3000 character(s) maximum

Increase defense spending to 3% of GDP after decades of under-investment.

Contact

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As an engaged Irish citizen, my aim in this submission is to help shape our National Maritime Security Strategy. I believe it's crucial that the strategy:

* Prioritizes public safety:
With 80% of our population living in coastal areas, secure seas are fundamental to our energy, food, and data security.
* Ensures responsible use of taxpayer funds:
This can be achieved through advocating for focused technological investments, like coastal sensors, and ensuring accountability via a clear Action Plan.
* Fosters public trust:
Regular updates on progress, such as public dashboards detailing threat responses, will be key.
* Enhances community resilience:
Empowering citizens to report risks and better understand threats will strengthen our collective security.

The goal is the safeguarding of Ireland's vital maritime domain. Transparency is not merely an option; it's essential for democratic security planning.

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

* Cable/pipeline damage: Internet/energy lines under sea at risk.
* Energy shortages: Most oil/gas comes by ship – accidents could disrupt supplies.
* Crime: Smugglers use Ireland’s big sea area.
* Accidents: Ferry fires or oil spills needing big rescues.

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

New threats: More spying, cyberattacks, and extreme weather.

Prepare by:
* Buying sea-monitoring drones/sensors.
* Training more coast guard/navy staff.
* Teaming up with nearby countries.

New threats: sophisticated cyber-physical attacks on undersea cables/energy grids
* Becoming a global leader in maritime cybersecurity:
* Create an AI-power "Cyber Shield" for critical infrastructure (real-time threat detection)
* Run simulated ransomware/invasion drills yearly
* Autonomous systems:
* Invest in drone swarms (air/surface/underwater) for 24/7 patrols

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes:

Focus on:
* West/south-west coast (where internet cables land).
* Busy shipping routes near Dublin/Cork.
* Offshore wind farm zones.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

* Tech: Sea cameras (satellites/radar), underwater sensors near cables.
* Gear: Modern navy patrol boats, rescue helicopters.
* Systems: Faster info-sharing between agencies.

* AI & Big Data
* Predictive analytics to flag suspicious ships/activities
* AI analysis of satellite/sensor data (e.g., detecting cable tampering)
* Drone Fleet
* Long-range surveillance drones + armed underwater drones for rapid response
* Cyber Resilience
* Secure control systems for wind farms/ports
* World-class cyber training for Naval Service

Funding: Dedicate 20% of maritime security budget to AI/autonomous tech R&D

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 own cables, wind farms, ports.

Their role:
* Report threats quickly.
* Help fund protection (e.g., cable sensors).
* Join emergency drills.

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

Crucial: Threats cross borders.

Focus on:
* EU partners (shared patrols).
* UK/France (joint training).
* NATO (intel sharing).

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 – with a strong focus on transparency.
Key elements:
* Clear steps (e.g., "Deploy undersea sensors by 2026").
* Who is responsible for each task (e.g., "Navy handles patrols").

Deadlines and progress tracking.
Critical addition:
* Public updates: Regular plain-language reports (e.g., yearly) on progress, challenges, and how threats are being addressed.

1. Clear Deliverables & Milestones
* Break objectives into phased actions (e.g., "Deploy 5 undersea cable sensors by Q3 2026").
* Set quarterly/yearly targets to track progress.

2. Assigned Ownership
* Designate lead agencies/roles for each task (e.g., "Naval Service: Patrol capability upgrades").
* Define cross-departmental responsibilities (e.g., Defence + Communications for cable security).

3. Resource Allocation
* Budget transparency: Link actions to dedicated funding.
* Staffing plans: Address skills gaps (e.g., "Recruit 50 naval personnel by 2025").

4. Risk Management
* Proactively flag obstacles (e.g., supply chain delays).
* Include contingency plans for high-risk actions.

5. Monitoring & Reporting
* Public dashboard: Share progress on key metrics (e.g., "% EEZ monitored").
* Independent audits: Validate outcomes annually.
* Regular reviews: Adjust timelines/tactics based on data.

6. Stakeholder Engagement
* Schedule industry/community consultations at critical milestones.
* Publish plain-language progress reports bi-annually.

Ensures accountability (no "orphaned" tasks).
Prevents budget/timeline overruns.
Builds public trust via transparency.
Enables agile response to changing threats.

A strategy with an action plan is just a document. Delivery demands discipline.

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

Prioritize public communication:
* Share easy-to-understand "maritime security dashboards" online (e.g., threat levels, project status).
* Hold coastal community briefings to explain risks (e.g., cable protection, smuggling) and how citizens can help.
* Use social media/alerts for urgent updates (e.g., suspicious activity reports).

Why: Public trust is vital – informed citizens support security efforts and report risks faster.
* Keeping the public informed isn’t just nice-to-have – it builds trust, improves vigilance and reporting, and ensures national efforts have democratic oversight.

* Become a global testbed: invite tech firms to trial cutting-edge AI/drone solutions in Irish waters
* Cyber Command: establish a dedicated maritime cybersecurity unit within the Defence Forces
* International Hub: partner with EU & NATO to set best practices for AI-driven maritime security

Messages:
* Cyber is critical - undersea cables need wartime-level cyber defense in peacetime
* Invest to save - AI/drones multiply coverage at lower cost than manned ships
* Get Ireland to lead the way - geography and tech ecosystem should be geared to position us to pioneer next-gen maritime security

We want to be nimble, agile, responsive, without the need for static large capital ships and investment that takes a long time to deliver. The threats are there now and will only get worse.
Let's not play catch-up, let's jump ahead and lead.

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

Contact

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[redacted]

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

Failure to resource a common operating picture creates vulnerability in delivery of counter-narcotics, fishery protection, protection of undersea infrastructure, and national integrity. This vulnerability is exploited by drug gangs, rogue fishing vessels, and hostile nations. This is reflected the increased tempo of narcotics interceptions, and movements down the coast of ships from hostile nations.

A Russian sail training ship was able to close into a unauthorised pier, complete an exchange with 'friendly fishermen' before an official response, despite it's presence being public and the authorities aware of its movements.

Intelligence sharing between agencies is incomplete, with multiple cases in recent years of agencies not sharing information, deciding that it's not their job but not passing intelligence on, deciding that it was more important to protected their organisation than resource another agency to deliver an op.
This increases risk to the state and communities. The country is too small to fully resource multiple niche capability in cyber, marine intelligence and internal security intelligence.

Failure to deliver intelligence led operations is visible to peer countries and hostile 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

The Irish energy grid is dependant on two pipelines that can be easily sabotaged (see Nord Stream 1 and 2), Ireland is outside the international security frameworks that might deter such an attack, and once the conflict begins expanding these pipelines present an opportunity for hostile actors to attack without retaliation.

Ireland is a conduit for drugs into European communities.
National and international narcotics gangs have identified Irish waters as a safe area to bring drugs into Europe- (see tempo of seizures since 2022). These seizures- large as they are- have not impacted the street trade indicated that most deliveries are successful. The lack of air search radar allows light aircraft to enter and leave the airspace at will.

The fisheries are at point of collapse.
Overfishing and destructive fishing practices are stressing the marine ecosystem in Irish Waters to the point of collapse. Once a fishery collapses, with Canadian experience, it never recovers. Protecting the fishery requires ships at sea, requires intelligence led interceptions and consequences for offenders up to scrapping the vessels.

The Naval service cannot man its vessels.
Inability to crew naval vessel has been blamed as failure of the civil service, in the dept of Finance and Defence. It is also a failure of the officers and NCO of the Defence Forces that they cannot retain men under their command. There are leadership practices and processes within the Defence Forces that are outdated and contribute to manning crisis. These processes have to identified and rectified while reopening career process and incentives for sailors to stay in service and retain their specialist skills while progressing their career to officer level -The default route to naval officer should start in Haulbowline, not in Galway, and sailors should be incentivised to develop skills, leave on career break to participate in global shipping, and then return to Naval Service at multiple points in their careers.

The Naval service does not have ASW capability.
For some reason, ships in the naval service were procured without basic ASW equipment- no towed arrays, no hull sonar, no offensive ASW systems, no ASW helicopters. The OPV90's are good ships- but they have no teeth. It is inexplicable how this was allowed to happen, and the recent purchase of towed array is to be welcomed.
The same is true for the CASA. They can carry a MAD array, and they can carry sonabhoys- those systems were not procured.

-Dark and Grey fleet vessels conduct high risk STS operations, have poor safety record and are an higher risk to case major pollution events. It is possible that there will be an incident either in Irish or our neighbours waters that will require an emergency response that we cannot currently resource

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

3000 character(s) maximum

No.
The strategy should focus on developing capabilities that are then available to respond to threats in all areas of the maritime domains and contribute to the security of our peers. French and Royal Navy operations should be able to count on Irish Naval service freeing up their major combatants in the coming storm.

- Common Operating Picture, linking AIS receivers, Marine Radar, commercial intelligence, fishery information and criminal intelligence.

- Cooperation and collaboration with all marine assets available in the State. This include the marine research vessels with their ability to operative deep water UUV and survey underwater infrastructure, the Irish Lights workboats and shore infrastructure, Revenue Commissioners, Naval Reserve, Naval Service, Coast Guard, RNLI and coastal Gardai districts

- Each domain has varied requirements. We cannot afford gold plated solutions to fit each domain. The solution is in cooperation between agencies and peer countries.

-it is easy to procure equipment and services. It is hard to change culture.
A culture of frustration and disillusionment, of learned helplessness must be destroyed and replaced with freedom of operation to deliver a mission. Commander have to believe their can make a difference, sailors must believe they have an interesting future.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Failure to develop a common picture results in duplication of spending- there are at least two, completely separate license holders for Lloyds Marine Intelligence each costing a minimum of €60,000. This is small change compared costs of the failure to share operational intelligence and to stovepipe analysis.

Failure to feed Marine Radar Data into the common operating picture creates blind spots in our and our peers situation awareness. Radar sites and AIS receivers on the infrastructure owned by Irish Lights should be fed into the Common Operating Picture, and additional sites on coastal high points (Blasket Islands, Saltees, Tory Island) would provide radar coverage out to 150km. The infrastructure is largely already there- it needs integration into the COP and would provide a good return on investment. Live Radar returns from naval, customs, Irish lights vessels can also be fed into COP.

Integrating data from fishery licences and port activity to the common operating picture will improve the boarding operations by highlighting vessels that show delta between their movements, and their licences and planned activity. A fishing vessels moving to a fishing area can be checked for licences, a ship moving to a port can be checked for what the port expects, improving the success probability for boarding operations by revenue and naval service.

Portuguese and Spanish Navy have intercepted Low Profile Vessels. Each of these carry over 1t of narcotics. These are noisy vessels with low radar returns. They are have large sonar signatures. Irish Navy vessels do not have ability to detect these vessels without assistance.

Basing ships in Dublin dispersed the community of the naval service without building capability or redundancy. It's a political move and not needed. Crews can be moved to onboard in Dublin or Galway rather than creating permanent infrastructure. It's a waste of investment that could be spent on operational assets.

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 not be part of delivering national security.
- Identifying who owns what.
These companies have been registered to offshore jurisdictions, and it will be difficult to identify the end owner. Google have begun buying cable operators, and there may be concerns within some counties that the reserve capacity that is assumed to be in the transatlantic cable infrastructure is actually controlled by large multinationals.

- Private sector owners and operators are regulated by the state. Providing them a means to influence the regulators, through financing or operations supports undermines the regulator.

- the state has limited and complex means to control ownership of the infrastructure. Allowing unknown and potentially hostile companies to influence the operations is not good practice.

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 essential. Ireland cannot, in the near term, provide anything approaching the broad spectrum of capabilities needed to protect the marine domain. We need the support of peers to bolster these capabilities, and provide experience while we develop them.

In return we need to deliver anything and everything possible to assist that, including allowing shared intelligence, shared airspace (using Scandinavian framework), provide sustainment bases in Shannon for marine patrol aircraft and public willingness by the government to contest isolationism within the Irish society's

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, in principle.
However the strategy is so overdue that delays in publishing it should be avoided.

The Common Operating Picture for the marine domain must be a priority for Dept of Defence, even if it means taking some functions from the Irish Maritime Administration.

Current control of AGS over marine profiling has limited operations by Naval Service and should be brought under J2, with collaboration with Revenue Commissioners. AGS do not have maritime assets to act on the intelligence they control.

Manning and incentive practices within the Naval Servcie and Defence Forces have resulted in trained members living in poverty while having skills that provide far greater opportunities outside the forces. This has to change. Every sailor needs to be paid fairly for their training and skills. Otherwise they will leave.
Refurbishing accommodation blocks for single solder and provides family housing on defence land is the single most cost effective way to improve standard of living and attractiveness of the defence forces.
Providing a varied and diverse career path for sailors will improve retention. This includes career breaks to all ranks to gain experience in Merchant Marine or allowing all ranks to go on attachments to other navies.
The package should include adventure training expeditions, along the lines of what is available to UK forces.

There is no Naval Service without Service Members. Officer and civil servants should adopt the RMAS slogan: Serve to lead.

Serve your soldiers, they will follow your lead.
Screw then around- they will leave.

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

War is coming and Ireland is not in anyway in a position to shape the circumstances to avoid it, or to contribute to the defence of our peers.

The cost of war is so high, that rational people cannot conclude anyone would risk it.

Wars are started by irrational people who think they can win a war.
The only way to stop a war is to present a united front that will result in immediate, violent defeat, including preemptive measures than increase the risk to them.
Sanctions don't work. Appeasement doesn't work.

Our children will look back on countries policy makers, political and military leaders with bemusement, and wonder 'why didn't they do anything to stop this'.
I'd prefer if Irish leaders were not included in that list.

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

cable security. other near shore security, need for radar. and significantly increased visible footprint. lack of surface and sub sea visibility and deterrent.

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

industrial / military sabotage to all surface and sub sea assets. fishing security and integrity. transatlantic and local drug interdiction.

Solution
significant increased footprint/ presence and deterrent in air and sea. .
technology leap in detection and identification of threats both technological
and physical

expand naval numbers and technological strengths with a step change in bureaucratic timely response and a focus on retention rather than recruitment. extensive use of reserve technological skills in support and land based functions. demand driven and flexible response to front line requirements and less civilian oversight/ delay and obfuscation .
More roles for civilian/ time served naval personnel on land based activities.

change the long 4-6 eeek patrols to
shorter 2 week stints with crew change locations on east and west coasts.
move the people wasting time bringing ships back to haulbouline

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

3000 character(s) maximum

with limited time and limited numbers and time taken to increase numbers. immediate focus should be south/ west and north west for larger assets. smaller assets in irish sea. but with sub sea capability in irish sea also ,

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

3000 character(s) maximum

technology , radar and three frigate level ships with sub sea and surface deterrents.
sub sea detection and low level deterrents in existing patrol vessels.
better access to satellite visibility of out waters
2 additional 295 with sonar capability on all .
and with subsea deterrents.
Mine clearance capability, . 2 vessels. New Dutch/ Belgian type MCMV s

Use on civilian/ time served navy personnel in shire based monitoring role.

look to Norway and Denmark learnings in all there challenges . they have done we are only starting and cannot waste time. uk is critical but only developing local strategy themselves

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. Owners of critical sub and surface technology assets . need to be involved in a active regular reviewing structure. Quarterly review and annual report to government.

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

Clearly Uk, Denmark and Norway snd France, can help
Particularly Denmark and Norway in terms of scale and structure required. France in technology and sharing assets. Our so called Military neutrality should
not be an impediment to dealing with individual countries with similar challenges and sharing assets, knowledge , and technology and organization structure.

