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

3000 character(s) maximum

Protecting fishing grounds
Protecting subsea cables
Protecting offshore energy supply

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 such as intercepting data on or destroying subsea cables are likely. Need an appropriately equipped division to protect these combined with international intelligence cooperation.
Fishing and energy attacks also need appropriately equipped and trained protection.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes. Risk and opportunity assessment could be completed to identify key assets and regions and investment aligned with these.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

International experts should be consulted on this and investment driven by the above strategic analysis. Ability to detect and disrupt undersea communications is one that jumps to mind.

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. It is unlikely that public services with sufficient expertise could be economically developed. A public oversight structure should be used with dedicated staff recruited into it from the private sector with the right experience. This structure could then outsource and coordinate the work.

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 will be important and should use established links via the EU and NATO but should be Irish focussed.

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

Definitely. Strategy without action is pointless.
Hard to say what key elements should be but they should involve activities with budgets and plans against at least the points outlined 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

Time is of the essence.
We should take action on the subsea cables issue immediately.
Use any existing national private company expertise such as XOcean or other similar companies to help guide activity.

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's maritime security faces several significant threats and vulnerabilities, but from [redacted] perceptive the biggest concern is the threat to critical energy infrastructure. In particular:

- Protection of undersea cables and pipelines: One of the most critical concerns is the security of undersea cables and pipelines, which are vital for internet and electrical connectivity and energy security. These cables and pipelines are susceptible to both accidental damage and deliberate sabotage that could render Ireland stranded from an energy or communications perspective.
- Protection of Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) infrastructure: We support the Government's policy to significantly decarbonise the electricity system by the early 2030s. This will require 5GW of offshore wind under construction by 2030 ('Phases 1 and 2') with further ambitious targets to enable Net Zero by 2050. In practical terms, this means that the 5GW will be provided by four developments in the Irish Sea and one off the south coast. We expect that the bulk of the later targets will be met off the South and West coasts. The development of these projects will be key for Irelands successful transition to a more energy secure and decarbonised society.
- Protection of coastal energy generating and storage facilities: Ireland has several power plants in coastal locations for cooling purposes and access to shipping routes for fuel delivery. Some notable examples include the following [redacted]

These plants account for over 3GW of Irelands current energy production potential and will likely be future sites for back-up generation as Ireland decarbonises.

In addition, Irelands current National Oil Reserves Agency (NORA) facilities are all located in ports (primarily in Dublin, Cork and Shannon). NORA ensures that Ireland meets its obligation to hold at least 90 days' worth of oil stocks. 85% of the reserves are held in these coastal locations.

Finally, potential future developments such as storage facilities in depleted gas fields and associated infrastructure will require consideration for future maritime security.

In addition, and following the recent enactment of the Merchant Shipping (Investigation of Marine Accidents) Act 2025 which aims to enhance Ireland's maritime safety regime and to prevent the recurrence of marine accidents, it may be prudent to coordinate and align the forthcoming Strategy where appropriate. The Act provides for the establishment of a Marine Accident Investigation Unit (MAIU) which we welcome, but further consideration of the creation of a role equivalent to the UKs Secretary of State's Representative for Maritime Salvage and Intervention (SOSREP) may be warranted. This will give one individual ultimate control and power to make the final decision during national maritime emergencies, with an overarching aim of reducing the risk to safety and marine pollution.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Ireland’s maritime domain is vast and involves many stakeholders. It ranks third in terms of size in the EU member states therefore it is a valuable European asset. Ireland's maritime security will likely face several emerging threats and future challenges:

- Cybersecurity Threats: As maritime operations become increasingly digitised, the risk of cyber-attacks on critical maritime infrastructure, including ports, vessels and energy infrastructure will grow. Ensuring robust cybersecurity measures and regular updates to security protocols will be essential as well as enhancing capabilities through advanced technologies.
- Protection of Undersea Infrastructure: The security of undersea cables, pipelines, and future gas storage facilities which are vital for communication and energy supply, will remain a critical concern. Implementing advanced monitoring systems and international collaboration will be key in future proofing protection for these assets.
- Climate Change: Rising sea levels, increased frequency of severe weather events, and changing oceanic conditions will pose significant risks to coastal infrastructure and maritime operations. It will be important to consider how this will impact future ORE development. Accounting for future conditions in design models will be vital, as well as investing in resilient infrastructure and adaptive strategies that can withstand the impacts of climate change and other environmental threats. It will also be an important consideration for future proofing our naval capabilities as more erratic weather may mean less ‘people’ days at sea and more reliance on unmanned surveillance.
- Illegal Fishing and Resource Exploitation: As fish stocks migrate due to changing ocean temperatures, illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities may increase. It is important that appropriate baseline data is gathered to understand current trends in fishery stocks. Too often this is being used as an argument against developing ORE projects. Investment in a holistic maritime data collection and repository systems is urgently needed for our maritime jurisdiction.

A Maritime Security Strategy must address and prevent many needs from those already managed e.g. illegal fisheries and criminal activity (drug smuggling) to future risks e.g. national security breaches by foreign entities. Ensuring effective surveillance and enforcement in Ireland's vast maritime area is challenging. Limited resources and capabilities can hinder the detection and response to illegal activities. Therefore, the need to ensure that the Irish Naval Service is well resourced, well-equipped and trained to handle a range of maritime security challenges will be key.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

[redacted] believes that the strategy should focus as a priority on areas with key maritime and critical infrastructure as outlined in Q1 above. Once sufficient maritime security strategies and technology have been developed for protecting critical infrastructure then the broader maritime space can be considered.

In addition, [redacted] supports the current intention of expanding the Navy base to have a presence in Dublin. We would see that this will have key benefits to current and planned energy and communications infrastructure on the East Coast. It will also provide access to a broader skill base.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Focus should initially be on expanding and modernising the Irish Naval Service with more resources, advanced vessels, equipment and training. Personnel in the Irish navy have been hugely committed to providing maritime security services, fisheries protection and rescue support since its inception. However, in the current economic climate, recruitment and retention of staff has been challenging. Investing in recruitment drives and benchmarking benefits offered with the private sector are now needed. In addition, providing comprehensive and continuous training for naval personnel will ensure they are well-prepared to handle modern threats. This includes simulations, joint exercises with allied forces, and specialised training in new technologies.
In addition, given the range of departments and agencies with a remit in maritime safety and security in Ireland, clarity of responsibility will be key in progressing technological developments efficiently. While we welcome the establishment of new agencies in this space (eg Marine Accident Investigation Unit) interface management between the various government departments to ensure clarity on the delineation of responsibilities will be required. The resourcing of all agencies and departments with responsibility in this area will be a challenge to fund due to our vast maritime area and the current immature nature of our blue economy. It be important to do a gap analysis on relevant departments and agencies to understand what is needed for them to function at a relevant level.
In addition to investing in appropriate 'people resources' the following technology enhancements should be considered:

