[redacted] appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the preparation of the Maritime Security Strategy and commends the Department of Defence for taking charge of this area and providing leadership. We want to see this position continued with Department of Defence robustly leading the Maritime Security policy function and wish to see the Department playing an active role in the Offshore Wind Delivery Task Force which brings together officials in all Departments and agencies under the chairmanship of Minister Darragh O'Brien. [redacted]

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

Hostile States using their undersea attack capability to sabotage international and national subsea communications systems and critical infrastructure.

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 greatest vulnerability is not knowing what is going on below the waves.

No naval capability to combat hostile state actors sabotaging undersea cables.

Dependency on others (UK / NATO) to protect Irelands and EU critical infrastructure

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

3000 character(s) maximum

In the short term yes - where our critical infrastructure is located

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Ireland should invest in Threat Detection technology and rapid response capability to counter threats below and above the wave and in the air

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 should contribute to protection of their assets

They should ‘live monitor’ the health status of undersea assets and alert national authorities when snd where threat activity is detected ASAP

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

provision of financial support to Irelands Threat Detection capability and provide supportive response capability in the aor, on and below the sea

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

Action Plan

1. Provide financial support to create national threat detection capability and response capability.
2. Identify Critical National Infrastructure
3. Provide resources to protect CNI
4. Provide resources to create a threat detect capability
5. Dictate where CNI will be located undersea (in an area that can be protected

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 lack of investment in a National Security strategy over the last 50 years is due to a misplaced concept of military neutrality - an excuse not to spend money on security.

Allocate 5% of our GDP to CNI protection until our resources are equivalent to average spend of our EU partners.

Co-operate with our Maritime neighbours to provide mutual support (in Threat Detection / Response capability / CNI protection.

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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

Maritime security is a critical part of Irelands security and neutrality . The lack of an effective airforce and navy increases the threat from hostile state actors, particularly Russia, to Irelands undersea cables. And also allows international drug traffickers to operate with ease through Irelands costal 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

Future challenges include our plans to significantly increase our off shore wind capacity and how we secure the infrastructure against sabotage attacks

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Not sure

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

3000 character(s) maximum

I believe a huge increase in defence spending is needed, especially in our navy and airforce. We should move to level of ambition 3 so we don’t have to rely on the UK to monitor our skies and territorial waters.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

We should own all critical infrastructure but I acknowledge that we probably require the assistance of the private sector to operate in the short to medium term, as long as the private sector companies are from EU member states and have no ties to hostile states such as Israel

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

3000 character(s) maximum

International cooperation is crucial and closer cooperation with all of the above is recommended

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes

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

3000 character(s) maximum

I believe a crucial part of Irelands defense strategy is to have a small highly trained and well equipped DF but also to have a large Reserve DF. One option is to make it compulsory for retired service personnel to join the Reserves for a number of years after retirement.
We need to pay our DF members an attractive salary to keep them in the DF. Ireland also needs to significantly increase our Cyber Security Strategy. We could incentivise our young IT professionals to join the Reserves in a Cyber Security role by offering free 3rd level qualifications in cyber security

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

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

3000 character(s) maximum

1. Climate Change - with rising sea temperatures and frequent heat waves endangering our marine biodiversity and affecting our weather; and rising sea levels threatening coastal erosion and inundation;

2. Ocean Acidification - the 'evil twin' of climate change, driven by human-induced CO2 emissions - with its horrendous impact on sea creatures and marine organisms that rely on calcium carbonate to build their shells and skeletons (such as oysters, corals and certain species of plankton). Ocean acidification will also have a significant impact on communities relying on fishing and aquaculture.

3. Oil spills from large tankers; Pollution from huge cruise ships;

4. Bottom trawling damaging the seabed and destroying marine biodiversity;

5. Pollution from industry, particularly in coastal regions and estuaries.

A threat which does not make me lose sleep is the dreaded cables question. Damage to submarine cables is relatively common. An estimated 100 to 150 cables are severed each year - mostly by fishing equipment or anchors (Safeguarding Subsea Cables: Protecting Cyber Infrastructure amid Great Power Competition). Surely then, this is a matter between the owners of the cables and the fishing and maritime industries and should not be a burden on the taxpayer or Department of Defence.

Even if these cables were the responsibility of the taxpayer as end-users, they run for thousands of miles outside our jurisdiction. It would not be possible for us to protect them over all of that expanse. We should leave them to the protections of international law and international maritime law in particular to which the owners have recourse. Furthermore, "Most countries are linked by multiple underwater cables, enabling data to be redirected smoothly if one or two lines are affected" (Safeguarding Subsea Cables: Protecting Cyber Infrastructure amid Great Power Competition).
What is particularly worrying is the lack of clarification from the Government about current policies/agreements to deal with the protection of undersea cables. Recent newspaper reports have indicated that the EU's new defence commissioner is in the process of developing a strategy, with the assistance of European and British navies, to police any threats to these cables off Ireland (Irish Examiner, January 24, 2025). During the Taoiseach's recent visit to Japan, he stated that Ireland has 'an individually tailored plan agreed with NATO, for example, in respect of cybersecurity co-operation and in terms of
subsea cables' (Irish Times, July 3, 2025).

So, despite this consultation process, and before it has even begun let alone finished, it appears the Government has already developed its policy on undersea cables. it is questionable if this Survey will really be 'informin

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

It isn't that i foresee it - climate change is here, that is fact. There are multiple issues now which have resulted from it indirectly, for example the polarization of society due to mass migration movements resulting from climate change (and conflict). This has revealed a deeply racist society which I don't particularly want to be apart of. The main method of moving about without a passport is the sea - a dangerous journey, and instead of being helped, their boats are being slashed, the occupants demonized, coast guards literally passing the buck.

1. Any military alliance with other countries, organizations or groups could draw us into war and this would result in our maritime territories being turned into battlefields with huge threats to our maritime/marine (and overall) security and health;

2. Engagement in military alliances with other countries, organizations or groups would result in the presence of nuclear submarines in our waters and the stockpiling of weapons on our coastline. These are all legitimate targets in warfare (over which we will have absolutely no control). They also pose huge risks to the natural environment.

For as long as we remain a neutral country and stay out of other people's wars, these are not real threats. The other, and more serious and likely future threats to Irish Maritime and Marine Security and Health are:

1. Continued and exacerbated climate change as outlined above;

2. Continued high levels and increasing levels of ocean acidification as outlined above, a real, direct, significant and imminent threat to island nations.

3. The collapse or slowing-down of the North Atlantic Drift , with disastrous consequences for Irish weather, climate and coastline;

4. Continued and exacerbated pollution from harmful agricultural and aquacultural practices, sewage, shipping and industry;

5. The development of a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal and storage facility in the Shannon Basin, with its fire/explosive hazards. This will also increase our fuel-dependency on external sources and this, in turn, would almost inevitably compromise our foreign policy. A huge amount of US LNG comes from fracking which is very damaging to the natural environment. We should not encourage this industry;

Given all of these concerns, I believe we must remain neutral; declare our seas neutral; stay out of military alliances and other people's wars; and get to work immediately on climate change and ocean acidification. This should include the development of indigenous, sustainable and environmentally-friendly energy, guided by wildlife and environmental campaigns such as the Fair Seas Campaign (https://fairseas.ie) and all of its subgroups; full implementation and enforcement of all marine protection legislation and a significant increase in the number of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) around our coast.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

I am not altogether sure as to the meaning or purpose of this question. Perhaps there is a meaning that escapes me. Water is all connected up - it does not recognize artificial or 'man-made' borders or boundaries. We know this from the great voyages around the world made by the 28,000 plastic ducks that were lost at sea from the Greek Ship, Evergreen Ever Laurel, in 1992. We need to protect our seas - around our whole island, and all waters within our jurisdiction and control - from the real threats - which come from climate change, acidification and pollution. However, special attention should be paid to already identified Marine Protected Areas and the number of Marine Protected Areas should be hugely increased in line with the recommendations of the Fair Seas Campaign and its various and highly regarded subgroups.

If the government does make the mistake of allowing others to stockpile lethal weapons on our coasts - then they should definitely avoid areas of high density population, Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and areas on geographical faults, such as Carnsore.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

1. We need to invest in research into climate change and ocean acidification, and in developing ways of living to reduce and prevent climate change;

2. We need to develop strategies to reverse, if possible, the effects of climate change and ocean acidification to date, such as coastal erosion, loss of biodiversity, endangerment of specific species;

3. We need a comprehensive plan for the rehoming of people affected by coastal erosion and inundation;

4. We need controls on our fishing industry and fishing by other countries in our waters;

5. We need to ban all military shipping, including submarines, other than our own, from our waters;

6. We need tight controls on oil tankers and cruise ships, and other sources of pollution;

7. We should work to develop sustainable, environmentally-friendly natural energy from wind, sea and tide.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

We have all seen the detriment to national funds incurred through State/Private partnerships with the Liffey bridge at the Strawberry Beds, the new Children's Hospital and now, the recent cancellation of housing partnerships that sored to huge costs, as examples. I would be opposed to any State/Private Partnerships having responsibility for our maritime and marine security and health.

Private Companies have no loyalties to Ireland or the People of Ireland. They also engage in practices designed to ensure their own survival that would be costly to the people and the welfare of the country - such as built-in obsolescence, exclusive rights to maintenance and spare parts, increasing fees etc.

Our seas are part of our Sovereign Territory. They are the jurisdiction and responsibility of the People of Ireland.

Private Companies using our seas or seabeds for their own gain should be subject to very strict controls and should be responsible for their own property (as in any car park or under any tenancy agreement).

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

Little or none, unless in the case of research and developments to stop climate change and to protect marine biodiversity.

Our partners in the EU and the UK are currently preparing for WW III and NATO is heavily invested in the toxic military industrial complex. None of this is good for maritime security or marine biodiversity. The absolute opposite is true. Manufacture, stockpiling and decommissioning of weapons are all bad for the natural environment (and thus, maritime/marine security and health). War is disastrous for the natural environment (and thus, maritime/marine security and health). NATO is not a maritime (and definitely not a marine) organization. It is in the best interests of Irish maritime/marine security and health to stay out of arrangements with the EU and NATO that have anything to do with military alliance or defence.

Our EU Partners, the UK (our neighbour), and NATO have their own agendas. They have little or no loyalty to Ireland, the Irish People, or our land and water territories.

The only international co-operation should be in relation to the very real, very significant and very imminent threat of Climate Change. This should include research; climate action; and rescue and restoration for those affected by climate change, ocean acidification and pollution.

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's Maritime Security Strategy must include marine security and health - Climate Change and Biodiversity. It must not be commandeered by the geopolitical power struggles and ambitions of other nations. We must focus on staying out of war and militarization which would pose additional and very serious threats to our maritime/marine security and health, on top of what is now a clear and present danger - Climate Change.

Our plan should be the establishment of a strong and well-resourced institution for climate change and marine health to identify current threats and increasing threats from climate change; to explore and develop measures to stop and reverse climate change and ocean acidification; and to accommodate those affected.

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 am very concerned that this survey begins on the presumption of some kind of 'threat'. I am fully aware that by 'threat', the survey means to imply - 'military or armed/aggressive threat'. I believe this is just another ploy in the fear-funding strategies of the military industrial complex. The questions are designed to elicit military solutions (as if there were such a thing).

Ireland is a neutral country and we should stay that way. That is our best hope of security (from a military point of view). Given our neutral status and our freedom from a warring history, we do not need a military-style navy. We need a strong and well-resourced coast guard with a mandate to protect our natural environment and fishing industry and to carry out search and rescue. The vast majority of our eminent scientists tell us that the greatest threat to our security is Climate Change. We can see that today in Europe, with soaring and life-threatening temperatures and frequent heat waves, including oceanic heat waves.

Our focus should be on addressing climate change, acidification and pollution, protecting our natural environment, and keeping our people safe from war and aggression by remaining neutral and staying out of war. While we distract ourselves with political, geopolitical and economic issues and frighten ourselves into war, we are ignoring and neglecting the real threats - threats to the natural environment and biosphere. According to the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (https://www.pik-potsdam.de), we are now close to breaching the seventh ('ocean acidification') of the nine planetary boundaries (the life-support systems of our planet).

Our seas give us the distance in time and space to stop and think. We need to do that and not venture in with this terrifying rush to militarism and war. Some people have obviously been unnerved by Russia's actions. We must not be amadáns - take out the globe and look at how the 'business' of violence has taken hold of actually all continents not just Eastern Europe. Our country does not have any delicious oil, or major stocks of rare earth minerals. Also, if in doubt about whether our friends are actually friends, go to the Cliffs of Moher, let the salt air clear your mind and look west. The US has almost the same number of nuclear weapons as their former rival. Lately it threatened Groenland, and is committing at least one genocide. Consider this, if this country had oil in the 1970s when they was a shortage and they were freaking out, imagine a media campaign to manufacture consent for war whereby uncle Sam (or another resource hungry 'liberator') said it was going to liberate ireland from the backward society replete with priests and nuns etc. We would have become the 51st state after a short and bloody mini annihilation.

Maritime & land security (nat/glob) can only be achieved by rejecting cosy relationships with genocidal states.

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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

Sabotage of undersea telecommunications and energy networks. Ireland's tech sector and hosting of multinational corporations would make Irish undersea critical infrastructure a valuable target.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Maritime drone warfare and hybrid/cyber warfare instigated by Russia and/or China.

Increased naval sea and air patrolling, increased general investment in defence forces, radar and sonar capabilities to detect threats, electronic warfare capabilities to combat drones, investment in cyber defences and resilience of infrastructure systems

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Primary focus should probably be on south-west and north-west coasts, because a vast majority of critical undersea telecommunications infrastructure lies off the south-west coast. Potential threats may approach Irish waters from the north west. On the other hand, the Irish sea and eastern waters are likely to be covered well by UK maritime surveillance and defence

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Investment in capabilities to effectively patrol and surveil Irish waters, so naval patrol ships and aircraft. Also capabilities to detect threats, such as radar, sonar and electronic warfare 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

Their help should definitely be employed in mapping and monitoring maritime infrastructure and its condition. Employ a Finnish-style whole-of-society approach

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 definitely be employed, particularly with EU partners and the UK, who have an intrinsic interest in securing the waters around Ireland. Our partners would also suffer consequences from sabotage to our critical maritime infrastructure

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

3000 character(s) maximum

An action plan should be drafted because that is often the best way to ensure action. We need concrete assurances that the government is willing to increase investment in defence and security across the board. Legitimacy and society involvement should also be included, which is why surveys such as this and other forms of public participation are very important.

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

Defence forces personnel retainment is very important!

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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

1. Inability of the Navy to put ships to sea.
2. Not having two at capability to monitor foreign navy, both surface and sub surface vessels.
3. The inability of the Aer Corps to provide top cover or patrolling capability in our area of responsibility.

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 activity of bad actors in our area of responsibility which may lead to the interference with, or destruction of sub sea cables, as has happened in the North Atlantic between mainland Europe and Scandinavia.

To best prepare for these possibilities, the Navy needs to be provided with the methods to detect sub surface craft and intervene to prevent anything happening. In order to do this the Navy needs to be financed and staffed properly, the main concern being the loss of staff due to poor pay, terms and conditions. These need to be rectified immediately.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

The main areas which will be subject to threat, such as undersea cables, need to be prioritised and protected until the threat has passed.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Investment should be prioritised in navel equipment to detect sub surface vessels and in aircraft and personnel to identify vessels operating illegally in our EEZ which the navy can then intercept.

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

They could identify specific areas of high threat or particularly vulnerable pieces of infrastructure which could cripple that interest.

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 relationships should be maintained, however, the main focus should be on increasing our own capacity to defend our area of responsibility and not relay on others to do it for us.

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

1. A list of primary infrastructure which needs to be protected.
2. A timeline within which it will be addressed.
3. The amount of investment needed for our Navy/Defence Forces, in addition to the current Defence budget, to adequately provide this protection.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Ireland needs to invest heavily, and expeditiously, in its own ability to defend its sovereignty and EEZ. Relaying others to do this for us is a national disgrace.

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 key vulnerabilities is Ireland's continued reliance on subsea fibre connectivity routed through the UK. This creates a single point of dependency that increases the risk to national resilience should a disruption occur—whether accidental or intentional. [redacted] also notes that limited real-time visibility and oversight of subsea infrastructure leaves vital assets exposed to interference from anchoring, fishing activity, or more deliberate threats.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Emerging threats are likely to include increased targeting of subsea infrastructure, both for disruption and surveillance, particularly in the context of heightened geopolitical tension. These threats may also straddle physical and cyber domains.

[redacted] recommends the following steps to prepare:

Diversification of Ireland's subsea routes, especially direct links to mainland Europe.

Investment in maritime domain awareness and subsea monitoring technologies.