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

Absolutely!!! not a 500 page report,
an executive summary highlighting the threats and with 20 actions over 5 years.
6 monthly reviews and update to select committee headed by Taoiseach. with defence minister on the reporting side , not on committee.
Action plan not waste time repeating strategy.
One sentence identifying the final outcome in scale numbers assets structure and operational plan.

Headings-
Task
1, People, numbers by tasking and quarterly timeline. budget same over 3 years. structure needs to be in place before assets.
2 Build operational structure military/ civilan. minimal department civil servants if any.
3,Assets , numbers by timeline
4 Technology radar, deterrent, air/ sea / land based
4 Responsibilities/ reporting structure / incident response plan.
5 Appoint a single Tzar to implement plan. Not!!!!! a civil servant/ bureaucrat or a committee under any guize, somebody with significant large project 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

This is a beyond urgent national impediment.
needs immediate actions on retention and short term skills and technology solutions with a sense of urgency not visible in bureaucracy at the moment.
So even the short term actions need a action plan and single responsibility for the next 12 months with quarterly published reporting published.

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 strictly protected Marine Protected Areas and the ability to enforce protections.

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

Biodiversity loss. To a certain extent MPAs can work to counteract impacts from overfishing and climate change but these will likely only have partial success. In order to properly address biodiversity loss we need to reduce fishing particularly by controlling foreign fleet access through the EU and restrictions on non quota stocks especially sprat such that removal of forage fish in particular does not affect habitats and the fishing industry directly. Then we also need to address climate change with offshore windfarm development, carbon storage and whatever other methods available. After a certain time we then need to impose tariffs on countries that are not working towards net zero and not gaining financial advantage from carbon emissions.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes biodiversity protection through MPAs should be concentrated in biodiversity hotspots. Windfarm development need to concentrate on suitably designated 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

Marine acoustics can serve to measure the health and biodiversity of marine areas and there is a lack of study in this area, as well as being used to protect areas and identify areas for protection.

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

It depends on how you characterise the private sector. Does this include third level establishments? But yes of course the private sector should be involved where it can provide solutions. Critical maritime infrastructure should remain in public hands.

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 is only relevant to military security and NATO also uses the Irish maritime area without licence or consultation. So NATO is not necessarily a benign organisation with to the marine area. International cooperation should always be pursued based on the calibre of organisations and how they can help.

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 but the key elements of any action plan depend on what your approach is.
1. Exhaustive study of marine area for biodiversity hotspots and MPAs.
2. Completion of a complete MSFP would be second, which would include MPA designation.
3. Designation of construction areas for windfarms and fishing priority areas.
4. Creation of requirements for foreign navies working in Irish Waters based on UNCLoS Law of the Sea requirements.

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

Lots but no time

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 single point of failure on Ireland's submarine gas, electricity and data cables, due to a lack of networked distribution and preventative surveillance. Ireland's large sea area magnifies this, however lowest cost solutions in the failover of interconnected networks and defence foresight is the root cause.

Ireland does not adequately value its EEZ, or the loss of access to it, and so has little aerial and submarine surveillance. It has no military radar or sonar to detect craft and no air, or marine deterrence.

Ireland's lowest cost, quickest route to market, network delivery has resulted in gas, electricity and data cables have no failover system to other cables if one is temporarily disabled.

Ireland also relies overwhelmingly on the military anglosphere and has pivoted away from countries with similar situations, especially those of northern Europe.

These threats are most likely to be contracted actions to harm Ireland's EEZ and not directly from state agents.

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 vast coast line and EEZ means that it cannot afford to invest in fixed assets. The mobility challenge should be taken as an opportunity

The use of maritime AI drones, for hire, to interfere with shipping or sea cables is the most likely threat. Merchant marine vessels will become more discretely monitored and if Ireland encircles itself in hybrid interconnector, embedding in the sea bed and with hydrophones (Passive acoustic monitoring), between deep offshore wind turbines it is less likely that a submarine will disrupt Ireland's EEZ.

Ireland as an island can be a strength, but as Ireland is not self-sufficient the threat of being isolated during an expanding regional conflict would cripple the state's ability to act and rapidly bring civil unrest. This is the consequence of the biggest threat on the horizon.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

No. Doing so means that any bad actors will use the de-prioritised areas as leverage points against internal political decisions. Ireland thinks in GAA county colours. If a naval officer from a neglected area saw her county's shoreline (or family’s maritime profession) lessened in policy then she would not be able to focus 100% on her role. This morale sapping action could spread and be used as a weakness to be leveraged by bad actors.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

The asset numbers and capabilities are a full tier below that of Denmark, which is used as a reference country.

EU funds should be used for dual use ports and airports. Ports can be built with the function of supporting offshore wind turbines and secure sites to hold naval vessels during rough seas. Naval vessels require suitable air coverage. As neither will be very far from Irish shores, Knock airport should be redeveloped as dual use aircorp and civilian airport – a norm in Europe.

All assets should EU supplied to ensure future access to servicing and to lower the possibility of third party remote control.

Naval
1 absoalon class frigate (https://www.militaryfactory.com/ships/detail.php?ship_id=HDMS-Absalon-L16) from Odense Lindo Shipyard fit with RTX SeaVue or Thales SeaFire2 radar, Kingklip 115 hull sonar and CAPTAS-4 series towed array unit. This should be supplied with 1 torpedo helicopter with submersible detection. A second helicopter for ship boarding operations. This will operate as Ireland's primary maritime radar system.

Consideration should be given for the consequence in equipping this frigate with full defensive capabilities such as an EW suite, a MBDA VLS, Exocet and MU90 tubes. Alternatively a lighter option of 2 MANPADs for the frigate and 1 for each of the other vessels, and/or 1 CIWS equivalent for each vessel.

The frigate should be equipped with 2 ship deployable medium range aerial reconnaissance drones, 3+ surface and 3+ subsurface drones.

2 west coast ports for rough seas protection for radar ship(s).

Remove P51 P52 P71 P72 vessels as they use limited personnel and resources offer little value. Upgrade P61-4 with enhanced radar, sonar and surveillance/response drones (aerial/(sub)marine). The submersible drones should have robotic manipulators and cutting technology and be capable of near field recharaging from submarine power cables. The submersible and surface drones should have passive hydrophones and active sonar. Aerial drones should have anti-drone engagement capability. Aerial and marine drones should have radio imaging and light spectrum imaging.

All ships should be equipped with ship to air/surface/subsurface ordinance to tackle large sized drones. And provide credible defence deterrence for (sub)surface vessels.

A ranger level marine regiment for the recapture of offshore assets or for the complex capture of ships.

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

Q/A 4

Air corp
6 FA50s (block 3) – Polish built – South Korean serviced. These should be equipped with the ability to deploy networked sonar/radar bouys, (sub)marine surveillance drones, and torpedos. The bouys can quickly map any area for forward reconnaissance to the fleets primary frigate.

3 ground deployed medium range aerial surveillance drones.

Retire two of the four Pilatur PC 12 aircraft as they will be replaced with FA50s. This will release some of the limited (support) crew to the FA50s. 4 of the FA50s and 2 of the drones should be based in Knock airport. The remainder in Baldonnell.

Army

Eir sat 2 – for maritime surveillance and data relay. 2 truck mounted mobile radar system - Thales GM400a equivalent. 1 truck mounted ship missile system – NMESIS equivalent. 1 truck mount medium/long range anti-aircraft missile system (Norwegian NASMAS equivelant) based out of Knock. 1 truck mount short/medium range anti-drone/aircraft system based out of Baldonnel.

Support, re-supply and servicing trucks all military assets.

1 command data system on a service wide quantum encrypted data network using open source technology for the functional application and a nationally created & owned quantum encryption data transfer system.

==========
Q/A 5

Ireland provides much scope for offshore banks to exist with low regulation within the Ireland's jurisdiction. They should be made aware of this benefit and their role in securing the physical security of Ireland's offshore assets. This can be through beneficial financial vehicles or structures that leverage their global financial expertise in military acquisitions and contracts. If a foreign financial entity is benefiting from Ireland's jurisdiction then Ireland should proportionately benefit from their expertise. Otherwise they should directly contribute to maritime investment.

All (air/sea) ports and offshore rigs/sites designed to service renewable energy demands should be contractually and legislatively bound through their licences to provide secure space for Irish military assets without capital or operational costs.

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

Each agreement of co-operation has a disproportionate obligation or associated threat. If an individual agreement cannot be sufficiently risk mapped and proven that it substantially permanently benefits Ireland then such an agreement should not be considered. Any agreement can be entered into at a later date with short notice if required.

Painting a target on Ireland in making agreements with others should come with explicit guarantees. Guarantees have shown themselves as flimsy and neither reliable nor worth the inflexibility of the binding obligations in resources that they ask.

Protect existing and future acquisitions. Ireland should look to other countries laws on the creations, access control and use of military technology. Ireland is capable of creating submarine surveillance, robotic and defensive drones and is also placed to create quantum encryption technology is also required to protect data transmission between and within all assets. Joint projects can facilitate this

Seek appropriate alliances.

1. Denmark is closest to Ireland in marine military needs and is a similarly sized EU member that has navigated EU's funds better than Ireland
2. Norway is closet to Ireland in coastal and submarine military need as it has a large Atlantic coastline
3. Ireland is aligned with English speaking nations for no clear reason. Intelligence, laws, funding and values have pivoted from the 5 eyes nations to the EU. So Ireland should use its limited engagement capacity and focus on maximising its returns without harming existing relationships

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Q/A 7

5. AI air gap – AI is useful for co-ordination, strategy & games, logistics and operations. Where feasible, such as strategy & games, AI should be air walled and isolated from all network connections. Then current data can be provided without risk. Alternatively if AI was used in navigational assistance or operations there should be mechanical disconnection options so that AI can be fully removed from any system at any time.
6. Secure networked open technology – custom and proprietary technology, especially software can be too expensive. Open source technology should be considered as the likelihood of zero day or zero contact exploits are lower as programmers and AI can easily test it for security flaws.
7. Ownership – Ireland should full contractual ownership over all military assets and services to prevent third party inspections or remote access and transmission of source code changes and data.
8. Nothing is secure – all purchases should be considered as corrupt on arrival; dismantle, analyse and repair. All fields of potential battle – near shore, submarine, near marine asset, open waters – are not secure, nor are those that are connected to them, this includes all economic actors in all related fields.

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

Ireland should approach its National Maritime Security Strategy with the following principles.

1. Dual use – when purchasing an asset make sure that it has a secondary use.

A) Ports can be used for military purposes but also for installing and servicing offshore wind turbines. There are many unused renewable energy funds and joint project actions that would allow this. The baltic nations did this.

B) Equipment purchase for surveillance (sea cable hydrophones) should be used for a second role such as Environmental impact assessment for DMAPs for wind turbines

I. Passive surveillance by sea cables & buoys with hydrophones

II. Active surveillance by (sub)marine drones and ship/helicopter sonar

C) A satellite can be used for military and environmental surveillance purposes

I. Sea cable hydrophones can be used for vessel detection and also environmental impact assessment of DMAPS used for the deployment of offshore turbines.

2. Mobility - Ireland does not have the resource to have two of anything for redundancy. Thus it will have to have mobility. Ireland cannot afford to have several west coast radar bases, however it can have one ship with a good radar and one truck mounted surveillance radar. Similarly, support equipment for ships, drones and aircraft can be based in primary hangers, but must be truck mounted for redeployment. An example of use would be Ireland taking a the EU presidency from uly 2026; anti drone technology or strike capability must be truck mounted for redeployment.

3. Modularity – all purchases should contractually designed so that Ireland can add or replace any component from any source without consequence or requirement to notify the parts or service supplier. All servicing contracts should cater for this i.e. if a ship's radar is replaced then the no one need be notified and all servicing agreements for the ship and old/new radar remain in place. This is also commercial protection of security assets; F35s cannot be modified and are in constant satellite telemetry with US military which can take remote control of their systems. Buy primarily EU, South Korean or Taiwanese equipment to prevent third party control of systems.

4. Full spectrum coverage - the deployment of any system requires full coverage by all others for layered protection. A ship mounted radar requires submarine sonar drones and fast aerial support, which requires MOBA with mobile land radar, which requires mobile drone defense resources, all of which require dedicated satellite coverage, and all of which require strong cyberdefense-warfare units.

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

Q/A 7

9. Protect (future) personnel and assets

A) Homelessness is an unnecessary and stressful problem for all enlisted personnel and officers. Previously the military would provide all housing needs, but demands have changed. Look to Denmark's military and its use of https://www.housinginternational.coop/co-ops/denmark/

B) review of all laws to prevent current and future service personnel from being compromised by a third party. Considering how easy it was for criminal gangs to gain access to the Garda PULSE system due to compromising material and unforgiving legislation. Laws should be military security risk assessed, at least allowing allowing for opt-outs.

I. ill-designed legislation can cause the loss of capability and institutional knowledge. The PSCS act is known to have led to the transfer or retirement of 20%+ of Garda personnel between 2018 and 2025

II. Future personnel can be put at data hacking risk before they even chose to join the Irish Defence Forces. The Digital Health Record act does not allow the right to erasure or non-provision of an identifying characteristic in order to get medical treatment. Following from the HSE hack, China could identify and target Chinese immigrants to Ireland via the digital health record bill and ulitmately compromise new recruits.

10. Starting from scratch – engage with novel thinkers that have recently left small modern miltaries and analyse their response to "what would you do if your military was starting from scratch". Bear in mind that in comparison to most OECD countries, Ireland is starting from the equivalent of scratch. This is the most efficient and effective realistic "what if" scenario planning for strategic investment in maritime defence.

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Q/A 8

Interconnected strategic offices.

An internal consultancy and internal audit unit should not be focused on finding the pennies down the sofa, but on seeing how the best or novel thinking, strategy and military techniques can or should be applied to Ireland using predictive modelling.

Ireland is known across the EU for under-utilising available funds. Import expertise to educate the whole of government to maximise EU funds, while efficiently complying with their onerous obligations. A department of defence 'EU funds office' should seek secondments for other departments and leverage EU member state networks to gain from the years of experience of other member state's mistakes and successes.

This should work with a strategy spending control unit to plan budgets across multiple governments – national and European.

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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

Cutting of under water cables

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

As above. Expand navy with more patrol ships and suitable radar to detect and intercept suspect vessels, and allow Britain, France or NATO to intervene when our navy is unable

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Areas with most underwater sea cables that are furthest from protection of the naval reach of Britain/France

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Modern long range radar, drones, AUVs, anti-hacking technology aswell as more conventional ships with armed with suitable weapons

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

Only those based in friendly countries with a credible track record in the relevant duties to be carried out.

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 much as possible with Britain, EU and NATO to compliment our future upgraded navy and air force.

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

Set deliverable targets and hit them, start with long range radar and recruitment drives

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

Perhaps look into funding possibliities with large corporations with their servers or headquarters in Ireland who have a vested interest in prevent under sea cables being cut.

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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

Ireland's maritime domain is more than ten times the size of its landmass & includes critical infrastructure such as transatlantic fibre-optic cables, subsea energy resources, & major global shipping lanes. The State has almost no independent capacity to monitor, secure, or respond within this environment. This creates real security vulnerabilities that are incompatible with national sovereignty & armed neutrality.

Neutrality cannot rely on informal arrangements with foreign powers. Secret or undeclared agreements—particularly with the UK—are incompatible with the Constitution, with democratic oversight, & with genuine independence. Ireland's defence & security posture must be built on autonomous capabilities, not on the assumptions or intentions of others.