- Enhanced Maritime Surveillance: Investing in advanced radar systems, satellite monitoring, and unmanned vehicles (aerial and underwater) will improve the ability to detect and respond to maritime threats.
- Cybersecurity Measures: Strengthening cybersecurity infrastructure to protect critical maritime systems from cyber-attacks is essential. This includes securing communication networks, port operations, energy generators and undersea cables.
- Resilient Coastal Infrastructure: Investing in coastal infrastructure to ensure it can withstand the impacts of climate change, such as rising sea levels and increased storm intensity, will help protect ports and other critical facilities.
- International Cooperation: Strengthening partnerships with other nations and international organisations will enhance information sharing and collaborative efforts to address shared maritime security challenges, in particular, with bordering neighbours.
- Research and Development: Investing in research and development to innovate new technologies and strategies for maritime security will ensure that Ireland remains at the forefront of addressing emerging 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, we believe the National Maritime Security Strategy (NMSS) should involve the private sector who are owners of key maritime infrastructure. Opportunities to consider collaboration on appropriate security measures will be important. However, costs to adhere to requirements under the Critical Infrastructure Resilience Directive or compliance with other EU obligations should not be unduly imposed on ORE developers or operators. The Marine Renewable Industry Association are proposing that a Critical Maritime Infrastructure Security Liaison and Advisory Group should be established with representatives of Defence, Naval Service, other State maritime agencies and ORE, data cable and gas pipeline industries. We would support the establishment of such a group in the near term to develop a collaborative approach between government and industry on our maritime security.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Given the extensive size of Irelands maritime space and the current limited capacity of our national security services, international cooperation should play a pivotal role in Ireland's NMSS. While this is not an area of expertise for [redacted] we would see some real benefits from co-operation in areas such as:

- Enhanced Surveillance and Intelligence Sharing: Collaborating with European neighbours and partners to ensure early detection and response to threats such as cyber threats, illegal fishing, smuggling, potential terrorist activities etc.
- Cybersecurity Collaboration: Working with international partners to strengthen cybersecurity measures for maritime infrastructure by sharing best practices and lessons learned as well as identifying evolving cyber threat practises.
- Joint Training and Exercises: As per Q4 our Maritime security capabilities will benefit from continuous training opportunities. Conducting joint training exercises will ensure that navy staff are up to date and well prepared for all incidences.
- Research and Development: Partnering with international organisations for research and development can lead to innovations in maritime security technologies and strategies. This can include advancements in surveillance systems, autonomous vessels, and environmental monitoring. Opportunities to gather and share data offshore should also be considered.
- Environmental Protection: International cooperation is essential for addressing environmental threats such as oil spills and marine pollution. Collaborative efforts can lead to better preparedness and response mechanisms.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

[redacted] believe that an action plan is warranted, but would question whether this should come in tandem with the NMSS or should be developed as a next step, as a result of the principles set out in the NMSS. Regardless, [redacted] would recommend that the action plan be subject to further stakeholder consultation.

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

Critical Infrastructure Resilience Directive (CER)

Ireland has now transposed EU Directive 2022/2557 (Critical Entities Resilience Directive) via the European Union (Resilience of Critical Entities) Regulations 2024 (S.I. No. 559 of 2024). Said legislation forms part of a European Union-wide effort to increase the resilience of essential services that provide vital societal functions in all Member States including energy (DSO/TSO/producers/market participants providing aggregation, demand response or energy storage services), transport (including managing bodies of ports), digital infrastructure etc.

Whilst the above referenced Regulations do not specifically reference offshore wind farms (OWFs) in contrast to other Member States such as Germany for instance which considers offshore wind farms critical once they exceed a capacity threshold of approximately 100 MW (as the CER Directive provides considerable interpretative flexibility by Member States in defining critical entities and security measures), it may nonetheless be helpful to consider the same as part of the forthcoming Strategy for the Resilience of Critical Entities due to be delivered in Q1 2026.

In addition, a National Risk Assessment must be conducted every 3 years as a requirement of EU Decision 1313/2013/EU and in the Irish context will be conducted by the Office of Emergency Planning within the Department of Defence which will act as the Single Point of Contact for Ireland concerning the CER Directive.

As the above-mentioned Risk Assessment will be aligned with the resilience strategy being developed for the Critical Entities, it appears sensible to coordinate and align with the forthcoming National Maritime Security Strategy to be developed as appropriate given that the vulnerability of critical assets will increase with the growth of maritime installations as underlined in the European Commission Communication on delivering on the EU's Offshore Energy Ambition (2023).

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Ireland's offshore domain is host to vital subsea infrastructure, including energy pipelines, fibre-optic cables, and interconnectors — many of which are in shallow waters and exposed to accidental or deliberate disruption.

- Roughly 75% of all North Atlantic subsea cables pass through Irish waters, making Ireland a global digital gateway.
- Three-quarters of Ireland's natural gas supply is imported via subsea pipelines.
- Cable landfall zones and shallow corridors (<100m depth) are especially vulnerable due to easy diver/ROV access and seabed mobility.

[redacted] directly supports mitigation of these risks through:
- Full seabed mapping and baseline vulnerability assessments, identifying where cables are exposed or at risk.
- Real-time surveillance using our fleet of 30 survey-grade USVs, operating without personnel offshore and with ultra-low emissions.
- Scalable, persistent presence in risk zones to detect interference, suspicious activity, and environmental change.

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 include:
- State-enabled hybrid interference, such as sabotage of Nord Stream and Baltic infrastructure.
- Growth in energy and telecom infrastructure, increasing attack surfaces, especially with major interconnectors like Greenlink and the Celtic Interconnector coming online.
- Ireland's expanding data centre sector, which is increasing demand for secure, high-capacity international cable routes.
- Cyber threats and GNSS spoofing, potentially degrading autonomous systems.

Preparation must involve both resilience and response:
- Infrastructure Redundancy: Build parallel routes and alternate paths. [redacted] supports this through surveying for new subsea corridors — already underway with National Grid and SSE in the UK.
- Vulnerability Mapping: [redacted] can deliver end-to-end baseline surveys of Ireland's seabed to identify high-risk locations.
- Repeat Monitoring & Surveillance: Using our Irish-based control centre and CyberDeck system, we can deploy autonomous guard missions, delivering live feeds to Defence Forces.

As an [redacted] [redacted] ensures data sovereignty and security, solving a key concern in marine surveillance partnerships.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes. [redacted] recommends prioritising:
- Cable and interconnector landfall areas (e.g., Wexford, Mayo, Cork, Galway).
- Shallow water corridors (<100m) where infrastructure is most vulnerable.
- Known exposure zones based on seabed mobility and previous interference reports.
- Cross-border interconnectors (e.g. Greenlink to Wales, Celtic Interconnector to France) and high-density data corridors.

[redacted]

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

3000 character(s) maximum

We recommend investing in:
1. Autonomous surveillance systems: [redacted] USVs can be used for real-time patrol, cable corridor scans, and infrastructure inspection. [redacted].
2. Baseline Risk Models: Mapping of cable exposure, anchor scars, fishing interference, and vessel loitering zones. [redacted] can deliver this today.
3. Infrastructure Redundancy: Surveying new cable corridors and expansion zones — aligned with EU goals for resilience and climate-aligned infrastructure. [redacted] has already supported such work with major TSOs.
4. Real-time Situational Awareness: Using [redacted], data can be streamed live to naval control centres or integrated into EU/NATO systems.
5. Data-Sensitive, Irish-Controlled Ops: With all operations based in Ireland, [redacted] ensures GDPR compliance and security of national 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?

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes — the private sector owns, operates, and maintains the majority of Ireland's offshore critical infrastructure.

[redacted] recommends that the strategy:
- Integrate survey and surveillance partners like [redacted] who can deploy at short notice to support Defence Forces or asset owners.
- Facilitate public-private data sharing, with clear confidentiality protocols.
- Reward proactive monitoring via risk-based insurance frameworks (as already seen in subsea energy sectors).

We are ready immediately to collaborate with the Irish Navy, National Cyber Security Centre, or infrastructure owners on joint trials and pilot deployments.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Ireland's subsea assets are regional and global in impact, and their protection must be coordinated with:
- EU infrastructure frameworks (e.g. Critical Undersea Infrastructure Protection).
- NATO interoperability protocols, especially in data feeds and patrol operations.
- Cross-border trials and exercises, e.g. shared missions with the Royal Navy or French Navy.