Structured collaboration between government, industry participants, and international partners.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes. Certain zones—particularly those hosting existing or future cable landing points—should be prioritised due to their strategic value [redacted] highlights the south and west coasts as areas with strong potential for alternative connectivity routes that would reduce over-reliance on the UK and strengthen overall resilience.

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] recommends prioritisation in the following areas:

Development of diverse and resilient subsea fibre routes.

Deployment of surveillance tools and technologies to monitor subsea infrastructure activity.

Strengthening of cyber-physical security capabilities.

Enhanced coordination mechanisms between public authorities and industry actors to ensure timely responses to potential threats.

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 private sector has a vital role in risk identification, incident response, and long-term resilience planning. [redacted] believes that involving private entities—particularly those designing, supporting, or planning critical infrastructure—will ensure the strategy reflects operational realities and emerging challenges. Clearly defined channels for communication and collaboration will be key to success.

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 essential. Ireland's subsea and maritime infrastructure is interconnected with broader European and global networks. [redacted] supports strengthened collaboration with EU partners, regional neighbours, and frameworks such as NATO's Individually Tailored Partnership Programme. Such cooperation can improve threat detection, share best practices, and enable coordinated responses to incidents affecting multiple jurisdictions.

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. [redacted] supports the inclusion of a practical Action Plan to ensure the Strategy is actionable and trackable. Key elements could include:

A mapped inventory of Ireland's critical maritime infrastructure.

Clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and escalation processes.

Investment milestones in maritime surveillance and subsea resilience.

Regular performance reviews and updates aligned with emerging risks and technologies.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

[redacted] welcomes this consultation and sees the development of a National Maritime Security Strategy as a timely and strategic move. Protecting subsea infrastructure is not only a matter of national security but also of economic resilience and digital sovereignty. [redacted] encourages a strategy that is collaborative, future-oriented, and open to innovation from across both public and private sectors.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Threats to the following
Underwater cables and impact to Ireland and transatlantic and inter country trade
Offshore wind resources

The vulnerability is the scale of our coast line and costal and underwater infrastructure and the number of resources required to monitor and protect them.

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

Possible interference with assets from foreign actors to pursue own interests and possible pressure on Ireland and possible challenges on the areas we currently control by foreign regiemes

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

3000 character(s) maximum

I feel the strategy should focus on prioritising which areas are currently strategically important or are strategically important if developed, e.g. an area of shallow water with good year round wind speeds that is ready for fast development

1. Protecting existing assets underwater and offshore wind
2. Protecting areas of future strategic interest with quick development opportunities (see above)
3. Protecting areas of joint interest between Ireland and neighbours, the UK, France and Spain.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Investment in the following

1. Training and recruitment of increased numbers of specialised military personnel to work in the defence forces with surveillance and
2. Development of drone capability within the defence forces to allow the defence forces to monitor and control large tracts of sea. Not to build but to control guide etc.
3. Surface vessels to show a presence around key strategic assets and "dissuade" foreign vessels from free access to the assets.
3. aircraft to again warn off surface vessels from around the areas of strategic interest, underwater cables, wind farms etc
4. Specialist expertise in the monitoring and safeguarding of key assets that we can share with allies. The vision of developing first in class expertise that is sought by other allies.

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 should be involved so that vulnerabilities are understood by the State and plans can be but in place to protect them.
Also in light of future infrastructure projects that a clear plan is in place to add infrastructure at speed as we need to do to become less reliant on imported fuels but also become an exporter of energy. To do this we need a good communication path between developers and the state to ensure that monitoring capability and existing resources are not stretched too thin are added at a rate as is appropriate.
Private sector also holds a role in the provision of monitoring and protection capability, id point to the work done in Australia in the development of sea, underwater and air drone technology to safeguard their territory.

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

Short answer we need to in light of new threats partner with likeminded countries and organisations to develop and leverage capability and resources and provide value back to allies. We have to be able to defend our own territories and assets that interlink with allies and assist in the supply of information and defence of these strategically important assets

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 has to have clear short medium and long terms actions to deliver on the strategy otherwise it is just an aspirational document.
1. Clear actions we do now
2. Actions for 6, 12, 24 months 5 and 10 years and what these actions deliver
3. Backing from Government and dept of finance
4. Risk register (confidential not public) that highlights where we are vulnerable and what we are doing
5. Clear picture of how we are going to build up expertise and assets.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

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

3000 character(s) maximum

We have a national apathy borne of many years of neglect in our national security whereby any investment in defence is seen as wasteful with money better spent elsewhere in more 'worthy' projects. This has led to our seas being unguarded and open to malign actors. As an island, we are vulnerable to disturbances to maritime traffic for delivery and export of all goods and also to undersea energy pipelines and communication cables being disrupted.

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

Disruption of the delivery of national gas and electricity by inter-connector and pipeline.

Investment in detection methods and policing ability with the recruitment of trained professionals.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Our maritime area is vast so concentration on specific areas is obvious. While there is an expectation of cooperation with the UK for Irish Sea security, the policing of our western approaches where our undersea cables are located should be the first priority.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Start with personnel because having the technology or the hardware is redundant if you do not have the people to operate it. Maritime reconnaissance aircraft with a suite of detection capabilities is a good first step followed by a sufficient number of Naval vessels to apply force if needed.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Difficult decisions are seldom made by committee. We are excellent at procrastination and kicking the ball down the road. The danger in widening decision making is inertia and a failure to carry out meaningful change. Consultation by all means but be time bound and strong in making the decisions.

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 essential. We have a very small field of experts and almost no capacity to detect and deter so an alignment with our neighbours is necessary even to the point of partnership with NATO.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Having a strategy without a plan is meaningless. The plan should concentrate on forming closer alliances and investment in technology, resources and personnel.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Educating our citizens in Irelands dependence on our seas for almost everything we rely upon to live our lives is essential. We have to move beyond our national handwringing whenever investment in defence is mentioned. People are now realising that there are bad actors with mal intentions out there so the next step in protecting our resources should now be made.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Our inability to see what bad actors maybe doing under waters. The undersea Interconnectors and cable links between various countries could be harmed which could leave us vulnerable.

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 previously stated , the interconnectors and cable data links we have between the US and Europe in what is the largest sea border in Europe and how we can protect them.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Our whole coastline must be managed, be it from bad actors or drug cartels that can exploit our inability to patrol and secure all our territorial 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

Investment in sonar and radar has be the first step ,another Naval base on the western seaboard should be prioritised. Drone technology is another area of priority. Investment in the men & women of our Defence Forces to be able to retain them in the future.

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 investment & technology may need to come from the private sector but the overall control and responsibility must be held by the State.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

International co-operation is vital learn what other countries are doing. This needs joined up response to the threat from cartels and other states that wish to exploit our vulnerabilities. We need to engage with all governments especially with our nearest neighbours GB and the EU.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Investment in the Defence Forces to retain the personnel to enable them to carry out their duties. Investment in sonar and radar capabilities for our air and sea.
Involvement in GB & European agencies and their maritime strategies , learn from what others are doing.
Encourage the private companies who have a vested interest in maritime to participate in the strategy.

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

Our coastline is probably the largest in Europe , 420,000 sq.kilometers to patrol and secure. To achieve this, our Defence forces need to have sonar and radar capabilities, otherwise we are blind. We need to invest in the retention of our Defence Force personnel so that it can compete in what the the private sector is offering. Private sector can bring technology to the table, some of our indigenous industries are already involved in drone technology ect.,they should be encouraged to participate in this .

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

3000 character(s) maximum

The failure of the naval service over the last eight-year period has resulted in a failure of effort at sea and consequently of domain awareness. Many threats have developed without an operational or a policy response. The navy has no strategy for naval defence of the country and has even failed to develop a strategy for its own survival. Threats and vulnerabilities have proliferated in the domain. Fishery protection effort has completely collapsed. Drug, arms and contraband importation has flourished without deterrence. Resource exploitation, precious metals and wreck extractions have proceeded wholesale. Russian and other nations have encroached without deterrent, observation or comment. Research and exploration vessels have manoeuvred without verification by the state. Development of naval capabilities, weapons and fleet replacement has been set back decades at a time when it is advancing elsewhere. Subsea infrastructure has been mapped and possibly mined. The navy in the last decade has been disastrously led and disastrously managed and the work of decades has been undone in silence for no obvious reason .

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

Failure to convincingly and firmly patrol our waters will continue to tempt bad actors to import contraband, will invite adversaries of IE or UK or EU or US - or all of them- to interfere with unprotected infrastructure, both surface and subsea. The sense of doubt about state capability, intent or determination to vindicate rights at sea will deter investment in infrastructure in which energy and environmental policy depends. Other nations will offer to provide services and in this guise the State's sovereign capability will be further eroded. The false idea that all maritime matters can be dealt with via air and satellite resourcing will continue to be advanced by non mariners attempting to safeguard their local interests with a consequent threat to naval capabilities as the resource available is diluted further. Transpolar routes will increase military and merchant traffic on the West coast but the State will have failed to invest in ships capable of operating out there choosing small hulls for perceived quick wins and confining our limited capabilities to the littoral. Other nations will make decisions on this activity without our input or our knowledge despite our legal and sovereign responsibilities. Fishing effort will advance north with new species following climate change but Irelands once excellent fishery protection effort has evaporated and this aspect to will be conducted by other agencies, again subdividing the resources available for the maritime in this country. Without persistent and determined domain awareness, deterrent capability and professional knowledge and experience, the State will not have demonstrated the necessary minimum measures necessary in peacetime for its rights to be respected in times of conflict and failure to engage with the very real security and defence concerns now risks the independence of national defence policy in the future.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

All areas in which our writ runs including continental shelf claims far beyond the 200 nm EEZ must be credibly patrolled, monitored and protected. The danger is to allow short sighted non mariners to draw the focus to small ships in the littoral at the expense of offshore capability. Ships combined with maritime air patrols, manned and unmanned are an extremely powerful offshore tag team and should be a specialty for an island nation. The uniqueness of the necessary capabilities diminish the closer in to the coast one comes (though it is all important and part of a whole). Big hulls capable of firmly establishing presence and vindicating rights in the offshore are the sine qua non of a modern navy.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Large hulls with the see-keeping characteristics needed for the wild offshore environment are essential. Such hulls must have flight decks and mission bays. Subsea imaging and active and passive sonar arrays are needed as are the shoreside data centres , expertise and link with a air capability -including a weapons deterrent- and satellite monitoring is essential but only when coupled with a ship's hull- all surveillance technical measures are illusory without a real-world ship to act on the information. Too many excuses around remote monitoring in lieu of ships at sea have been part of the loss of the navy's operational focus over the last eight years of the current leadership's tenure. Passive acceptance of decline damages the navy at every level. Weapons are the strategic sweet spot for a navy, that which no other agency can provide. Weapons and sensors require specialist users and maintainers and need to be truly naval in design and production. For decades the navy had to manage with World War Two era AA and infantry support weapons bolted to the hulls. This is a reflection the navy's lack of status within the Defence Forces. Only the 76mm and 57mm guns and their associated systems bucked this trend and now most of them are out of commission. Investment is also needed in tactical air search radars for every ship and EW suites. The lack of helicopters has been disastrous and should be remedied and no future ships should be built or accepted into service if they lack a flight decks.

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

They should be responsible only for maintenance and first line security but defence, deterrence and intervention must be a State competence . Trying to do this on the cheap by farming out responsibility for defence to infrastructure owners will not work. It will result only in the failure to resource the state assets - be they navy or otherwise- and the consequences will be other navies deciding without us to do it for us or to take advantage of our failures in other ways detrimental to the national interest.

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

Every aspect of cooperation and partnership should be explored but the Departmental/ civil service instinct to try and evade investing in our sovereign capability must be countered (as evidenced by the twenty year long abject failure to develop a national capability to evacuate Irish citizens from trouble zones- a national competence sacrificed on the alter of ‘cooperation’)

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

No. Issue the plan , require agencies to develop their own plans in support and do not accept inertia from the naval leadership

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 navy is totally subordinate to the army resulting in bad policy, unfair and ineffective resource allocation and bad blood. Develop a truly joint structure and if this is beyond the ken of the current defence administration/ general staff then establish an independent Navy.

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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

Vulnerable to illegal fishing and exploration of other resources in our econmoic waters. Threat to key infrastructure including undersea cables. Also vulnerable to spying/reconna

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

3000 character(s) maximum

The threats could come from both States and non State players eg terrorist groups. Threats can come from unexpected sources eg would a Reform led Govt in the UK be a natural ally of Ireland?

The best preparation is a radical improvement in our Air & Maritime defence capability as per Q 4

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

3000 character(s) maximum

The Atlantic is especially vulnerable given cables but the Strategy should cover all 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

Urgent need to invest in
Detection: Radar and sonar to identify 3rd parties in our air & undersea space. long range UAVs to cover wider areas and 3rd party identification
Intervention: Naval and Airborne interception so Jet aircraft, UAVs and Naval ships. All need a deterrence capability in the form of sufficient firepower
Protection Cyber resources also need improving

To deliver the above we would need the equipment itself, tech to run & document the data, and sufficient skilled people in the armed forces

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

3000 character(s) maximum

In the short term the private sector may well be needed to support existing/ deploy new capability. However given that the requirement will be long term we should be aim to integrate necessary capability into our Defence Forces. Legislation may be needed to enable the Govt to direct private sector owners where necessary

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

3000 character(s) maximum

It should include cooperation with any international partners including the EU & NATO as necessary to deliver our security goals

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 has to be
Start with defining what a good Maritime security position would look like.
What is our current position against each dimension eg technology, people resourcing, aircraft, ships etc and therefore the gap?
By each element eg interception aircraft detail what steps are needed by who & by when to get to the 'good' position
Put in place an independent quarterly monitoring to check progress

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

Yes, please just get on with it

Contact

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Background to survey participant:

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

Vulnerability 1: Undersea Cables
Ireland is a critical hub for transatlantic undersea cables that carry the vast majority of internet and financial traffic between North America and Europe. These cables are highly strategic yet vulnerable.

Threats to Undersea Cable Threats and Vulnerabilities:
State-sponsored sabotage: Adversary naval or research vessels covertly map or tamper with cables.
Espionage/tapping: Advanced persistent threats (APTs) seek to intercept traffic via splicing or repeater compromise.
Grey-zone operations: Foreign vessels operating under civilian guise to probe or sabotage infrastructure.

Vulnerabilities to Undersea Cable Threats:
Limited seabed surveillance therefore no persistent sonar or UUV patrols.
Private ownership with uneven security standards at landing stations.
Dependency on a small number of cables without robust redundancy plans.

Impact: Disruption could severely degrade Ireland's connectivity, financial services, and data centre operations, while espionage could compromise government, business, and personal communications.

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Vulnerability 2: Shipping.
Irish shipping is vital for trade, energy supply and connectivity to Europe. Modern ships rely heavily on Operational Technology (OT) systems (ECDIS, GPS, data loggers etc).

Threats to ships entering Irish waters:
GPS spoofing and jamming: Alters navigation data, causing groundings or collisions.
AIS manipulation: False vessel positions or identities in Irish waters.
Malware targeting ECDIS and engine control systems: Loss of navigational control or forced shutdowns.
Supply-chain attacks: Compromise of software or hardware used in shipboard systems.

Vulnerabilities to Shipping:
Many ships use outdated OT systems lacking encryption or modern security controls.
Little oversight of foreign-flagged vessels entering Irish ports.
Port IT and VTS systems may lack robust cybersecurity audits or drills.

Impact: A successful cyberattack on shipping could block critical ferry and cargo routes, disrupt cargo logistics. A successful cyberattack on a ship's OT systems may cause a pollution catstophe (e.g. oil tanker grounding), injury and death onboard the ship or in proximity to the ship.

Example Maritime Cyber attack: 2017 NotPetya on Maersk, Denmark. The same may occur to an Irish port or Irish ferry operator (e.g. Irish Ferries / Stena Line / DFDS).

***
Vulnerability 3: Espionage and Grey-Zone Threats
Ireland’s geopolitical position makes it a potential target for state-backed espionage and hybrid threats.

Threats:
Foreign naval or research vessels conducting covert seabed mapping.
Surveillance of cable landing stations, ports, and shipping movements.
Electronic surveillance of AIS and VTS systems.

Vulnerabilities:
Absence of Maritime Security Unit minimise communication between NCSC, defence forces and government.

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 and future threats to Ireland's maritime cybersecurity:

Future Threat 1: Advanced Undersea Cable Sabotage and Tapping
Adversaries deploying sophisticated submersibles (manned or unmanned) to splice, tap, or physically damage cables.
Tapping repeaters or regenerators on cables near Ireland's EEZ to exfiltrate data.
Planting dormant malware in landing station equipment or network management systems.

Potential attack scenario: A covert submarine mission that lays listening devices on Atlantic cables between Ireland and US.

Future Threat 2: Hybrid Campaigns Targeting Cable Landing Stations
Blended cyber-physical attacks against shore-based infrastructure.
Ransomware or supply-chain attacks on companies operating landing stations.
Coordinated disinformation campaigns to sow panic about alleged sabotage or outages.