Risks & Motivations

Ireland faces no credible threat of conventional military invasion. However, the following motivations could lead external actors to interfere with, or act against, Irish territory or infrastructure:

Disruption of Global Infrastructure
Ireland hosts a large concentration of transatlantic fibre-optic cables that carry most EU–US data traffic. In a conflict or confrontation, a hostile actor could target these cables—physically or digitally—to cause systemic disruption across the West.

Airspace or Maritime Bypass
As a neutral state with limited enforcement capability, Ireland's airspace & maritime domain could be used by third parties to bypass detection or sanctions. This creates incentives for quiet or covert encroachment.

Pre-emption or Denial
In a scenario where major powers are in conflict, a belligerent might seek to deny Ireland's territory, ports or airspace to an adversary. This could involve covert pressure, coercion or hybrid interference.

Subsea Surveillance and Mapping
Hostile actors may map or observe cable routes & maritime terrain. This can be done using state or commercial vessels under innocuous cover.

Cyber or Hybrid Actions
Ireland is a digital hub but lacks national cyber-defence depth. As such, it may be targeted as a soft-entry point into wider European systems or infrastructure.

Actors and Capabilities

Actor Capability Motivation Likely Vector
UK High Historical/Operational Air, sea, cyber

USA High Strategic Redundancy ISR, cyber
France Moderate Low (EU-aligned) Naval (NATO-led)
Russia Low Disruption of cables Subsurface, cyber
China Low Commercial or cyber Cyber only

Current Gaps

No maritime patrol aircraft or submarine detection
Naval Service at minimal staffing and coverage
No national underwater surveillance system
Limited legal/technical capacity to interdict suspicious maritime activity
No cyber or digital protection for cable infrastructure

Conclusion

Ireland's neutrality is not credible if it relies on others. To uphold the Constitution & protect sovereignty, Ireland must develop its own maritime situational awareness & response capability independent of any potential adversary

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 future maritime security threats are unlikely to take the form of traditional naval assault. Instead, they centre on hybrid and infrastructure-focused risks, where hostile actors exploit current gaps in surveillance, enforcement, & policy clarity. These challenges must be addressed within the framework of Ireland's neutrality and constitutional independence.

1. Subsea Infrastructure Risk
Ireland is a hub for transatlantic fibre-optic cables. These are essential to global data & financial flows yet remain largely unmonitored & unprotected. Disruption—even through covert tampering or mapping—could have global ripple effects, particularly in the context of NATO-Russia tensions.

2. Maritime Surveillance Deficits
The Naval Service is understrength, with limited patrol coverage & long-standing retention problems. Ireland has no maritime patrol aircraft, no persistent radar coverage, & limited ability to detect or investigate sub-surface activity across its vast EEZ. This makes it vulnerable to both state & non-state exploitation.

3. Exploitation of Neutral Status
Ireland's neutrality is undermined if it cannot monitor or enforce what takes place in its territory. Adversaries may exploit this as a blind spot in NATO coverage, operating surveillance vessels, sub-sea drones, or signal interception platforms with little risk of detection or challenge.

4. Resource and Climate-Driven Tensions
As competition for fish stocks, seabed minerals, & energy infrastructure grows, Ireland will face increased pressure to police its offshore territory. The capacity to enforce these claims—particularly in the Rockall or Atlantic margins—will be essential to maintain sovereignty.

5. Cyber-Maritime Integration
The risk of cyber-attacks on ships, ports, or offshore infrastructure is increasing. As digital systems become central to maritime operations, Ireland will need an integrated maritime cyber defence posture.

Preparation Strategy:

Rebuild the Naval Service to at least 9–12 multipurpose ships with modular systems.

Establish a National Maritime Surveillance Programme, integrating satellites, coastal radar, & passive acoustic monitoring.

Develop Domestic Naval and Long-Range Drone Capability, including airborne drones capable of launching smaller drones ("drone-carrying drones"). These will provide persistent, cost-effective surveillance & force multiplication without over-reliance on foreign assets.

Designate Cable Protection Zones, monitored by unmanned systems, & backed by clear legislation & enforcement capacity.

Create a Maritime Cyber Security Unit focused on securing ports, infrastructure, & subsea data systems.

Legislate for Maritime Sovereignty Enforcement, including powers to interdict & investigate suspicious underwater activity.

Securing Ireland's maritime space requires investment in sensors, vessels, drones, and doctrine rooted in neutrality and self-reliance.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes. While Ireland's entire maritime domain must be monitored and defended, some regions demand significantly greater priority based on strategic risk, infrastructure exposure, and geopolitical context.

The Eastern Seaboard is the most immediately critical. It hosts the majority of Ireland's population, infrastructure, and economic activity—including Dublin Port, vital energy and data infrastructure, and submarine cable landings. Crucially, it also faces the United Kingdom. While current relations are formally cooperative, history and present realities caution against complacency. The UK has in the past threatened Irish neutrality, and it is actively complicit in the ongoing genocide in Gaza. In that context, informal or secret military arrangements with the UK—especially those lacking democratic oversight—are incompatible with Irish neutrality and strategic autonomy. As such, the Eastern Seaboard must be treated as the priority theatre for surveillance, interdiction, and deterrent presence, even as we seek to maintain and develop friendly relations.

The South Coast is the second critical area, due to its exposure to maritime approaches from the English Channel and the Bay of Biscay. Cork Harbour, the Kinsale and Celtic Sea gas infrastructure, and related facilities form key energy assets which require persistent protection.

The Atlantic West and North-Western Approaches—while less exposed to conventional threat—are highly significant for early warning. This region hosts the transatlantic data cables which link Europe and North America. A covert or hybrid operation targeting these cables would carry severe global implications. Surveillance and underwater detection systems are essential here, with a particular focus on sub-surface drone activity and unauthorised vessel presence.

The Irish Sea and Northern Corridor—adjacent to Northern Ireland—presents specific security concerns due to the history of UK military activity and the potential for airspace or maritime overflight without consent. Monitoring here should be integrated with passive sensor networks and supported by unmanned systems.

In short, the strategy must prioritise:

The Eastern Seaboard – for geopolitical, population, and infrastructure risk;

The Southern Coast – for energy security and maritime transit;

The Western Approaches – for global digital infrastructure protection;

The Northern Corridor – for sovereign surveillance integrity.

Neutrality demands not only formal independence, but the practical ability to detect, deter, and respond to activity in all key maritime areas without reliance on foreign militaries.

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 protect Ireland's maritime interests credibly and independently, strategic investments must prioritise autonomous, layered, and resilient systems suitable for a non-aligned, neutral defence posture. This means focusing on technologies that provide persistent surveillance, reliable interdiction capability, and protection of subsea infrastructure—without creating dependencies on foreign powers or slipping into export-oriented defence industrial policy.

1. Persistent Maritime Surveillance
Ireland must develop layered situational awareness across its EEZ, especially around subsea cables and offshore infrastructure. Key capabilities include:

Long-endurance uncrewed surface and underwater vehicles (USVs/UUVs) for real-time patrol and sensor coverage.

Fixed seabed sensors and passive acoustic systems at critical nodes.

Aerostats and maritime UAVs providing radar and EO/IR coverage over extended ocean zones.
All platforms must be networked via secure, domestic command and control.

2. Domestic Maritime Drone Capability
Ireland should develop a sovereign maritime drone programme focused solely on national defence. This includes:

Drone-carrier drones capable of deploying smaller sensor or interdiction drones at long range.

Modular systems that can operate from land, ship or mobile platforms.
This capability must remain strictly domestic—produced, operated and controlled in-country—with no commercial or export function.

3. Subsea Infrastructure Security
Strategic investment is required in both physical protection and technical monitoring of undersea cables and pipelines. This includes:

Tamper-detection systems embedded in cable landing zones.

Autonomous response drones on standby to investigate interference.

Shielded cable routes or modular reinforcement at vulnerable points.

4. Data Fusion and Domestic Command Infrastructure
A centralised but redundant maritime intelligence centre is essential to integrate sensor inputs, assess threats, and coordinate responses without reliance on foreign intelligence. All data must be processed, stored and secured onshore under national control.

5. Small Naval Interdiction Craft and Port Defences
Investment in a fleet of fast, armed patrol vessels with drone-launch capability will allow coverage of vulnerable approaches, cable sites, and port infrastructure. Fixed and mobile harbour defence units should also be established at key commercial and military ports.

These investments, delivered without exporting or international dependency, will establish a resilient, self-reliant maritime defence system appropriate to a neutral state.

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 must exclude private sector involvement in defence planning, command structures, or critical response capabilities. While private entities may operate maritime infrastructure such as ports, cable landing sites or energy facilities, they should not be treated as partners in the development or execution of national security policy. This is not a question of technical competence but of sovereignty, accountability, and neutrality.

Permitting private sector roles in security policy invites market logic into the heart of national defence. It risks subordinating strategic decisions to commercial interests, creating vulnerabilities where infrastructure or data become subject to foreign investment, mergers, or trade treaty obligations. In particular, private involvement in the defence sphere would entangle Ireland in global arms supply chains governed by anti-democratic structures such as the Wassenaar Arrangement or EU Defence Fund procurement rules—structures incompatible with constitutional neutrality.

There is a real and immediate danger that Ireland, under pressure to “modernise” or “align” with partners, becomes a passive node in the global military-industrial complex. This would erode neutrality not through overt alliance, but through the slow corrosion of defence sovereignty by procurement dependency, market regulation, and commercial influence.

Ireland must structurally distinguish itself from the prevailing model of privatised, profit-driven defence sectors. National security infrastructure must be publicly owned, operated and directed. Any physical infrastructure operated by private entities—such as ports or cable hubs—must be subject to strict regulation, state-led threat assessments, and, where necessary, contingency planning for rapid temporary national control in a security emergency.

The Strategy should therefore make a clear and binding distinction: the private sector may own assets, but the State alone is responsible for their defence—and must reserve the right to act without private sector consent where security requires it. Neutrality demands no less.

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's National Maritime Security Strategy must be guided by constitutional neutrality, operational independence, and full democratic oversight. While international cooperation has a place, it must be carefully circumscribed and strictly civilian in character. There is a clear line between coordination in areas such as environmental monitoring, search and rescue, or fisheries protection, and involvement with military or quasi-military blocs.

Engagement with NATO—formally or informally—undermines the credibility of Ireland's neutrality. The Individually Tailored Partnership Programme (ITPP) with NATO has no democratic mandate, was never subjected to Oireachtas scrutiny, and is incompatible with a sovereign security doctrine. It should be ended. Continued participation risks aligning Ireland with military actions that breach international law, draw us into foreign strategic priorities, or erode neutrality by degrees. The same principle applies to EU initiatives that, while described as security-oriented, are structurally integrated with NATO and defence-industrial policy.

The only international entity with legitimate multilateral authority is the United Nations. Ireland should maintain active support for UN-mandated civilian maritime missions and peacekeeping activities, where clearly separated from great-power conflict. Any operational engagement must be transparent, non-binding, and revocable.

In short, international cooperation must be:

UN-only in any military context

Civilian-led in all other areas

Non-binding, reversible, and transparent

Exclusively oriented toward Ireland's constitutional neutrality

Anything else risks Ireland becoming a passive node in foreign defence strategies—or worse, an unaccountable participant in future conflicts.

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 strategy that is not intended to be implemented is not a strategy at all—it's an academic exercise masquerading as policy. It offers false reassurance to the public, wastes civil service capacity, and invites foreign interests to fill the vacuum. Worse still, it opens the door to quiet alignment with foreign doctrines through informal cooperation, unaccountable "partnerships," or creeping procurement decisions that later bind the State. There is no strategic value in producing a document designed to sit on a shelf.

The National Maritime Security Strategy must be implemented as a concrete Action Plan, structured around publicly owned, constitutionally grounded, and operationally independent capacity. Its key elements must include:

Domestic Capability, Not Defence Export Industry
Maritime defence capability must be built for national use only. Ireland should not—and must not—develop into an arms exporter or supply chain node. To do so would insert us into the global military-industrial complex, locking us into trade rules and production contracts that corrode neutrality from within.

State-Owned Infrastructure and Systems
All surveillance, patrol, port protection and maritime C2 infrastructure should be wholly state-owned and operated. No private outsourcing, no defence contractors, no dual-use entanglements. This ensures public control, legal accountability, and long-term neutrality.

Procurement Only, Not Proliferation
Ireland may procure essential hardware from neutral or non-aligned states—but only for direct use. We must not license, co-develop or subcontract military components for export. Our focus is defence, not profit.

Civilian-Military Separation
Strategic maritime capability should serve civil resilience first: radar, drones, port protection, undersea cable monitoring. Defence must never become a pretext for military alliances or industrial alignment with NATO, EU defence initiatives, or private security firms.

Transparent Parliamentary Oversight
All investments must be publicly costed, debated, and reviewed by the Oireachtas—not embedded via technical deals or hidden under "market efficiency" narratives.

In short: A strategy is only as valuable as the State's willingness to act on it—independently, peacefully, and in full public view.

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's maritime security must be firmly grounded in our sovereign neutrality, in our Constitution, and in the realities of our geography and infrastructure. This requires a coherent, fully state-owned defence posture focused on resilience, deterrence, and democratic accountability—not commercial partnerships or military alignment.

We must resist the global trend toward outsourcing defence to private firms or embedding security into international arms production systems. Ireland's neutrality cannot survive if our critical infrastructure, security services, or logistical backbones are in private or foreign hands. This includes both the operational functions of defence and the manufacture or export of military material. Once Ireland becomes a node in the global military-industrial supply chain, the erosion of neutrality is not hypothetical—it is inevitable.

A genuinely independent maritime security strategy must reflect three foundational principles:

Non-Proliferation of Force
Ireland should not produce or export military systems. While it is acceptable to import equipment required for domestic use, there should be no role for Irish entities—public or private—in the global arms market. This avoids entanglements in foreign conflicts and prevents conflicts of interest that would incentivise militarisation.

State Ownership of Maritime Defence Infrastructure
All ports, cable landing points, radar stations, patrol assets, and surveillance systems must be publicly owned and operated. This ensures democratic control, legal accountability, and strategic integrity. There should be no leasing, licensing or "public-private partnership" arrangements.

Neutrality Through Independence
Ireland's ability to remain neutral is not guaranteed by declarations—it is preserved through structures. A domestically funded, publicly operated, non-exporting defence capacity is the only way to uphold neutrality in a world where international law is increasingly undermined by geopolitical blocs.

In sum: We must abandon any ambition to follow the commercialised model of "security" now dominant in Europe and NATO. Maritime security must serve the Irish people, not foreign policy objectives, private profit, or the demands of global defence markets.

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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

Pollution, overfishing

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

Banning sea floor trawlers, massively reducing fishing quotas, environmental regulations around waste and fossil fuel use, demilitarisation.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

The areas most overfished

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Reducing fossil fuel dependency on maritime vessels

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

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

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

Increased military spending is despicable at a time if climate collapse and increasing homelessness

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

Retention in the Defence Force due to poor pay and conditions.
A clear lack of urgency by the personnel of the Department of Defence who appear to frustrate and delay defence operations.
The Department of Defence not understanding that their role is to help and support the Defence Forces in a timely manner.
Complete lack of procurement urgency in the Department of Defence as their practices are not aligned to best in class as seen in US multinational organisations.
Poor threat analysis technique and lack of top down risk assessment (TDRA) modern techniques.
Little or no meaningful ability to respond to any threat.
Serious lack of surveillance above and below our 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

Threats
No central bunkered operations command and control centre staffed 24 x7 with decision makers on duty.
Command centre should be comprised of experts from all sections of Defence and have the ability to task all responses from use of ships, aircraft, Drones etc.
Complete lack of personnel to deliver the threat prevention measures 24 x7.
Lack of the use of surveillance drones.
No eyes on what is in our Maritime space.