[redacted] is already engaged with clients and governments across the globe. We can play a bridging role by:
- Offering scalable, non-militarised surveillance tools,
- Facilitating low-friction cross-border collaboration (e.g., cable corridor scans),
- Acting as an Irish voice in international fora focused on marine security technology.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes — a measurable Action Plan is essential to move from policy to impact.
[redacted] recommends including:
- Baseline seabed vulnerability map by end of 2025.
- Pilot deployment of persistent USV patrols in one high-risk corridor (e.g., Wexford or Celtic Interconnector).
- Public-private protocol for incident response, including cable cut or loitering event detection.
- Industry engagement programme, with Irish and EU suppliers.
- Annual national review of asset risk zones, changes, and response capabilities.

[redacted] is ready to lead or support each of these pillars and proposes an Irish Navy pilot immediately as a starting point.

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 stands at the centre of Europe's digital and energy future. Its seabed infrastructure is essential, expanding rapidly, and increasingly exposed.

[redacted] can:
- Deploy immediately, with proven systems, scale and personnel.
- Scale capacity, building new USVs in Ireland for dual-use applications.
- Operate securely, with full Irish data governance.
- Support government and industry, bridging defence, infrastructure, and clean tech.

We urge the Strategy to act decisively and to leverage domestic technology leadership, like [redacted] to create sovereign resilience with global relevance.

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

Threats:
Bad actors intent on causing disruption to connectivity between European states.
Narcotics traffic through Irish waters, either landing here or transiting to other states.

Vulnerabilities:
Vulnerability to attack of interconnecting infrastructure connecting the state to other nations or any such infrastructure passing though Irish waters.
Inability to protect offshore wind farms & Kinsale gas field.
Inability to protect Irish ports.
Inability to detect underwater vessels transiting through Irish 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

1) Adequate naval assets to meet the requirements of the maritime security strategy
Appropriate naval assets require to be procured. Such vessels should be designed to meet the needs of a modern defensive navy. Using vessels designed for fishery protection won't be adequate. Vessels such as frigates are more appropriate & should have helicopter carrying capabilities. These vessels should be new or nearly new if procured externally. It may be necessary to re-establish ship building capacity in Ireland to meet this need, rather than procure abroad. Also, vessels shouldn't be hand me downs from other nations that aren't adequate for the tasks identified in the maritime security because they come cheap. This has been policy for decades & has not served the state well. Also, an increase in assets for airborne maritime surveillance is required.

2) Recruiting & retaining competent personnel to maintain the Naval Service's ability to meet the demands of the maritime security strategy.
It's becoming more difficult globally to recruit men & women into armed forces. As conscription won't be an option it's vital that condition of service are attractive enough to encourage people to enlist. There needs to be a complete reset to pay & conditions across the DF & a culture change both in government & the Department of Defence toward uniformed personnel.

3) Adequate infrastructure to support an enlarged navy.
At present the majority of naval assets are based in Cork Harbour. This is a single point of failure should any hostilities occur. Basing naval assets around the coast will be a challenge as most ports don't have infrastructure too support naval assets on a permanent basis. Acquiring naval bases on the east & west coasts should be a priority as these will take years to establish with planning requirements etc.

4(Resistance to any expansion of Ireland's military capability.
A significant number of people see Ireland's expansion of military capability as joining NATO by stealth. It will be necessary to win the public's heart & minds with facts not emotions & this needs to be part of the strategy.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Focus on areas where the greatest threats are faced in the first instance, such as areas where data interconnectors, electricity cable, gas pipelines pass through or come ashore. The areas off the southwest coast near data interconnectors where vessels from other states have been sighted, the Kinsale gas field & British/Irish electricity & gas interconnectors are the prime targets for bad actors to attack. The next priority would be to be able to protect future infrastructure such as offshore wind farms, which are planned for the south, east & west coasts.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

1) Primary radar system
2) Retention of current naval personnel & recruitment of additional personnel to meet the requirements of the maritime security strategy.
3) Identification & procurement of suitable sites around the coast where bases to support naval operations can be constructed.
4) Appropriate naval assets fitted with military radar, sonar etc & with helicopter carrying capability.
5) Increase in the number & availability of airborne surveillance assets - this will also require increased recruitment in the Air Corps.

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. Private sector owners/operators should participate in an advisory role so that their security requirements are taken into account. Also, the private sector participants can provide detailed information on the design, construction & potential vulnerabilities of their infrastructure.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Focus on building cooperation with our EU partners & EEA members such as Norway. Partnership with NATO will cause a public outcry, however our prospective EU/EEA partners are already NATO members so this is a way to sidestep some of the noise from those vehemently opposed to an increase in military capability. Cooperation with the UK can be considered separately however the state already cooperates with the UK on many issues so there shouldn't be a problem. Such partnerships should be established as soon as possible as these will ease procurement issues, which will occur as Europe is re-arming in the face of threats from the east & supply of equipment may become an issue in the short/medium term.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes, in as short an achievable timeline as is practicable.
The action plan should be created & overseen by senior Irish military personnel with support from the Department of Defence & external advisors.

The key elements should be:
1) Resolve the recruitment & retention issues.
2) A "hearts & minds" programme to ensure public support.
3) Restructure the Naval Service to meet the demands of the maritime strategy.
4) Identify the areas of greatest vulnerability.
5) Identify & procure the appropriate naval & air assets/equipment to meet the demands of the maritime strategy, including all support functions such as maintenance, training etc
6) Identify the location, procure & build support bases on the coast to support permanent naval operations.
7) Review the strategy in a manner that perpetual momentum is maintained so that the state is never as defenceless in the future.

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 maritime security is critical to our ability as a nation to function. Successive Irish governments have neve taken our security seriously, preferring to hide behind the neutrality position as it meant not having to spend money. The Defence Forces at full strength has never had the appropriate equipment or structure to defend the state. To be effective the maritime security strategy needs to show that it will provide the appropriate equipment & personnel to meet its demands. It's no longer acceptable to procure old outdated & unsuitable equipment because this comes cheaper that new, state of the art assets. This process cannot be about political posturing that runs out of steam. The state has a duty to protect its citizens & infrastructure & it finally needs to take its responsibility seriously & step up. There will be considerable pushback, mostly emotionally driven with little recourse to facts & the state must be prepared to overcome any doubts the public has about why our military capability needs to expand.

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 geographical position and military non-alignment has historically insulated it from some of the more direct consequences of global conflict. In an era of uncertainty with increasing maritime insecurity, hybrid warfare, and documented targeting of critical infrastructure, Ireland can no longer be a passive spectator and should respond accordingly to potential threats to its maritime security. A significant vulnerability in this context is the systems of critical subsea infrastructure that underpins the economic and societal functioning of the State and its neighbours. This includes fibre-optic subsea cables, gas pipelines and electricity interconnectors. While the subsea gas and electricity links between Ireland and the UK are more shielded and monitored, the substantial system of transatlantic subsea cables that transit through or near Irish waters are more vulnerable. If just three or four cables were intentionally cut in sequence, there would most likely be a noticeable impact on digital connectivity. A larger scale, coordinated interruption, though unlikely, could have devastating effects on financial systems, internet connectivity, and expose multiple security vulnerabilities. This could manifest, for example, through a coordinated anchor dragging event severing multiple cables at once, a hybrid scenario where there is plausible deniability on the part of the perpetrators. Therefore, increased preparedness and a clear hierarchy of response structures between industry, government and the defence forces is vital. Crisis management responses are complicated by the variety of stakeholders involved including private companies operating across different regulatory landscapes, limited maritime security capabilities, and government agencies and departments often with competing mandates, resource levels, and experience. Apart from subsea infrastructure, Ireland relies heavily on maritime transportation for the provision of energy and importation of essential goods. Any disruption to global shipping supply lines, such as existential shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic or spill-over from proxy conflicts, such as Houthi attacks on merchant shipping in the Red Sea and Iranian threats to close the Strait of Hormuz for example, could have severe economic consequences for Ireland. In this context, Ireland should strongly advocate for freedom of navigation and support diplomatic efforts to secure merchant shipping and maintain supply lines. Limited maritime enforcement and monitoring capacity is itself a security vulnerability and can be manipulated in non-linear ways by adversarial state or non-state actors. Apart from vulnerability in the monitoring and protection of critical offshore and subsea infrastructure other maritime security issues should be an ongoing concern including the protection and monitoring of ports, fisheries protection and enforcement, and countering the trafficking of drugs, weapons, and people into Ireland and western Europe.

