurisdictional boundaries and has historically been used for smuggling and illicit maritime activity.
Recommended Action: Increase maritime domain awareness, including shared patrol protocols with UK counterparts, and strengthen intelligence-led operations to deter organised crime

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland's maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

To effectively safeguard Ireland's maritime interests, strategic investment must target the convergence of physical, digital, and organisational capabilities. As global maritime threats become more hybrid and technology-driven, Ireland must take a proactive and innovation-led approach to strengthen its resilience. From [redacted] perspective, five core investment priorities are recommended:

1. Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) Technology
Ireland's vast EEZ requires persistent, real-time awareness. Investment in multi-layered surveillance infrastructure is essential, including:
Satellite imaging and AIS integration
Autonomous surface and underwater drones (UAVs/UUVs)
Seabed sensors for subsea infrastructure monitoring
AI-enabled anomaly detection and data fusion platforms
These technologies will enable detection of unauthorised vessel activity, cable interference, or environmental hazards far beyond traditional radar range.

2. Cybersecurity Infrastructure
Ports, vessels, and offshore assets increasingly rely on connected digital systems. Securing maritime cyber-physical infrastructure should be a national priority.
Establish maritime-specific cybersecurity standards and protocols
Fund testing facilities and simulation labs for maritime cyber resilience
Enable threat intelligence sharing between government, ports, and private operators
Incentivise indigenous development of maritime-focused cybersecurity solutions

3. Digital Twin & Predictive Asset Management
The use of digital twin technology—creating real-time virtual models of offshore energy assets, ports, or subsea networks—will greatly enhance resilience, maintenance planning, and emergency response.

Support R&D and commercialisation of maritime digital twin platforms
Integrate asset data into national security systems to support situational awareness
Use predictive analytics to detect risk indicators in infrastructure performance

4. Multi-Use Maritime Infrastructure
Investments should also address the dual needs of defence and economic activity:

Modernise port infrastructure with security-by-design principles (e.g. controlled access, integrated surveillance, cyber-secure ICT systems)

Develop multi-use offshore service platforms for monitoring, logistics, and patrol operations near offshore wind farms and cable corridors
Establish coastal security hubs capable of supporting joint civil-defence operations

5. Skills and Innovation Ecosystem
No strategy is complete without investment in people and innovation:

Fund blue economy research clusters with security applications (e.g. MaREI, LERO)

Develop specialist postgraduate programmes in ocean data science, maritime cybersecurity, and subsea engineering
Support SMEs and start-ups through challenge-based funding, testbeds, and defence innovation pathways

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

The National Maritime Security Strategy must actively involve the private sector, particularly owners and operators of critical maritime infrastructure. In today's interconnected environment, maritime security is no longer the sole domain of defence and public authorities. Ports, energy companies, offshore wind operators, undersea cable providers, and logistics firms all control assets that are essential to national resilience, trade, energy supply, and data connectivity. Their collaboration is not optional—it is essential.

1. Critical Role of Private Sector in Risk Management

Private entities often possess detailed operational knowledge, infrastructure access, and monitoring capabilities that the State cannot replicate. They are typically the first to detect anomalies—whether in data flows, cable function, port operations, or vessel movements. Including them in structured information-sharing, joint planning, and incident response frameworks will improve situational awareness and response times across the entire maritime domain.

Recommended Role:

Participate in joint threat assessments and security planning

Establish incident reporting protocols aligned with national frameworks

Co-invest in resilience upgrades, including cyber hardening and surveillance systems

Conduct joint emergency response exercises to test operational readiness

2. Cybersecurity as a Shared Responsibility

Many maritime operations now rely on automated systems, IoT devices, and cloud platforms—all managed by private vendors. The cyber vulnerabilities introduced by these systems can expose the broader maritime domain to risk.

Recommended Role:

Implement minimum cybersecurity standards aligned with national strategy

Join public-private cyber threat intelligence-sharing platforms

Invest in cybersecurity training and audits, particularly for SMEs and supply chain participants

Collaborate with State agencies on detection and response for cyber-physical threats

3. Innovation and Technology Development

Ireland's private sector, particularly its indigenous SMEs and research-performing enterprises, can provide critial innovation in maritime surveillance, threat detection, data analytics, and digital twin technology.