Future challenges
Getting and retaining high calibre personnel.
Lack of understanding of how the latest technology can contribute to the threat.
No satellite coverage with constant feed to command centre.
All personnel on our waters can play a part to help protect our territorial waters but they need training and a means of reporting issues. This should be viewed as an opportunity.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

No it should be comprehensive and cover the full 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

Use of Satellite and Drone technology.
Investments on one secure underground command and control centre with all technology in place to monitor and respond to any threat.
Centralise the command and control capabilities into a 24x 7 location. Key operations personnel should be based there and have the ability to make decisions. This may mean having Naval, Air Force (Corps) and Army General staff in place 24 x 7. They could rotate in and out but if we are to be serious if they are not in the Command Center then any response gets delayed.
Use of AI for intelligence analysis is a must. This will assist in getting to the 10% of what we do not know as if our space is well monitored we will know a good 90% of what is happening real time.

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

There is always an opportunity for security cleared partners and the private sector can help.

Role
Service and maintenance of equipment
Training and development
Assist in monitoring operations.
Intelligence analysis.
Pilot drones.
Manipulate satellites
Supply technology

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 vital.
Role
Inter connectivity between EU national command and control centres.
Policy development.
Training standardisation.
Joint response and monitoring exercise.
Joint procurement of equipment to ensure value for money.
Legal support.
Joint response coordination.

YES to part 2 of your question

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 would caution that any action plan will need flexibility for effectiveness.
Threat assessment review - constant situation awareness
Specific mission
Service support
Command and control structure
Communications structure
Budget
Accountability
Training and development
Resources - personnel and equipment
Groupings (all resources- personnel)
Location
Specific tasks of each grouping

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 is a real opportunity here to set a new benchmark for maratime security and protect not only our undersea infrastructure but also our sea going people, our environment and our territorial waters. Remember everything can be hacked so the use of technology must be protected from hackers and the personnel who work in this space looked after.

I wish all well with this consultation and success in developing our nation maratime security strategy.

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 vulnerabilities remains its inability to proactively prepare for threats against infrastructure due to a significant lack of manpower, experience, resources and support structures.

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

I believe Irelands greatest threat will be from nations intent on damaging infrastructure along the seabed which supports European economies and power systems. Be that from surface is subsurface vessels.

Ireland also faces a challenge in policing vessels entering approaching Europe smuggling drugs and other illegal materials.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Ireland should be capable of policing its entire maritime domain at all times however the west and south coasts should be prioritised.

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

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anti submarine surveillance and anti submarine warfare should be prioritised. Ireland should invest in a dedicated naval base on the west coast that is not situated in the centre of a town or city. This would provide room for training facilities and future expansion where necessary.

Additional aircraft attached to the naval surface would also increase effectiveness and allow for additional patrols when naval vessels are deployed elsewhere.

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

It is the responsibility of the State to protect its domain. The owners of the infrastructure if not already doing so could be taxed for use of the States domain similar to how home owners must pay a local property tax for they' re home.

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?

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Ireland should increase its cooperation with other EU member states in sharing information towards a common EU defence.

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 strategy is ineffective without a binding Action plan. This is a must.

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

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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

One of the most pressing concerns is the vulnerability of critical undersea infrastructure—particularly transatlantic data cables that land in Ireland and support global communications. These could be targeted by hostile actors seeking to disrupt commerce or intelligence flows.
Despite having an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) ten times the size of its landmass, Ireland’s naval capabilities remain limited. Staffing shortages and aging vessels reduce the state’s ability to patrol and protect its waters. This makes it difficult to monitor illicit activities such as drug smuggling, human trafficking, and illegal fishing. Hybrid threats also loom large. Foreign “research” vessels may conduct unauthorised surveillance or map seabed infrastructure under the pretext of scientific missions, operating in grey zones that are hard to police. In parallel, cyber vulnerabilities in ports and maritime navigation systems expose Ireland to potential disruption without a single shot being fired.
Ireland's heavy reliance on EU and NATO partners for maritime intelligence underscores a critical strategic gap: a lack of sovereign capacity to detect, deter, and respond independently. Climate change is another challenge, increasing the frequency of maritime disasters and placing additional pressure on already stretched 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?

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Looking ahead, Ireland's maritime security will face increasingly complex and technologically advanced threats. One of the concern is the weaponisation of autonomous maritime systems. Low-cost, mobile underwater and surface vehicles could be deployed covertly by hostile actors for surveillance, disruption, or attacks on critical infrastructure such as undersea cables or offshore platforms—often without detection.

Space will also become an active domain of maritime security. As satellite constellations expand, the systems Ireland relies on—GPS, communications, and vessel tracking—will become more vulnerable to hacking, spoofing, and jamming, potentially disrupting both civilian and defence operations.

Another emerging challenge is deep-sea resource competition. As technologies for seabed mining become viable, Ireland's vast Exclusive Economic Zone could attract foreign interest and activity. Without strong legal protections and monitoring capacity, this could lead to geopolitical friction and environmental degradation.

Quantum and AI-enabled threats are also on the horizon. Quantum sensing may eventually expose stealth operations, while swarms of AI-driven drones could overwhelm traditional naval defences. These technologies point to a future where maritime advantage hinges on scientific and technical capability.

At the same time, hybrid and grey zone threats—such as cyberattacks, covert mapping of the seabed, and unmarked vessel incursions—are expected to intensify. Climate change will compound these risks through more severe storms, rising sea levels, shifting fisheries, and possible maritime migration.

To meet these future challenges, Ireland must invest in persistent maritime domain awareness using satellite, drone, acoustic, and AI-driven systems. Strengthening cyber resilience and building sovereign capabilities in both space and subsea surveillance will be crucial, alongside enhancing naval operational readiness.

Above all, collaboration will be key. Government, defence, academia/research, and industry must work together. By embedding research centres and future national tech hubs into maritime security planning, Ireland can ensure that innovation supports sovereignty—enabling the nation not just to respond to future threats, but to anticipate and shape them.

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

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Given the vastness of Ireland's maritime domain—over 880,000 km², or roughly ten times the landmass—it is both practical and necessary for the National Maritime Security Strategy to prioritise certain geographical areas. High-risk zones should be identified based on strategic, economic, and environmental importance.
The Southwest and West coasts, where critical transatlantic undersea cables land, should be a primary focus. These areas are vital to global digital infrastructure and are increasingly vulnerable to hybrid threats, including sabotage or covert mapping by foreign actors.
The Irish Sea also warrants special attention due to its proximity to the UK, high traffic volume, and dense maritime infrastructure. As cross-border cooperation evolves post-Brexit, security and surveillance here remain complex but essential.
Additionally, emerging offshore renewable energy zones, such as those designated for wind farm development, must be protected. These will become critical national assets in the energy transition and could be targeted for disruption.
Finally, areas rich in biodiversity or targeted for deep-sea resource exploitation need robust monitoring to prevent environmental degradation and enforce maritime law.
In short, prioritising these zones does not mean neglecting the rest—it means building a layered approach where high-risk or high-value areas receive enhanced focus, surveillance, and inter-agency coordination as part of a smart, scalable maritime security framework.

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

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First, investment in maritime domain awareness is essential. This includes satellite surveillance, coastal radar systems, unmanned surface and underwater vehicles (USVs and UUVs), and AI-driven data fusion platforms to detect and respond to anomalies in real time. These systems should be integrated across defence, civil, and scientific domains to ensure comprehensive coverage and intelligence sharing.

Second, undersea infrastructure protection must be elevated as a strategic priority. Transatlantic data cables, offshore energy platforms, and seabed assets require constant monitoring. This demands both physical surveillance and advanced cyber-defence tools, including quantum-secure communications and network anomaly detection systems.

Third, naval capabilities must be strengthened. The Naval Service needs modern multi-role vessels, improved retention and recruitment structures, and increased operational capacity to maintain sovereignty and enforce law across the EEZ.

Fourth, investment in dual-use research and innovation is vital. Ireland should support national tech hubs and research centres focused on maritime autonomy, quantum sensing, and green maritime technologies—bridging research and real-world application.

Finally, infrastructure at key ports should be upgraded to support defence, civil protection, and emergency response operations—ensuring resilience in times of crisis or disruption.

A focused blend of technology, infrastructure, and inter-agency capacity-building will enable Ireland to meet both today's risks and tomorrow's maritime security challenges.

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?

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The strategy should actively involve the private sector, especially owners and operators of critical maritime infrastructure. Their role is vital because much of the maritime domain—such as ports, undersea cables, offshore energy facilities, and shipping—is privately owned or managed, making collaboration essential for comprehensive security.
Private sector actors can contribute by:
Sharing real-time threat intelligence and incident reports to improve situational awareness across public and private stakeholders.
Implementing robust cybersecurity measures to protect critical infrastructure from cyberattacks, which are increasingly common in maritime domains.
Participating in joint exercises and preparedness planning alongside government agencies to strengthen coordinated responses to crises.
Investing in resilience and redundancy for critical infrastructure to mitigate the impact of potential disruptions.
Supporting research and innovation by collaborating with academic and government research centres on emerging maritime security technologies.

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?

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Given the transnational nature of maritime threats—ranging from cyberattacks and smuggling to environmental hazards and geopolitical tensions—no single nation can address these challenges alone.
Cooperation with EU partners is essential, as many maritime security issues overlap with European waters, including fisheries management, border control, and shared infrastructure protection. Ireland can benefit from EU frameworks for intelligence sharing, joint operations, and funding for maritime domain awareness technologies.
Collaboration with neighbouring countries like the UK and France is also vital, especially post-Brexit, to ensure seamless coordination in the Irish Sea and adjacent maritime zones. This helps maintain security, trade flow, and emergency response capabilities.
Ireland's Individually Tailored Partnership Programme (ITPP) with NATO offers valuable opportunities for joint training, capacity building, and interoperability without formal alliance membership. Engagement with NATO and other international maritime organisations strengthens Ireland's ability to contribute to and benefit from collective maritime security efforts.

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 be accompanied by a detailed and actionable Action Plan. While the strategy outlines vision and priorities, the Action Plan provides the practical roadmap—assigning responsibilities, setting timelines, and defining milestones for success. It transforms ambition into implementation and ensures long-term accountability.

Key elements should include:

Clear Objectives and Milestones aligned with strategic goals, such as maritime domain awareness, cyber resilience, and modernised naval capacity. Time-bound targets enable progress tracking and adaptation to emerging threats.

Naval Fleet Renewal through a phased upgrade plan, including acquisition of modern multi-purpose vessels with dynamic positioning and built-in support for autonomous robotic systems—ensuring future-readiness for evolving missions at sea.

Workforce Planning through a comprehensive people strategy for the Naval Service and supporting agencies, labs, and services. Recruitment, training, and retention in critical fields such as robotics, AI, and cybersecurity must be prioritised.

Technology and Innovation Investment via the phased establishment of a National Field Robotics Research Lab, starting with the consolidation of existing capabilities (e.g., UL CRIS, NMCI, Navy HQ, GSI, MI). This lab should:

Focus on robotic systems for sea, air, and land operations (ROVs, AUVs, ASVs, UAVs, sensors).

Be co-located with a port or coastal area offering access to ocean, test ranges, and controlled airspace.

Include test tanks, marine robotics labs, airborne systems labs, and specialist engineering facilities.

Evolve to full operational capability over 5 years, with staffing and funding levels comparable to marine institutes like WHOI, Ifremer, or NOC.

Resource Allocation ensuring sustained investment in research, infrastructure, and personnel. Ireland currently lacks a national engineering-focused marine lab—closing this gap will support both security and innovation agendas.

Defined Roles and Partnerships across government, academia, and industry to ensure coordination and avoid duplication. Integration with international partners (EU, NATO, IMO) and domestic stakeholders is essential.

Cyber-Physical Infrastructure Protection, particularly for critical undersea assets like data cables and offshore platforms. This includes quantum-secure communication, AI-based anomaly detection, and real-time surveillance.

Monitoring and Evaluation mechanisms to assess progress, report regularly, and refine the plan in response to changing risks and technological advances.

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

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A few additional considerations:

Maritime Security as a National Innovation Driver: Maritime security challenges can serve as a catalyst for Ireland's broader technological and industrial development. A dual-use innovation model—where capabilities for defence also support sectors like offshore energy, marine science and technology, and environmental monitoring—should be central to strategic planning.
Youth and Skills Pipeline: A long-term skills strategy is needed to build future maritime expertise. This should include targeted education and outreach programmes in schools and universities to foster skills in robotics, AI, ocean science, and cyber defence—especially through collaborative projects with research institutions. (Robotic completions , workshops etc)
National Maritime Awareness Campaign: Public understanding of Ireland's maritime domain remains limited despite its strategic importance. A coordinated awareness initiative, involving media, education, and local communities, would help build societal support for maritime investment and resilience.
Climate Security Integration: Maritime security and climate adaptation are increasingly interlinked. The strategy should explicitly include climate-related maritime risks—such as sea-level rise, fisheries shifts, and infrastructure vulnerability—and invest in technologies and response systems that serve both security and sustainability goals.
Legislative and Policy Reform: A review of Ireland's legislative framework for maritime security should be considered, including clearer mandates for agencies and updated provisions for emerging threats (e.g., autonomous systems, grey zone activity).

Contact

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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?

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Legislative Enforcement: A programme of reform is in progress to deliver a modern, integrated marine planning system. The National Marine Planning Framework ("NMPF") is now in place and has also enacted the Marine Area Planning Act 2021. This legislates for the future of marine planning. An increased naval presence will be required to support enforcement in order to ensure that this new legislation is properly adhered to.

Data Infrastructure Security: A Cable Landing Station ("CLS") is located at the Port. The CLS is part of a high-speed subsea data connection of Iceland with Ireland at Galway known as FARICE. A second data cable (PISCES) has commenced surveys inside the Irish 12 mile limit; this is being co-funded by the Connecting Europe Facility. Discussions are ongoing regarding a third data cable from the Far East direct to Galway. These three cables will link Ireland directly to other markets in the EU, USA and the Far East.

This infrastructure will require protection and will impact Naval Service planning.

There is already evidence of unwelcome interest in cables off our coast by foreign actors. Earlier this month, RTE reported that the Irish Defence Forces monitored a sanctioned Russian cargo ship off the Irish coast. They referenced the Russian general cargo ship 'Barents' and noted that data showed that the ship passed near undersea cables which run through Irish waters.

Resourcing: The Naval Service is currently under resourced. A failure to attract and retain personnel is a threat to Ireland's maritime security. The establishment of a permanent base at Galway will attract people from the West of Ireland who are interested in joining the Navy. Personnel at a new base in Galway could be housed at Renmore Army Barracks, which is adjacent to the Port.

SECA-Induced Traffic Shifts: The introduction of the Sulphur Emission Control Area (SECA) in the North Sea has led to a measurable shift in commercial shipping patterns. To avoid the cost of low-sulphur fuels required in SECA zones, vessels are re-routing along the West Coast of Ireland. This has resulted in increased traffic and associated maritime risk along the Atlantic seaboard. Ireland's ability to monitor and respond to these risks must be reinforced through investment in western infrastructure.

Drug trafficking: In recent months, Ireland has enjoyed some notable successes in terms of the interception of large quantities of narcotics off our coast (these interceptions tend to be far more significant that interceptions on land after the narcotics have been split into smaller quantities). This is welcomed and the excellent work carried out by the Naval Service and other State agencies in this regard is to be commended. However, it is a reasonable assumption that narcotics are being successfully landed in Ireland or passing through Irish waters to overseas ports. An expansion of our Naval Service with additional patrol activity should mitigate this threat.