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 green energy transition predicates a substantial growth in offshore assets and subsea infrastructure over the next two decades with improved technology meaning this infrastructure will move further offshore. This includes ambitious plans to develop a framework for the delivery of 20GW of offshore wind by 2040 and 37GW in total by 2050. This growth must be framed against the backdrop of an increasingly unpredictable international security environment where subsea infrastructure has been the target of deliberate sabotage and interference.

Intentional damage to subsea cables usually consists of relatively crude approaches such as deliberate anchor dragging across cable sites or the use of cutting tools nearer to the shore. There is also a potential threat from cheaper and increasingly accessible technologies, such as drones and UUV's, which can typically favour an aggressor. Investment in a drone equipped with rudimentary explosive material requires little financing or expertise to operate and theoretically could be deployed en masse against a landing station or an offshore windfarm for example with the potential for significant damage. Subsea cables are difficult to access and usually require more advanced UUV and detection technology to intercept at sea. However, landing sites and nearshore cables and pipelines are more vulnerable in this context.

The first priority should be to build maritime security capacity and Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) through the acquisition of appropriate technologies and assets while incrementally investing in the Irish Naval Service (INS) and research in the area of maritime security. Currently, there are no maritime security related courses available at third level in Irish Universities. This is a significant gap which ultimately impacts the State's innovation potential and strategic leadership in this space. The National Maritime College of Ireland could play a role here in conjunction with the Naval Service.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

This question needs to be considered in the context of the ongoing capacity issues faced by the INS and other maritime enforcement entities within the State. One potential option for a more prudent application of resources is to consider dividing Ireland's maritime domain into four security zones (North, South, East and West).

One potential method to delineate these zones is to borrow techniques from Marine Spatial Planning – in that it should be ecosystem based, adaptive and integrated. Central here would be a process of spatial data collection including port locations, shipping lanes, energy and telecom infrastructure (including subsea cables), areas of fishing activity etc. Then stakeholder and regulatory (national and international) mapping and integration followed by risk assessments. Each zone could then be subdivided into three sections based on UNCLOS's maritime boundary definitions. This could consist of: (1) nearshore zone (ports, cable landing stations, ferry terminals etc); (2) territorial zone (1-24nm); and (3) Exclusive Economic Zone (25-200nm).

The Western Zone for example might prioritise illegal and unregulated fisheries enforcement, whereas the Southern Zone may prioritise offshore wind and subsea cables, the Eastern Zone may prioritise critical gas pipelines, electricity interconnectors, and port security, while the Northern Zone may prioritise bilateral security engagement, coordinate patrols and/or exercises with the UK.

This approach has the potential to facilitate a more cost effective and judicious provision of resources given ongoing maritime security capacity restraints. Resources can then be strategically deployed depending on specific threat intelligence, security context, or other spontaneous emergency, security, or disaster responses such as an oil spill or Search and Rescue event etc.

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's limited maritime security capacity alongside ongoing staff retention and budgetary issues suggest that more innovative and smart technology solutions, such as the use of autonomous systems and uncrewed vessels, should be considered. In comparison to larger investments, such as patrol vessels, autonomous systems tend to be cheaper, more durable and maintain a lower profile and can improve Ireland's capacity to respond to and deter threats across the full spectrum of the maritime security space. Technological investment must always be considered as a force multiplier and not a method to replace highly trained and well-resourced Naval Service personnel.

Investment should focus on three areas: (1) Uncrewed Undersea Vehicles (UUVs) can offer more tactical flexibility and complement sensor technology used by the private sector for detecting subsea cable faults in real time. It is also important to actively engage in innovation in this space, particularly in the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Digital Twinning, and Extra Large Autonomous Underwater Vehicles for example. (2) Remotely Piloted Air Systems (RPAS) and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) including AI equipped drones to contribute to better MDA through inspection and monitoring of critical infrastructure including subsea and nearshore. (3) A shipborne towed sonar array to complement the Air Corp's CASA C-295 maritime patrol aircraft and help build subsea capacity.

The National Maritime Security Strategy should also advocate for the creation of a single agency with responsibility for maritime security within the State. This could be an expanded version of the new Maritime Security Unit within the Department of Defence and could help tackle some of the existing duplication and inefficiencies. Such an entity could mirror the Joint Maritime Security Centre in the UK, which aims to increase awareness and understanding of maritime security threats, facilitate cross-government coordination and deliver a "whole-system response". Alternatively, the entity could adopt an "information fusion centre" type model ([redacted], whereby information on maritime security threats are received, analysed, and pertinent information is shared with the relevant authorities. Here, the existing components of the Fishery Protection System and Lifeguard can be utilised. Within this agency, there could be a National Critical Infrastructure Committee to coordinate and manage crisis response in the event of suspicious activities or acts of intentional disruption to subsea infrastructure. This could be supported by an intelligence-gathering element in the context of disrupting and deterring maritime cyber-attacks supported by existing national agencies such as the National Cyber Security Centre. Subsea infrastructure protection would be just one element of the new agency. Other branches would focus on additional maritime security related issues for the state such as fisheries crime.

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. This is a critical factor.

The vast majority of transoceanic digital communication cables are privately owned and, in the Irish case, privately maintained, monitored and protected sometimes through third party private operators. Therefore, closer engagement with the private sector is crucial to monitor and secure cables, to set agreed standards for security, and to share pertinent information. Currently, much of the interaction between State agencies and the private sector is carried out on an ad-hoc basis. This means that if a state or non-state entity interfered or deliberately damaged these cables in the Irish Exclusive Economic Zone, private operators do not currently have a clear and systemic response hierarchy or the confidence that the State can judiciously respond to intervene.

The lack of a common platform where government and industry can engage on sensitive issues, data and threat information around subsea infrastructure is a significant gap. The International Cable Protection Committee recognises such engagement as best practice and highlights that the sharing of risk and incident data between operators and governments is useful for identifying patterns of activity, gaps in existing cable protection efforts, areas for improving resilience, and identification of malicious acts by state and non-state actors. In addition, the INS should be consultees in the cable planning and application process and an INS member should be designated as a liaison officer to the subsea cable industry to facilitate the exchange of information and updates as they pertain to security related matters specifically.

Without strong trust and secure communication channels between public and private stakeholders, cooperation can be slow and fragmented, which can in turn negatively impact security and resilience. This underpins a core component of cooperation which is the sharing of information. Without trust, governments are reluctant to share confidential security data whereas the private sector are reluctant to share commercially sensitive information or data collected through their existing sensor systems. Without this, it is not possible to gain a comprehensive understanding of the threat landscape and formulate effective crisis management responses.