Recommended Role:

Engage in State-funded R&D programmes (e.g. via Enterprise Ireland, SEAI, or Horizon Europe)

Develop and test new maritime security technologies through challenge-based innovation calls

Pilot dual-use (civil/defence) technologies in ports, energy platforms, and transport systems

Help scale emerging technologies from research into commercial deployment

4. Governance and Collaboration Frameworks

For private sector involvement to be effective, the Strategy must provide a clear framework that defines roles, responsibilities, accountability, and information-sharing parameters—especially concerning confidentiality and national security.

Recommended Role:

Join sector-specific maritime security working groups or advisory boards

Formalise

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes, the National Maritime Security Strategy should absolutely be accompanied by a clear and time-bound Action Plan. A strategy without implementation detail risks becoming aspirational rather than operational. An Action Plan will provide transparency, drive accountability, and enable meaningful coordination across government, enterprise, and security stakeholders.

From [redacted] perspective, the Action Plan should translate the Strategy's high-level objectives into practical measures, investment priorities, and measurable outcomes. This is essential not only for safeguarding Ireland's maritime domain but also for building cross-sector confidence and enabling Irish enterprise and research organisations to contribute effectively.

Key Elements of the Action Plan
1. Defined Roles and Governance
Identify the lead department or agency responsible for each strand of implementation.
Clarify inter-agency coordination mechanisms (e.g. Defence, Transport, Energy, Enterprise, Communications, Justice).
Establish a National Maritime Security Coordination Group, including public, private, and academic representatives, to oversee delivery.

2. Prioritised Investment Programme
Outline priority infrastructure and technology investments with indicative timelines and funding routes (e.g. surveillance systems, cyber resilience, offshore energy security).
Include a pipeline of projects eligible for EU or cross-border co-funding (e.g. EDF, Horizon Europe, CEF).

3. Capability Development and Training
Commit to building Ireland's national skills base in maritime security through targeted upskilling, postgraduate training, and defence-industry-academia partnerships.

Support training exercises, scenario testing, and drills across sectors (e.g. ports, offshore wind operators, naval forces, cyber response teams).

4. Cyber and Infrastructure Resilience Standards
Develop and publish maritime-specific cyber and physical security standards for critical infrastructure operators.

Provide a phased implementation roadmap to allow public and private entities to align systems and operations.

5. Innovation and Enterprise Engagement
Include a framework for enterprise participation in delivering maritime security solutions.

Set out calls for innovation, testbed projects, and pilot initiatives supported by State agencies (e.g. Enterprise Ireland, SFI, SEAI).

Provide support for SMEs and start-ups working in subsea surveillance, digital twins, asset protection, and AI for threat detection.
6. Monitoring and Evaluation
Define KPIs and performance indicators for each strand of the Action Plan (e.g. reduction in response times, number of infrastructure upgrades, industry engagement metrics).

Publish an annual progress report to provide transparency and adjust priorities as needed.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

[redacted] welcomes the development of Ireland's National Maritime Security Strategy and urges it to be action-oriented, innovation-driven, and inclusive of enterprise. Maritime security should be seen not only as a defence concern but as an economic opportunity. We propose creating a Maritime Resilience Innovation Cluster to support technology development and international collaboration. The strategy should be embedded in broader national risk and infrastructure planning and position Ireland as a global leader in maritime resilience.

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

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Please answer the below questions in the boxes provided. There is a 3,000 character limit per question. When you have completed your answers please hit the submit button at the bottom of the page.

Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

Continued under investment in Defence has led to the situation where our tiny Naval fleet that has contracted from its maximum of 9 ships less than 90 metres in length to a situation where currently just 4 ships are available to patrol Irish waters or the EEZ.
In the absence of an active fleet, our Island nation is unable to monitor in any way the subsea infrastructure that passes through our waters and comes ashore on our island.
Combined with our poorly equipped inadequate surface fleet, we have just 2 aircraft available for monitoring the waters from the air. Similar sized coastal states use between 5 and 15 maritime patrol aircraft, most which would also have a built in Anti Submarine capability, allowing them to monitor vessels operating subsea.
In addition, with a very public acceptance by Government that so few ships can put to sea at any time, it leaves our waters open to be used either by (a) Organised Criminal groups engaged in the smuggling of illegal weapons, narcotics or even people trafficking. (b) Rogue states engaged in conflict elsewhere using the Irish EEZ for military activities, or the transport of military equipment.