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?

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Climate Change: Fish stocks are shifting; Surveillance of our fisheries must be enforced.

Northern Sea Route: Due to the effects of climate change and the melting of polar ice, the Northern Sea Route ("NSR") is increasingly navigable to sea-going vessels during the summer months. This represents a shift in global maritime access. The NSR, which runs along Russia's Arctic coast, offers a route from the Far East to European waters that is approximately 30% shorter than traditional passages.

This reduction in distance and transit time brings with it fuel savings, lower operational costs and a logistical edge for commercial operators, notably for Russian and Chinese interests. This new route also shortens the sea passage for Russian and Chinese naval vessels entering European waters.

Unlike current deployments, which are closely monitored by European surveillance networks, naval vessels transiting the NSR will approach the Atlantic from the less monitored northern flank.

The NSR is regulated by Russia and any vessel wishing to transit the route must obtain prior authorisation from the Northern Sea Route Administration ("NSRA"). This grants Russia regulatory control and strategic leverage over Arctic maritime traffic.

The above requires enhanced monitoring and enforcement by EU and NATO members to safeguard:

- Fisheries
- Oil and gas reserves
- Subsea data cables
- Offshore renewable energy infrastructure

The opening of the NSR brings both opportunity and risk and it will be critical for maritime security strategies to adapt to this evolving operating environment.

Logistics/Cyber: Sections 19 to 21 of the European Parliament's resolution of 17 January 2024, "Building a Comprehensive European Port Strategy" note various logistics/cyber threats relating to ports, particularly from countries and entities from outside the EU.

The Port suggests that each of the above are taken into account in the context of the review.

Dual use: There is an increasing understanding of the dual use of commercial ports for the port's traditional role and for military use. It is likely that, as the EU turns its attention to security matters, there will be an increased emphasis on commercial ports' ability to accommodate the military. The risks of espionage and sabotage in ports with dual use should be considered.

Offshore Renewable Energy: Ireland's Future Framework for Offshore Renewable Energy states that "Ireland has the potential to be a world leader in offshore renewable energy (ORE)" and notes "our long term ambitions of 20GW by 2040 and 37 GW by 2050".

This represents an enormous capital investment in offshore assets. In addition to the turbine assets themselves, the development of offshore wind will give rise to other infrastructure to enable the export of the surplus power. Such power could be exported by way of interconnectors and/or hydrogen/green fuels. These assets require protection from hostile actors.

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

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The vast majority of our marine area lies off our West Coast and it is suggested that the importance of the Western seaboard is clearly emphasised.

- Ireland serves as a vital gateway for global digital connectivity. Several strategic subsea cables make landfall on the west coast. These carry international internet and financial data traffic. The strategy should identify and prioritise the protection, monitoring and rapid response capability for these cables, particularly on the West Coast. This could include the deployment of maritime surveillance (eg drones, patrol vessels, seabed sensors) and partnerships with private cable operators for real time status alerts and inclusion in joint defence or EU cyber marine security frameworks.
- Offshore wind turbines and related infrastructure must be protected. The initial development of such infrastructure will take place off the East Coast before moving around to the West Coast over time. Marine security requirements should retain flexibility to ensure that resources are deployed in the areas in which the infrastructure is developed.
- The direction of drug trafficking is generally from the Americas to Ireland rather than from Europe/Africa /Asia and, as such, our Atlantic coast requires more patrol related resources to combat this activity.
- Given the scarcity of port infrastructure on our West Coast, the lack of shipping and economic activity in the West compared to the East, surveillance, either formally through agencies or informally by way of passing traffic, is more limited off the West Coast. This surveillance deficit should be addressed through the marine security review.
- Ireland's western waters are home to some of the most biologically diverse marine ecosystems in Europe. They support a wide range of marine life from valuable fish to protected and endangered species. The western seaboard SACs and MPAs are critical for marine mammals, seabirds and cold-water coral reefs. These ecosystems play a crucial role in carbon storage, climate regulation and marine food chains. Biodiversity hotspots such as the Porcupine Bank and Rockall Trough are globally significant but vulnerable to disturbance. These waters are vital to Ireland. The Strategy should prioritise enhanced protection, monitoring and enforcement capability along the Western seaboard.
- The Navy needs to reduce its carbon footprint. The costs for naval vessels burning unnecessary fuel from Haulbowline to the West Coast will be negated by having a base in Galway. All new naval ships are expected to have shore power capabilities. This has been factored into the design of the new Port of Galway. A naval base at a relocated and expanded Port of Galway will assist the Navy to reduce its own carbon footprint.

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

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- Infrastructure: One naval base is insufficient to properly police the Irish coastline. While the recent announcement of the deployment of a naval vessel at Dun Laoghaire is welcome, a location for an additional West Coast base has yet to be announced. For reasons set out in this document, such a West Coast base should be located at a relocated and expanded Port of Galway. Investments in Irish port infrastructure around the coast will better enable the Naval Service and other agencies such as the Irish Coast Guard to carry out their vital work.
- Technology and Surveillance: Invest in radar, satellite tracking, drones and AI-enhanced detection:
  - Radar systems provide real-time coverage of coastal waters.
  - Satellite tracking enables wide-area monitoring, including identification of ships with disabled AIS (Automatic Identification Systems).
  - Drones (UAVs) offer flexible, cost-effective tools for surveillance over large maritime zones.
  - AI-enhanced detection can help analyse vast datasets from radar, satellite and drone feeds to detect patterns, anomalies or illegal activity more efficiently and with reduced human workload.

- Cable Security: Use sensors at landing sites to detect tampering or suspicious activity, provide early warning for physical or cyber attacks and support forensic investigations in the event of a disruption.
- Climate change is driving a marked increase in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, including storms, high seas and flooding. This growing volatility directly increases the risk of maritime emergencies. It is suggested that, to maintain maritime safety and resilience in a changing climate, Ireland must prioritise a modernised, climate-responsive SAR capability. This includes, not just equipment upgrades, but systemic improvements in coordination, technology, and training, especially along the exposed and strategically important western seaboard.

- Enforcement: There is a need to equip The Naval Service and the Irish Coast Guard ("ICRG") for existing and new challenges. Ireland's marine environment faces threats from:
  - Illegal fishing
  - Pollution (including plastics and oil spills)
  - Unregulated offshore development
  - To respond effectively, the Naval Service and ICRG need:
  - Modern patrol vessels with environmental monitoring equipment
  - Enhanced legal powers and enforcement tools
  - Access to marine pollution detection technologies
  - Training in marine environmental law and incident response

These investments will help Ireland meet international obligations and safeguard marine biodiversity, fisheries and coastal communities.

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?

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Yes. The private sector should:

- Supply technology and cybersecurity services.
- Collaborate on surveillance and data sharing. The private sector often has real-time operational data on vessel movements, cargo, communications traffic or underwater activity that can contribute to national situational awareness. They should:
- Share radar, AIS, and CCTV feeds with state agencies under agreed protocols.
- Participate in information-sharing networks for threat intelligence, suspicious activity reporting and incident alerts.
- Work with government to establish secure data exchange platforms that protect sensitive commercial data while enabling timely state access during emergencies.
- Private sector stakeholders such as port operators, offshore energy companies, telecom firms (e.g. subsea cable operators) and shipping companies often own, operate or have direct access to critical data and observations that can significantly enhance Ireland's maritime situational awareness.

While the private sector can augment national capabilities, operational control and legal authority must reside with the state. This includes:

- The Irish Naval Service and its fleet.
- The IRCG and Search and Rescue resources.
- Strategic port infrastructure, especially where it intersects with national security (e.g. naval berths, customs zones, cable landings).

Maintaining sovereign control over these assets is essential to:

- Protect national interests during crises.
- Avoid dependency on private or foreign actors.
- Uphold legal authority and accountability in sensitive 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?

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International cooperation is essential in terms of maritime security. However, it is suggested that the use of non-EU state owned controlled or influenced platforms in ports or to assist with maritime security should be resisted.

The European Parliament's resolution of 17 January 2024, "Building a Comprehensive European Port Strategy," includes the following:

"Deplores the fact that EU ports are misused by criminal organisations as key entry points for illicit drugs, which has an effect on society as a whole and undermines the safety of ports, nearby cities and their residents; calls on the Commission to present measures for effective European cooperation to combat drug trafficking, extraction and criminal subversion; welcomes in this respect the Commission's 18 October 2023 roadmap to fight Drug Trafficking and Organised Crime and underlines the need for a coordinated EU approach to combat all kinds of transnational organised crime.

Stresses that European ports are particularly exposed to the trafficking of other illicit products such as weapons or counterfeit items, as well as to customs and VAT fraud and that it is also necessary to step up the fight against these activities; underlines in this respect the importance of cooperation between port management bodies and law enforcement authorities, including in the usage of digital tools and data to ensure safe and secure port operations; considers that, when there is sufficient legal justification, ports should be able to access to all tools they need to contribute to their security."

We strongly support the sentiments expressed in this resolution in terms of international cooperation to counteract criminal activity.

We also suggest the following:

- Deepen integration with European Maritime Safety Agency ("EMSA") and EU maritime initiatives
- Enhance intelligence sharing via Interpol and global maritime networks.
- Expand NATO cooperation through Ireland's Individually Tailored Partnership Programme for joint training and interoperability
- Strengthen bilateral links with Japan, the UK, France, Iceland, Portugal, and Spain

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?

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Yes, an Action Plan is required. The Action Plan should include the following:

1. Infrastructure & Resources
- Recruitment strategy.
- Port enhancements – it is suggested that Galway, as a proposed Naval Base, is critical in this regard.
- Multi-year capital plan, to include dedicated funding over a ten period.

2. Training & Roles:
- Cybersecurity and cable protection training.
- Multi-agency cooperation modules.

3. Technology:
- Investment in power, drones, radar and other emerging technologies

4. Governance:
- Create a Maritime Security Coordination Unit
- Define strategic milestones and monitoring of progress against agreed capital plan

5. Private Sector Protocols:
- Regular drills and data protection frameworks

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

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Currently, access to the Port of Galway is limited to 4 hours per day at 2 intervals of 2 hours. In addition, the size of vessel that can be accommodated at the current Port is limited. The gated Port at Galway does not give the Naval Service 24-hour access/egress in the event that there is an incident offshore to which the Naval Service may need to respond. If the gates are closed, the response time to an incident could be delayed by 10 hours; this is clearly unsatisfactory in the event of an emergency.

A planning application has been submitted for the relocation and expansion of the Port of Galway. This development will:

- Improve Port infrastructure for commercial and research shipping activity in the West of Ireland.
- Serve as a critical logistics base for onshore and offshore renewable energy.
- Unlock 17 acres of docklands for urban regeneration – see www.galway-harbour.com.
- Provide enhanced facilities for national and international research vessels.
- Support naval operations with 24/7 access and accommodation for vessels of frigate class of 138m and larger.

The proposed development will remove current tidal restrictions, enabling rapid emergency response and better alignment with national and EU security priorities.

Ireland has 12% of the EU's sea area and this sea area is seven times the size of the island of Ireland. Ireland's ability to effectively patrol this area is likely to be compromised if the Navy's current fleet of eight ships is not increased. Our naval services currently operate from one permanent base in Haulbowline in Cork Harbour. Ireland's ability to service its vast sea area, particularly off its West Coast, would be better served by the establishment of an additional base situated around the midpoint of our Atlantic Coast; a relocated and expanded Port of Galway is ideally situated in this regard.

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?

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We are a neutral island without the ability to stop a threat actor from cutting us off from the rest of the world. Currently I think we are vulnerable to having our electric, gas and Internet connections being tapped or rigged with explosive for use at a later date (like what happened to Nordstream).

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?

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As the geopolitical situation deteriorates globally, the risk of our island being completely blockaded by a hostile navy increases. We could have put physical trade routes completely cut off. We could also see our offshore energy infrastructure like wind turbines being sabotaged.

To prepare for this, we certainly need to be able to send to sea a substantial traditional naval force of ships to intercept and investigate suspicious activity and head off intrusions such as what happened with a Russian ship a few years ago. We should not be relying on a flotilla of fishermen.

However I think we also need to learn a lot from Ukraines use of drones in the Black Sea - we should not invest all of our money in extremely expensive ships which can be taken out with drones causing less than a thousand euro. I think an area of opportunity could be having a huge navy of aerial, surface and subsurface drones to give us the flexibility and cheap coverage we need in order to patrol and control our extensive EEZ.

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

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We should work with UK to burden-share along our respective EEZs in the Irish sea, and we should focus more of our attention off the South West coast where all our transatlantic comms cables are, and any other area with offshore infrastructure or energy interconnectors.

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

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If I have to pick a single focus, I think we need to seriously explore having a huge drone navy we can use as a force multiplier in a flexible way. We will never have the biggest navy but we can try to be a hugely technologically advanced force.

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?

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We should maintain as much sovereignty over our critical military infrastructure as much as possible. The State needs to cop on and take our security seriously - especially if we want to be neutral. We should invest more in defence to ensure we can credibly protect that neutrality, instead of fobbing off contracts to the private sector by looking for a good deal.

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?

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I think we should cooperate more with UK along our shared boarders, and with the EU on a regional level. But our focus should be more on tailoring our Maritime security towards our specific situation of defending our own island, and not on deployments in other seas or oceans.

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 should be published detailing timelines, infrastructure and technology planned, to keep government accountable (without sharing publicly any militarily sensitive details).

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 just want us to take our navy seriously, it's absolutely shocking the helpless state we've let ourselves get into and I just hope we have enough time to recover before something bad happens.

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

Funamentally my life in Ireland depends on safe, reliable sea routes for everything from broadband in my living room to food on the shelves. Four weak spots keep me awake even though I am no expert.

First, nearly all the internet cables and gas pipes that link Ireland to the world run along the seabed just off our coast. Russian "research" ships have already lingered over them, and we saw in the Baltic last year how a few well-placed cuts can knock whole regions offline. If two of those cables were severed at once, banks, data centres, and hospitals here would feel it within hours. Right now we seem to have almost no permanent sensors on the seabed, no quick-reaction repair gear, and nobody clearly in charge of watching that patch of sea around the clock.

Second, the computers that run our ports are a soft target. Ninety percent of our trade moves through those gates, yet many port IT systems still sit outside the stronger EU cyber-security rules. In recent drills, a single ransomware attack on one gate system backed trucks up for kilometres in less than half an hour. That kind of shutdown would strand fresh food, medical supplies, and hazardous cargo while the hackers name their price.

Third, organised crime is taking advantage of the gap in navy patrols. The huge cocaine haul from a cargo ship last year was a lucky catch rather than proof the system works. With only one or two naval vessels on duty most days, smugglers know the odds are with them. The same wide open sea lanes those gangs use could just as easily serve foreign intelligence boats.

Fourth, we are about to plant thousands of offshore wind turbines and high-voltage cables in the same waters, yet no one has spelled out who protects them. Countries like Belgium are already fitting underwater sensors and drone pickets around their wind farms. Ireland has not even decided who would show up if a turbine, its cable, or its substation were tampered with.

These problems look different on the surface but they share a single cause, thin situational awareness and overstretched response capacity. Neutral status does not deter saboteurs, and good intentions do not slow drug money. What will help is constant monitoring of the seabed, clear rules that pull ports and offshore wind under strong cyber laws, more eyes in the sky and at sea to cover the patrol gap, and a stockpile of spare cable and power gear so repairs do not drag on for weeks. A joint team drawn from the navy, customs, gardaí, and energy companies should treat smuggling, spying, and sabotage as one connected threat, not three separate jobs.