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

Closer partnership and engagement with other EU Atlantic Member States (Portugal, France, and Spain) and /or through NATO's Partnership for Peace programme, are some obvious methods by which Ireland can enhance its intelligence, situational awareness, and technological expertise in relation to its maritime security without compromising its non-aligned stance. This might include joint training, intelligence sharing, technological development, equipment maintenance, or possibly joint procurement and pooling of assets.

The INS also has niche capabilities and expertise that are beneficial for other states in areas such as Visit, Board, Search and Seizure techniques and, despite its size and resource constraints, has shown that it can meaningfully contribute to larger naval missions, such as EU Operation Atalanta and EU Operation Sophia, both in an advisory and operational capacity.

The INS and the Department of Defence should also aim to undertake maritime exercises involving the private sector and UK maritime agencies to develop, test, and coordinate crisis management responses and protocols in the context of threats to submarine cables, electricity interconnectors, and oil and gas pipelines in adjacent waters.

In addition, and importantly, Ireland should increase bilateral engagement with the UK and US independent of the EU and NATO in terms of building maritime security capacity, expertise, and joint training and simulation exercises around subsea infrastructure in particular.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes. A five-year Action Plan would be appropriate and should prioritise investment in maintaining a sustainable base level of maritime security capacity with a dual focus on staff retention and capacity within the INS and technological investment and procurement of appropriate assets.

The Action Plan might include: (i) mapping of relevant stakeholders (ii) stakeholder engagement (iii) monitoring, evaluation, and reporting mechanisms including KPIs, annual reviews, and public facing reporting (iv) budgetary allocations and strategic investments (v) risk assessments, and (vi) legal and policy alignment.

The strategy should be a living document and revised and updated every five years. In addition, it should pay attention and align closely with the EU Maritime Security Strategy while recognising Ireland's unique national governance structures, agencies, challenges and available capacities.

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 is national security for Ireland, but there is a lack of a maritime security consciousness or culture within the State. There should be ongoing effort to raise awareness in coastal communities, and among students, practitioners, and policy makers of its current and future importance. Here the government should support academic research and innovation in maritime security, governance, technology, and capacity building, particularly in Irish Universities, driving innovation and advancement in the field and facilitating Ireland's potential future emergence as an internationally recognised hub for excellence in maritime security research.

Contact

Contact Form

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

3000 character(s) maximum

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

3000 character(s) maximum

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

3000 character(s) maximum

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

3000 character(s) maximum

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

3000 character(s) maximum

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

3000 character(s) maximum

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

3000 character(s) maximum

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

3000 character(s) maximum

I don't think their is a huge threat to maritime cables, that Ireland has to make secure. The existing Cables have always been vulnerable to damage just by normal shipping and they are replaced. There are also so many cables that it would be impossible for Ireland to protect them all - even if Ireland expanded funding to these protections vastly. I think this is a non-issue being used as an excuse to end Ireland's neutrality.

Contact

Contact Form

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Ireland is not at the races in relation to maritime security. We are the main European port of choice for the importation of drugs and weapons. This is to say nothing of our pathetic naval capabilities.

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 described above. I believe that as an island nation, we are completely within our rights to completely and dramatically overhaul our navy. This could be justified in relation to combating the drugs and illicit goods being transported through Ireland. A massive increase in the naval/coastal defence budget could be justified this way and would not effect our neutrality.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

No, every corner of the country should have a relatively large naval port. This would secure the country's coastal defence and also provide a source of sustainable employment in all areas of the country reducing the Dublin biasis.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Recruitment in the navy specifically. Together with all of the necessary technological and equipment investment required.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

In my opinion, this is not an area for the private sector

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

3000 character(s) maximum

I believe that the above is important but in order to gain widespread national support, this programme needs to be promoted as a crime prevention strategy and not a military one.

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, by all means. Rebranding, explaining and promoting this strategy as a response to the way our island is being exploited by international drug dealers

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

3000 character(s) maximum

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

Contact

Contact Form

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Currently I see the Lack of a Naval & Air Corpes Patrol Presence around our coast as a Huge gap in our National Security .
Leaving an open door to Drug & criminal gangs to use out long coast line as a open door to Import drugs 7 what ever else they wish to do with very little chance of been discovered .This is while 100'd of Millions of euros worth of Patrol Vessles lie tied up in Cork P 50 P 60 & P 70 Class PV's because the Government wont pay proper wages to the Naval specialised staff , in the grans schmen of things this is crazy .The Russian Navy are off our coast & have free run while the Government gather reoprt after report & kick the can down the road.
Over 100 Years adrer Independance we still rely on the Royal Navy & RAF to protect our sea & air space above that sea , what would our founding leaders think of this ??? A National embarrassment pure & simple
The short sighted view of most Irish Governments on Naval & Defence matters for an island Nation is staggering !!

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 as the drug import point of choice by south Anerican durg gangs & the likely attack on under sea cables which may damage Ireland as a Country for continued FDI investment . Off sea wind farms at risk from foreign or Non state actors
The best way to prepare is to get our current Naval fleet out on Patrol & increase to 12 ships equipped with sonar areial UAV etc . It's not Rocket science after all other Nationa Manage it !!

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

3000 character(s) maximum

No Equip the NAVY & AIR CORPES To Patrol the ENTIRE coast , use Satalites Like Denmark & Sweden have started to do recently

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

3000 character(s) maximum

LONG RANGE UAV to patrol the sea from the air
Long Range Unmaned surface craft
Marine Radar
Fixed sonar listening points near under sea cables to detect any security risk

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

Security should not be run in any way by pricate sector .
However they could be charged a fee in the same way aircraft pay for ATC services when passing through irish controled airspace .

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

Increase co operation with NATO EU States EEAC EMSA FRONTEX is only a good thisg shared intel , training & Technology sharing can only improve our Marine security

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

3000 character(s) maximum

YES 100 % an action plan with clear time line agreed by governemnt for the strategy to be implemented .
NOT ANOTHER REPORT glossy press release only to get kicked down the road when nit leaves the news cycle .
LETS GROW UP AS A ISLAND NATION & PROTECVT OUR MARINE SECURITY AFTER !100 + YEARS AS A STATE

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

TAKE OUR DEFENCE SERIOUSLY.
LETS GROW UP AS A NATION & STOP FREE LOADING ON SECURITY & DEFENCE .
TIME TO STOP WRITING & READING REPORTS & TAKE ACTION

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

Contact

Contact Form

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

3000 character(s) maximum

The threats to Ireland's maritime security fall into two categories; real and potential.
The real threats currently are the smuggling of drugs and persons through our maritime territory. The potential threats are those that might occur during a time of hostilities between the USA/NATO and Russia, between the EU and Russia and/or other foreign powers, and/or terrorist actions by non-state actors.
Those smuggling drugs and persons will continue their efforts unless or until it becomes either unprofitable or impossible. Neither scenario applies currently nor is likely to occur in the near future.
Threats during hostilities might take the form of cutting or tapping the undersea cables that terminate on various parts of Ireland's coasts, including those pipelines that connect us to the UK. The loss of communications/data transmission by the cutting of cables would do major damage to Ireland, the EU and to NATO. The cutting of pipelines and cables to the UK would deny Ireland much of its imported fuel in addition to communications with the UK and beyond. Another possibility might be the neutralization of Shannon International Airport to deny its use by NATO.
These and other vulnerabilities exist due to state of the Irish Defense Force's lack of personnel and equipment. To some extent, these vulnerabilities also exist because Russia or another hostile state, would not honor Irish neutrality in case hostilities were to break out..