With the above in mind, there is a genuine intent by successive governments to encourage the use of Irish Waters for Offshore Renewable energy. To do this without adequate security being provided by naval forces, brings a risk of ORE facilities being damaged, either by negligence or by deliberate action.

Ireland is located adjacent to the main sea lanes of communication between the American continent and Europe, which carries the majority of all freight between these continents. It is our duty to maintain security of the sea lanes on behalf of our fellow EU members, and our own citizens.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

The use of hybrid warfare to disrupt the carriage of freight by sea.
For example: the hacking of the essential electronic aids to navigation that permit ships to navigate our waters safely.
This could lead in turn to a major ecological disaster, which we are unprepared to deal with. This is already being seen in the Baltic Sea.
The best solution to prevent loss caused by these acts is to have active visual and electronic surveillance of our maritime sphere using all available means, be it satellite, Radar and electro-optic aids. At the end of the 20th Century we had a network of manned lighthouses that were able to monitor this area 24/7/365. We automated the lights, but did not replace the lookout the lighthouse keepers provided, leading to situations like the Vessel "MV Alta" which having been abandoned by its crew in 2018, drifted un-monitored until coming ashore in Ballycotton in 2020, where it remains. During this time, it passed close to large oil tankers departing nearby Whitegate refinery unobserved, according to a recent presentation given by Naval Service officer Lt Buwalda for the Defence Forces Review. https://www.military.ie/en/public-information/publications/defence-forces-review/df-review-2024-final.pdf

While radar and optics work well in coastal areas, further out into our EEZ more imaginative options need to be considered for active monitoring, such as the use of "Saildrones", as demonstrated by Denmark recently in their Baltic Waters, or MALE (Medium Altitude Long endurance) Unmanned aerial vehicles..

At present any monitoring is passive, at best, and like the air domain, requires participation for the users. If the vessel of interest decides not to switch on their AIS transponder, they remain invisible to most monitoring systems.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland's maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

No,
The Republic of Ireland is located surrounded on 3 sides by water. A factor which seems to be lost to many in government. 95% of all the goods we consume come by sea, through Ports on our East, South and West coasts. The west coast has the potential to be an ideal testing area for ORE platforms. The East coast is a busy shipping route, which is shared by many in the marine leisure sector.
The South coast shares both features of the East and West coast as well as a still functioning fishing industry, which many are being driven from for reasons to detailed to go into in this document.
In the past investment was focused on certain designated fishing or commercial ports, which led to other otherwise useful ports and harbours going into decline and being abandoned.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland's maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Immediate investment in Naval Service and Air Corps ships, aircraft and infrastructure to monitor the entirety of the EEZ in an active and not token manner.
Support this with investment in Customs vessels and technology to permit them to liaise with the Defence Forces and An Garda Siochana to prevent the smuggling of illicit goods into the state, which in turn will improve our position as a safe place to do business internationally.

Grow the Coast guard from a combined voluntary coastal rescue and full time helicopter rescue and coastal monitoring organisation to a statutory body tasked also with the enforcement of maritime safety and pollution legislation, including anti pollution monitoring, and maritime safety enforcement.

From a maritime incident response view, we have not advanced much since the Whiddy Disaster of 1979. We still lack designated emergency towing vessels, and our response to the many commercial vessel groundings and sinkings in the years since (Kowloon Bridge, Yarrawonga, Bardini Reefer to name just 3) has been reactive, rather than proactive or preventative. The countless incidents involving the fishing fleet has also demonstrated a huge weakness when it comes to the monitoring and enforcement of SOLAS (Safety of Life at sea) regulation.
If we wish to promote the state as a good place to encourage growth in the Offshore Renewable Energy field,

this needs to be addressed.
That said, some regulation needs to be updated to reflect current trends, in the area of foreshore licencing, which is at best dysfunctional, and vessel classification, which is driving the industry to register vessels outside the state, as no appropriate licencing exists here.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

Absolutely. It is only the private sector that can grow the industry, and they are best placed to indicate and advise what current weaknesses exist.
However while their advice in this area would be welcome, the securing of same should not be delegated to them. This could lead to conflicts of interest, and anti-competitive practices.
Security, Regulation and enforcement should always be in the hands of the state.