If we act now, we can turn these weak points into strengths and keep our sea lifelines safe. If we wait, the first deliberate cable cut or port hack will make the decisions for us.

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

I see three future challenges rising faster than our ability to handle them. First, cheap autonomous drones, both underwater and aerial, will give smugglers and hostile actors the reach we used to associate only with navies. A battery-powered sub that fits in a van can now map or damage a cable without a mother-ship. Ireland's EEZ already stretches far beyond the patrol hours we can fly or sail, so once drones arrive in numbers we will be blind in places that suddenly matter.

Second, critical seabed and offshore energy infrastructure is multiplying. By the middle of the next decade we expect dozens of trans-Atlantic fibre pairs, two gas or hydrogen lines and thousands of megawatts of offshore wind exporting through single points. That density means a small strike, an anchor drag or a cyber-triggered trip on one export cable can ripple into data outages, power shortages and insurance claims in the same afternoon. We do not yet run a real-time sensor grid on the seabed, we do not hold spare cable or substation modules on Irish soil and we have no clear repair contracts in place.

Third, climate change is loading the dice toward more extreme Atlantic storms and longer search-and-rescue pulls. The same Navy and Coast Guard teams we ask to watch smugglers and inspect turbines will also handle bigger weather hits, so workload will spike just as personnel shortages bite. The capacity gap will keep widening unless we change the model.

Preparation starts with round-the-clock awareness. Fibre-optic strain sensors, AIS spoof detection, long-endurance drones and satellite feeds should funnel into one maritime fusion cell that includes Defence, the National Cyber Security Centre, port operators and cable or wind farm owners. Ports, offshore wind and subsea cables all need to fall under the higher NIS2 cyber tier with mandatory red-team tests, and operators must agree that key telemetry can be shared instantly in an emergency.

Resilience matters as much as surveillance. A bonded depot on the south coast holding spare cable segments, turbine transformers and drone parts cuts repair time from weeks to days. Standing rapid-call ROV contracts should be signed now, not after the first break. On the patrol side, leasing two commercial offshore patrol vessels, restoring sea pay so we can keep crews and buying a handful of autonomous surface craft will close the most obvious coverage gap while longer-term shipbuilding proceeds.

These steps shift the conversation from worrying about the next shock to being ready for it. Waiting means the first coordinated drone swarm, cable cut or offshore turbine hit will force frantic decisions under the spotlight. Acting now turns that future headline into a manageable incident.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes. Some pieces of sea carry national risk far beyond their size, and spreading thin resources evenly makes them ineffective everywhere.

West of Valentia island through Galway and Mayo is a small but vital patch of seabed where sixteen trans Atlantic fibre pairs and two gas pipelines converge before landfall. One anchor drag or deliberate cut there would throttle data traffic and gas imports at the same moment. That patch needs constant acoustic or fibre strain monitoring backed by an on call repair vessel, not just occasional patrols.

The east coast corridor from Dundalk down through Dublin Bay to Rosslare moves almost all container, roll on roll off and passenger traffic. Port IT systems in this strip have already shown they can be frozen by ransomware during cyber drills. Continuous cyber oversight and a rapid boarding team that can reach suspect ships inside the Irish Sea would do more for resilience than trying to station one patrol craft in every county.

The Celtic Sea between Waterford and Kerry is the future offshore wind factory, worth billions and exposed to weather and sabotage. Belgium hardened its farms with seabed sensors and surface drones after suspicious activity. Ireland should copy that model, run trials while the first turbine foundations go in and make sure developers share data inside a joint fusion cell.

Quiet inlets from Donegal round to the Shannon estuary are favourite drop off points for smugglers. The shoreline is broken, roads are few, and naval presence is sporadic. Customs, Garda and Defence should agree a handful of choke points, fit them with cameras and keep rapid launch ribs on standby rather than trying to watch every cove.

Prioritising does not abandon the rest of the territorial waters. It hardens the handful of areas where a single strike, hack or covert shipment could ripple nationwide, while long endurance drones and satellites keep an eye on the wider ocean. A tiered approach turns limited money and crew hours into a shield that can actually stop something rather than a thin blanket that fails everywhere.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

If the budget is tight the first euro still goes into knowing what is happening under and on top of the water in real time. A web of fibre-optic strain sensors and a few fixed acoustic arrays on the seabed would spot a cable cut, pipeline tampering or a rogue underwater drone the moment it starts, not hours later. All that data must flow into one maritime fusion centre that overlays Navy radar, satellite ship tracking, port cameras and telecom alerts on a single screen. A clear picture is the base for every other decision.

Sensors mean little if we can't fix damage fast. A resilience depot on the south coast holding spare fibre rope, cable joints, turbine transformers and modular substations lets us launch repairs within hours, not days spent hunting parts abroad. A repair vessel or anchor handler should be on a standby contract, the same way we already keep an emergency tow tug for oil spills.

Eyes in the sky and on the surface can plug the patrol gap without buying a fleet of big ships. A small squadron of long-endurance drones that stay aloft for thirty-six hours, backed by solar-powered surface craft patrolling choke points, would expand coverage without extra berths or crews. Their feeds loop straight into the fusion centre so one duty officer can scan the whole region from a desktop.

Offshore wind farms and ports need tougher cyber shields. The upcoming EU rules for critical infrastructure security set a higher bar, and Ireland should apply them in full. A joint security operations centre and annual independent hacking tests will raise defences before ransomware gangs shift from hospitals to harbours. Wind developers should accept a licence clause that live turbine telemetry routes to the fusion centre during an incident.

None of this works if sailors keep leaving. Competitive pay, help with housing and a clear lateral-entry path for engineers and medics will slow the talent bleed in the Naval Service faster than any shipbuilding plan. While retention settles, leasing two commercial offshore patrol vessels gives breathing room and adds deck space for drone launch and recovery.

Satellites are the final force multiplier. A shared slot on a European mini-satellite network would give Ireland its own ship-tracking and high-resolution imagery every hour without building a constellation from scratch. Combine those feeds with storm models and we also improve routing for trade and search-and-rescue.

Hard concrete still counts. Raising breakwaters at Dublin and Cork to handle higher storm surges, deepening access channels and fitting backup microgrids in container terminals will keep goods moving when the next Atlantic storm hits.

We cannot afford every tool outright, so we should lean on allies and EU partners wherever it buys leverage. Shared satellite data, pooled drone buys, joint seabed sensor projects and free surveillance flights from the European Maritime Safety Agency all cut costs and shorten delivery times. Par

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, because they own the hardware, hold the real-time data and already field the crews who fix things at sea. Without them the State would be blind and slow.

Cable firms, port companies, ferry operators and offshore wind developers see the first anomalies, whether it is a voltage dip on a fibre pair, an unexpected tug movement or a turbine SCADA alert. Their sensors feed the picture the fusion centre needs. A licence condition should require secure live telemetry to reach that centre the moment an incident starts, with agreed privacy limits in peacetime.

Private owners can also bankroll part of the sensor web. Every new cable landing, turbine array or LNG jetty should carry a security levy that pays for fibre-optic strain lines, seabed listening nodes or drone beacons in the project zone. Shared infrastructure cuts costs and stops the State chasing retrofits later.

Rapid repair depends on them too. The vessels, ROV teams and spare joints already sit in their supply chains. A standing framework that lets Defence and port authorities task those assets within hours is faster than waiting for a naval ship that might be hundreds of miles away.

Cyber is the same story. Port and wind-farm SOCs should plug directly into the national cyber centre, swapping threat intel daily and running joint red-team drills each year. When the ransomware call comes in the middle of the night the playbook is rehearsed and the key contacts are on speed dial.

Finally, the private sector can help plug the manpower gap. Seconded engineers, data analysts and drone pilots can rotate through the fusion centre or exercise with the Navy, building a shared skill pool that survives staff turnover on both sides.

In short, the State sets the rules and owns the response trigger, but private operators supply the eyes, ears, tools and much of the funding. Bring them inside the security tent from day one and the strategy gains depth it cannot afford to buy alone.

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. Our sea area is too large and our assets too thin to go it alone, so outside help is leverage we cannot ignore. EU tools like EMSA patrol flights, the Common Information Sharing Environment and shared small-sat imagery can add extra eyes and data tomorrow at a price we can afford. Neighbouring coast guards in Britain, France and Spain already watch the same shipping lanes, so real-time radar, AIS and boarding alerts should flow both ways. The NATO partnership programme offers trial runs on seabed sensors and anti-drone drills without full membership baggage, while agencies such as the European Fisheries Control Agency and the IMO bring patrol cover and cyber standards for free.

The strategy needs formal data-sharing deals, permanent liaison officers and yearly joint exercises so legal red tape does not slow help when cables are cut or a port goes dark. Partnerships amplify our own baseline of sensors, crews and repair stockpiles, they do not replace them.

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, a strategy without an action plan risks becoming shelfware. The plan should be short, dated and costed, so any citizen can track progress.

Write each task on one line, naming a lead agency, a support partner and a clear deadline. Add the budget line or funding source beside it. Group tasks under five headings: domain awareness, resilience, patrol capacity, cyber defence and international cooperation. For each heading set one measurable outcome, such as seventy percent seabed cable coverage by 2027 or one hundred drone patrol days per quarter.

Include a simple traffic light dashboard updated every six months and lodged with the Oireachtas library. Missed timelines must trigger an automatic date and cost review, not quiet drift. Publish an annual public report so private operators and allies see what gaps still need filling and can adjust their own plans.

Lock key legislative moves, like mandatory cable security levies or port cyber audits, into the first twelve months, so projects now on the drawing board build the new standards in from the start.

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 few practical steps could punch far above their cost.

1) Turn the public into extra eyes. A free hotline and phone app let anyone fishing or walking the shore report a drifting cable marker, a suspicious drone or a fuel spill in seconds. Simple “who to call and what to say” cards in marinas, ferries and schools cost little and widen our early-warning net.

2) Run one big joint drill every year. Navy crews, Gardaí, customs, port IT teams, cable engineers, wind-farm staff and local lifeboats all face the same staged incident, from ransom-ware in the port gate to a cut fibre pair offshore. Using existing ships and classrooms keeps the bill small, yet it forces everyone to practice call chains, spot legal snags and fix them before the real thing.

3) Set aside a modest pot for green-shipping trials. A shore-power plug in Dublin and Cork and one shared methanol bunker barge qualify us for EU green-corridor grants that cover half the spend. It also future-proofs trade routes and cuts emissions risk.

4) Publish a yearly stress-test on what a week-long cable break or port shutdown would cost. Seeing the numbers in black and white pressures insurers, port firms and cable owners to fund their own fixes instead of waiting for the taxpayer.

5) Seed low-cost R&D with local universities on seabed sensors and drone-spotting tech. One million euro of seed money can unlock matching EU funds, give students real projects and maybe even spin out kit we can export.

These actions back up the core plan, cost little compared with the risks and make sure the whole coastline is ready and supports both Ireland as well as the wider EU 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

Drug trafficking, illegally immigrants and illegal fishing

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

Illegal fishing
...drug trafficking..... illegal immigrants cross the sea.... Russia.....

Larger navy, up to date naval ships and radar

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Our full coastal waters

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Absolutely 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

No it shouldn't involve the private sector

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

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

Survalanice , show of force

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

Make it happen quickly

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

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

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

3000 character(s) maximum

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

3000 character(s) maximum

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

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

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 Designated Area Maritime Area Plan (DMAP) is a critical component in addressing offshore security and defence in Ireland, particularly in the context of developing offshore wind projects. It is imperative that the Maritime security strategy aligns seamlessly with the DMAP, including the importance of spatial distribution in identifying potential risks, coordinating with stakeholders, and integrating security measures into planning and operational processes. By ensuring that the national security strategy robustly supports the DMAP, we can significantly strengthen the resilience of our offshore infrastructure and safeguard the safety of maritime operations. Collaborative efforts among industry stakeholders, government entities, and defence strategies are essential for achieving these objectives.

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

That we do not have an ability to know what is in our waters never mind defend our waters. Also to protect our shipping and fishing limits.

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

Undersea cables for interconnectivity and their vulnerability. Undersea activity and lurking potentially hostile ships.
Sonar, beefing up our Navy, Air defense and other appropriate investment.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

I imagine our western, northern and southern seas as I hope there would always be co-operation with the UK and 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

Sonar and radar.

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 feel unsure about private enterprise being involved as eventually profit seems to be their goal and how would their allegiances be monitored.

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. All of them but NATO appears to be on shifting sands (pardon the pun) at the moment. it also depends on what international maritime organizations.

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 it must.
1. Consult develop plan in tandem with land and air defence.
2. Seek advice as appropriate
3. Adequate finance and future funding for maintenance and future developments.
4. Decision making powers to the appropriate organisation. Curtail vetos.
5. Develop action strategy and act, act ,act.

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 think we are extremely vulnerable and are great talkers but action action action is needed now.

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

Energy vulnerability
Back door to Europe for smuggling

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

Energy vulnerability
Ireland's strategic location as a possibility for bad actors.

Prepare by:
Research and development in technology

Investment in navy and army

Making deals with other countries

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes, any area with underwater 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

Not sure

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, owners and operators of maritime infrastructure should also have responsibility for security.

The role they could play would be financial investment in security technologies. Investment in research and development.

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

Cooperation with of the above need to be considered; however with NATO I am not so sure.

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 with the areas I have highlighted above.

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

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 several significant threats and vulnerabilities, particularly in light of its critical subsea infrastructure and strategic position. Key challenges include:

1. Vulnerability of Undersea Infrastructure:
Ireland's subsea cables and energy pipelines are vital to both national and European interests, with over 95% of international data passing through Irish waters. These infrastructures are highly vulnerable to sabotage, interception, or natural disasters. As someone with expertise in subsea robotic systems, I recognize the importance of robust protection measures, especially given the difficulty in monitoring these assets.

2. Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA):
Ireland's vast EEZ requires enhanced MDA to detect and respond to illicit activities, including unregulated vessel movements and illegal fishing. Limited resources and vast ocean areas make this a critical vulnerability. Technological integration of unmanned systems (UAVs, UUVs) and satellite monitoring is necessary to strengthen real-time surveillance.

3. Illicit Maritime Activity:
The use of Irish waters for illicit activities, such as drug trafficking and smuggling, poses significant security risks. These activities threaten both national security and marine sustainability. Increased international cooperation is essential to combat these threats effectively.

4. Geopolitical and Hybrid Threats:
Ireland's position in the North Atlantic makes it a potential target for hybrid threats, including cyberattacks on maritime infrastructure, GPS spoofing, and the use of uncrewed systems. As a nation highly reliant on maritime trade and energy, these risks could have severe consequences.

5. Offshore Energy Infrastructure:
The growing offshore energy sector introduces new vulnerabilities, particularly in terms of physical threats to infrastructure and the resilience of energy supply chains. These assets require robust protection, especially during installation and operation.

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

Emerging Threats and Future Challenges:

1. Cybersecurity Threats to Maritime Infrastructure:
As Ireland's subsea infrastructure - such as data cables and energy pipelines - becomes more critical, it will increasingly be targeted by cyberattacks. These threats could disrupt communications, data flow, or energy supplies. The growing dependence on digital systems in maritime operations, including autonomous vessels and offshore energy platforms, further elevates this risk. Preparing for this will require enhanced cybersecurity frameworks, regular penetration testing, and continuous monitoring of maritime digital systems.