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

3000 character(s) maximum

The biggest threats/future challenges to maritime security are the protection of those undersea cables that terminate in Ireland and the control and protection of our EEZ from submarine and/or "ghost fleet" vessels seeking to operate close to our shores.
In order to prepare for the future threats/challenges to our maritime security, Ireland must make some speedy, difficult and costly decisions. The personnel, equipment and general support of the Defense Forces must be increased. Cooperation with the UK and the Royal Navy and other EU members will be essential. Coordination with NATO, at a higher level, may be required. Ireland's stance on Neutrality may have to be re-defined.
The existing vessels in the Irish Navy should be up-graded to provide better platforms for anti-submarine warfare and any additional maritime assets should have anti-submarine capabilities. The Air Corps may contribute to maritime security by the purchase and operation of aircraft that could augment the Navy's anti-submarine resources. Maritime drones and SONAR sensors might help protect the EEZ.
It is not unreasonable that the Defense Force personnel might be required to increase 10 fold.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

The protection of the undersea cables and their Irish terminals plus the pipelines from UK should be the main focus of the maritime strategy. The current size of the Defense Forces dictate restricting what can realistically be protected at this time.
As the Defense Forces/Irish Navy personnel and equipment is expanded/increased, then more of the EEZ may be patrolled/protected.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Increasing the size of the Irish Defense Forces will take more time than may be available should some form of hostilities that affect Ireland break out. Investing now in a long-term plan to increase the size of the Defense Forces and in "force multipliers" such as maritime and aerial drones, passive SONAR buoys, and cooperative agreements with other maritime powers will help fill gaps in our maritime defenses.

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

Every available resource should be brought to bear to strengthen the National Maritime Security Strategy and cooperation with the private sector should be a major component of the plan. Such cooperation might take the form of an agreement to place passive SONAR buoys onto existing and planned wind turbine farms located off Ireland's shores. There is a massive private sector interest in the development and production of aerial and maritime drones that might be utilized by the Defense Forces. The entities that develop, produce and lay the undersea cables might share insights on how the cables might be "hardened" and/or better protected. Cooperation in these and other areas between Government and the private sector would build bridges that would be useful now and into the future, as would the "cutting of red tape" that would help facilitate that 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

There should always be a place in any nation's policies for international cooperation. The magnitude of the potential threats measured against the current size of the Irish Defense Forces require cooperative action amongst the friends and neighbors of Ireland.
Ireland by itself cannot protect either its citizenry or its territory.
Hard choices will have to be made by both the Irish people and by their government.
If the needs identified by the National Maritime Security Strategy cannot be met by the existing Defense Forces, then those forces must be increased with additional personnel, equipment and/or support from others. This leads to at least three questions; how to pay for the enlargement of the Defense Forces and can the strategy be met within the current conception of Irish "neutrality", and are the Irish people ready to consider and/or to approve the increase in spending to strengthen the Defense Forces and the possibility of abandoning neutrality for the benefits of mutual defense under NATO or some other international security alliance?

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 is a "must". The Plan should include realistic estimates of the costs involved and how the Plan will be paid for plus a time frame so the Government and the public will be able to judge the progress (or lack of progress) in order to make timely and prudent changes as needed.
The Action Plan should also address the need to "sell" the Strategy to the public and to those young men and women the State would need to attract to fill the additional positions in an expanded Defense Force.
Additionally the Plan should address the steps needed to retain existing Defense Force members, so as to make use of their expertise and to provide a pool of existing personnel that might be promoted and/or utilized as trainers/instructors.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

It would be unwise to rely on either the "goodwill" of a physically distant Russia or on the current administration in the USA, which has proven to be unreliable in its dealings with NATO, in trade discussions, and other matters of international relations.
A strong and united Europe might successfully stand alone against hostilities from the East and/or indifference from the West.

Contact

Contact Form

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

3000 character(s) maximum

There are a number of areas:
- The undersea cables are a critical infrastructure both to this country and our colleagues in the EU and the UK. In an increasingly fractious world it is important that this connectivity is secured and is seen to be so as a deterrent.

-We are an island nation and the free operation of our ports is essential to our trading with the rest of the world. We are entirely vulnerable to a blockade which would paralise us economically.

-Our energy security is also reliant on maritime access: Shipping for the supply of oil, undersea pipelines for the supply of gas and undersea cables for the suppy of electricity. This is not to mention what is likely to be a reliance on offshore wind production. A small number of strikes on these critical conduits would create an energy deficit which could not be quickly replace and would economically cripple us.

-This is not to mention the need to be able to defend our fishing 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

-Communications, Electricity and gas : We need an ability to police the security of these channells either through Sonar, radar or satellite or indee remote monitoring. This is essential. On top of that there needs to be a credible rapid response capability, both maitime and airborne. It is equally essential that there is a creditable and visible capability otherwise all of the surveillance will be just a waste of money.

-Offshore energy: The plans for significant offshore generation is welcome but that in ieslf makes these turbines visible, vulnerable and capable of being destroyed without collateral damage in human terms.

-Port access and Fishing: protection of these access routes and activities is obvious.

We need to ensure that electronic surveillence is boosted significantly. We cannot counteract what we cannot see. A properly resourced and funtioning Naval Service is essention. There is a need to have at least 2 ships at sea at any point in time with a futher 2 ready for deployment. The Aircorp needs serious upgrading in its serveillence capability but also in its offensive capability. It should have a credible capability to use lethal force where justified. We should also consider having a short range missile capability to assist in defending our airspace.

Our traditional stance of claiming "neutrality" is no longer reliable. Ireland is strategically important in communications between the EU and USA, and on defence of sea routes.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

We dont have the luxury of time to do this piecemeal. Decades of neglect and underinvestment has created a degree of urgency in getting to even a basic level of capability. In the absence of us joiining NATO or being full memmbers of the EU defence arrangements we need to become significantly more self reliant. Thats an urgent minimum. But it needs to move forward on all aspects in tandem.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

These areas are not mutually exclusive. We will remain as vulnerable as our weakest point. We need a 5 year plan to advance in all of these areas simultaneously. This will cost a lot but there is no credible alternative. The world and the geopolitc situation is changing rapidly.

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! The essence of security is who controls the service and ensures that the activities undertaken are fit for purpose. I have no issue with using external consultants but ownership and control should 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

YES! Neutrality is a meaningless status to assert, It wont save us is any of the big actors decide to move against us. We may be militarily neutral but we are not politically neutral. This distinction is used to justify not spending on the Army/Navy/ Aircorps. This sort of distinction is totally in our own heads and is externally meaningless. Does Russian think we are neutral, Do Israel or Palestine?

Who wouild defend us? Do we expect the USA to rush to our aid? The UK, the other EU members? Seriously? The days of the "free ride" are over. NATO is increasing spend to 5% of GDP and we need to mirror this.
We should cooperate with the EU and NATO in sharing intelligence, ensuring compatibility of systems, dovertailing strategies etc. This is critical to ensure complete coverage of all vulnerabilities. For expample could NATO or the UK provide missile coverage for our maritime area?

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Absolutely!
It is meaningless to have a strategy which is not accompanied by at least an outline Action Plan, with detailed next steps covering all fronts, tight deadlines, a budget to execute the initial phase and a outline of the subsequent capital spend required with multinannual funding commitment.

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

Sadly, for a nation with so much going for us, we are defenceless. Even if we pretend to be neutral on any level and I would contend that we are not, we should not be defenceless. None of the worlds aggressors see us as being truly neutral, just militarily inadequate. The USA, UK and EU and most countries see us as being "Neutral on their side" not "Neutral on Russia's side" and so on. I have great admiration for the men and wornen in our armed services. They are shining examples of the best of us as a nation but we treat them shamefully.

We need a closer military allignment with friendly nations. It is unrealistic to think we can do it alone.

Contact

Contact Form

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Rouge states and their proxies, including traditional sabotage of infrastructure from manned submersibles, to Unmanned Submersibles, to the backing of terrorism.