Potential attack scenario: Simultaneous cyberattack and physical breach at Dublin cable landing facility or less-populated areas e.g. Killala, Lecanvey or Ballinesker.

Future Threat 3: Cyberattacks on Shipping's Digital Systems
Evolving malware designed to target maritime OT (e.g. ECDIS, AIS, propulsion systems).
AI-driven GPS spoofing or jamming attacks in port approaches.
Hijacking of shipboard satellite communications (SATCOM).

Potential attack scenario: An attacker compromises a ship's Electronic Chart Display and Information System (ECDIS), injecting false chart data re-routing the vessel into shallow waters, risking grounding near the Irish coast.

Future Threat 4: Energy Infrastructure Integration
Ireland's future offshore wind farms will rely on subsea cables for power export and control systems.
Pipelines for gas/hydrogen may use seabed sensor networks.
These networks introduce new attack surfaces.

Possible attack scenario: Compromised control signals causing grid instability.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

1) Irish Sea:
Ireland's busiest port is Dublin with regular ferry routes to/from UK and France and regular shipping routes to /from elsewhere.
Cable Landing Stations (e.g. Loughshinny, Portrane, Clonshaugh)

Threats:
GPS spoofing affecting ferries and shipping
Cable landing station sabotage / espionage

2) Celtic Sea:
Cork Harbour (same as Irish Sea above) - in addition tthe Celtic sea a has major hydrocarbon offshore structure
Heavy shipping passing Ireland's south coast

Threats:
Ditto Irish Sea
Cyber-physical attacks on energy stations in Celtic Sea and Cork Harbour.

3) Corrib Gas Infrastructure
Offshore gas field with pipeline touching land in County Mayo.

Threats:
Cyber-attack on pipeline SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisiton) systems.

4) West Coast / Atlantic Coast:
Many cable landing facilities in less-populated areas with routing from Ireland (thereby EU / Europe) to US.
Ongoing offshore renewable energry projects (wind turbines).

Threats:
The west coast is more liable to cable tapping by submarine activity than the Celtic Sea and Irish Sea as foreign forces will likely decide that detection is more unlikely.

5) Remaining Irish shipping ports:
The ports of Waterford, Foynes, Rosslare and Galway are critical for all consumer exports as between them they handle containers, bulk transport (grain, fertiliser etc), hydro-carbon shipping and RoRo cargo. To a lesser extent these ports handle passenger traffic (Rosslare and Ringaskiddy).

Threats:
Disruption of VTS (vessel traffic services) systems managing ship movements.
Cyberattacks on port IT systems
Cyberattacks on port OT systems (affecting container operations particularly)

6) European Economic Zone (EEZ) and surrounding continental shelf:
EEZ is roughly 900,000 square kilometres (≈ 263,000 nautical miles square)
Undersea cables and pipelines. Potentially offshore energy.

Threats:
Illegal mapping of the surface by foreign naval vessels or vessels appearing as civilian vessels.

Example threat: The Yantar (Russian oceanographic research vessel) seen in the Celtic Sea on Monday 11th November 2024 and Tuesday 12th November 2024 and later in the Irish Sea on Thursday 14th Nov. 2024. Not escorted out of Irish waters until the vessel had entered the rather enclosed Irish Sea.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Acquiring and re-purposing Anti-Submarine Warfare vessels (Cooperation with Naval Forces)

Ireland's Navy has no anti-submarine warfare (ASW) ships, hence Ireland may have difficulty detecting submarines and other submersibles incuding Unmanned Underwater Vehicles (UUV) and Autononomous Underwater Vehicles (AUV) tampering with offshore cables and energy pipelines. Were Ireland to acquire ASW ships (e.g. Type 23 frigates used by the Royal Navy or Fridtjof Nansen-class frigates used by the Royal Norwegian Navy), these ships could be adapted to conduct inspections of underwater cables. This would be very useful in the event of suspected sabotage.

Other purpoises of using ASW ships that would assist the Maritime Security Unit:

Using the ASW's sonar to detect submarines or other UUVs in the vicinity of submarine cables.
Using the ASW vessel to operate towed sonar arrays (widely used for petroleum exploration in the North Sea)
ASW vessels would have the capability to deploy military standard UUWs to inspect the underwater cables.

ASW ships with their abilities to "listen" for submarines may be adapted to listen for monitoring activity by subversive vessels that may be posing as merchant vessels (e.g. posing as a research vessel or even as a fishing vessel). ASW could target their operations towards the vicinity of the underwater cables "listening" to all sonar activity taking place in proximity of the cable.

Whether or not ASW vessels are acquired the proposed Maritime Security Unit should comprise the following technologies:

Autonomous Underwater Vehicles (AUVs): Patrol and inspect cables/pipelines for tampering or damage.
Unmanned Underwater Vehicles (UUVs): Conduct covert surveillance, seabed mapping, and deploy sensors.
Seabed sensor networks: Permanently monitor cable routes for disturbances.
Towed sonar arrays and hull-mounted sonars: For patrol vessels to detect submersibles or seabed anomalies.

Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) Platform: Fuses sonar, radar, AIS, satellite, and cyber threat data into a single picture.
Secure, encrypted communications systems linking Defence Forces, Naval Service, Coast Guard, and NCSC.
AI/ML (atificial intelligence / machine learning) enhanced analytics to detect anomalies in maritime and cyber data.
Digital Twin models of critical infrastructure for Maritime Threat Awareness and Maritime Response Awareness.

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 private sector own and operate the majority of Ireland's underwater telephony cables, ports and harbours, shipping companies and ferry operators and energy stations. Militaries often cooperate with the private sector - not least to practice boarding ships and yachts (I have been part of such exercises) not belonging to the military.

Invest in cybersecurity controls for Operational Technology (OT) systems.
Conduct regular cyber risk assessments and share results with MSU.
Upgrade physical security at critical maritime sites (e.g. CCTV, access control).
Implement GNSS anti-spoofing solutions in port approaches.

Cyberthreat information sharing:
Share cyber threat indicators and incident reports with the MSU and NCSC.
Participate in national threat intelligence exchanges.
Contribute to building a common operating picture of maritime cyber threats.

In the event of an attack or sabotage:
Coordinate with MSU for joint physical–cyber incident response.
Provide technical staff and resources to support restoration.
Participate in joint training exercises with Defence Forces.

Maritime operations rely on many contractors and vendors:
Enforce cybersecurity requirements in contracts.
Vet vendors and service providers.
Monitor and audit third-party access to critical systems.

Ireland’s tech sector and universities are innovation leaders:
Collaborate with Defence Forces on new surveillance, UUV, and cybersecurity technologies.
Contribute to pilot projects (e.g. seabed monitoring systems, AI anomaly detection).
Help train the next generation of cybersecurity talent for both civil and military needs.

Underlying reasons why the MSU should be in partnership with the private sector:
The vast majority of critical maritime infrastructure is privately owned.
Threat actors often target private operators as entry points for hybrid attacks.
Infeasible for Defence Forces to monitor and defend all assets without cooperation.

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 being a small nation with an undersized military cannot defend itself on its own. Threat actors operate across borders be it by using civilian shipping, UUVs / AUVs to execute espionage or sabotage.

Cooperation Activities:
Exchange maritime surveillance data (e.g. AIS, sonar tracks, satellite imagery).
Share cyber threat intelligence on malware, intrusion attempts, and tactics.
Coordinate grey-zone activity reporting (e.g. suspicious foreign “research” vessels).
Key Partners:
EU and EEA Member States (including former EU member UK).
NATO (for collective defence planning even as a Partner nation).

Joint Exercises and Training:
Cooperation Activities:
Participate in EU, NATO, and bilateral maritime security exercises.
Conduct joint cyber-physical drills simulating sabotage of cables or ports.
Share best practices on incident response and maritime domain awareness.

Key Partners:
Nordic countries with experience countering grey-zone threats.
UK Joint Maritime Security Centre (JMSC).
EU’s Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) projects.

Cybersecurity Standards and Information Sharing:

Why: Attacks on ports, shipping companies, and cable landing stations often use the same malware and tactics worldwide.

Cooperation Activities:
Participate in EU-level cybersecurity coordination (e.g. NIS2 Directive implementation).
Share Indicators of Compromise (IOCs) via EU, NATO, and industry networks.
Align OT cybersecurity standards for ports and energy terminals with European partners.

Key Partners:
EU Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA).
European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA).
NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE) (as a Partner).

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

3000 character(s) maximum

The following are suggested for the MSU Action Plan:

Establish the MSU's mission statement and goals.
Conduct formal assessment focusing on undersea cables, shipping, ports and grey-zone threats.
Define relationship with the existing three arms of the Defence Forces (Navy, Army, Air Corps).
Legal and policy frameworks to be drafted to ensure the powers of the MSU are understood.
Develop core divisions (cable and pipeline security, maritime cyber security, etc).
Decide on roles for defence services personnel and civilian personnel.
Identify training requirements.
Secure funding.
Formalise data sharing agreements (e.g. EU armed forces and UK) and NCSC.
Develop communication channels with private sector (incident reporting etc).
Obtain assets (UUV / AUV) and deploy in cooperation with allied forces.

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 faces rapidly evolving cyber threats that span traditional military domains, critical national infrastructure, and maritime security. The country's strategic location at the western edge of Europe makes it both a gateway for transatlantic communications and a strategic vulnerability for aggressor state-sponsored cyber-attack operations.

Undersea cables, shipping OT systems, ports, and energy infrastructure are increasingly targeted in the grey zone of geopolitical competition. Cyber-enabled sabotage, espionage, and disruption of maritime logistics would have severe consequences for Ireland's economy, security, and sovereignty.

Norway provides an instructive model through its Cyberforsvaret (Norwegian Cyber Defence Force). By consolidating cyber-defence capabilities under one military command, Norway has achieved:

Unified command and control for cyber operations.
Integration of defensive and offensive cyber capabilities.
Coordination with civilian agencies for national critical infrastructure protection.
Close alignment with NATO's collective cyber-defence framework.
Specific focus on maritime infrastructure, including undersea cables and energy installations.

Ireland lacks a dedicated military cyber command. Cyber responsibilities are fragmented across civilian agencies and Defence Forces IT support functions, leaving gaps in readiness, response coordination, and strategic deterrence.

Establishing a dedicated Cyber Defence Command within the Defence Forces is essential. Such a command would:
Centralise Ireland's defensive and (where mandated) offensive cyber capabilities.
Build joint-service integration across Army, Naval Service and Air Corps.
Provide a single point of coordination with the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) and civilian critical infrastructure operators.
Develop cyber talent pipelines, training regimes, and secure sovereign capabilities.
Enhance Ireland's ability to meet EU and NATO cyber-defence expectations.

Within this proposed command, a Maritime Cybersecurity Unit should be a core, mission-focused division. This unit would:
Protect Ireland's undersea cables which are a vital transatlantic link for European data and commerce.
Defend port and shipping OT systems from cyber attacks that could disrupt food, fuel, and trade supply chains.
Monitor, detect, and respond to seabed surveillance and sabotage operations by adversaries using civilian vessels as cover.
Integrate seabed domain awareness (e.g., UUV deployments) with cyber threat intelligence to counter grey-zone hybrid attacks.
Coordinate with Naval Service and Coast Guard for joint responses to physical-cyber threats.

By following Norway's example, Ireland can build a credible, unified cyber-defence capability with a maritime cybersecurity component tailored to its strategic needs as an island nation, data gateway and modern European economy.

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

Ireland's maritime security is vital to our economic resilience, digital infrastructure, and strategic autonomy. As an island nation with a vast Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), continuously evolving threats that may affect Ireland's maritime security include,

1. Subsea Infrastructure Risks

Ireland's undersea cables, including interconnectors and offshore energy assets, are critical to global data and energy flows. These are vulnerable to sabotage, espionage, and unregulated activity, posing risks to enterprise continuity and national security. Given the strategic importance of these assets, and the relatively low complexity involved in disrupting them (as per recent international examples), it is vital that they are monitored and protected in a modern and technologically advanced way.

2. Cyber and Hybrid Threats

Increasing digitisation of port infrastructure and maritime logistics operations exposes systems to the potential for cyberattack, which can disrupt trade, supply chains, and critical services.

3. Environmental and Climate Pressures

Rising sea levels and extreme weather events threaten coastal infrastructure and marine ecosystems, impacting sectors such as fisheries, offshore renewables, and tourism.

4. Geopolitical Tensions

Strategic competition in the North Atlantic and Arctic regions, including increased naval activity, challenges Ireland's maritime domain awareness and possibly also its sovereignty.

The Role of Space and Innovation

Space-based technologies are essential to addressing these threats. Satellite communications, Earth observation, and maritime surveillance enhance Ireland's ability to monitor vessel activity, detect illegal operations, and support marine spatial planning. These capabilities also align with the goals of the Marine Planning Policy Statement and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

[redacted] for its part supports the development of Ireland's space sector through the National Space Strategy for Enterprise, ESA partnerships, and Horizon Europe. These initiatives help build resilience, support sustainable marine development, and strengthen Ireland's position in the global space economy.

However, maritime security is also a cross-cutting issue and [redacted] contributes by fostering innovation, supporting critical infrastructure, and leveraging space and other technologies to protect Ireland's maritime interests and economic future.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Maritime security will face increasingly complex challenges in the coming years, shaped by technological, environmental, and geopolitical change. From [redacted] perspective, some of the most significant emerging threats include but are not limited to

1) Disruption to Critical Maritime Infrastructure

Ireland has set ambitious targets for offshore wind energy and intends to maximise the offshore assets available. This will include wind farms, subsea cables, and offshore transmission substations – the forthcoming National DMAP from DCEE will identify further areas for offshore wind development up to 2040.

The ambitious scale of this development will be a national strategic advantage for Ireland. The corresponding risk is that wide areas of large renewable energy infrastructure off our coasts could be disrupted.

These assets are essential to Ireland's digital economy and energy transition, and their protection is vital to national and enterprise resilience.

2) Cybersecurity and Autonomous Systems

The rise of autonomous vessels, smart ports, and AI-driven logistics will invariably introduce new vulnerabilities. Cyberattacks on maritime systems could disrupt trade, supply chains, and critical services, with cascading effects on the broader economy.

3) Climate-Driven Maritime Instability

Climate change will intensify pressures on marine ecosystems, increase extreme weather events, and drive shifts in maritime activity. These changes may lead to resource competition, migration, and new security dynamics in Irish and EU waters.

4) Space Asset Dependence and Vulnerability

Maritime operations increasingly rely on satellite-based services for navigation, surveillance, and communication. Disruption to space assets whether accidental or deliberate could severely impact maritime situational awareness and response capabilities.

To address these challenges, [redacted] advocates a proactive, innovation-led approach that includes,

A. Investing in Space and Surveillance Technologies

Strengthen Ireland's capacity in Earth observation, satellite communications, and maritime domain awareness through ESA collaboration and national space programmes.

B. Enhance Cyber Resilience

Promote cybersecurity standards and innovation across maritime and port infrastructure, including support for SMEs engaged in maritime supply/value chains.

C. Support Sustainable Marine Development

Align enterprise policy with marine planning and environmental protection goals, as outlined in the MPPS and MSFD.

D. Foster Cross-Sector Collaboration

Encourage partnerships between government, industry, and academia to develop dual-use technologies and build resilience across the maritime and space domains.

Again, Ireland's maritime future will be shaped by how we anticipate and adapt to emerging threats. [redacted] is committed to supporting innovation, infrastructure protection, and space-enabled solutions to ensure a secure and sustainable maritime domain.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Prioritising the areas that are marked for offshore wind energy infrastructure. In this regard, the geographical focus of the Strategy should align with the 'Phase 1' offshore wind projects along the east coast, the South Coast DMAP, and those areas identified via the forthcoming National DMAP (expected late 2027).

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 safeguard Ireland's maritime interests, strategic investment must focus on enhancing resilience, innovation, and situational awareness across the maritime domain. From [redacted] perspective, the following priorities should be considered,

1. Space-Based Surveillance and Monitoring

Investment in satellite technologies such as Earth observation, maritime traffic monitoring, and environmental sensing is critical. These capabilities support real-time awareness of vessel movements, illegal activities, and environmental changes, aligning with the MPPS and MSFD.

2. Cybersecurity and Digital Infrastructure

As maritime operations become increasingly digitised, ports, logistics systems, and offshore platforms must be protected from cyber threats. Investment in secure digital infrastructure and cybersecurity innovation will help safeguard trade, data, and critical services.

A proposed Offshore Wind Centre of Excellence (OWCE) for Ireland, as per the relevant action in Powering Prosperity - Ireland's Offshore Wind Industrial Strategy (2024) is currently being assessed for feasibility. Feedback to date since publication of Powering Prosperity has put 'Digital, AI and Data' high on the list of supply chain areas for development and support via RD&I in coming years, and 'Security/Cybersecurity' has increasingly featured in [redacted] discussions with industry. Therefore, an OWCE could in future be positioned as a hub for developing new solutions for offshore renewable energy-related resilience, cybersecurity, and critical infrastructure protection.