2. Use of Uncrewed Systems and Autonomous Vessels:
The rise of uncrewed aerial and underwater vehicles (UAVs, UUVs) will introduce new challenges for maritime security. These systems can be deployed for surveillance, sabotage, or illegal activities without detection. Preparing for this will require investment in technologies like AI-driven monitoring systems, autonomous threat detection, and cross-border intelligence-sharing platforms to identify and counter these systems in real-time.

3. Climate Change and Extreme Weather:
Increased frequency of extreme weather events (storms, rising sea levels) will not only endanger offshore infrastructure but also increase the risk of maritime accidents, shipwrecks, and disruptions to shipping lanes. Ireland must invest in resilient infrastructure, adaptable emergency response strategies, and climate-adaptive policies for the offshore energy sector.

4. Geopolitical Tensions and Hybrid Warfare:
Ireland's position in the North Atlantic means it could become a focal point in geopolitical tensions, particularly as competition for resources (energy, data, marine minerals) intensifies. Hybrid warfare, including disinformation campaigns and covert operations targeting critical maritime infrastructure, will become more likely. Preparation will require strengthening intelligence-sharing networks with international partners and improving strategic resilience against unconventional threats.

5. Expanding Offshore Renewable Energy Risks:
As Ireland develops its offshore wind and renewable energy sectors, these new assets will be vulnerable to both physical sabotage and environmental threats. Preparing for this will require robust security measures, including surveillance, rapid response capabilities, and cross-sector cooperation between maritime security agencies and the renewable energy industry.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes, the Strategy should prioritise its focus on specific geographical areas within Ireland's maritime domain, given the varying levels of risk and strategic importance across different regions. Several key areas warrant particular attention:

1. Critical Infrastructure Zones:
Regions with significant subsea infrastructure, such as the areas around the Celtic Sea, which house key undersea data cables and energy pipelines, should be prioritised. These infrastructures are critical to national and international communications, trade, and energy supply. Protecting them from physical damage, cyberattacks, or disruption is paramount.

2. Offshore Renewable Energy Zones:
With the expansion of offshore wind farms and other marine renewable energy developments, the areas in the Atlantic, particularly off the west coast of Ireland, should be given special focus. These regions will be vital for Ireland's energy future and will require enhanced security measures to protect from sabotage, illegal fishing, and potential threats to infrastructure integrity.

3. Shipping Lanes and Trade Routes:
Ireland's strategic location on major global shipping routes makes its waters a critical point for international trade. Areas surrounding major ports, including Dublin, Cork, and Shannon, and key shipping lanes, should receive heightened security attention to prevent disruptions to trade, piracy, and smuggling.

4. High-Risk Zones for Illicit Activity:
Regions more susceptible to illegal activities, such as drug trafficking, smuggling, and unregulated fishing, should also be prioritized. Enhanced monitoring, coordination with law enforcement, and international partnerships will be key in curbing illicit operations in these areas.

5. Border Zones for Geopolitical Tensions:
The maritime boundary areas near the UK and EU waters should be given careful consideration, as they may be more vulnerable to geopolitical tensions and hybrid threats, particularly around contested waters or shared maritime borders.

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, several strategic investments in technology, infrastructure, and capabilities must be prioritized:

1. Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) Technologies:
Investing in advanced surveillance systems, such as satellite monitoring, autonomous drones (UAVs), and underwater vehicles (UUVs), will significantly enhance Ireland's ability to monitor its vast maritime domain. Integrating these technologies into a unified system will allow for real-time tracking of vessels, detection of illicit activities, and early identification of emerging threats, such as uncrewed vehicles or cyberattacks on maritime infrastructure.

2. Cybersecurity for Maritime Infrastructure:
As Ireland’s subsea data cables and energy pipelines become increasingly vital, prioritizing cybersecurity is essential. Investment in advanced encryption, intrusion detection systems, and continuous monitoring for subsea infrastructure will protect critical assets from cyberattacks. Additionally, developing cyber-resilience frameworks for maritime operations will reduce vulnerabilities to cyber warfare and hacking.

3. Offshore Renewable Energy Security:
With the expansion of offshore wind farms and marine renewable energy projects, securing these infrastructures from physical threats and natural hazards is crucial. Investment in specialized subsea security systems, such as robotic inspection and protection systems, as well as enhanced emergency response capabilities, will ensure the resilience of these emerging sectors.

4. Interagency and International Data Sharing Platforms:
Building integrated data-sharing platforms between national agencies (Navy, Coast Guard, Gardaí) and international partners (EU, NATO) will enable more effective collaboration and faster response times. These platforms should focus on sharing information about vessel movements, maritime incidents, and intelligence related to illicit activities.

5. Enhanced Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR) Capabilities:
Increasing investment in search and rescue technology, such as autonomous rescue drones, satellite tracking, and upgraded vessel fleets, will improve response times in emergency situations. Strengthening SAR capabilities will be vital in safeguarding lives and protecting Ireland’s maritime environment.

6. Physical Infrastructure and Port Security:
Upgrading port security infrastructure and enhancing the physical protection of critical maritime facilities, including energy terminals and logistics hubs, will mitigate risks from terrorism, sabotage, or natural disasters. Investments in port access control, surveillance systems, and resilient infrastructure are key to securing Ireland's economic and strategic assets.

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 National Maritime Security Strategy should actively involve the private sector, particularly those who own or operate critical maritime infrastructure, such as subsea cables, offshore energy installations, and major shipping ports. These private entities are key stakeholders and can play a crucial role in ensuring the resilience and security of Ireland's maritime domain.

1. Infrastructure Protection and Resilience:
Private sector owners of critical infrastructure are often best positioned to manage the day-to-day security of their assets. They can implement cutting-edge technologies and operational protocols tailored to the unique needs of their facilities. Collaboration with the public sector to establish minimum security standards, share best practices, and conduct joint risk assessments will strengthen the overall security of vital infrastructure, especially subsea cables and offshore energy projects.

2. Information Sharing and Intelligence Collaboration:
Private companies possess valuable data on vessel movements, port security, and potential threats to their assets. By partnering with government agencies, they can contribute real-time information and participate in joint intelligence-sharing networks. This collaboration will enhance situational awareness and enable faster responses to emerging threats like illicit activities or cybersecurity breaches.

3. Emergency Response and Crisis Management:
Private sector operators, especially in energy and telecommunications, can play a pivotal role in coordinated emergency responses to maritime incidents or attacks on infrastructure. Their involvement in drills, incident response planning, and real-time coordination with public agencies will help streamline operations during crises and ensure a unified, effective response.

4. Research, Development, and Technological Innovation:
The private sector is often at the forefront of technological innovation. They can contribute to the development of new security technologies, including subsea monitoring systems, autonomous vessels, and cybersecurity solutions. Collaborating on R&D initiatives will help the country stay ahead of emerging threats and ensure the continual enhancement of maritime security capabilities.

5. Regulatory Compliance and Industry Standards:
The private sector can help shape regulatory frameworks and industry standards for security. By aligning with public sector objectives, private entities can ensure that their infrastructure meets or exceeds national security requirements, thus safeguarding both public and private 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

International cooperation should be a cornerstone of the new National Maritime Security Strategy. Given the global nature of maritime threats - ranging from cyberattacks on subsea infrastructure to illicit trafficking and geopolitical tensions - collaboration with both regional and global partners is essential to safeguarding Ireland's maritime interests.

1. EU Partnership:
As an EU member, Ireland should strengthen its maritime security ties within the European Union. The EU has a shared interest in the security of vital infrastructure, including undersea cables, energy pipelines, and trade routes. Collaborative initiatives such as the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) and the EU Maritime Security Strategy can provide Ireland with valuable resources, intelligence-sharing platforms, and coordinated responses to maritime security challenges. Cooperation on joint exercises, training, and cross-border policing will enhance Ireland's ability to respond effectively to regional threats.

2. Neighbouring Countries:
Ireland's geographical proximity to the UK and other neighbouring countries in the North Atlantic makes bilateral cooperation essential. These countries share similar maritime threats, including illegal fishing, smuggling, and potential risks to offshore energy infrastructure. Regular joint operations, intelligence sharing, and common regulatory frameworks will help enhance security in shared maritime zones, including the Irish Sea and the Celtic Sea.

3. NATO Cooperation:
Ireland's partnership with NATO through the Individually Tailored Partnership Programme (ITPP) is an invaluable asset in enhancing maritime security. NATO's expertise in defence and maritime security, along with its multinational resources, could help Ireland improve its surveillance capabilities, conduct joint maritime operations, and access strategic intelligence. Additionally, NATO's partnerships with other international maritime organisations, such as the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), ensure a holistic approach to maritime security, addressing both military and civil threats.

4. Global Maritime Organisations:
Engagement with global maritime organisations, such as the IMO and the United Nations, will further strengthen Ireland's strategic positioning in global maritime security discussions. International law, norms, and multilateral coordination are crucial to ensuring the protection of the global commons, including critical undersea infrastructure, shipping lanes, and fisheries.

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 an Action Plan that outlines how the strategy will be implemented. While the strategy provides the overarching vision and objectives, the Action Plan ensures that these goals are translated into concrete, actionable steps with clear timelines, resources, and accountability.

1. Clear Objectives and Milestones:
The Action Plan should define specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) objectives. This will help track progress and ensure that each aspect of the strategy is effectively addressed. For example, milestones could include completing national MDA integration within a specific timeframe or enhancing cybersecurity measures for critical infrastructure by a set date.

2. Resource Allocation and Budgeting:
An Action Plan must detail the financial and human resources required to implement the strategy. This includes funding for technology investments, personnel training, and international collaboration. Budgeting for both immediate needs (e.g., cybersecurity upgrades) and long-term projects (e.g., offshore energy infrastructure protection) will be crucial for ensuring sustainability.

3. Stakeholder Responsibilities:
Clear roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders—public agencies, private sector partners, and international collaborators—should be outlined. This includes specific tasks for national authorities (e.g., Coast Guard, Navy), as well as private entities (e.g., subsea infrastructure operators) and international partners (e.g., NATO, EU). Coordination mechanisms and communication channels must be established to facilitate collaboration.

4. Technology Integration and Innovation:
The Action Plan should prioritize the acquisition and deployment of advanced technologies, such as surveillance systems, autonomous vehicles, and cybersecurity frameworks. It should also include provisions for continuous innovation and adaptation, ensuring that Ireland's maritime security remains ahead of emerging threats.

5. Training, Exercises, and Simulations:
A key element of the Action Plan should focus on building capabilities through regular training and joint exercises with national and international partners. This will ensure preparedness for a range of scenarios, from maritime incidents to cyberattacks. Simulation-based exercises should also be incorporated to test response readiness.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation:
Finally, the Action Plan must include mechanisms for continuous monitoring and evaluation of progress. Regular assessments, audits, and feedback loops will ensure that the strategy remains flexible and adaptable to evolving threats.

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 addition to the National Maritime Security Strategy, I propose a few broader considerations:

1. Emerging Technologies:
Integrating AI and machine learning for predictive monitoring and AI-driven cyber defence will enhance surveillance and protect critical infrastructure from evolving threats.

2. Expanding Law Enforcement Capabilities:
Strengthening the legal authority and operational capacity of maritime agencies like the Coast Guard will improve enforcement against threats such as illegal fishing and piracy.

3. Resilient Supply Chains and Energy Security:
Diversifying energy sources, creating redundancy in supply chains, and developing contingency plans for disruptions will safeguard Ireland's energy and trade dependencies.

4. Public Awareness and Engagement:
Educational campaigns and community involvement will build a culture of security, ensuring all stakeholders are actively engaged in maritime protection.

5. Offshore Renewable Security:
Dedicated security measures for offshore energy projects, including monitoring and threat mitigation, will protect Ireland's expanding renewable energy sector.

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

Hybrid attack by a hostile foreign power on undersea infrastructure in Ireland's maritime area and its approaches, including deployment of submerged or surface vessels or uncrewed vehicles to sever or damage the following:
- Communications cables, halting or slowing flows of information vital for commercial activities.
- Electricity interconnectors, harming energy security and removing a key means for balancing the demands on the electricity grid, including when generation from renewables is low (import from interconnectors) or too great (export via interconnector).
- Gas pipelines, which is an important supply of Ireland's total energy requirement.

Hybrid attack by a hostile foreign power on ports or other shore-based infrastructure, by means of naval or unflagged shadow-fleet vessels, or special forces, to achieve the following effects:
- Destruction or damage to fuel and gas storage facilities, refineries, and fuel farms, which are mainly based within ports, or are otherwise located on the shore. Ireland's reserves of fuel and gas stocks - being in ports or otherwise near the shore - are located within reach of hostile maritime action. The loss of fuel and gas stocks would cause immediate economic and social cohesion harm.
- Blockade of ports, by means of threatening use of Anti Surface Warfare or the overt or covert deployment of sea-mines on the approaches to ports. Ireland's trade with the world would be adversely affected. If combined with the destruction of fuel and gas stocks, then blockade would prevent replenishment of such stocks, exacerbating crises.
- The Navy does not currently have any credible capacity to escort merchant ships to and from Ireland's ports (note: 'escort' here means having hard naval capabilities to deter or fight off hostile naval or air attacks).
- The Navy has no capabilities to (a) conduct Mine Counter Measures (MCM) to sweep and clear sea-mines; or (b) detect and deter hostile undersea vehicles or submarines by having first rank navy Anti Submarine Warfare (ASW) capabilities, or (c) deter hostile naval activity or attack by having competitive capabilities to carry out Anti Surface Warfare (ASuW), or (d) perform self-defence against hostile maritime aviation or missile attack.
- The Navy's base in Cork is essentially undefended against a conventional military or naval attack. The Navy, or wider Defence Forces possess almost no weapons capable of mounting an effective and persistent defence of bases.
- Ireland does not face a threat of invasion and occupation but Ireland's maritime area and the integration of its economy with the rest of Europe and with North America means that attacking Ireland could be viewed by a hostile foreign power as an attractive means of indirectly attacking the rest of Europe. Ireland's lack of any effective means of deterring or combatting an attack makes such an attack more likely.

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 future is uncertain and so a prudent approach is to test against credible worse case scenarios. Two scenarios are suggested here. The first scenario is the Russian Federation invades the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) using conventional military forces in coordination with hybrid and limited air attacks against many European states to intimidate European states from aiding the Baltic States and to multiply the dilemmas facing European Governments and overload decision-making with overlapping crises. The hybrid attacks are augmented by the aggressor with limited long-range air attacks. Ireland is subjected to a hybrid attack on undersea infrastructure and ports to undermine Ireland's economy, and by extension contribute to undermining Europe's economy. Many other European countries are also subject to hybrid attack. The intent of these hybrid attacks is to undermine the will of European Governments and of their citizens to commit to joining the defence of the Baltic States and instead to accept occupation of the Baltic States in exchange for relief from further hybrid attacks. There are multiple varieties of this scenario, such as, for instance, Russian invasion of Moldova, or of parts of Finland, or parts of Norway, or indeed any combination of these. In this scenario it is in Ireland's interests to possess the means to adequately secure its maritime area, being the most likely avenue for a hybrid attack. In defending its own maritime area, Ireland would indirectly be aiding the security of the Baltic State (and the rest of Europe), by reducing the effectiveness of an attack on Ireland; and because Ireland's economy is integrated with Europe's, defending ourselves adds to the security of all.

In the second scenario a hostile foreign power, which could be the Russian Federation or another state hostile to Europe, carries out a hybrid attack on undersea infrastructure in Ireland's maritime area as a means to damage the wider European economy and influence popular opinion in Europe. The undersea infrastructure attacked in this scenario could be passing through Ireland's maritime area without connecting to Ireland, or could be connected to Ireland, with onward connections to other European countries; in either case Ireland's security interests ought to be protected by Ireland having the means to deter such attacks from happening, or if they do occur, to detect the attacks and the attackers and combat them, to deter further attacks or degrade the capability or willingness of the attacker to repeat the attacks.