Our main vulnerabilities being maritime energy and communication 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

Russian aggression in the North Atlantic

Prepare by integrating our maritime intelligence and detection systems with our EU and NATO partners, investing heavily in our naval service and air corps, and building national resilience through investment in civil defence capacity (stock piles of fuel and generators)

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Our Exclusive Economic Zone

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Sonar, anti submarine warefare capabilities (both detection and actual kinetic solutions)

Air defence for ships and strike capacity for providing deterence to surface and sub surface vessels alike

Unmanned submersibles and surface vessels also need to be examined (can provide capability with less at sea man power commitments)

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

Should partially fund security efforts

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes increased interoperability with NATO but that needs to come with increased investment

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, should include funding commitments, strategy for partnering with allies

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

3000 character(s) maximum

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

Contact

Contact Form

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Not enough boats to monitor our waters

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Instability in Europe with Ukraine invasion. Drugs trade. Huge Investment in navy needed. Better communication systems. Recruitment drive. Investment in boats and monitoring systems. Communication and sharing of data with Europe colleagues

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

3000 character(s) maximum

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Naval ships and recruitment and new IT 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

No. It should be government owned

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, with EU, UK and NATO

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes, it should include funding and time frames

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

3000 character(s) maximum

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

Contact

Contact Form

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Vulnerability of Subsea Infrastructure: Ireland's crucial undersea communication cables are at risk of sabotage, with foreign actors (notably Russian vessels) reportedly mapping and potentially targeting them.

No Sonar Capability: Without effective sonar systems, Ireland struggles to identify and respond to underwater incursions, increasing risks from foreign espionage or sabotage.

Manpower Shortages: Chronic staffing issues within the Naval Service mean Ireland cannot consistently crew its existing fleet. At times, fewer than half of its patrol vessels can be deployed due to personnel shortages, severely limiting operational capacity.

Absence of Long-Range Maritime Drones: Ireland has no long-range maritime drone (UAS) capability. This limits persistent surveillance of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), hampers rapid threat detection, and leaves vast areas of Irish waters unmonitored, especially during gaps in crewed patrols.

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

Hybrid and Grey Zone Threats – Ambiguous actions like surveillance by unmarked vessels or cyber interference will increase.
→ Prepare with better intelligence-sharing, inter-agency coordination, and a national maritime operations centre.

Subsea Infrastructure Vulnerability – Ireland's undersea cables remain high-value targets.
→ Invest in seabed surveillance, protect cable landing points, and deploy anti-submarine sensors or drones.

Naval Manpower Shortages – Without enough personnel, even modern systems won't be operationally useful.
→ Introduce new recruitment incentives, use crew-optional vessels, and build a reserve maritime surveillance force.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Atlantic Approaches (West and Southwest):
Ireland's western seaboard is of strategic international importance, hosting the bulk of transatlantic subsea cable infrastructure. It is vulnerable to underwater surveillance and grey zone interference. This area demands priority surveillance, seabed monitoring, and persistent maritime drone patrols.

Cable Landing Zones (e.g. Mayo, Cork, Wexford):
These landing sites carry a substantial portion of global internet traffic. Disruption here would have disproportionate national and international consequences.

Irish Sea:
This high-traffic zone is vulnerable to smuggling and cyber-infrastructure threats. It is also a key area for fisheries protection, search and rescue, and commercial shipping oversight. Requires a more permanent patrol presence and rapid coordination with UK and EU counterparts.

EEZ:
Ireland's vast EEZ is under-monitored and prone to illegal fishing, pollution, and potential hostile transits. Should be patrolled using long-endurance maritime UAVs, satellite surveillance, and naval presence.

Supporting Two New Naval Bases: Sligo and Arklow
To properly support operations across these priority areas and address longstanding naval capacity shortfalls, the strategy should include the establishment of two new regional naval bases: one in Sligo and one in Arklow. These bases would serve as regional hubs for patrol, surveillance, inter-agency cooperation, and rapid response.

Arklow Naval Base – Irish Sea Operations
Strategic Location: Ideal for patrolling the Irish Sea, monitoring east coast cable landing sites, and supporting coastal joint operations.

Existing Infrastructure: Arklow already possesses strong maritime facilities and road/rail connectivity, making it a cost-effective option for conversion.

Patrol Vessels: Well-suited for small and medium patrol craft, with minimal infrastructure upgrades required.

Recruitment and Retention Benefits: The east coast population offers a larger recruitment pool, and personnel stationed closer to Dublin or southeast communities are more likely to remain long-term.

Sligo Naval Base – Atlantic and EEZ Coverage
Operational Value: Strategically located to cover the northwest Atlantic approaches, under-patrolled EEZ waters, and vital subsea infrastructure off the west coast.

Proximity to Finner Army Camp: Enables dual-use efficiencies in logistics, maintenance, and training. Co-location with Defence Forces assets may reduce operating costs and improve interoperability.

Infrastructure: Sligo has well-developed road, port, and rail access, making it viable for naval support operations and capable of hosting both personnel and maritime assets.

Regional Recruitment: Establishing a base in Sligo opens recruitment opportunities across the northwest, an area historically underserved in Defence Forces postings, thereby supporting decentralised growth and improving retention.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Continuation of Answer 3....

Strategic and Organisational Benefits:
Decentralisation: Reduces dependency on Haulbowline and enhances regional responsiveness.

Coverage & Presence: Ensures year-round patrol coverage in key maritime zones that are currently under-monitored.

Retention & Lifestyle: Offering personnel the chance to live and serve closer to home supports retention and morale, particularly for families.

Crisis Response: Improves positioning for humanitarian assistance, SAR (search and rescue), and climate disaster support operations.

Conclusion
Ireland's maritime strategy must be built on a realistic understanding of both emerging threats and our current operational limitations. Prioritising geographical focus areas is essential — but doing so without also decentralising operational capability would leave persistent blind spots.

The establishment of new naval bases in Sligo and Arklow is not just a strategic necessity; it is a cost-effective, infrastructure-smart, and recruitment-sensitive solution that will dramatically enhance Ireland’s maritime security posture for the decades ahead.

Answer 4.

By 2030, establish a 6-ship core fleet:

4 Retained/Refurbished OPVs: Continue EEZ patrol and SAR roles
1 Converted P70: Refit for multi-role missions with UAV/MCM capability
1 New Modular Multi-Role Support Vessel (MRSV): For command, support, humanitarian, and UAV/UUV operations

Features:

All vessels interoperable with UAVs, UUVs, and modular containers
Civilian-use capable (e.g. disaster relief, medevac)
No acquisition of high-cost frigates or corvettes (although worth looking at a Mogami Class Frigate)

Base Infrastructure Expansion as detailed above.

Air & Subsea Surveillance:
Lease/purchase 1-2 maritime drones (2025-2028)
Upgrade existing CASA CN-235s to modernised MPA standard by 2030
Develop UUV-based surveillance systems for cable protection (2028+)
Join EU surveillance data sharing frameworks

Personnel Reform:

Flexible service models (reserve, contract)
Retention incentives: housing, training, career development
Recruit cyber/UAV/UUV specialists
Enhanced Reservist Support: To encourage pride and a sense of prestige in serving the nation, introduce tax credits, travel concessions, free or discounted access to cultural institutions, and salary matching while on duty. These measures aim to enhance recruitment, retention, and recognition of reserve personnel's valuable contribution.