Conclusion

Strategic investment in space, cybersecurity, infrastructure, and innovation will ensure Ireland's maritime domain remains secure, sustainable, and economically vibrant. [redacted] is committed to enabling these advancements through policy, funding, and collaboration.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

[redacted] structured engagement with the private sector through innovation funding, regulatory clarity, and collaboration platforms. This aligns with the Marine Planning Policy Statement and Marine Strategy Framework Directive, which emphasise integrated, cross-sectoral approaches to marine governance. Through the National Space Strategy for Enterprise and ESA partnerships, [redacted] also encourages private sector participation in space-enabled maritime services, supporting both security and economic opportunity. Roles for the Private Sector could therefore include,

1. Innovation and Technology Development

Industry plays a central role in developing and deploying advanced technologies such as autonomous systems, AI, and space-based monitoring that enhance maritime situational awareness and infrastructure resilience.

2. Data Sharing and Maritime Domain Awareness

Timely sharing of operational data (e.g. AIS vessel movements, navigational/route/cargo information, anomalies, environmental conditions) can support national surveillance and enforcement efforts. Public-private data partnerships, under appropriate governance can strengthen collective security.

The role of the private sector, particularly offshore wind developers, ports, and companies in other marine technology/adjacent sectors, should be addressed to Ireland's National Maritime Security Strategy. Under Powering Prosperity, dual-use infrastructure and technologies can enhance both energy security and national defence, unlocking value from increased EU and national investment. Private sector actors can co-develop cybersecurity standards, supply patrol and surveillance systems, build maritime domain awareness tools, and enable strategic offshore hubs. With coordinated support, Irish firms can play a proactive role in surveillance, emergency response, and innovation — while also growing export-ready capabilities in the EU's evolving defence-industrial landscape.

It will be important to consult with those offshore wind developers who are currently planning projects in Ireland's maritime area, in addition to EirGrid as TSO for the offshore grid, and Gas Networks Ireland as owners of the subsea gas pipelines. An ongoing role for these key stakeholders under the Strategy – such as a standing Consultative Forum etc. – would be important. Engagement with the owners/operators of offshore renewable energy assets should greatly enhance the effectiveness of the 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 is essential to safeguarding Ireland's maritime interests. As a small, open economy with a vast maritime domain and critical subsea infrastructure, Ireland's security is deeply interconnected with that of its immediate neighbours and global partners.

Maritime areas/themes where continued cooperation should be considered critical include,

1. Shared Maritime Domain Awareness

Ireland's ability to monitor and respond to threats such as illegal activity, hybrid attacks, or environmental hazard (s) relies on real-time data sharing and joint surveillance efforts with EU partners, ESA members, the UK, and others.

2. Cybersecurity and Hybrid Threat Response

Maritime cyber threats often originate beyond national borders. International cooperation enables shared threat intelligence, harmonised standards, and coordinated responses to cyber incidents affecting ports, logistics, and offshore systems.

3. Climate and Environmental Monitoring

Marine environmental challenges such as pollution, biodiversity loss, and climate-driven changes require joint monitoring and policy alignment, as reflected in the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and Marine Planning Policy Statement. Earth observation data from the European Space Agency can play a vital part in the Climate and Environmental Monitoring toolkit.

With regard to 'Strategic Partnerships' [redacted] enhanced cooperation through EU Maritime Security and Space Programmes as evidenced by the state's participation in EU initiatives such as Copernicus and Horizon Europe and which strengthen Ireland's access to space-based maritime surveillance and innovation funding.

If Ireland achieves its offshore wind energy ambitions, the construction and protection of offshore wind energy assets will benefit Europe. It will be in the European interest to ensure that these projects are protected. In addition to the EU and UK, international alliances such as the North Sea Energy Cooperation (NSEC) should also be engaged with from the offshore energy perspective.

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, if the National Maritime Security Strategy is to be of maximum utility to all stakeholders, it should be accompanied by a detailed and time-bound Action Plan. A clear implementation roadmap is essential to translate strategic intent into measurable outcomes/operational deliverables, attributed to specific action owners, for delivery within a specified timeframe to ensure accountability and fully enable cross-sectoral coordination.

Any Action Plan should support national enterprise, climate, and digital strategies to ensure coherence across government.

Possible elements of the Action Plan could include,

1. Defined Objectives and Milestones

The Action Plan should set out specific, measurable goals aligned with the Strategy's priorities such as infrastructure protection, cyber resilience, and environmental monitoring, along with timelines and detail responsible/accountable actors.

2. Technology and Innovation Investment Pathways

The Plan should outline targeted investments in space-based surveillance, cybersecurity, building on [redacted] through the National Space Strategy for Enterprise and ESA partnerships.

3. Capacity Building and Skills Development

Maintaining a skilled workforce is essential to maritime and digital security. The Plan should include actions to support training, research, and innovation in maritime technologies, space technologies, data analytics, cybersecurity, nautical and environmental sciences.

4. International Cooperation Actions

The Plan should explicitly detail how Ireland will engage with EU partners, ESA neighbouring states, and international organisations, such as NSEC, to enhance maritime domain awareness, infrastructure protection, and crisis response.

5. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adaptability

A robust monitoring and evaluation framework should be embedded to track the plan's progress, assess impact, and adapt to emerging threats or technological developments.

Given the changing geo-political context, the Strategy should cover a short period with further iterations to be developed an annual or biennial basis, which would enable it to evolve in response to emerging challenges and 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

Maritime security should not be considered a matter of national defence only, it is a foundation for economic stability, digital connectivity, and sustainable development. From [redacted] perspective, Ireland's approach must be forward-looking, innovation-driven, and deeply integrated with enterprise policy.

A secure maritime domain underpins trade, energy, tourism, and digital infrastructure. It is essential that maritime security be recognised as a driver of economic confidence and investment, particularly in coastal and regional communities.

Ireland's growing space sector also offers transformative potential for maritime security. Continued investment in satellite-based monitoring, AI-driven analytics, and secure communications will enhance situational awareness and support marine planning, as outlined in the Marine Planning Policy Statement.

Regarding innovation and our SME sector, maritime security challenges present opportunities for Irish enterprises (particularly SMEs) to develop and export solutions in areas like cybersecurity, marine robotics, and environmental monitoring. Targeted supports and test bed or demonstrator environments should be part of any national strategy.

Ireland has both challenges/threats to face in future, as detailed in previous answers. It also has an opportunity to address these through modern, efficient and technology-enabled solutions that could deliver great economic benefit alongside other, more 'classic' capabilities already established within in our growing offshore wind supply chain in Ireland, some of which have the ability to support other maritime needs such as security.

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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

Limitations in ability to detect, investigate, interrupt and prosecute maritime security breaches both military & civil

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 to offshore maritime assets & infrastructure not to solely undermine Ireland Inc but to test and undermine European capability and interests.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

An estimate of situation based on potential tests to Irish and European capability will expose that in evolving realtime scenarios. Assets must be adapaptable in realtime to evolving threats - use of tech as well as dynamic platforms is essential.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Sub survace, surface, cyber and air based sensors & platforms as well as personnel expertise developed to international standards. Effective territirial & inshore policing also needed.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

On land, owners of key infrastructure provide 1st line security for it - commercial interests must do that offshore also. So owners/operators of floating energy platforms must provide 1st line of security themselves.

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 benefits from its European market cooperation so it must be prepared to jointly protect that - understanding that any threat to Ireland will be as a result of an intention to test and undermine Europe.

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

No action plan , no more talk just do for a change.

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

We must also train those who will provide evidence including geospatial evidence for national and international courts. I wish to be part of providing that training based on my knowledge and experience.

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

Ireland faces a number of low probability/high impact threats and vulnerabilities to its maritime domain and one high probability/high imact threat.

The certainty is that climate change will have an impact on Ireland's marine environment. Rising sea levels will increase the risk of inundation in our coastal cities, particularly Cork and Galway. Rising sea temperatures will further damage sea life, which combined with overfishing will reduce economic opportunities for coastal communities. Although the impact of Climate change on ocean current patterns remains uncertain, the risk of a shift to a climate more typic of our latitude cannot be overlooked and should inform planning including in the security domain. Therefore our Maritime Security strategy has to be climate proofed. While other policy domains will lead the response to climate change, the Security strategy needs to keep this in the forefront of planning and horizon scanning.

Ireland is dependent on undersea maritime infrastructure for its economic well being. 70% of our gas, still a key part of our energy generation and domestic heating, is imported via subsea pipelines. The Nordstream attack demonstrated the vulnerability of this type of infrastructure. Electricity interconnectors with the UK and continental Europe are also vulnerable to this type of attack. Although the probability is low that this infrastructure will suffer an attack in the near future, the impact would be high, particularly if multiple connections are targeted.

Ireland also relies on undersea cable infrastructure for its economic wellbeing. The majority of connections run between the UK and Ireland. Given the potential for a less friendly government in London, with the rise of Reform, diversification of our interconnections should be prioritised. In addition to our direct connections, a significant number of international cables run within our EEZ, Ireland's lack of capabilities to monitor and protect our EEZ may prompt even friendly nations to take control in this area.

Ireland is overdependent on Dublin port for imports and exports. A hostile actor could, with rudimentary technology and planning, cause disruption by scuttling a large vessel in the navigation channel. The economic disruption caused by such an event would be catastrophic and could extend to food security issues.

Finally, Ireland lacks a meaningful capacity to manage its maritime domain or to maintain adequate marine domain awareness. The Commission on Defence outlined some of the areas that need to be addressed including primary radar, aircraft and personnel. In the short to medium term it is not possible for Ireland to address this capacity deficit alone. Given the political challenges of pursuing partnerships with other actors, this vulnerability may be exploited by 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

As discussed above the most significant emerging threat for Ireland's maritime security are the downstream effects of anthropogenic climate change. These could include, but are not limited to:
1) Damage to critical infrastructure due to extreme weather events.
2) Coastal inundation impacting major population centres.
3) Marine-ecosystem collapse due to climate change, over fishing, industrial pollution (or likely a combination of all three)
While climate change will be addressed in other policy domains it is essential that resilience to these challenges forms the core of the maritime security strategy. Each climate change challenge could produce security challenges through population displacement (both internally and from outside the state), competition over scarce resources either energy or food, and the need to defend Ireland's economic interests in remaining fish stocks and/or offshore inrastructure. The response to these challenges will require international cooperation, particularly with European partners, and a whole of government approach where security and risk analysis forms a core part of planning, budgeting and managing multiple policy areas. The Maritime Security Strategy, nested ideally within a National Security Strategy, could provide a blueprint for addressing these issues.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

While the entirety of Ireland's maritime domain is vulnerable, the East coast is shared with the UK and presents a less challenging operational domain even with current capablities. The existing Naval infrastructure in Cork also provides a capability on the South and South West coats. Therefore the short to medium term geographical focus of our investment in maritime capabilites should be on the West Coast. Both Galway, as discussed in the Commission on Defence report, and the Shannon estuary should become hubs for our developing capability. Either Foynes port or the old Tarbert Power station site would provide exceptional berthing for longer range Naval Vessels. Used in conjunction with Shannon Airport, the region would provide a defensible strategic base for offshore patrols and operations.
Private industry should also be incentivised to base a cable repair vessel at Foynes, to enhance our response capability to undersea infrastructure damage.
By developing a combined Naval and Air Corps capability in Galway and Limerick and/or Kerry we would be creating a formidable domain awareness and response capability that would benefit not just Ireland but also European security.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

The most immediate challenge to Ireland's maritime capability is personnel. Addressing the retention crisis and ensuring Ireland's existing fleet can be used to the optimum level in the short term would have a significant impact on our level of preparedness for a Maritime security challenge. More flexible terms of service in the Naval Reserve is essential to allow specialist personnel continue to serve while also realising their full economic potential.
The procurement of primary radar should be completed as soon as possible and procurement of a flagship multi-role vessel should be fast tracked. The primary capabilities of this vessel should be designed for supporting Ireland's off shore security needs and not for troop or equipment transportation. The European Patrol Corvette (EPC) PESCO project may produce a suitable vessel and our observer status on the project should be leveraged in the planning and procurement phase. However, given the timeline a second hand vessel may be required as in intermediary step.
Ireland should continue to investigate the utility of Unmanned vehicles both aerial and undersea as a force multiplier for Marine Domain Awareness.
As mentioned above, we should encourage the location of a marine cable repair vessel at an Irish port. In addition we should amend planning on cable landings to ensure that the private sector is investing in appropriate security sensor technology on under sea cables.
In terms of broader security institutions, it is essential that Ireland develop a national level Intelligence Agency with appropriate legislative support and oversight.

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 maritime domain combines key national security issues with private interests whether that is subsea infrastructure, off shore energy infrastructure such as the Corrib gas field or offshore wind, fisheries and aquaculture.
Industry is also a source of solutions to maritime security challenges including sensor technology on undersea cables and pipelines, drone development and even satellite capabilities. Only a partnership approach can address the complex needs of the maritime environment.
The cost of maintaining an appropriate security capability in the maritime domain also needs to be considered when approving and planning marine developments.

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 is essential to Ireland protecting Ireland's Maritime interests. As discussed above we are already engaged in relevant PESCO projects and these should be kept under review. Similarly out ITPP with NATO has provided access to the Critical Maritime Infrastructure Coordination Cell. At the EU level we also have access to EuroSur, SafeSeaNet and MARSUR to enhance domain awareness.
This cooperation is essential to allow Ireland to address the gaps in its maritime capabilites in the medium to long term. However in the short term it is necessary to consider bilateral arrangements with neighbouring states - France and the UK. These should address emergency responses to immediate threats in the maritime domain. These agreements will present a challenge to our existing policy of military neutrality but could be negotiated in terms of our shared interests in maintaining access to undersea infrastructure rather than involving a direct alliance or reciprocal defence arrangement. Without such agreements Ireland will offer nothing in terms of securing Europe's Western flank, and will be a bystander in any crisis even where it directly affects our economic or security interests.
Finally we should use similar sized maritime nations as a benchmark and peer group for developing our maritime strategy. Within Europe, Denmark would be an appropriate peer, outside of Europe, New Zealand should be approached to develop a knowlege sharing and training partnership.

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 without an action plan and benchmarks is not a strategy.
In the short term the action plan should focus on retention and recruitment to reach establishment size of the Navy and Air Corps, a review and plan to enhance the Naval and Air Corps reserve, procurement completion for Primary Radar and the Multi role vessel, bilateral agreements to be negotiated and clear lines of responsibility for delivery, oversight and review.
The medium term goals should be oriented towards the establishment of new military installations on the West Coast (the Shannon Estuary and Galway), the expansion of our naval and air capabilities to meet the gaps in our Maritime Security.
The Maritime Security Strategy should be reviewed updated on a 3-5 year rolling basis going forward.

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 development of this strategy is welcome, however in the absence of a National Security Strategy it is like building an extension when you don't have a house. While the Maritime domain presents specific challenges that can be addressed by a separate strategy, without the appropriate National Security policy framework and institutional infrastructure supporting that strategy, Ireland will face considerable risks.

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

While recognising the multi dimensional nature of Ireland's maritime environment and the various contrasting risks and threats facing maritime security, the most significant and critical vulnerability relates to the security of our nation's undersea energy and data cable infrastructure. Several cables are located in or near Ireland's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). These cables, which carry the vast majority of international data and voice transfers, are vital to Ireland's and Europe's connectivity and are of high strategic and economic importance. As a hub for international communication, any disruption to the energy and data cables within our EEZ would have consequences for the functioning of business, banking, government operations and society at large.
These vulnerabilities have been significantly highlighted by recent events. In September 2022, the Nord Stream gas pipelines suffered a series of explosive ruptures in the Baltic Sea, causing significant leaks and disabling the pipelines. A month later, in October 2022, the SHEFA-2 telecom cable, which connects the Faroe Islands, Shetland, Orkney, and mainland Scotland, was damaged in two separate incidents. In October 2023, a section of the Baltic connector gas pipeline linking Finland and Estonia, along with an adjacent communications cable, was damaged. Most recently, in November 2024, the BCS East–West Interlink cable between Lithuania and Sweden and the C-Lion1 cable between Finland and Germany were both severed in the Baltic Sea within hours of each other.
While some incidents have been officially attributed to accidental causes such as fishing gear or anchors, the fact that these disruptions coincided with heightened geopolitical tension, especially the war in Ukraine, has raised suspicions of hostile interference. For Ireland, the principal vulnerability lies in the dense cluster of transatlantic cables along the west and south coasts (carrying US-EU internet traffic), as well as interconnectors to the UK and France. In November 2024, the Russian "oceanographic" vessel Yantar lingered near subsea cables in the Irish Sea just north of Dublin, prompting the Irish Naval Service to escort it away. Damage to a single major cable can cost several million euros in repairs and up to 4 weeks of outage, not to mention the severe economic fallout for tech industries and communications.