Self regulation is no regulation.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

In the absence of (in the short to medium term at least) an active Irish Naval and Air Corps presence in our EEZ, then the multilateral aspect is the only way to ensure the security of our waters.
While NATO is considered a dirty word by certain sectors in Irish Politics, the fact is it has an unequalled history in achieving consistent standards in Naval Co-operation. We can only benefit to work with them, even if we chose not to become a member. All the other EU states with an Atlantic coast are NATO members. It makes absolute sense that we would cooperate with their naval forces at least in the area of combined training.
Portugal and Denmark in particular are geographically similar (coastal nations with a land border with a militarily stronger neighbour who historically has invaded them in the past) and how they manage and control their maritime sphere is something we could learn much from.
By working with our EU and European neighbours, and permitting them to monitor and secure our EEZ, we may find, in due course we are in a position to return the favour to them, thus increasing our profile as "honest brokers" internationally.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

The Maritime industry sector should be revived.
40 years ago we had a small ship and boat building industry, that died as it failed to keep up with modern methods and technology, combined with ambivalent owners.
With certain investment and encouragement, we could rebuild a heavy engineering industry that would permit ORE hubs to assemble and construct the necessary infrastructure in the state, as well as the many vessels and craft that are needed to support and secure the maritime area.
In addition, having this capability at home could greatly reduce the cost we would have to incur to build the Naval vessels required, with certain modules built, or final assembly carried out in Ireland.
As an example, a future naval vessel built in the former H&W shipyard in Belfast, with final assembly, sea trials and fitting out carried out at the former Verolme Cork Dockyard, after some modernisation and investment.
This facility in addition would provide secure spaces to inspect, examine or repair any vessel involved in incidents around our coasts.
We have in the state numerous small companies engaged in the construction of small marine craft for use by defence and law enforcement agencies around the world. Their participation in contracts for the State's military and law enforcement should be encouraged where practical. For example, An Garda Siochana, in recent times purchased a Patrol boat for the Garda Water unit from a Finnish based company. There was no reason that a designed for purpose vessel could not have been built by an Irish supplier, as was recently the case when the Naval Service selected their Motor Training Launch, which are being built in Kerry, and is essentially similar in size and purpose.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

In 1996, there was an episode of the RTE "Prime Time" show which described the issues faced by the Naval Service and Air Corps in their efforts to secure the states Air Domain and Waters.
30 years later, in the wake of the Commission of the Defence Forces, 2 Defence White papers, a Green paper, and numerous consultations, the exact same issues are still being faced, with no effort made to remedy them in the years since, at a time when Ireland was told we were "Awash With Money" during the Celtic Tiger years.

How many more consultations will it take to get real action? Will it take another Betelgeuse or Air India disaster?

The answers have already been well provided by numerous people far more qualified than I to speak as experts in this field.
We need action not talk.
We need movement on the Naval Multi Role Vessel, which was first proposed in 2007.
We need replacement of the Offshore Patrol Vessels built in the Late 1990s/early 2000s which are approaching

end of life with larger Patrol corvettes which would be better equipped to defend themselves when operating in hostile waters with UN and EU overseas missions, such as anti Piracy or Anti Smuggling patrols.
We need all Naval vessels over 80M in length to be capable of landing a helicopter of our own Air Arm or that of a neighbour, ideally up to 15 tonnes size.
We need to be able to support the Islands off our coasts all year round, and have Naval and Air assets capable of doing so.
We need to be able to provide immediate response to any hazardous incident that takes place in our territorial waters, and not hope that our neighbours will be there to assist us with the more complex aspects.
We need most of all to do away with the idea that Ireland is a soft target for criminal gangs or rogue states to carry out their operations to destabilise the EU.
Our location at the choke point for international cargo to the EU makes our stance of "Military Non-Alignment" a moot point.
We may not wish to involve ourselves with the military actions of foreign states, but we currently do not have the means to prevent ourselves to be used by them in their military actions, as demonstrated by the use of the Russian Navy to carry out Military exercises that would interfere with legitimate commercial sea and air traffic within our EEZ.