In either scenario the risks increase if the United States adopts an isolationist approach because effective support or help in deterring, combatting, and/or recovering from attacks might not be forthcoming. The risks also increase if more Member States of the European Union elect populist, or even pro-Putin, governments because the unity of will and mutual aid between Member States might be obstructed.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

The Strategy ought to prioritise securing Ireland's maritime interests from the shore, then the 12nm territorial limit, then the 200nm EEZ limit, then approaches further out, such as sea-lanes for maritime transport outside the EEZ limit.

Taking shore-based areas first. The shore is a geographic area that can be used to project power into Ireland's maritime area. Vital shore-based maritime infrastructure includes the TEN-T Tier 1 ports of Dublin, Cork /Ringaskiddy, and Shannon/Foynes, which must be comprehensively covered by the Strategy. Also, the naval base in Cork, the proposed base in Dublin, and other ports, perhaps in the West and North-West sectors of the maritime area that might be useful or critical as interim bases in times of crisis, also need to be addressed in the Strategy. Naval headquarters, command and control centres, radar sites providing the recognised maritime picture (and recognised air picture), stores, fuel reserves, and logistics, are all vital for sustaining naval operations and must be properly addressed in the Strategy. Air Force bases and maritime aviation has a key role in the Strategy - the maritime area includes the airspace above the sea surface.

The next geographic area for the Strategy is the maritime area within the 12nm territorial limit. This area and its seabed could be used to position permanent sensors to provide remote monitoring of undersea activity. The 12nm limit area could be segmented and those segments on the approaches to key ports and naval bases ought to be prioritised for remote sensors so as to secure maritime transport to and from the key ports.

The area between the 12nm limit and the 200nm EEZ limit, being very large, should be segmented according to economic and/or strategic importance. Segments comprising the sea-lanes to the TEN-T Tier 1 ports, areas with offshore renewable energy installations, areas with undersea cables, should be determined and prioritised according to national resilience and economic criteria with maritime security tailored accordingly.

Sea-lanes outside the EEZ limit and that are of vital interest to Ireland ought to be part of the Strategy.

The airspace of Ireland's maritime area should also be considered as part of the Strategy. The Air Force has a mission of the highest importance to ensure situational awareness and support naval missions.

Space is an important domain for contributing to situational awareness about the maritime area. The Strategy ought to contain details on how Ireland participates in European arrangements to share satellite surveillance information.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

The following four key areas require investment to effectively safeguard Ireland's maritime interests:

1) Surveillance and situational awareness: Land-based radar is required to provide the basis for the Recognised Maritime Picture (and the Recognised Air Picture). If fixed radar installations are deployed these should be complemented by mobile radar systems to enhance resilience in the event that a fixed site is made inoperable. The range of detection should match or exceed the EEZ limit, or as much as is practicable. Remote sensors, including passive acoustic devices, should be installed on the seabed at critical locations, to provide situational awareness of undersea activity. Critical undersea infrastructure should also be equipped with remote sensors to detect activity or damage; if such sensors are provided by infrastructure owners, then the data should be required by law to be shared with the Navy. The facilities housing land-based sensors and seabed sensors ought to be hardened against attack and provided with redundant and resilient power supplies. Command and control centres necessary for integrating the information flows from multiple sources and sensors, ought also to be hardened with resilient support systems.

2) The surface fleet can be designed and procured as a "high/low" mix. The "high" component should comprise Corvettes (or Light Frigates) with ASW as a primary mission, and with Anti-Air Warfare (AAW) and ASuW as secondary missions for self-defence. The Corvettes ought to be designed to full naval construction and performance standards, including: excellent acoustic properties for silent approaches to undersea contacts; torpedoes to deter hostile undersea activity; air search radar and anti-air missiles capable of providing self-defence; surface radar and anti-ship missiles capable of deterring hostile naval ships; and capability to operate Uncrewed Air Systems (UAS) to provide situational awareness about surface contacts at a safe stand-off. The "low" component should comprise of Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPV) designed to either naval or commercial shipping standards and equipped for maritime constabulary duties; the existing class of OPV would suffice. The requirements for a future class of OPV should be reviewed and consideration given to enhancing the sensor suite and combat power of the OPVs when the current ones are to be replaced. A third component could include support ships equipped to operate UAS, Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROV), Uncrewed Surface Vessels (USV), to augment undersea situational awareness and retrieve/replace sensors, and to peform MCM.

3) MCM capability which can comprise of containerised systems with remotely operated sensors and mine-neutralisation vehicles that can be controlled from the shore or from OPVs or support ships.

4) Maritime air patrol capabilities are required comprising Maritime Patrol Aircraft equipped with ASW sensors and torpedoes, and Remotely Piloted Air Systems.

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

While there is a role for the private sector, as owners of much critical undersea infrastructure (CUI), national security and defence, and therefore, the National maritime Security Strategy, is properly a sovereign responsibility. It is inappropriate to delegate, or abdicate, responsibility for national security and defence to the private sector. The responsibility to secure and defend Ireland's maritime area is the Navy's, supported by the Air Force. The current situation where it appears security of CUI in Ireland's maritime area is the CUI owners' responsibility with complaints referred to An Garda Siochána is an arrangement that is not fit for purpose and exposes Ireland to unacceptably high risks. Ultimately, the private sector can write-off its investment in CUI and 'walk away' from Ireland; Ireland cannot 'walk away' from Ireland.

The private sector can support Ireland's future maritime security strategy by maintaining CUI repair capabilities and capacity, including maintaining stocks of capital spare parts, to recover from the severing or damaging of cables or other CUI. There might be a need to enact legislation to require such recovery and repair capacity, in which case such legislation should be coordinated with the European Union. The cost of maintaining CUI recovery and repair capacity might need to be subsidised with cost recovery allowed by including such costs in the determinations of the relevant utility regulators.

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

Given Ireland's extensive maritime area it makes sense to participate in international cooperation arrangements to share the effort of providing security for an area that is of economic and strategic interest to EU Member States and other countries, including Norway, Canada, and the US. The extensive CUI in Ireland's maritime area demonstrates significant common interest as and between Ireland and the EU and other countries. The hostility of the current government of the Russian Federation points to an imperative need for Ireland to implement a coherent and robust security policy for its maritime area having regard to hybrid, naval and other military threats. Ireland participating fully in an individually tailored partnership with NATO is a reasonable additional means for Ireland to augment its own actions to achieve a coherent and robust security policy. Such a partnership with NATO could present opportunities for expertise to be shared with Ireland's Defence Forces, especially in the conduct of naval operations and maritime aviation. The partnership with NATO might also reduce risk by helping to increase the deterrence value of the Navy by means of sharing expertise, provision of training, and participation in exercises.

Ireland should also consider seeking bilateral relationships with other countries, especially the UK and France where Ireland's maritime area is contiguous with the maritime areas of those countries, and coordination of security arrangements would be very beneficial.

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 is essential for achieving the Strategy. The key features of the Action Plan ought to include the following:

1) Committed multi-annual funding sufficient to provide the resources to deliver the actions, and to do so at pace having regard to the imminence of the threat.

2) Decide the strategic objectives for the Strategy and work though these to identify all key subordinate tasks and timeframes that must be met.

3) Design the Naval forces necessary for delivering the Strategy. Also, design the Air Force component supporting the maritime Strategy. Procure and deliver the ships, aircraft, and other systems required to achieve the forces design. In view of the urgency of the threat consider procurement by means of Government to Government negotiations to rapidly acquire naval and aviation assets already in-service with other navies and with low integration or development risk.

4) Develop shore- and land-based infrastructure necessary for the Navy being able to perform its mission effectively. Dependent on risk assessment, this might require hardening of certain facilities, such as for command and control centres, stores and logistics. Similarly, this is also required for the Air Force maritime component.

5) Recruit the naval and other military personnel; recruit supporting civilian staff.

6) Agree arrangements with EU Member States, and other multi-lateral bodies to cooperate in maritime security. Also, agree bilateral arrangements in order of priority with UK, France, US, and Canada.

7) Maintain a maritime presence with existing forces and enhance the capabilities of the existing forces pending the procurement, delivery, and recruitment of the new forces.

The above suggested steps of the Action Plan should run concurrently, where feasible, so as to minimise the implementation timescale.

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

Additional thoughts on the future Navy:

- The EU project for a common corvette - the Multi Modular Patrol Corvette (MMPC) also known as the European Patrol Corvette - should be of interest to Ireland because it appears to be specified to be capable of performing a set of naval missions potentially well adapted to Ireland's maritime security needs. However, if the MMPC project will take too long to develop to permit procurement and delivery withing a relevant timeframe then the credible realistic alternative is a government to government deal for existing and in-service designs. Both France (Naval Group) and Italy (Fincantieri) have credible solutions that might be viable for Ireland.

- USVs controlled from the shore or from crewed ships provide a means to multiply maritime presence and provide surveillance at lower cost compared to crewed systems and at lower risk. A potential course of action would be to deploy a mix of powered USVs for rapid deployment and investigation of contacts complemented by, for example, sail-equipped USVs designed for persistent surveillance. There are multiple existing systems available on the market including systems produced by European companies.

- Maritime Aviation: RPAS equipped with electro-optical sensors and radar, provide a means to augment the Air Force's Maritime Surveillance Aircraft (MSA). For a competitive maritime aviation component it is necessary to procure Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) with the capability to carry out ASW. The Air Force's existing MSA model, the Airbus C295, can also be procured in an MPA configuration, to complement the existing MSAs, and this might be a credible rapid acquisition approach pending procurement of a more capable MPA depending on the outcome of the force design (discussed in the response to Q7).

- In the response to Q4 the concept of a "high-low" fleet was discussed. The Commission on Defence report points to a fleet of 12 ships for Level of Ambition 3. The "high" component could comprise 4-5 Corvettes, while the "low" component could have 5-6 OPVs. This high-low fleet could be supplemented by 2 Support Ships, with a primary mission to be the mothership for deep sea ROVs to patrol CUI, install or replace seabed sensors, operate uncrewed undersea vessels (UUV), and USVs, and with a secondary mission to host MCM systems and conduct sea-mine clearance beyond the range of shore-based MCM.

- The shore can be used as a geographic area to project naval power into the maritime area. For instance a small number of anti-ship missile systems on mobile land vehicles would hold at threat any ships of a foreign hostile power within range. This could provide a means to rapidly strengthen the capability of the Navy pending the acquisition of Corvettes.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the proposed Strategy.

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

Contact

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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

The consultation on International Connectivity for Telecommunications (2) published by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communication identified that there are 14 subsea telecommunication cables that connect Ireland to other countries. Specifically, 4 of which connect to North America, 9 of which connect to UK, and 1 that connects to Iceland. The number of subsea telecommunication cables increases if we consider those subsea cables transiting Irelands Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and make landfall in other nation states. [redacted] notes that the National Risk Assessment 2024 (3) published by the Department of the Taoiseach highlights concern from hybrid threats that could impact our maritime security including the risk to telecommunications infrastructure from acts of sabotage. Furthermore, it expressly identifies that the presence of significant communication infrastructure in Ireland, including subsea communication infrastructure in Ireland' s EEZ, exposes Ireland to an additional degree of risk from both State and non-State actors.
The National Cyber Risk Assessment 2022 (4) as published by the Department of Climate, Energy and Communications identified several threats and vulnerabilities related to subsea telecommunication cables including, but not limited to:

- sabotage by Nation States;
- natural events; and
- accidental damage.

Footnotes
URL
(2) https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-culture-communications-and-sport/consultations/consultation-on-international-connectivity-for-telecommunications/
(3) https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-the-taoiseach/policy-information/national-risk-assessment-2024-overview-of-strategic-risks/
(4) https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-justice-home-affairs-and-migration/publications/national-cyber-risk-assessment-2022/

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] notes that the consultation on International Connectivity for Telecommunications identifies that Ireland has 14 subsea telecommunication cables carrying telecommunications and internet traffic connecting Ireland, Europe and North America. This number increases if we consider those telecommunications cables transiting our Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). With growing national and international demand for data it is anticipated that the number of submarine telecommunication cables will further increase, as the number of subsea telecommunications cables increases it is likely to amplify the threats and vulnerabilities highlighted in response to Question 1.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

[redacted] notes that certain areas of Ireland's territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) have a higher density of subsea telecommunications cables and this may be a consideration as part of any prioritisation of specific geographical areas within Ireland's maritime domain by the relevant authorities.

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] notes that both the ENISA report “Subsea cables – what is at stake?” (5) and the EU Commission’s “EU Action Plan on Cable Security” (6) contain a list of good practices and key actions which should be taken into consideration when determining strategic investments to safeguard subsea telecommunications cable infrastructure in Ireland’s maritime domain.

Footnotes
URL
(5) https://www.enisa.europa.eu/publications/undersea-cables?v2=1#contentList
(6) https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52025JC0009

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

To enable a transparent and proportionate approach to the National Maritime Security Strategy, key stakeholders should be consulted including subsea telecommunications network and service providers. Such providers may provide knowledge and expertise of subsea cable infrastructure which may enhance future implementation of the new 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

International cooperation with other nation states is extremely important due to the shared international interests of protecting the current and future subsea telecommunication cable infrastructure in Ireland's maritime domain. The National Risk Assessment 2024 published by the Department of the Taoiseach also highlights the requirement for international co-operation in relation to ensuring the secure and continued transfer of data, cross border data flows and the security and resilience of digital infrastructure such as subsea telecommunication cables.

[redacted] also notes the ongoing security and resilience of subsea telecommunication cables is reliant on repair capabilities of which the availability of repair vessels is a key component. This point is further detailed in the EU Action Plan on Cable Security with the proposed establishment of an EU Cable Vessels Reserve Fleet for emergency deployment or repair of electrical and optical submarine cables connecting EU territories. International cooperation among EU Member States will be key in supporting the availability and activities of repair vessels.

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] does not have any observations to make on how the National Maritime Strategy should be implemented.

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 recommendation in the ENISA report “Subsea cables – what is at stake?” that Member States ‘Appoint a national lead agency’ responsible for subsea cable protection is a matter that should be reviewed as part of this process. It is important that any such lead agency has the capabilities to monitor and protect subsea cable infrastructure within the maritime domain. Furthermore, the roles of all stakeholders in the National Maritime Security Strategy should be clearly detailed to allow clear demarcation of roles and responsibility between relevant public bodies and agencies to facilitate a coordinated approach to security of subsea cable infrastructure in the maritime domain.

Briefly outline why you are making this submission: (Continued)

Providers of subsea telecommunications networks and services are providers of electronic communications networks and services for the purposes of the 2002 Act, the CER Regulations and the NIS2 Directive.
[redacted] notes the Consultation background identifies the presence of extensive undersea cable infrastructure in Ireland’s Maritime domain and that “over 95% 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”;
[redacted] further observes that international connectivity, provided by subsea telecommunication cables, forms the backbone of Ireland’s international telecommunications and connectivity capability.
[redacted] has also taken note of proposals in the European Commission’s White Paper(1) to assure the security and resilience of EU Member State’s subsea telecommunications cable infrastructure in which it states: “over 99% of intercontinental data traffic is carried through submarine cables, and three insular EU Member States, Cyprus, Ireland and Malta, as well as a number of islands in other Member States and outermost regions are highly dependent on them.”
[redacted] response solely focuses on matters relevant to electronic communications.

Footnote
URL
(1) https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/14168-White-Paper-How-to-master-Europes-digital-infrastructure-needs?_en

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