In addition, Irish waters have long been exploited for illicit activities such as drug trafficking and weapons smuggling, and organised crime groups continue to evolve their methods. For example, one particularly challenging and emerging threat is the use of semi-submersible vessels for drug transport. The first recorded interception of such a vessel in the Atlantic occurred off the coast of Spain in 2019, involving the seizure of 3,000 kg of cocaine. Ireland's EEZ zone is too vast to patrol with the limited technology available to Ireland (lack of coastal radar and limited number of patrol vessels and planes).

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 outlined above, the most significant economic as well as societal vulnerability relates to the security of Ireland's energy and data cable infrastructure. This is a current and, for the foreseeable future, emerging threat. We propose to address such vulnerabilities by utilising smart, AI-driven technology. Such technology will detect unknown or “dark” vessels and illegal approaches in the vicinity of the cables, build a resilience against sabotage and assist in combating organised crime. Distributed Acoustic Sensing (DAS) technology is already available and enables existing fibre optic cable networks to be repurposed as extensive underwater acoustic monitoring systems. This technology allows for continuous, high-resolution surveillance over distances exceeding 150 kilometres, effectively transforming subsea cables into vast, real-time listening infrastructures. Already embedded fibre cables within offshore wind farms, HVDC power interconnectors (e.g., the upcoming Celtic Interconnector), and active or inactive pipelines (e.g., Corrib gas pipeline) can be leveraged directly, requiring no subsea modifications. By connecting a shore-based interrogator, these fibres become virtual sensor fences, which can be used to detect and classify threats such as anchors dragging near cables, trawling activities, unauthorised seabed excavation, diver or submersible incursions, and even pipeline leakage or structural anomalies.

Capturing DAS data and optimising machine learning algorithms, supported by emerging computing technologies, will provide real time monitoring of the cables, detect and identify unauthorised or covert maritime activities, enhance surveillance of the maritime environment surrounding the cables and provide early warning capabilities. In addition to detecting suspicious maritime activities close to cables, the technology will allow enhanced monitoring of potential organised crime activities, support interdiction efforts and bolster anti drugs enforcement.

This non-intrusive dual approach strengthens physical cable infrastructure security, provides protection to a fundamental pillar of Ireland's economic platform and improves marine awareness and sustainability. Additionally, DAS deployment offers substantial environmental co-benefits, as it is sensitive enough to promptly detect subsea earthquakes, landslides, or turbidity currents, providing critical early-warning capabilities for natural hazards that threaten subsea infrastructure and coastal communities. This real-time seismic monitoring significantly strengthens Ireland’s preparedness for natural disasters. Moreover, DAS can also be applied to marine environmental protection, including continuous monitoring of marine life activity. This can support conservation initiatives, provide critical insights into marine biodiversity and enhance Ireland’s overall marine research capabilities, all from the same device and data.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Given the identified threats above, the strategy should prioritise its focus on actions to combat these vulnerabilities. The first focus should be the protection of energy and data cables, by protecting the locations where these cables are laid. The use of DAS is especially suited, as it makes use of the same infrastructure that it intends to protect, thus no additional undersea infrastructure is required.
Once these cables are secured, then the attention could focus on geographical areas that are more prone to criminal activity at sea. In this case, using DAS, additional dedicated cables could be laid in the medium to long term to create a dense network of intelligent distributed sensing devices and cover the entire coastal area at minimum cost.

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, it is critical to prioritise strategic investments that protect the nation's undersea cable infrastructure, essential to both digital connectivity and energy transmission. Disruptions caused by sabotage or accidental damage could severely impair Ireland's economic operations, governmental services, and societal functions. Therefore, a comprehensive Security Strategy should include the following technology and infrastructure priorities:
- Investment in smart monitoring technologies for real-time detection of anomalies and unauthorised activities near undersea cables, leveraging advancements in distributed fibre optic sensing.
- Establishment of a rapid incident response program to address and mitigate threats or damage swiftly.
- Strengthening international collaboration, including optimising existing agreements and establishing new protocols where necessary, to ensure coordinated protection of transboundary cable routes.
- Deployment of redundant routing and backup systems to ensure network resilience and continuity of service in the event of infrastructure compromise.
With respect to the technology we suggest that investment in fibre sensing using Distributed Acoustic Sensing (DAS), as the technology is already well developed, it runs on existing fibre cables and could be installed immediately. This solution should be prioritised as it has the potential to deliver excellent ability to detect threats on cable infrastructure at a minimum cost, and could thus be deployed immediately. In addition, it also offers the ability to detect dark vessels at a fair distance from the cable, bringing the additional benefit of intercepting potential criminal activities at sea.
In the medium to long term new fibres should be deployed specifically for sensing purposes to increase the sensing coverage.
Other technologies, including underground sonar, coastal radar, drone fleet should also be considered in the medium to long term to complement fibre sensing. However, these will likely require a much larger investment and lower value for money.

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 private sector owns or operates most undersea cable infrastructure. For example, private international technology companies have heavily invested in multiple cables which cross our EEZ or land in the State. In contrast, other cables connecting to Ireland, such as IRIS, are owned by non-EU states. Given the very significant international private ownership, operation and reliance on undersea cables located within Ireland's EEZ, it is imperative that they are also involved and consulted in the development of the National Maritime Security Strategy.
Energy infrastructure follows a similar model: the Corrib gas field is now operated by a private consortium led by Vermilion Energy, and upcoming offshore wind farms are under development in partnership with private firms like EDF, RWE and Saorgus Energy.
Formalising Public-private partnerships (PPPs) will enable structured information-sharing and rapid co-response to incidents. Under such PPPs, the private sector could share real-time incident data, threat assessments, and maintenance insights with national security bodies. In return, government agencies would provide prioritised threat intelligence, risk modelling, and support for incident response. Several EU members have already embedded private operators within formal security regimes. In France, companies such as Orange Marine and Alcatel Subsea Network conduct regular integrity checks on subsea cables in collaboration with national authorities. Similarly, Italy’s Navy and Telecom Italia Sparkle signed a framework agreement in 2022, committing to information exchange, joint reconnaissance, and monitoring of Sparkle’s submarine cables and surrounding sea areas, with the Navy providing cartographic support for the seabed of interest and assistance in emergency operational situations.

Success in the development and implementation of any critical strategy must always involve close consultation and cooperation of all stakeholders. Such involvement should commence at an early stage and include strategic development, action plan evolution, investment avenues and sources, as well as international cooperation platforms.

One high-value PPP opportunity within the current strategy is deploying DAS on existing undersea fibre cables. By equipping privately owned cables with DAS interrogators, operators gain finer-grained maintenance and fault-detection capabilities, while Defence and Coast Guard units receive continuous security monitoring for threats. A jointly staffed monitoring platform can help ensure that anomalies trigger coordinated responses, from immediate military patrols to operator repair dispatches. This two-way flow reduces duplication, accelerates response times, and aligns private risk-management obligations with national security goals. Shared equipment and personnel costs will also enhance resilience and deliver measurable economic benefits.

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 the international connectivity of undersea energy and data cables to Europe and across the Atlantic it is imperative that any security strategy includes international cooperation as a fundamental component in the protection of this essential infrastructure. Leveraging existing international cooperation partnerships, for example MAOC (N)) (Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre – Narcotics) in the fight against drug smuggling and Europol in respect of organised crime, is essential to develop intelligence and rapid response teams. The building on current partnerships and the development of new cooperation mechanisms focused on the protection of maritime infrastructure will be crucial. The sharing and analysis of real time monitoring data will support early detection of "dark" or suspicious vessels or anomalous activities and allow the deployment of appropriate rapid response capabilities. In addition, the sharing of captured data in respect of climate or maritime wildlife patterns will boost global understanding and awareness.

However, Ireland's inclusion in such international cooperation frameworks will likely depend on its ability to contribute valuable intelligence and data. To be a meaningful partner, Ireland must invest in and deploy advanced smart infrastructure capable of generating high-quality, real-time monitoring data, such as DAS systems. This data will thus enhance domestic maritime security as well as offer actionable insights to international partners, thus reinforcing Ireland's strategic relevance within broader collaborative 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. To be realisable and provide public confidence the National Maritime Security Strategy requires the support of a robust and achievable detailed Action Plan. Such a plan should provide all actors, stakeholders and the public, clarity on how each strategic component will be approached. The plan should provide clarity in objectives, expected actions, outcomes, roles, responsibilities and investment avenues.
A key consideration is that, beyond outlining collaboration with industry, the Action Plan should also incorporate measures to engage the research community. This will ensure that the latest technological advancements, including smart infrastructure and, in particular, cutting-edge AI algorithms, are fully leveraged in shaping national maritime security efforts. This will ensure that evolving security technologies are leveraged to the maximum, and will also foster the development of indigenous startups, which is key when it comes to national security.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

The use of smart technologies to protect our undersea cables, enhance surveillance against organised crime, as well as provide real time data on climate and marine life patterns is achievable in the short term. The technology transforms standard cables into dense arrays of virtual microphones. It works by detecting tiny vibrations along the cable, allowing each cable to 'listen' or sense its environment in real time. These vibrations, once captured, can be analysed using advanced AI techniques to detect dark vessels, submarine activity, cable tampering as well as marine wildlife movement patterns and vocalisations.
There are currently limitations in respect of signal and data capture, interpretation, cable sensitivities, environmental noise interference and scalability. However the current Trinity College Dublin Research Project "Sea Scan", jointly funded by Research Ireland and the Defence Forces is making significant progress in reducing these limitations and overcoming many of the technological issues.
In addition, Prof. Ruffini is heavily involved in similar research activities at the European level, for example through the participation in the EU project ICON (coordinated by TCD), and the Celtic-Next project SUSTAINET.
The SeaScan Team has also developed a strong network of stakeholders, which includes government institutions (Department of Defence, Defence forces, the national security centre, the department for communications), subsea cable operators (euNetworks, ESB Telecom, Zayo, MDM Engineering, Tampnet (Norway)), equipment vendors (Adtran, Alcatel Submarine Networks), and researchers (Dublin Institute for advanced Studies (Geophysics) and Trinity College Dublin (departments of zoology, computer science, engineering), Queen's Belfast University (department of engineering), Rice University in the US (Department of Earth, Environmental and Planetary Sciences).

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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

Currently, sub sea infrastructure is extremely vulnerable, due to the Naval Service unable to put sufficient vessels to sea due to the ongoing unaddressed crisis in the Naval Service. The Naval Service has no significant sub sea capability, sonar etc, and no way of dealing with a hostile actor should one be detected. The Flower Class Corvette's which served during the 50s and 60s had a sub sea capability, sonar, weapons etc. It's open season for drugs smuggling, particularly along the south and West coastline, once again due to the fact we have no surveillance radar and a lack of a Naval presence.

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

Sub sea infrastructure, and the ability to protect it ,along with drug and weapons smuggling. Again, a properly resoursed Naval Service with the ability to launch drones, at sea, to improve surveillance. Purchase capable Naval vessels, not as we currently have patrol vessels. The type 31 Royal Navy vessels, currently under construction, or similar, are required. The proposal to purchase a Multi Role Vessel for the Naval Service should be reviewed, and consideration should be given to purchasing a similar vessel to the type 31, which would have sub sea, and air defence capability, along with the capability to deploy helicopters or maritime drones.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Clearly, there are areas that have a greater importance, where energy interconectors and data cables are located, particularly in shallow waters. The south and west coast are vulnerable regarding drug smuggling efforts.

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 first priority should be ending the crisis in the Naval Service and the Defence Forces generally. By introducing payments that reflect individuals worth, improving technical pay and allowances, introducing long service loyalty payments etc. Skilled people must be retained.
By purchasing suitable ships, such as type 31s or similar, that have an anti submarine and anti air capability. By purchasing suitable maritime drones, ship and land launched systems. By providing a second Naval Base along the east coast, which would also act as a driver for recruitment.

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 could provide technical assistance to the Naval service along with improving security of their infrastructure, by deploying sensors to aid with the detection of possible interference.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Ireland should be working with our European partners and with the United Kingdom government either through existing arrangements or through new bilateral arrangements. We cannot provide the protection required by ourselves alone. Ireland should become more directly involved in European defence. Neutrality offers us nothing by way of protection.

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 needs to increase defence spending significantly. A plan should be put in place to do this ,with an agreed multi annual budget in place to fund the improvements necessary. Be it payments for individuals, or for equipment purchases, and agreed plan along with funding is necessary.

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

Currently, we are defenceless with a extremely limited Naval Service and capability. Significant improvement is required, and fast. Equipment purchases need to be expedited along with retention measures for skilled personnel. To date, the government has failed to deliver what is required. That two needs to end. The Department of Defence also needs to up its game, and lobby government for what is required, equipment and payment wise for serving members.

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

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

3000 character(s) maximum

The most significant threat stems from the current Govenment's policy of steadily eroding our Neutrality, especially with the undemocratic act of removing the people's Triple Lock. This is at the time when there are highly militarised and belligerent States trying to rip the UN Charter to shreds. In the past weeks people all over the world have been shocked by the unjustified, illegal and unprovoked attacks on Iran by Israel, backed by the US. The US then compounded this aggression by directly bombing nuclear energy sites in Iran on Sunday, 22nd June - the anniversary of Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of the Soviet Union by Nazi Germany and its European Axis allies in 1941. Our government here is desperately trying to also play its part in tearing the fabric of the Charter apart. The government's intention is to remove the UN element of the Triple Lock by replacing it with an optional 'International Force' or "any other regional arrangement or body that operates in a manner consistent with the UN Charter and international law." This is clearly designed to open us up to participating in one of the adventures of the US dominated NATO, which has been shown to act in a manner contrary to and in breach of the principles of the UN Charter and international law.

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

Exploitative activities and extractive industries by profit only seeking corporations leading to serious environmental damage and destruction including; Climate Catastrophe contributing to higher sea temperatures endangering our maritime biodiversity and affecting our weather, and causing rising sea levels due to ice cap melt, which causes risk of coastal erosion and inundation; Pollution from shipping activities such as the omnipresence of huge cruise ships, and oil spills from large tankers; Bottom trawling resulting in immense damage to the biodiversity life of the seabed; Gas terminal and delivery industry in coastal regions and estuaries risking harm to the life and rights of nature and communities
How to prepare to counteract this; Work in the UN to establish an international Environmental Justice Commission EJC to monitor implementation of proper, adequate and just green transformation measures along the dimensions of international, intersectional and intergenerational justice. The EJC should be guided by principles of equal distribution, recognition, and participation of communities across the world. Empower the EJC to investigate issues pertaining to environmental justice and propose recommendations to legislative bodies around the world to address them. The EJC should investigate the international dimension of environmental justice, ranging from trade relations to the rules of the game for transnational corporations. This should include outlawing the ability of secretive World BankCorporate Courts to sue Nations who pursue just green transformation measures to protect the environment, as is the case with many transnational trade agreements, such as CETA. The EJC could also address that environmental destruction is a threat to human and non-human life, and work to introduce an Environmental Abuse Directive to codify the civil wrong for contributing towards climate and environmental damage, with personal and punitive liability for those who profit from pollution. This could also recognise that climate change is criminal damage, and that ecocide is also a crime.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

The word ‘domain’ is a peculiar choice. It signifies dominion, ownership, control. None of these terms apply to the sea and the oceans for which humankind has a duty of care for. Perhaps what is being referred to is that each coastal State may claim a territorial sea that extends seaward up to 12 nautical miles (nm) from its baselines, and that the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of Ireland extends 200 nautical miles (370 km) from the coast. There has been some ambiguous and confused commentary to falsely claim that Ireland has ‘jurisdiction’ over the territorial waters and the EEZ combined.
This has been particularly so in relation to undersea cables to promote and foster the propaganda that we have a share of responsibility to protect the cables which stretch all the way across the Atlantic from the shores of North America. It is the transnational corporations and commercial interests who own, utilise and operate this infrastructure who have responsibility that they continue to function effectively. This involves them conducting adequate risk assessments, and implementing the required control measures, such as having back-up cables in the event of accidental damage, which can and does happen.
In no way should the financial and material assets of our State be diverted away from social programmes and towards the machinery of war under the hoax of protecting this infrastructure. This has to be a core tenet of any Strategy envisaged to be pursued.