In summary. Build the new Navy and the AIr Force to become a job that its members are proud to work in, and who feel rewarded for doing their job.

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

Contact

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Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

Lack of capacity in the naval services
Lack of capacity in the monitoring of our maritime areas

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

dependance on undersea cables is a huge vulnerabilty both with data and energy
Inceresed capcity in the naval services, air corps and coast guard is required.
Modern equipment such as drones should be used for unmaned constant monitoring

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

Priority should be given to areas where cables and interconnectors are located

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Increased naval and air corps personell
Better equipped ships
Drones
Radar and sonar upgrades

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes
Security fees should be charged for protection of data infrastructure

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

Intergated copperationwith EU should be prioritised over all others

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes
Destails of what and how to achieve the goals identified with specific timescales for implementation

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

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Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

A lack of the necessary resources to monitor, surveil and guard our maritime zone and boundaries.

Ongoing disputes regarding the specific maritime boundaries between Ireland, Iceland, UK, Norway, Denmark.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

Undetected exploitation of our natural maritime resources from within, near to, and beyond the boundary of our designated area that may put Irish interests, and those of our neighbouring nations at risk.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

Defining and extending the specific area covered in Ireland's maritime domain should be an immediate priority.

There is a vast expanse of ocean territory to the North-East, East and South-East which is currently undesignated.

To ensure the ecology of this area is conserved and well managed, Ireland should seek to increase the boundary of its maritime domain.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Developing and managing critical aspects of current and future maritime issues including;

undersea infrastructure:
- telecommunications cabling
- energy pipelines
- any other

clean energy generation:
- off shore wind
- tidal energy
- seabed resource exploration
- off shore gas exploration
- hydrogen generation from sea water

ocean exploration and conservation:
- ocean floor mapping, monitoring tidal currents and off shore weather events
- monitor and manage responses to climate change and risks
- fund ocean related ecological research and projects into maintaining the ocean for wildlife and its ability to act as a carbon sink
- support Ireland's development as a global centre of excellence for marine biology and natural science.

ocean governance:
- be capable of identifying all vessels / entrants into our territory,
- effectively manage, apprehend and prosecute intrusions into our territory

sustainable management of the 'blue economy':
- formally establish our maritime domain as an opportunity for economic growth and innovation

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes, there is an opportunity to partner with the private sector in developing an maintaining Ireland's critical maritime infrastructure which is beneficial to both parties.

As part of any partnership, there should be an emphasis on knowledge transfer from the external parties to the State in order to build an internal base of expertise with a view to becoming self-sufficient in all matters over time.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

While international cooperation will be required, Ireland needs to spearhead the management of its own territory, developing technical capabilities and expertise. I believe this is the best choice for the long term management of Ireland's political and economic interests.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes an action plan detailing clear goals, steps to achieve such goals, the timelines to do so and the repercussions of failing any of these points to promote transparency and accountability.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

Maritime resource management poses significant opportunities, threats to the coastal nations who manage a given zone. The entitlement of a maritime zone to Ireland also places considerable responsibilities on our State.

An appropriate level of expertise is required within the State to demonstrate its ability to manage its own maritime affairs - both to its citizens and other nations. Ireland has a strategically important position on the western edge of northern Europe and continual direct investment in Maritime resources, complemented with international cooperation and public private partnerships can increase the probability of maritime treats and opportunities being handled appropriately.

Ireland should also seek to extend its exclusive economic zone and continental shelf as far as possible east with respect to the OSPAR Commission's MPA zones in the North-East Atlantic.

