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

Marine Engineering Division

Report on Aquaculture Licence Application

Application Reference No: T05-069N4

Report Prepared by:	**Jerome McCarthy**
Date:	30th November 2023
Applicant	Saltspray Mussels Technology Ltd.
Location	Bantry Bay, Co. Cork
Applicant Type	Aquaculture/Foreshore Licence Renewal & Review
Site Area (Ha)	8.4
Species	Blue Mussels (Mytilus edulis)
Cultivation Method	Rope longlines
Intertidal/Non-Intertidal	Non-intertidal
Source of Seed / Spat	Natural spat collection on collection rope.
Annual Production Estimates	105 tonnes
Shellfish Waters Designation	Yes ☒ No ☐
Reference:	Bantry, SI No. 200, 1994
Environmental Designation	Yes ☐ No ☒
Reference:	
Development Plans	Yes ☒ No ☐
Reference:	Cork County Development Plan 2022, Sections 7.26 and 8.20
Pre-Consultation Meeting	Yes ☒ No ☐
Date:	Various, 2022 and 2023

Drawing Validation Sheet

OSI Maps **Yes** ☒ **No** ☐

Comment: 6” scale maps prepared by GIS Mapping Section

BA Chart **Yes** ☒ **No** ☐

Comment: BA Charts prepared by GIS Mapping Section

Farm Layout Drawing **Yes** ☒ **No** ☐

Directional Arrow	Yes	☒	No	☐
Scale	Yes	☒	No	☐
Title Block	Yes	☒	No	☐
Date	Yes	☒	No	☐

Comment: Drawing submitted are suitable

Drawings of structures **Yes** ☒ **No** ☐

Comment: Typical floating longline detail supplied.

Details of Proposed Navigation Marking **Yes** ☒ **No** ☐

Comment: A group marking scheme is in place.
Site layout plan shows proposed marker buoys at corners of site. Details of these are given on sections and details drawing.

Site Access Indicated **Yes** ☒ **No** ☐

Comment: Drawing submitted is suitable

Site Co-Ordinates Indicated **Yes** ☒ **No** ☐

Comment: Table of site co-ordinates included on site layout drawing.

Site Overlap **Yes** ☒ **No** ☐

Comment: The site overlaps existing sites T05-069N4 and T05-053N2, which are both licensed. Site T05-069N4 is being renewed & reviewed to include the area previously covered by T05-053N2.

Oyster Fishery Order Overlap **Yes** ☐ **No** ☒

Comment:

☒ **The application is submitted with each of the requirements listed and is therefore deemed to be a valid application.**

☐ **AFMD should be aware that insufficient details have been submitted as per above.**

Site Suitability Assessment

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

Site Management
The applicant has been operating at this location for a number of years and is an experienced mussel farm operator. The site was inspected in June 2023 and no issues were noted.

This application includes an amalgamation of two existing sites and a minor change of the existing boundaries to facilitate existing site operations. There is no increase in structures or activity on the site due to this review.

Proposed Site Layout and Structures
The structures at this site have been in place for a number of years and consist of the standard double head-rope method. The layout consists of two blocks – a southern with 10 no. and a northern with 12 no. 110m floating longlines. These are indicated in the application drawings. The eastern boundary should be moved eastwards to better facilitate the layout of the southern block of lines to ensure a minimum spacing of 10 to 15 metres between the outside longlines and the site boundary. A maximum of 22 no. mussel longlines as outlined above should be permitted within the proposed site.

The review includes the moving of the northern boundary northwards by some 20 metres. A buoy constituting part of the local Special Uniform Marking Scheme (SUMS) is located near the north eastern corner of the existing site. It is recommended the SUMS buoy be moved to the new northeastern corner of the site.

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

Land Based Facilities / Site Access
Bantry Pier is used by mussel farmers on a daily basis to access the sites and carry out operations associated with the aquaculture industry. The pier is suitable as an access point for this site.

Navigation
There is commercial shipping including cruise liners, oil tankers and fishing as well as marine leisure in the area. The site lies within the existing Special Uniform Marking Scheme (SUMS) for the area operated by BIM and this SUMS reduces the impact of the aquaculture on navigation in the area.

The proposed site has a minor impact on the adjacent navigation routes in that the northern boundary is being moved some 20m north of the nearest SUMS buoy. This buoy should be moved northwards to mark the proposed north eastern corner of the site. The operator should contact BIM regarding relocation of the marker.

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

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

Impact / Cumulative Impact
There is commercial shipping including cruise liners, oil tankers and fishing, as well as marine leisure activity in the area. The focus of marine leisure in this area is mainly around Glengarriff Harbour and Garnish Island. When revised, the group marking scheme will reduce the impact of this aquaculture site on navigation in the area.

The aquaculture in this part of Bantry Bay has been in place for some time. Once items above relating to the positioning of the adjacent SUMS buoy and the alignment of the northern and eastern boundaries are addressed there will be no increase in impact due to the renewal and review of this licence.

Marine Engineering Division has no objection to the licensing of this site subject to the above.