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 are vital projects to invest in;
Research into the effects of climate catastrophe and in developing ways of living to reduce and mitigate ill effects such as coastal erosion, loss of biodiversity, endangerment and loss of flora and fauna species
A comprehensive plan, such as the Blueprint for a Just Transition https://www.gndforeurope.com/ offers proposals and recommendations for investment in a genuine Green Transformation to protect people, place and planet. This includes GREEN PUBLIC WORKS with The GPW Financial Strategy and Harnessing Public Investment, and ENVIRONMENTAL UNION with Declaring Climate Emergency, and Respecting Planetary Boundaries
Our fishing industry should receive much needed investment for sustainable development with protections for the livelihood and well-being of our fishing folk and communities
Natural energy from wind, sea and tide could be all beneficial if invested solely on the basis of the need for people and the planet to survive and thrive. All investment should have safeguards to protect from profiteering by the transnational corporations owned and controlled by multi-millionaires and billionaires

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

Transnational Corporations who own, control and profit from infrastructure, such as under sea cables, should foot the bill for the maintenance of these. Our taxes should not be used directly or indirectly to subsidise the activities and responsibilities of these Corporations.
Corporations who engage in environmentally destructive practices, such as fossil fuel and carbon polluting industries should not be allowed to operate on our shores and seas in ways that are not beneficial or are harmful to the well-being of people and planet. An example are fracked gas supply infrastructure moored or located at our shoreline, including close to Shannon

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

No cooperation with NATO should be a cornerstone of all of our strategies, including when operating with our seas in a peaceful and harmonious way. NATO should have disbanded about 30 years ago when the Warsaw Pact did so. It has always had a malign role in world affairs by conducting aggressive wars and belligerently intervening in the sovereign affairs of other countries. The latest worrying example of this was the bombing of civilian nuclear facilities in Iran. Many of us still think of the risks posed to us by the nuclear pollution from Sellafield / Windscale across the Irish Sea. The last thing we want is to be exposed to nuclear contamination because it has been made acceptable to drop bombs or send missiles into nuclear plants as the US, aided by their key strategic partner Israel, did a few weeks ago

The only cooperation we should have with the EU and our ex-EU neighbour Britain should be for mutually beneficial trade and commerce, social and cultural interaction, including for education and research. We should make it plainly clear to them that our cherished Neutrality is not for sale and we will not combine militarily with them in 'willing for war coalitions', including in our seas where there has been suggestions that their Navies should be allowed to patrol. We should ask the British Government to face up to their responsibility to be cooperative with us for peace, and they could start by making plans to military disengage from Lough Foyle and its shores where their troops are regularly conducting training with guns and bombs for possible Nato nefarious war like deeds in some unfortunate part of the world.

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

Any proposed action plan must commit to the investment and regulatory measures outlined in the Blueprint for a Just Transition, and to proposals from Jeffrey Sachs, a prominent economist and advocate for peace and sustainable development, and a strong proponent of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Mr. Jeffrey D. Sachs | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

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

Our internationally respected and admired Neutrality should be valued by enshrining it in our Constitution Bunreacht na hÉireann. The referendum and wording for this would help dispel the myth currently peddled by the Government parties that 'we are neutral militarily but we are not politically neutral'. A reminder is needed of the wise adage that 'war is politics by other means'. Adhering to the principle of a State being neutral means that we are enemies of none, and that we try to maintain friendly relations to all. If a conflict escalates or arises between other States we should remain neutral in that conflict in that we should not support or join in with any of the aggressive activities of either party, whether they be through financial, economic, cultural or military measures. This has advantages for peace and security. One is that a neutral country is better placed to promote or make a valuable contribution for the peaceful resolution of the conflict. Another is that we could genuinely offer and deliver humanitarian aid to citizens / residents of either or all the countries involved in the war, where this would be possible. A Neutrality article in Bunreacht na hÉireann could include a coherent and firm commitment to the United Nations Charter and international law. This would go a long way to counteract the many attempts to negate and make the role of the UN irrelevant, including by the EU. This makes it even more vital that we uphold and maintain all three elements of the Irish people's Triple Lock currently under threat by the Irish Government

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

3000 character(s) maximum

As a country we don't have an adequate army navy air force or police force. They are under resourced under equiped and therefore unable to provide security for the state. Therefore we need to joint with others to get us up to speed, given the current threats from inside and outside the jurisdiction.
I dread to think of how little we as a country spend on our own defense we have no problem giving money to ngo's who only make things more difficult fo4 the government to rule as per the people's wishes.
There is an immediate need in my open ion to joint nato and all that that entails. It will also make things on the island of Ireland easier into the future. Most of all we need to spend on these services as an enable " how many police vehicles have ANPR and onboard computer services"

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

Russia or other.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Invest in our forces and join NATO

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

3000 character(s) maximum

At this stage the only reasonable option to protect any maritime area of the state is to get help from security services abroad.

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. If critical maritime infrastructure is owned by private sector it should be compulsory purchased. Why is critical maritime infrastructure not owned by the state?

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

3000 character(s) maximum

For god sake join NATO spend on defense and stop wasting money.

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

1. Sack the civil servants who came up with this crap.
2 Ask NATO can we join and how mush should we spend.
3. Do it now not next week or year or when it’s too late.

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

All purchase should be made in the EU only.

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

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

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

3000 character(s) maximum

1. Unauthorised submarine activities in EEZ waters, Irish territorial waters endangering civilian lives and government infrastructure activities.

2. Narco Sub traffic through the north Atlantic into Ireland's western seaboard owned by cartel and rogue state bodies. 'Narco subs have gotten bigger and more sophisticated to travel longer distances at sea and could possibly be armed with weapons to resist capture.'

3. Underwater Unmanned Areal Vehicles used to:
Sabotage transatlantic cables
Vandalism
Interference
Target Irish naval vessels on the surface
Target civilian vessel activities
Coral reef pollution, fish species harm
Smuggle drugs, contraband, weapons, and other illegal merchandise compromising national security

4. Seabed Warfare:
Mines
Torpedoes
Deployment of alien government owned underwater hydrophones
Electronic warfare devices
Illegal divers
Weapons concealment
Alien government subsurface reconnaissance activities against Irish maritime traffic and shipping

4 (b). Unauthorised/ unwelcomed alien naval wargame activities in EEZ waters too close to territorial threshold that can pose risks to civilian populations in event of live munition misfire striking a civilian ferry, village or town on land.

5. Boat drones used as diversions to panic population or authorities to through off approaching threat coming to shore from the coast.

6. Coastal waters used to launch aircraft/ UAV attacks by surface vessel.

7. Air attacks against Irish naval vessels launched from Irish, Celtic Seas and Atlantic.

8. Exposure of vital sea infrastructure to subsurface, low air altitude attacks. Examples: Offshore Wind Farms, Gas refinery, Transatlantic cables and pipes etc.

9. Lack of costal defences to protect vital shipping ports from surface, subsurface, and air attacks impacting civilian populations. 'Food, Water, Medical, power, and heating etc.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

1. Dramatic increase in foreign submarine and underwater UAV activates.

2. Increase in alien naval presence to conduct future sabotage attacks on Ireland impacting other counterparts in the UK and EU.

3. Organised criminal factions acquiring capabilities to attack naval vessels and air corps aircraft that have potential to conduct lethal impact to evade capture.

4. Environmental damages to maritime life and vital infrastructure by extreme weather events at sea. Example: Current shifts, Warming water temperatures, earthquakes on seabed, and waterspouts etc.

5. Vital subsurface infrastructure targeted for damage and attack.

What response to counter these threats?

While Ireland acquires sonar capabilities for naval vessels on the surface, the Navy should explore and acquire a expeditionary submarine capability to operate in deep waters to fill a gap of the limitations of naval vessels sending divers down to the seabed from the surface. This would also serve as a benefit to ease pressure and hassle on surface resources to intervene threats deeper underwater.

Acquiring naval countermeasures to engage subsurface threats that endanger crew onboard naval ships, naval bases, and civilian vessels if torpedoed by intruder submarines/ subsurface UAVs.
Pursue electronic warfare technologies to counter cyber-attacks on offshore windfarms or other maritime infrastructure linked to bandwidth communication networks to the national grid.
Implement a multiagency communication network to alert navy, army, and air corps of threat or attack likely to take place to minimalize impact. This includes protocols to link Gardaí, Coast Guard, Ambulance Service, Red Cross and Fire and Rescue in event of civil impacts that may also be impacted.

Evacuation/ Restriction Protocol to clear infected areas of maritime incident or disaster to prevent catastrophic loss of human life. Implementing a National Alert Broadcast System to critically inform civilians what to do to protect themselves and help the vulnerable unable to assist others in disaster events. No fly, Sail zones to divert shipping and Aircraft in an area deemed hazardous to approach or travel
through.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes, the priority should be focused in all of Ireland's territorial water domain and the first 150 - 400 miles into Ireland's EEZ waters after entering from Ireland's coast.

This would allow a buffer zone to distance a maritime security threat from the country's coastline as the most crucial to protect inhabitants and vital national infrastructure operating along the coast.

'Would recommend engaging with members from the National Maritime Institute of Ireland to further elaborate on specific areas seen as the most important to police within the state's jurisdiction. Those with vital infrastructure present should be prioritised as the most important to focus.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Naval Ship deployment with radar, sonar and countermeasure capabilities. Ships fitted with Air defences, and Anti-Submarine warfare technologies such as lightweight torpedoes, and mines/ depth charges.
Invest in a small fleet of perhaps four (4) small Diesel/ electric expeditionary submarines for the navy not just for ant-ship/ submarine warfare, deep sea expeditions in transatlantic cables/ pipe inspections of infrastructure with diving crews, repairs, cooperation with the National Maritime Institute of Ireland to assess coral reef ecosystems for universities, environmental bodies and agencies that play a role in retaining protected infrastructure fuelling the Irish economy.

Access to orbital satellites own by the EU naval tracking stations to safeguard Irish naval vessels operating and making them aware of potential threats in the surrounding waters around them when at sea in deep Atlantic.

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 should.

Using private sector agencies can benefit financial assistance to fund and facilitate certain aspects of resources used in the strategy that don't necessarily need to be in the umbrella of defence forces directly.
A role that the private sector could play is investing in additional personnel to be employed to participate in expeditionary missions that cooperate with maritime security. Example, engineers to maintain submersible vehicles used for deep sea operations to repair transatlantic cable damage and critical infrastructure evaluation that could use naval expeditionary submarines to travel to areas at sea where infrastructure is

located.

Investing in part-time staff used as extra resources to assist naval operations at sea on naval vessels and bases to increase manpower for planned complex operations requiring additional assets to maximise effect.
Some equipment not used in constant naval or security operations can be invested by private investors to save tax payers money on additional costs on a yearly basis.
Reserve forces could be funded by private investors which can use skills used in naval sector to be used also in private sector like gas refinery, electricity and transport etc.

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

Considering the situation in the world today, a form of sharing information between other neighbouring governments in the EU should be increased to monitor activates and be aware of movements that could Transend into other areas beyond Ireland's geographic limits.

Sharing vital data or information on red flagged entities moving around, toward or intending to travel through Ireland's maritime domain would make the country aware of what impacts could occur if something resides currently as not a threat suddenly becomes an unprecedented threat.

Some type of broader initiative lead by another country which allows Ireland to be informed of potential threats before they occur days in advance would enable preparedness to brace for the worst before it occurs. Perhaps some type of early warning/ notification arrangement can be put in place to allow NATO countries such as the UK, France and Norway that potential dangers to the state are due to pass by or dangerously close to it's waters.

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 agree.

Such an Action Plan would follow in this format:

Clarity of the scale of the challenge at present

Points of the most critical evaluated dilemma
Gather resources of interest to face the challenge
Eliminate the least likely to be selected
Consider the personnel required
The costs to consider
Implementation of risks that could occur
Recovery/ countermeasures
Backup/ Emergency measures
Draft prototyping the selected approach
Assess/ evaluate performance of prototype
Apply Improvements
Re-evaluate
Additional recommendations
Finalise for satisfaction of standards to be met
Fully implement to operate live

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

As part of my own proposal approach to this security strategy, I would encourage the Department of Defence to consider Ireland procuring a expeditionary submarine capability which was stated earlier in this survey.

There exists a submarine program currently being ran between the Swedish and Dutch navies to procure a diesel/ electric submarine to meet the demands of the unique challenges facing their maritime securities. This particular program has various aspects which would be in my point of view be very ideal to revolutionise maritime security strategy due to it's unique security challenges of transatlantic cables, pipes and general national subsea interest etc.

This program is ran be SAAB and is focused on the new A26 Oceanic submarine range, also known as the Blekinge-class submarine.

Further detail of this submarine are acquired below which is provided in the URL provided below:

URL: https://www.saab.com/products/oceanic

If the navy where to have four of these Oceanic submarines introduced as a possible solution, this would give Ireland a capability to operate security parameters not just supporting naval operations above water, but below the surface underwater. It would achieve greater expeditionary missions in below subsurface environments to assess/ protect subsea infrastructure in Irish waters and achieve a creditable layer of critical stealth to evade detection of spying hostile actors that seek to undermine Ireland's maritime domain as a sovereign nation regardless of multinational alignments.

Please do keep in touch for further discussion on further communication on the subject of this maritime security strategy.

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

Maritime security should not just be seen in the context of military, drug smuggling or international telecommunciations cables. A strong case can be made for the development of an indigenous Irish mercantile marine—a domestically owned and operated commercial shipping industry.

Economic Independence and Sovereignty
Reduced dependence on foreign shipping: Historically, Ireland relied heavily on British or foreign-owned vessels for imports and exports. An indigenous mercantile fleet would ensure greater control over trade logistics.

Strategic autonomy: In times of war, embargo, or political conflict (e.g., WWII and neutrality), foreign fleets may become unavailable. A national fleet ensures continuity of trade.

National economic policy alignment: Irish-owned shipping companies are more likely to align with national priorities, such as supporting rural ports or transporting domestically produced goods.

2. Job Creation and Skills Development
Employment opportunities: Operating and maintaining a merchant fleet creates jobs not only for seafarers but also in shipbuilding, repair, port services, and logistics.

Maritime education and training: A national fleet can support training programs and institutions, fostering a skilled maritime workforce and enhancing Ireland's maritime heritage.

3. Support for National Trade and Industry
Boost to Irish exports: Control over shipping can reduce transport costs and improve reliability, which helps export industries (e.g., agriculture, dairy, whiskey, tech equipment).

Import security: Guarantees in the transport of essential imports (fuel, food, machinery) during disruptions in global supply chains.

Support for small ports: Indigenous operators are more likely to service regional ports, fostering balanced regional economic development.

4. Strategic Geographic Location
Atlantic gateway: Ireland’s location on the western edge of Europe makes it a natural hub for transatlantic and European shipping routes. A national fleet can capitalise on this advantage.

Post-Brexit considerations: With the UK no longer in the EU, Ireland's direct shipping connections to the EU mainland are more strategically important than ever.

5. Environmental and Regulatory Control
Sustainable practices: A domestic fleet allows Ireland to enforce environmental standards and support green shipping initiatives.
Compliance and regulation: Irish-owned vessels are more easily regulated and monitored for labor, safety, and environmental compliance.

Developing an indigenous Irish mercantile marine is not merely a romantic or nationalistic idea—it is a strategic, economic, and practical initiative that can strengthen Ireland’s autonomy, economy, and global presence. While it requires significant investment and long-term commitment, the potential benefits across multiple sectors make it a compelling national maritime security objective.

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

Increasingly sophisticated narco-multinationals capable of using shipping, drone and submarine vessels linked to ownership or indirect control of ports and landing areas.

Use of illegal migration by sea by to tie up limited maritime security resources in times of geo-political tension or outbreak of conflict.

Protection of sub-sea straegic assets such as telecoms cables and future on-sea assets such as floating wind turbines.

Measures
Long Range Drones
Greater use of long-range drones for surveillance of Ireland's vast maritime zones; Ireland has one of the largest EEZs in Europe (over 400,000 km^2), yet a it has a tiny naval force. Long-range drones (e.g., MQ-9B SeaGuardian, Eurodrone) can monitor large swathes of ocean continuously and cost-effectively; they can stay aloft for 24–40 hours, far longer than manned patrols, have lower operational costs (no crew, less fuel) making it feasible to maintain constant maritime awareness of illegalfFishing and for smuggling detection. They can also play a role in the protection of critical sub-sea infrastructure e.g., transatlantic data cables, energy pipelines etc which are increasingly seen as vulnerable to sabotageand in search and rescue operations.
Dronescan provide force multiplication for our tiny navy enabling our few ships to operate with much greater situational awareness. It is appreciated that drones have limitations in relation to harsh Atlantic weather and that while they can detect and monitor, they cannot intercept or apprehend vessels. They may also be vulnerable to cyberattacks, GPS spoofing, and electronic warfare.
Strengthen the Coastguard
Develop aerial emergency and coastguard search and rescue services as a wing of the defence forces while maintaining and enhancing the use of volunteers in local maritime communities.
Additiona ships
Additional all weather patrol ships and two multi-purpose ships are required which have specific capabilities for the defence of subsea assets and large scale sea rescue missions - possibly linked to state terrorist attacks on civilian airliners.