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

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Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

Ireland is extremely vulnerable to both security and economic threats due to the fact that we have no effective monitoring of the maritime areas in our jurisdiction. We have the largest maritime area in the EU have by far the smallest and least capable Navy for aide to civil authority(Search & Rescue, disaster relief, fisheries monitoring etc) or civil power(Intradiction - drugs shipment, protection of undersea/offshore infrastructure etc).
Without capable radar/sonar and joint operations capabability (effective Naval and airforce) we will continue to be seen as a weak link and exploited by state or non state actors.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

Protection of key undersea and offshore infrastructure in particular data and power cables from state actors.
The Irish Governement in partnership with the EU and NATO should invest effectively in priority areas. A cross functional and departmental committee should be raised to conduct a risk assessment of our maritime area. The areas should be categorised in relation to the risks as outlined by national and international intelligence agencies. From that risk assessment an action plan that is focused on capital and expenditure requirements to meet that plan. The investment should be prioritised in order of level of risk; High to Low. Included in this investment should benational and international interagency training acredited by best in class agencies.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

Prioritisation should be in line with the risk assessment conducted by national and international inteligence agencies.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Prioritisation should be in line with the risk assessment conducted by national and international inteligence agencies.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes. There is a need for inter departmental, inter agency and all stakeholders, including all private stakeholders /owners of key infrastructure. It is critical to include all stakeholders to understand levels of risk and possible mitigations that may not be considered by public SMEs.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

We are a member of the EU and therefore exist within the defended boundaries of the EU. Without partnership we become an outlier as we are today. Ireland, as a small island state, require input from all agencies both national and international to ensure that we have best in class input/partnership, strategy and guidance.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes that is critical.
A cross functional and inter departmental and agency led Steering Committee should be raised to conduct a risk assessment of our maritime area. The areas should be categorised in relation to the risks as outlined by national and international intelligence agencies. From that risk assessment an action plan that is focused on capital and expenditure requirements to meet that plan. The investment should be prioritised in order of level of risk; High to Low. Included in this investment should be national and international interagency training acredited by best in class agencies.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

Maritime security requires an effective, collaborated and actionable strategy. It requires partnership both public and private, national and international. If i was selecting a stakeholder list it would include the following:

An Garda Siochana
Defence intelligence officials - national and international
Army Ranger Wing
Reps from local fisheries
Reps from tech companies, telecommunications companies - owners of undersea cabling
EirGrid.
Department of Transport
Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications
Relevant European Union officials that are involved in partly funding and designating certain projects, like the Celtic Interconnector, as Projects of Common Interest.
The European Commission, European External Action Service (EEAS), European Defence Agency (EDA), European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA), European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), Frontex, and the European Union Satellite Centre (SatCen) are important players in maritime security, especially in information sharing initiatives like CISE
Private Telecom Companies
Foreign Affairs officials
Dept of Justice
Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA)
National Cyber Security Centre
Neighbouring countries
Maritime Industry Representatives
Local Communities
Private Sector Partners and Suppliers
The successful development and implementation of an Irish maritime defense strategy requires the collaboration and input of a wide range of stakeholders, ensuring a comprehensive and effective approach to protecting Ireland's maritime interests.

Contact

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Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

Lack of a sufficiently manned naval service
Lack of a military naval presence on the western seaboard
No subsea monitoring capability as of June 2025
No fast air intercept capability prote int to countering naval threats in Irish EEZ
No marine land force capable of operating in support to Irish naval service

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

Future threats to subsea cable infrastructure
Continued narcotic transmission through Irish maritime areas of responsibility
Continued incursions of foreign state actors both surface and sun surface to Irish EEZ

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland's maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes.

Western seaboard is effectively unmanned from a naval perspective. National naval patrol schedule would allow for coverage of some of those waters were the naval service fully manned. It is not.

Vulnerable infrastructure such as offshoot wind sites and oil and gas field should be included in future projects for maritime development.

Subsea surveillance and power projection should be prioritised for the west and south coasts.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland's maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Naval bases on eastern and western seaboards.
Incentives to increase recruitment into the defence forces as a whole.
Development of a marine contingent capable of interdiction operations to be employed on eastern and western seaboards.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

No.
Private sector should be directed under legislation by the government of the day and infrastructure should come under government control in extremis.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

It should. Be we're not near capable of approaching national partners in any meaningful way currently.
Significant investment and development of a national strategy should be employed and rolled out first before we could offer any credible benefits to international partners.
As of now we are viewed as the free loaders of Europe in terms of all things defence. This includes maritime capability.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

It should include an action plan but not before a national defence and security strategy is developed.
Action plans are fine however the resources and direction needs to be present before it is launched.
It should also become the defence forces main effort in addition to a national security strategy and all outputs and operations should be redirected to support this main effort.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

The defence forces need to become more autonomous decision makers. Current levels of beuracracy in the Irish defence apparatus do not lend itself to meaningful and efficient change in defence. “Mission, task, execute”
“Getting things right” prolongs clear and previously outlined requirements to Irelands defence and security development.
Members of the department of defence should, as a requirement, have military or relatable experience prior to taking up positions in the civil service.
Maritime security is a vital component of Irelands future defence strategy but so is air and land security. Why has a national defence policy not been issued despite being one of the most important recommendations in the commission on defence?