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

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The strategy should conisder the security and defence of eastern and southern ports where much or Ireland's maritme based trade is focused. The port of Dublin is particularly vulnerable.
Protection of current and future strategic assets such as oil and gas, turbine and fisheries facilities suggests a need for deployment of appropriate assets on the west coast and some base facilities at Foynes, Galway and Killybegs.
In the context of greater north-south collaboration through the 'shared island' strategy and with the potential for eventual unification of the political arrangements on the whole island consideration regarding the future maritime security of Northern Ireland is required.
While Ireland has an enormous maritime zone not all of it is of equal importance or is easily accessible by malign actors in the event of large scale threats of resource grabbing. A capability of monitoring and quickly responding is still required across all areas, however, and large scale incursions into the Irish EEZ by friendly or hostile countries could be seen as compromisiong our ability to be a neutral but defence capable state.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

As above:

Develop a strong indigenous mercantile marine to safeguard against future threats to food and essential supplies.

Develop long range drone capacity and expertise supporting and supported by research and development and indigenous commercial companies.

Integrate and develop aerial emergency and coastguard services as a wing of the defence forces and build naval reserve capacity based on communities with a tradition of volunteer involment in coastguard and sea rescue services.

Develop an Atlantic all weather fleet of ships and an Irish Sea patrol service with at least two mutlti purpose ships capable of supporting defence of sub-sea cables and large scale rescue missions.

Develop our maritime intelligence capacity in close collaboration with the relevant British and French services and the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre, based in Lisbon.

Develop access to maritime / naval educational studies and opportunities so as to create a 'pipeline' of graduates and expertise and grow awareness of the challenges and opportunities arising from our westerly island status.

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 private sector should be involved on the basis of consortia brought together to focus on specific 'asks' arising from the strategy. Public, private, academic, NGO / community and even philanthropic players should be considered in addressing specific issues.

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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The sea does not easily lend itself to boundaries and international cooperation and collaboration is vital.

Joint security planning should involve strong maritime neighbours like Britian, France and, potentially, the EU aligned but non EU country of Norway. This should move towards joint a strong shared maritime / naval intelligence system and joint operations as Irish capacity is developed.
The role of the Lisbon based Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre and Irelands participation in it needs to be highlighted much more.

Ireland needs to use the development of this maritime security strategy to articulate a set of principles which might underpin a policy of defence capable non-alignment rather than repeat references to an unarticulated and contradictory 'neutrality'. In a situation in which the USA is increasingly seen to be 'neutral' on the Ukraine the possibility of a hostile USA threat to our maritime security, while currently remote, cannot be ruled out. It is important not to let opposition to NATO, contradictory as it may be, diverty from the critical need to focus on collaboration with those neighbouring maritime countries which have significant maritime and naval security expertise and capabilities.

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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The need for an action plan would seem to be self evident. It would be preferable if an implementation oversight group was chaired by an independent person of standing rather than an official of the Department of Defence and had the power to report directly to a relevant Oireachtas Committee and related state security structures.

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?

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Critical Undersea Infrastructure
Ireland plays a key role in global data flows, hosting major transatlantic submarine cables essential to internet and financial systems. These assets are vulnerable to sabotage or accidental damage, and recent Russian naval activity near Irish waters has raised security concerns.
The Outernet, a LEO satellite network from Rivada Space Networks, offers a resilient complement. Immune to terrestrial threats and free from third-party routing, it provides secure, low-latency global data with full control, redundancy, and sovereignty.
Naval and Surveillance Limitations
Ireland's Naval Service struggles with staff shortages, ageing equipment, and limited surveillance, undermining its ability to police its vast EEZ or respond to threats.
Plans to acquire towed array sonar systems mark progress, in line with the State's "LoA 2" defence goals. Yet without radar integration, training, and investment, these efforts risk falling short of operational resilience.
Hybrid and Non-Conventional Threats
Ireland faces growing "grey zone" threats—covert, ambiguous actions below open conflict thresholds. Foreign surveillance vessels, unreported seabed mapping, and dual-use civilian ships reveal legal and strategic blind spots.
These tactics exploit Ireland's non-aligned stance and gaps in maritime law. A revised security posture is required—respecting neutrality but adapting to evolving hybrid warfare realities.
Environmental and Climate Challenges
Climate change poses mounting threats: severe storms, coastal erosion, and fishery disruption. These affect safety, infrastructure, and resource access.
Should the North Atlantic Drift collapse, NATO and EU strategies would shift dramatically, making Ireland central to transatlantic resilience. Enhancing maritime domain awareness and SAR coordination will be vital.
Geopolitical Pressures and Strategic Ambiguity
Ireland's position between Europe and North America places it in a key geopolitical zone. Though non-aligned militarily, its geography and infrastructure increasingly draw it into wider strategic dynamics.
Limited involvement in EU security efforts and the lack of a national maritime strategy have exposed vulnerabilities. The 2022 Russian naval exercises near Ireland's EEZ highlighted the costs of strategic ambiguity.

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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Hybrid and Asymmetric Threats
Ireland’s maritime domain is increasingly vulnerable to hybrid threats: cyberattacks, autonomous surveillance, and covert dual-use vessels. These operate in legal grey zones and often fall below conventional thresholds of conflict. Given Ireland’s dependency on subsea cables and offshore infrastructure, any disruption could cause significant national and international repercussions. Current communications lack redundancy. Implementing a PACE model—Primary, Alternate, Contingency, Emergency—is essential. In this context, The Outernet, Rivada’s LEO satellite network, is critical. It provides resilient, secure communications free from terrestrial vulnerabilities. As part of a broader surveillance strategy—including sonar and autonomous systems—it ensures redundancy, rapid attribution, and operational coordination.
Sovereignty in a Multipolar World
Global power shifts in the North Atlantic, including rising NATO and Russian naval activity, increase strategic pressures. Ireland’s policy of non-alignment is being tested, and the absence of a national maritime doctrine leaves the State ill-equipped. Non-alignment must be reassessed within an evolving security framework. Clear strategic intent, participation in joint exercises, and investment in diplomatic capacity are necessary to safeguard sovereignty while contributing to regional stability.
Climate Change and Resource Tensions
Climate change threatens coastal resilience, fisheries, and offshore energy infrastructure. Increased competition over marine resources may inflame disputes. Ireland must integrate climate resilience into maritime planning, with domain awareness tools like environmental satellites and predictive models.
Autonomous Maritime Systems
Autonomous technologies can bolster surveillance and efficiency but also present risks if misused. Ireland must develop robust governance to manage legal, ethical, and operational aspects. Indigenous tech capacity, public-private R&D, and the use of secure platforms like The Outernet will ensure these tools remain accountable and interoperable with allies.
Maritime Governance and Rule of Law
Challenges to UNCLOS and rising IUU activity risk undermining maritime order. Legal disputes over seabed resources and undersea cables will intensify. Ireland must invest in legal capacity, reinforce data sovereignty, and participate in international norm-building to defend its maritime rights.
Conclusion
Ireland’s maritime future depends on the rapid development of a coherent national doctrine that reflects its non-aligned stance while addressing new threats. Investment in secure, non-terrestrial communications like The Outernet, autonomous systems, cyber defence, and legal resilience will underpin this transition. By embedding climate adaptation, enhancing coordination, and asserting strategic clarity, Ireland can secure its maritime interests in a contested era.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Prioritising Geographical Areas in Ireland’s Maritime Domain

Ireland's maritime security strategy must adopt a risk-informed, geographically prioritised approach. A tiered framework that reflects strategic, economic, and environmental vulnerabilities will allow the State to allocate capabilities effectively and respond proportionately to emerging risks.

Southwest Approaches, Atlantic Seaboard

This region holds exceptional strategic value, hosting dense clusters of transatlantic subsea cables, shipping lanes, and expanding offshore renewable infrastructure. Its relative remoteness renders it vulnerable to covert surveillance, sabotage, and hybrid operations by non-allied actors.

Investments should prioritise unmanned systems, satellite-based monitoring, and secure communications. The Outernet, a self-contained LEO satellite network, should be integrated as a critical component of this region’s surveillance and response systems, ensuring resilience in the face of disruption.

Irish Sea, Eastern Maritime Corridor

A narrow, densely trafficked zone with major ports and interconnectors, the Irish Sea is central to trade, energy, and cross-border connectivity. Over 70% of Ireland’s natural gas is delivered via subsea pipelines through this area. A dedicated Irish Sea Working Group between the UK and Ireland should coordinate threat detection and response across jurisdictions. Joint intelligence sharing, real-time monitoring, and cross-border collaboration are vital to managing risks in this sensitive corridor.

Northwest Continental Shelf and Extended EEZ

Ecologically rich yet poorly monitored, Ireland’s extended maritime jurisdiction is vulnerable to illegal fishing, unauthorised surveys, and environmental degradation. Climate change will intensify pressure on this zone, with shifting fish stocks and increasing maritime traffic.

Ireland must integrate environmental protection into security planning and pursue satellite partnerships (e.g. with EMSA, FRONTEX). Long-range unmanned systems and robust legal efforts to secure shelf claims are required.

Ports and Coastal Infrastructure

Ports form the backbone of Ireland’s maritime economy but are increasingly exposed to cyber threats due to digital interdependencies. As hubs for offshore wind and logistics, their strategic importance demands robust continuity plans.

The integration of the Outernet into a PACE framework will ensure secure, sovereign communications during crises—protecting operational functions when terrestrial systems fail. Port-specific drills, cyber resilience programmes, and designation of Critical Maritime Infrastructure are also essential.

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

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Strategic Investment Priorities for Safeguarding Ireland's Maritime Interests
Ireland's maritime security strategy must confront a rapidly evolving threat landscape—shaped by hybrid threats, cyber vulnerabilities, climate change, and geopolitical flux. Strategic investments must address pressing capability gaps while strengthening national resilience and ensuring alignment with EU and international frameworks.
Maritime Domain Awareness
With one of Europe's largest EEZs, Ireland must develop sovereign MDA capabilities. Current systems are fragmented and overly reliant on external data, limiting detection and early warning.
Priorities include acquiring long-range patrol aircraft, uncrewed aerial systems, and synthetic aperture radar for 24/7 surveillance. A National Maritime Data Fusion Centre should integrate AIS, radar, satellite imagery, and subsea sensors to deliver a real-time maritime picture.
The cornerstone of this architecture must be a secure, sovereign satellite communications system. Rivada's Outernet, offers unmatched resilience for coordination during crises, cyberattacks, or infrastructure failure—making it a critical pillar of Ireland's future maritime communications.
Naval Service Renewal
Ireland's Naval Service faces both fleet obsolescence and staffing crises. Multi-Role Vessels with modular capabilities must replace ageing ships. Fleet adaptability is vital for missions spanning hybrid threats, cyber defence, and environmental response.
A robust personnel strategy is essential to restore full operational capacity.
Cybersecurity for Maritime Infrastructure
Ports, energy systems, and subsea assets face growing cyber threats. A Maritime Cyber Security Centre of Excellence should coordinate threat intelligence and resilience standards.
Cyber audits and Defence Forces cyber units focused on maritime systems are essential. Planning and infrastructure development must embed cyber-by-design principles. Cross-sectoral cooperation with EU partners is key to building collective resilience.
Subsea Infrastructure Protection
Ireland's transatlantic cables, interconnectors, and offshore energy platforms are strategic targets. Autonomous underwater systems should be deployed for anomaly detection and routine surveillance.
A dedicated infrastructure protection unit must coordinate civilian and defence responses. An EEZ risk registry will support targeted monitoring. These assets must be prioritised under national critical infrastructure policy and supported by international intelligence-sharing.
Environmental Intel and Climate Monitoring
As climate pressures mount, maritime governance must integrate spatial intelligence and real-time environmental data. Smart buoys, sensor arrays, and AI-enhanced monitoring tools will support sustainable fisheries, pollution tracking, and threat prediction.
Ireland should deepen participation in EU frameworks such as EMODnet and Copernicus to enhance access to marine data.

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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Shared Responsibility for Infrastructure Protection

Private operators are exposed to threats including cyberattacks, sabotage, and hybrid disruptions. A clear model of shared responsibility is vital. Industry should co-chair a National Critical Maritime Infrastructure Forum alongside government, contributing to joint risk assessments, contingency planning, and recovery protocols. Private operators must maintain minimum physical and cyber security standards, aligned with EU frameworks such as the NIS2 Directive, and take part in scenario-based preparedness exercises with the Defence Forces and Gardaí.

Cybersecurity and Strategic Communications

Digitised maritime operations present expanding attack surfaces. Successful cyberattacks on ports, energy platforms, or subsea cables could paralyse national trade and connectivity. Therefore, cybersecurity must be a strategic priority.

Private actors must collaborate with the NCSC on threat reporting, workforce training, cyber audits, and cyber risk registers. Adoption of international standards is essential to ensure sector-wide resilience.

Critically, Ireland's dependence on terrestrial infrastructure renders it vulnerable during crises. Here, the Outernet, Rivada's LEO satellite network, offers a transformative solution. As a secure, sovereign, space-based communications platform, it can ensure uninterrupted coordination and data flow for maritime actors when terrestrial networks are compromised. Rather than developing such capacity in-house, the State should procure Outernet services from private providers—rapidly and efficiently—embedding it into its Maritime Security Strategy.

Enhancing Situational Awareness and Intelligence Sharing

Private entities possess advanced tracking systems, sensor networks, and operational insights. These should feed into national Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) platforms. Shared anomaly reporting channels and integrated, interoperable systems will bolster detection and response.

Private actors should also collaborate on co-developing technologies such as AI for anomaly detection and blockchain for logistics integrity.

Capacity Building and Innovation

The maritime sector must embed resilience into its innovation pipelines. The private sector should co-invest in R&D partnerships with academia and Defence Forces in key areas: autonomous vessels, persistent surveillance, and cyber-physical resilience.

Engagement with Horizon Europe, DTIF, and testbed initiatives will drive innovation. Private contributions to workforce development—particularly in cyber, engineering, and marine systems—are vital to building indigenous capability. An Executive Innovation Corps should be established similar to the U.S. Army's Detachment 201: designed to fuse cutting-edge tech expertise with military innovation.

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 must be a foundational pillar of Ireland's maritime security strategy. As a non-aligned island nation with vast maritime jurisdiction and limited surveillance capacity, Ireland cannot address complex, transboundary threats—such as cyberattacks, hybrid interference, and environmental crime—in isolation.

European Union Cooperation

Ireland's engagement with the EU's integrated maritime security frameworks is critical. Deeper involvement in initiatives like the EU Maritime Security Strategy, MARSUR, and CISE will enhance interoperability, situational awareness, and crisis readiness.

Collaboration with EMSA, Frontex, and ENISA should be expanded to support pollution response, integrated border management, and cyber resilience.

Ireland must maximise EU funding opportunities to invest in dual-use technologies, including uncrewed systems, AI, and secure communications. This should include integration of the Outernet, a LEO satellite system, as a resilient alternative to vulnerable terrestrial networks—enabling uninterrupted situational awareness and communications during crises or attacks.

Regional and Bilateral Partnerships

Ireland's proximity to the UK, France, Spain, and Iceland necessitates formal cooperation to secure shared maritime zones, protect infrastructure, and respond to transboundary risks.

Post-Brexit complexities demand structured maritime coordination with the UK. Regional efforts should include joint exercises, data-sharing, and collaboration on offshore energy and subsea cable protection.

Ireland should deepen engagement with forums like the North Atlantic Coast Guard Forum and OSPAR, which support joint operational planning and environmental resilience.

Engagement with NATO

Through Ireland's Individually Tailored Partnership Programme, strategic collaboration with NATO can enhance national maritime capabilities without compromising neutrality.

Ireland should leverage NATO Centres of Excellence for training in cyber defence and hybrid threat response, while participating in non-combat joint exercises focused on subsea infrastructure and disaster preparedness.

All cooperation should be transparent and subject to democratic oversight to maintain public trust.

Championing Global Maritime Governance

Ireland must uphold multilateralism and the rule of law in global maritime affairs. This includes active participation in the IMO and UNCLOS, promoting high standards for cyber regulation, autonomous shipping, and biodiversity protection.

Ireland should build alliances with like-minded maritime states (e.g. Norway, New Zealand, Portugal) to amplify its voice and support equitable access to ocean resources.

As part of its development agenda, Ireland should offer legal and enforcement capacity-building to developing coastal nations.

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. Without a binding and operational Action Plan, the strategy risks remain aspirational. Ireland's maritime domain faces an evolving spectrum of threats—from hybrid warfare and cyber disruption to environmental instability and strategic infrastructure vulnerabilities. Addressing these risks requires more than policy rhetoric; it demands a structured, accountable, and well-resourced roadmap.

Key Elements of the Action Plan

- National Maritime Security Coordination Centre (NMSCC):

A statutory agency should be established to unify inter-agency coordination, integrate intelligence, and direct operations across civilian, military, and private actors—reporting to the highest level of Government.

- National Maritime Security Doctrine:

Ireland currently lacks a strategic doctrine. A formalised position, grounded in sovereignty, non-alignment, and international cooperation, is essential—especially in responding to grey-zone threats.

- Maritime Domain Awareness:

Sovereign MDA capability must be prioritised. Investment is needed in surveillance, AI-enabled data fusion, autonomous systems, and satellite technologies. The Rivada Outernet should be embedded as a secure, sovereign enabler for real-time coordination.

- Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Resilience:

Ireland's ports, undersea cables, and offshore energy sites require cyber defences beyond current norms. The Plan must define responsibilities under NIS2 and expand cyber protections for OT/IT systems.

- Legal and Normative Reform:

Hybrid threats exploit legal ambiguity. A comprehensive legal review is required to strengthen enforcement, clarify EEZ jurisdiction, and improve attribution frameworks.

- Private Sector Integration:

Industry is a critical co-producer of security. The Action Plan must define its roles, promote intelligence-sharing, and incentivise collaboration on resilience and innovation.

- Geospatial and Environmental Intelligence:

Climate change is a maritime security driver. The Action Plan must integrate environmental monitoring, predictive modelling, and spatial planning into national security policy.

- International Cooperation:

Ireland must deepen engagement with EU frameworks, NATO partnerships, and regional actors. The Action Plan should articulate mechanisms for interoperability, burden-sharing, and joint exercises.

- Institutional Capacity and Public Culture:

A persistent gap exists in maritime security awareness. The Action Plan must invest in education, outreach, and joint civil–military training. Introduction of an Executive Innovation Corps (EIC) would foster strategic agility and long-term capability.

Conclusion:

An Action Plan is not an addendum—it is the Strategy's operational backbone. It must be detailed, properly resourced, and implemented with urgency if Ireland is to meet the complex maritime security demands of the 21st century.

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

Strengthening Ireland's Maritime Security Strategy

Ireland's vast maritime domain, combined with its policy of military non-alignment and limited surveillance capabilities, leaves it vulnerable to hybrid and grey zone threats—particularly targeting undersea infrastructure. State and non-state actors may exploit legal ambiguities to sabotage transatlantic cables, energy interconnectors, or offshore assets.

As host to a disproportionate share of EU–US digital infrastructure, Ireland must urgently improve deterrence, surveillance, and legal preparedness. Strategic gaps include the absence of unmanned monitoring, clear escalation protocols, and resilient communications infrastructure.

Geopolitical Relevance and Strategic Planning

Ireland's Atlantic position, as the EU's westernmost state, gives it critical importance in transatlantic security and logistics. Climate change and shifting trade routes further enhance this role. Ireland should develop strategic foresight capabilities to anticipate emerging Atlantic dynamics and vulnerabilities.

Legal and Institutional Reform

Hybrid threats often fall below existing legal thresholds. Foreign vessels may conduct seabed surveillance lawfully but with hostile intent. A comprehensive review of legislation and protocols is essential to clarify Defence Forces' roles and inter-agency responses to ambiguous threats.

Soft Power and Maritime Diplomacy

Ireland's credibility in peacekeeping, rule of law, and multilateralism allows it to shape emerging maritime norms. The State should actively promote global regulation of autonomous vessels, climate adaptation, and biodiversity protection—especially for vulnerable coastal and island nations.

Protecting the Blue Economy and Innovation

Ireland's growing blue economy—offshore wind, aquaculture, biotechnology—faces threats from espionage, sabotage, and cyberattack. Testbeds and marine innovation zones are particularly exposed. A security lens must be applied to research infrastructure and maritime data assets.

Establish a National Maritime Security Coordination Centre

Current responsibilities are fragmented. A unified centre must coordinate military, civilian, and regulatory responses, enable real-time intelligence fusion, and guide strategic planning.

Publish a Maritime Security Doctrine

Ireland lacks a formal doctrine outlining its strategic objectives and operational thresholds. A doctrine would provide clarity on engagement, deterrence, and resilience.

Leverage the Outernet for Maritime Resilience

A secure, sovereign satellite communication system is vital to monitor, coordinate, and respond during crises. The Rivada Outernet offers a robust, space-based solution that surpasses terrestrial networks in resilience. Ireland should incorporate the Outernet as a foundational asset for secure maritime communications, anomaly detection, and continuity of operations.

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?

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Our perceived and apparent lack of Naval ships available to intercept any threats or suspicious ships coupled with the lack of radar to track same shows the limits of the Irish Navy to respond to any calls for service. Given Ireland's location at the west of Europe and as an Island nation, a strong naval presence supported by a capable air force is vital for responding to any threats at sea as well as conducting standard operations. Ireland' s perceived lack of resources is made worse but our lack of monitoring. I feel the most significant threats to Ireland's maritime security is international crime gangs looking to move illegal materials into the country followed closely by hostile vessels spying in Irish waters. We should not forget the role of fisheries enforcement that the Irish navy play an active role in as well as they ability to support rescue operations in additional to assisting in policing operations.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

I feel other nations will continue to conduct operations in Irish waters and this will only continue. Looking towards the rise in use of drones, it would hard not to see similar water borne vehicles becoming an issue in the years to come. I feel the Ireland has a strong basis in Information technology in terms of the large multi-national companies based here as well as the levels of research and development that happens here also. The government should look to harness this position in conjunction with the Irish Defence Forces to ensure that all the technology developed in Ireland with military applications is reviewed and researched by our forces so they can become subject matter experts on it before its deployment by the armed forces of larger nations. This way Irish defences forces can become world leaders on military technology before other nations and it could be looked at in terms of third level educational opportunities for Irish defence forces staff. Additionally, we need to ensure that all aspects of state spending in similar areas are aligned to ensure best standards, for example firearms purchased for the Gardaí and the defence forces should regularly reviewed to ensure cost savings can be achieved and issues facing either organisation in these areas are highlighted and overcome. This could also apply to vehicles, technology, uniforms and other items of equipment and infrastructure. It could also be expanded to other state agencies including but not limited to Garda Ombudsman, Customs Service, Irish Aviation Authority, Airport Police, Harbour Police, Fire & Rescue services, road safety authority, Public Transport providers, Airports, electrical suppliers, gas and water suppliers, local councils and any further transport police that might be created.

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

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While I am sure some areas of the country would be more vulnerable than others in terms of maritime security and surveillance, I believe the strategy should be developed as a whole island approach and implemented on a phased basis with the input of a risk assessment to help develop a suitable timeline for the implantation. Consideration should be given to the coastline around Northern Ireland as well and how risks developing in this area are dealt with. Additionally, the location of defence forces assets should also be factored in to the strategy and considering how best to implement same. The ongoing requirements of the naval service in terms of current activities should also be consider in the strategy so that multiple objectives might be considered and or completed at the same time.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Investments that will be required for the successful implementation of this strategy cannot be understated. I feel that a new naval basis on the east coast of the country would be important for protecting shipping routes through the Irish Sea as well as the whole eastern seaboard in general. Consideration to a shared naval / air force base should be given, to be located either in the North West of the country or the South east, which to mind would help increase our range of response into the North Atlantic Ocean as well as towards main Europe. Coastal lookout bases should also be considered and this could be a shared venture between the Defences forces, customs, Gardaí and rescue services. This lookout spots could be created at a low cost and would help provide a human presence in our maritime security while also helping to possibly saving lives at sea. The provision of high quality radar systems will best allow our smaller naval fleet to respond to incidents intelligently. Any such radar systems should be available for monitoring in a variety of locations, for example multi military locations, government buildings in Dublin as well as some possible Garda locations to help allow of multi-agency responses to incidents that occur. The investments undertaken to roll out this strategy should also be considered in terms of the economic benefit for the country as a whole. For example, a new naval base in the North West of the country could provide a welcome boost for the local economy. Any works or investment made in the development and implementation of this maritime security strategy must also be considered in the terms of an overall security strategy for the state in order to avoid undue costs and to provide the best return on any investments.

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 National Maritime Security Strategy must involve the private sector in some capacity. At an absolute minimum, the defences forces need have an in depth knowledge of all critical maritime infrastructure in order to best protect it and the nation's interests. Additionally, depending on the type and level of investment projects that this strategy might require, private sector involvement might help progress these projects in a better fashion as well as highlight any possibly unforeseen difficulties that could be encountered during the development process.

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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Increased international cooperation should feature heavily in the new National Maritime Security Strategy. Guidance and support of friendly nations may help develop the strategy in a variety of ways and could also help grow our own defence forces. Where possible, any National Maritime Security Strategy that this country develops should look to build upon and overlay with similar strategies from friendly nations. Our naval service should look to build relationships with other friendly nations, in particular of other island nations such as Australia, New Zealand and Japan to name but three.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

The National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by an action plan, which should outline the milestones associated with the successful implementation of the security strategy and it should also detail how and when certain other key events will be achieved in relation to the strategy. Such action plan would allow the public to see value of money in any investments and would also help focus government planning to achieve a successful security strategy.

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 success of maritime security or state security can be hard to quantify, as a strong defence will dissuade any threat before it is attempted or even considered, which means nothing happens and this can be hard to demonstrate as a success. The failure of state security including maritime security will be readily visible to all, in and out of the state and does not bear thinking about. State Security has far reaching implications and the value of same cannot be understated, our nation has seen enough the effects of terrorism and we need our state agencies to be robustly support to protect our population and our nation. The success of State Security will require significant investment at every level of government and we can no longer afford to leave our state security in the hands of friends and neighbours.

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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

Bad actors are a threat to Ireland as a whole e.g Russia. With no Navy and no Air Corps currently due to Government neglect we are wide open for exploitation. Along with this we have no capability to patrol, protect and deter the sovereign waters and air space of Ireland which is an absolute disgrace.

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

Russia and bad actors which have already been proven by the continuous probing of our waters, air space and cyber sector.

Best preparation is to build a competent navy, anti submarine warfare, military radar, air defence and multi role fighters for interception.

We will also require heavy lift capability in the form of air craft both jets and rotary.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

The strategy should encompass Ireland’s sovereign territory both air, sea and land.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Drone, anti submarine warfare technology, military radar and a well built, well equipped defence forces.

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 provide a subsidy to the Defence Forces for the protection of critical infrastructure which allows them to operate their equipment. They will also provide expertise in the form of SMEs during incidents and emergency

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, EU, EUBG and partner nations can provide assistance and peer to peer training. Soldiers, sailors and air crew of foreign militaries should train in Ireland and assist the Irish DF in their role while Irish soldiers, sailors and air crew should train with other countries in the same capacity to create a seamless partnership for supply lines, training and interoperability.

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. Action plan should be based off the CODF produced in 2020 BUT should be implemented as a matter of urgency and not delayed because of a “Neutrality” stance which is the current issue. Neutrality should be defended but inline with The Hague convention of 1907 which details the criteria of neutrality.

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

Dedicated Minister Of Defence which should either be a member of the DF or a former member of the DF. Dr. Cathal Berry being a prime example. The time for play has past and it's time to get serious about defence.

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

Contact

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

3000 character(s) maximum

We don't have enough ships or people to patrol our coast. The big ships are not needed, they are too big needing too many sailors and cost too much to run. The two smaller vessels that we bought from New Zealand are a better option. Smaller, faster vessels and more of them.

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

If we have turbines at sea , we will need to protect them, not least so that foreign investors will have confidence that they will be protected. The electricity and gas connectors will need to be protected too. We need to have the capacity to protect cables leading to the US , not least to deter them from using a threat to those cables by a foreign power as an excuse to send their military here, because we are seeing almost every day...the present US regime is capable of actions previously thought unlikely.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes, anywhere there is a concentration of cables, gas and electricity interconnectors, turbines, illegal foreign trawlers, Russian or other ships outside the limit, or areas where drugs are landed.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Smaller faster patrol ships, undersea sonar, connection to satellite survey equipment, surveillance drones, assault drones and a very few short range missiles.

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 might have to : Such as the likes of Starlink (we would have to hold our nose) . These would have to be additions as we could never trust that they would be there in a crisis.

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, there would have to be cooperation with other EU countries and Britain but not with the US under any circumstances. A fundamental of this cooperation would have to be respect for our neutrality...that would be essential. If they want us to join NATO , we would have to say no. No joining NATO because it is 99% an arm of US power . Ireland does not want to have anything to do with NATO at sea or on land .

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Action Plan.
A. These are the areas (see above) that need protection.
B. Aquire morof vessels *(like the two from New Zealand) we need to protect those assets.
C. Get the tech we need (satellites , sonar, radar).
D. Recruit (and pay reasonably) the number of people we need(and not have our sailors sleeping in their cars.)
E. Say where the money is coming from .(Apple money?)
F. Agree the countries we will cooperate with.
G. State categorically that will not engage with NATO or the US military.
H. We will make all of this and these measures plain to the public.

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

We all agree the world has changed. We will need more sea based turbines, we rely on internet and other communications cables. We have gas and electricity interconnectors . We have occasional Russian spy ships. We have a US being run by an unpredictable regime. We have mega Spanish and other EU trawlers laying waste to fish stocks. We have drug smugglers using Irish waters as an easy option. We have huge ships that we simply cannot man/woman. We probably will need drones and short range missiles if deterrence is to be taken seriously. But we do not sell our hard won neutrality and we to not go hand in glove with the US or NATO under any circumstances.
Thanks for the consultation and opportunity to comment. I hope you get what you need and I hope you will not have to compromise with those who would not have Ireland's best interests at heart.

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

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

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Cocaine smuggling and threat to undersea 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. Our coastal regions are wide-open to drug smuggling with many ports, including Killybegs, lacking any customs inspection or enforcement. There are also many isolated coves and harbours, historically used by Itish, Spanish and French smugglers during English occupation which are not being adequately monitored.

I would use automated drones to patrol our coastal waters and ensure a robust customs presence at all our major ports to counteract these smugglers.

As for the threat to our undersea cables and infrastructure, in many cases these are shared infrastructures and some of the burden of protecting these should fall.on our European, UK and US partners. Their Navies should be allowed operate in our waters under Irish Naval supervision.

There should also be more rigorous enforcement of fisheries laws against foreign vessels operating in Irish waters and, perhaps, the aforementioned foreign navies could assist in this also.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes, the whole Atlantic seaboard from the coast out to the edge of our territorial 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

Drone technology is a must with unmanned vessels also. As previously mentioned other states with vested interests in our offshore infrastructure and stemming the flow of drugs from South America to Europe should also have a role to play in effectively policing and protecting our waters.

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

They could certainly help to fund protections but I would not be in favour of private companies operating as maritime security in our waters.

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

Please see previous answers 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

See previous answers 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

I would be interested to know the tendering process behind the recent announcement that a French company will provide the technology for the Irish Navy to monitor and detect potentially hostile submarine activity in Irrish Waters.

Were Irish companies, such as Barry Electronics, Killybegs, approached at all and, if not, why not?

Finally, as regards offshore wind potential, I believe at least 50% of future osw projects should be owned and operated by State companies such as ESB or Bord na Mona for the benefit of everyone on the island of Ireland and not be sold off wholesale to foreign companies.

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

Aggression by the Russian state or actors working on its behalf, specifically (1) damaging subsea cables which pass through our territorial waters and (2) threatening incursions by Russian naval assets. We are currently unable to respond to any such threats.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

The biggest emerging threats as as Q1 above. Preparation should include
(1) proper resourcing of the Naval Service including purchasing corvettes / frigates with full-spectrum weapons and sensor capability
(2) delegation of the coastguard role to the Irish Coast Guard to permit the Navy to focus on defence operations
(3) Augment the Air Corps fleet with long range maritime patrol aircraft
(4) Develop military facilities for (1), (3) along the east coast to improve response times

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

3000 character(s) maximum

No. Any such focus will leave obvious vulnerabilities in "coverage" by the Defence Forces.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

As Q3 above, but specifically

- ships equipped with sonar, radar, targeting systems
- patrol aircraft with maritime strike capability
- naval base on the west coast
- station aircraft at Shannon airport
- use Ireland's technological infrastructure to develop unmanned subsea systems for protection of cables

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 as appropriate - but not to the extent that the State's responsibilities are delegated to profit-seeking enterprises

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

3000 character(s) maximum

It is essential - yes to all of the above. There are common European procurement programmes such as the future corvette program which Ireland should take part in.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

What use is a strategy without a plan?

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

N/A

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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

Same as any threat really:

1. Too centralised with significant bottle necks.
2. Too few people really understand what it is, how it works and why is it important.
3. Decisions are made on a higher level instead of by the people who have actually made it work and have hands on experience with dealing with it.
4. Too little automation resulting in too expensive solutions and higher risk of lost of life and resources.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Entropy. Instead of moving the problem somewhere else look for a way to actually reduce higher entropy by exchanging energy for a reduced entropy state. For example it is better to recycle or refurbish equipment than throwing it away or buying new equipment with unknown behaviour or behaviour where the people supporting it will get surprised by it. But there are other things that count as entropy, such as integrity, trust or belief systems.