Without an overall security strategy I fear the maritime security strategy is at risk of failure without a combined effort from all arms of the defence forces.

Is maritime security the biggest threat to Irish defence today? Maybe. And if it is decided that it is, all other operations and training should support efforts to mitigate such risks.

As with all other matters of defence in Ireland recruitment and retention is a significant PROBLEM, not a challenge. Challenges are defined as “ a call to someone to participate in a competitive situation or fight to decide who is superior in terms of ability or strength” right now our inability to recruit and retain in the organisation is stronger. A problem has a solution. That solution is return to previous 2009 pension plans, and don’t refer to it as a “DPER matter” it’s a defence matter. If government is serious about developing a national security strategy and particularly a maritime one personnel are required. The organisation won’t come close to reaching what it requires to implement any of the no doubt worthy and appropriate suggestions on this forum without people. The current Recruitment strategy has not been effective. Revert to previous pension plans for front line services, without that everything else is an academic exercise.

Good luck. Please get this right, Ireland is entirely vulnerable from multiple domains and needs to increase defence capability starting go with recruitment.

Contact

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Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

Understaffed naval service

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

Make the naval service attractive for recruitment and retention

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland’s maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

All the main ports

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland’s maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

I don’t lnow

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

Co funders and co partners.
Not involved in security secrets

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes to EU, yes to NATO

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

No

Contact

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Please answer the below questions in the boxes provided. There is a 3,000 character limit per question. When you have completed your answers please hit the submit button at the bottom of the page.

Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

Protection of underwater assets: communications, electricity connectors, gas connectors.
Interdiction of smuggling activities, ranging from illicit drugs to weapons.
Curbing illicit fishing.
Migration control.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

Russian and its allies' sabotage, underwater or surface, using surface vessels and mini submarines - drugs, arms, people smuggling.
From any direction except thru the Irish Sea, to be liaised with our neighbours.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland's maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

Irish Naval Service are the best advisors, could concentrate on closing gaps in consultation with EDA plans and NATO (e.g. the RN's Project Cabot) as per Q6 below. Locations of repeaters, boosters, transformers, pumping stations, could merit particular attention. However we have no expertise in this area.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland's maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Sonar and radar surveillance from marine vessels and platforms.
Towing of arrays
Ability to host and manage ancillary equipment such as small USVs/ROVs/UAVs.
Should be difficult to ‘take out’ without raising alarms.
Strong interoperability and robust communications with possible allies.

Other instrumentation ref weather climate sea conditions etc. could be carried at virtually no cost

A strategic state involvement with a capability such as OR-CA could help fulfil expectations that Irelnd could play a positive passive in enhancing its own essential capabilities and those of its neighours at least cost. Meetings and info-exchange has shown an immediate innovation urgency of naval interest in ‘persistent’ mission autonomous solutions. Their rapidly growing plans and budgets led to contacts with the EDA, the RN (who commented “this is exactly what we are looking for” ref Project Cabot) and USN/DoD (this is “super”) that confirmed major possibility for OR-CA to be a prime ASW surveillance and towed array device, worldwide!

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

The state might preferably be the owners and the final interpreters and reactors to results. The private sector might be the operators, to provide defined services such as operation and maintenance functions. A private sector bonus could be the opportunity to bid for similar work in EDA areas at least. This might enable best control of performance and cost., and increase 'export' employment. Control centres would however be Naval Service controlled.

The private sector is better placed to respond to the need for specialists and their pay and conditions than a state entity with all its problems of knock-on wages comparisons that might cripple an essential service.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring

countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

The answer must be - all of the above. To not liaise closely would greatly reduce the benefits.
Irish assets should interface continuously and seamlessly, including cyber protection, with all friendly neighbours, for maximum effectiveness.

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

Allowing for the need for secrecy or not, any such expenditure could be expected to have a detailed action plan with a strong section on engaging and retaining key personnel.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?

3000 character(s) maximum

The ability to conduct persistent missions without refuelling/crew/replacements are key international naval objectives. The Irish Naval Service can evaluate the merits of [redacted] very low radar trace and acoustic signature: OR-CA is stealthy and can hold station or continuously vary its position in a controlled or random manner. Its slow to brisk walking pace make it a difficult target and ensure near-zero impact on marine life. Its surveillance is at very reduced cost but arguably with best performance.

OR-CA could include docking/induction charging of smaller USVs, ROVs, UAVs as decided, thereby increasing its mission potential.

With modular design, OR-CA is cost-effective to produce, its US and European patented technology is purposed for each application by AI software. Proven to TRL4 in the LIR tanks in Cork, funding is needed to reach TRL7 within two years via a larger sea-tested version. [redacted] has generated strong security interest in this dual-use technology and anticipates employing over one hundred people at its core centre in Ireland.

Economic benefits - Jospa can of itself be a significant employer, and also a jobs multiplier. OR-CA manufacture could be subcontracted in Ireland – no shipyard needed, made of composites, no unusual lifting or size requirements. Fitting of surveillance sensors by specialist suppliers/installers can add to employment. All security sales are passive: with major civil export potential its role in the economy could be quite significant. Familiarity with OR-CA could assist Irish offshore contractors build out internationally as its use increases.

Ireland's international reputation might be enhanced by the positives of a 100% green passive security offering. With XOcean, [redacted] other companies and universities, AI and data handling, Ireland could become a centre of autonomous marine excellence.

[redacted] would very much like to finalise this project in Ireland and provide good employment and enhance Ireland's reputation We are prepared to be very flexible in structuring the necessary funding of € 3-3.5M, and reward funding entities. We have so far received no assistance (other than much-appreciated test time at LIR courtesy of SEAI) and little encouragement to do so. Funding for the technology is more readily available outside the State. "Time is money", our resources are limited– we fear we may have no other option.

Contact

Contact Form

Q1. What do you see as the most significant current threats or vulnerabilities to Ireland's maritime security?

3000 character(s) maximum

1. A poorly equipped and staffed navy.
2. A lack of a designated Minister for Defense.
3. An unofficial and over-reliance on the UK.
4. One of the largest and most poorly monitored Exclusive Economic (Maritime) zones in the EU.

Q2. What do you foresee will be the biggest emerging threats/future challenges to Ireland's maritime security and how would you best prepare for them?

3000 character(s) maximum

1. Bad (foreign) actors.
2. Continuing decline of our Navy and defense forces.
3. Absence of political will, knowledge and expertise.

Q3. Should the Strategy prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas in Ireland's maritime domain?

3000 character(s) maximum

Obviously, the priority should be the Atlantic margin but also the gas/electricity interconnector infrastructure on the East of the country.

Q4. To most effectively safeguard Ireland's maritime interests, what strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, or capabilities should be prioritised?

3000 character(s) maximum

Technolocy

1. Sonar capability
2. A properly equipped and staffed Navy.
3. Commence building a submarine fleet
4. Maritime patrol aircraft to include interceptors.

Q5. Should the National Maritime Security Strategy involve the private sector who may be owners or operators of critical maritime infrastructure? What role could they play?

3000 character(s) maximum

No.
For decades, the country has outsourced its responsibilities to the UK and/or the private sector.
Build home capability.

Q6. What role do you think international cooperation should play in the new National Maritime Security Strategy? Should this increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU, with neighbouring countries and through our Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO or other international maritime organisations?

3000 character(s) maximum

YES - increased cooperation include a focus on our partners in the EU.
The UK should be explicitly excluded until we have built our own capability in conjunction with the EU

Q7. Do you think the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented? What do you think the key elements of this Action Plan should be?

3000 character(s) maximum

OF COURSE - the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an Action Plan that will detail how the strategy will be implemented. This is a moronic question.

Q8. If there is anything additional you would like to propose or any general thoughts you have on maritime security, please let us know?