Cyber and Hybrid Defence. Expand Naval Intelligence/Cyber unit.
Integrate with EMSA, CMRE, and hybrid threat initiatives

International Cooperation:
Leverage PESCO for funding and collaboration
Join EU/UK/Nordic maritime surveillance initiatives
Use PfP ties for training and interoperability

Coast Guard Integration
To improve inter-agency coordination, maritime safety, and surveillance efficiency, the Irish Coast Guard should be brought under the broader Defence Forces umbrella.

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

Continued answer 4.

It would operate under a joint command structure led by the Naval Service and Air Corps.

Benefits:

Unified maritime operational planning and resource sharing
Better coordination for search and rescue, disaster response, and patrols
Enhanced use of Air Corps assets for maritime monitoring
Career development pathways and shared training opportunities across services

Answer 5.

This is simply NO! In the short term while there is critical staff shortages, okay to use private firms for maintenance etc. All assets should be owned by the state. Civilian contractors to clean bases, cook meals etc, no problem but any critical infrastructure, if at all possible, should be kept in house.

As a stop gap to keep the defence forces operational it would be acceptable to do so on a temporary basis but not in perpetuity.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

NATO is toxic in this country and should be avoided.

In my view, Ireland's maritime security will be significantly enhanced by strategic engagement in cooperation frameworks like PfP and ITP, i support strengthening our involvement in PESCO, asset sharing, and intelligence exchange. These measures provide force multiplication, technological access, and improved threat response capabilities, all while respecting and preserving our neutral status.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

I've pretty much laid out what I believe the strategy should be above in answer 4.

Any strategy should aim to highlight the public good a functioning navy can provide, bringing the coast into the defence umbrella will help justify increases in budget expenditure as everyone is in favour of the coast guard. Strongly highlight the benefits of the reserves.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Food for Thought: Tackling Recruitment and Retention Challenges

A critical challenge for the Irish Naval Service remains low recruitment and staff retention. Meeting growing operational demands may require innovative approaches beyond traditional voluntary enlistment.

One possible, albeit sensitive, option for future discussion is the introduction of a limited form of conscription focused on long-term unemployed youth. With appropriate legal safeguards, the Defence Forces could potentially identify individuals suitable for service. Those selected would undertake a minimum term of active service in the Navy followed by an additional minimum term in the reserves, combined with comprehensive upskilling programs—providing vocational training or educational opportunities under military guidance.

While this concept represents a significant departure from Ireland's current voluntary service ethos, it could offer a structured avenue for military expansion, assist in addressing skill shortages and skill development. Such an approach would necessitate thorough legal, ethical, and public consultation before any consideration of implementation.

Another mechanism that could be considered—though it would also face legal and policy hurdles—is offering asylum seekers the opportunity to voluntarily join the Defence Forces. This pathway could provide them with steady income, accommodation, and valuable skills while their applications are processed. Given the existing influx of immigrants with professional qualifications such as nursing, engineering, and mechanics, their expertise could be effectively integrated into military roles. This arrangement could allow asylum seekers to serve and specialise, while simultaneously having their degrees recognised or pursuing EU recognised qualification programs. Additionally, their service would be viewed positively in the evaluation of their asylum application and could serve as a positive way to vet asylum seekers, creating mutual benefits for both the individuals and the Defence Forces. It could also take some sting out of the far right who claim everyone who comes here are doing so for benefits etc

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Deliberate sabotage or surveillance of subsea telecommunications cables, electrical interconnectors, gas pipelines and off-shore energy infrastructure.

This would include both physical and cyber threats and with energy networks the cascade effects of even a small disruption can be significant.

Ports such as [particularly] Dublin, Cork, Foynes and Rosslare are critical trade hubs and any intentional (or unintentional) damage/disruption has immediate and downstream implications.

Rising sea levels have a direct implication on of course those ports, as they are often foreshore or indeed reclaimed land located.

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

Hybrid Attacks on Undersea Infrastructure.
Cyber-Attacks on Maritime Logistics and Port Systems.
Security of Offshore Renewable Energy Infrastructure.
Autonomous Maritime Systems - unmanned surface and subsea 'drones' - if we can't see/detect we cannot observe/monitior.
Climate-Driven Disruption

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes.
1. South Coast and Celtic Sea.
2. East Coast - Ports and population.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Domain awareness - if we can't see it, we can't monitor it.

This needs to be both civil and security based and coordinated.
AND include a review of those agencies that perhaps need upgrading or sidelining to non-critical roles - there cannot be too many chiefs!

It should not be forgotten the considerable expertise (technology and people) that exists within the private sector, that can be leveraged especially in the areas of Uncrewed Surface Vessels, Underwater drones for cable and seabed infrastructure surveillance and Aerial drones for port, coastline and offshore wind farm monitoring. Many of these technologies can be dual-purposed, for example the same monitoring systems of subsea construction can feed into contingency planning.

Joint exercises, red-teaming and info-sharing between state and infrastructure operators.

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

Many of Ireland’s most important maritime assets — ports, subsea cables, energy infrastructure, offshore wind farms - are owned, operated, or maintained by private entities. As such, they are both potential targets and first-line responders.

These companies already operate stringent Health & Safety obligations - this is an extension of same.

It is in their interest to be involved, both as regards contingency planning but also commercially - is their insurance company asking to see proof of their contingency robustness? The answer is "yes", so that information should also be shared and 'stress-tested' by the state.

Again, many irish companies and individuals have this expertise which can be leveraged.

An example is Irish Sea Contractors, who have developed an AerSub concept - for repair of undersea communications cabling.

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

Much of Ireland's critical infrastructure (cables, energy interconnectors) is global in nature, relying on cross-border protection and agreements. As such we cannot do anything on our own and it would be grossly negligent to think otherwise.

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 a plan is just a policy statement. With one, it becomes a living strategy - delivering not just protection, but preparedness, deterrence and resilience.

Ireland needs to move from intent to implementation.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Maritime Security (in an Irish context) suffers from the old adage of "out of sight, out of mind". Traditionally, focus of trade, infrastructure, societal development has been 'land based' - we can see it and feel it!

But what happens beyond the horizon or under the waves is forgotten. In fact another analogy would be around "photo-ops" - great coverage of cutting the ribbon on a Motorway, not so much around underground pipes!

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Drug cartels having a gateway to Europe also thr sub sea cables and not having the capability to see what's under out seas is a big issue

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

Recruitment in naval service and other maritime organisations

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Subsea cables and our air space

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Sonar, Anti Submarine Warfare (ASW) planes and helicopter and various ASW weapons

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

3000 character(s) maximum

As little as possible, you would not have the garda run by a private security company.

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

None, we are a defensive force we should be able to that at least

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, ditch triple lock it is only getting in the way of overseas missions to try stop drug cartels

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

Possible join nato or make a deal with UK us or eu for better equipment

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Ireland has proud history as a maritime nation at the frontier of Europe. But with a large coastline and territorial waters, it faces a significant challenge in terms of securing its interests and those of its key partners. Ireland's small but capable naval service has to-date been sufficient for the task, but new threats and new vulnerabilities raise questions over what Ireland's maritime defence posture should be over the coming generation.

Chief among these vulnerabilities is critical subsea infrastructure, whose damage and disruption are a worry for businesses and policymakers alike. Pipelines for carrying gas, cables for carrying electricity, and optical fibres carrying data for internet services are key to modern life, not just for Irish citizens but many others across the European continent. Currently 25% of European Union data resides in Ireland, making it an attractive target for hostile state and non-state actors.

Adversaries may target Irish subsea infrastructure in order to test their capabilities, perhaps believing they can do so at low risk of being detected, let alone challenged. This sort of attack fits into the growing pattern of 'greyzone' or 'hybrid warfare', similar to what has been seen in the cyber domain over many years. Therefore, having the capabilities to detect, interrogate, and mitigate suspicious or malicious activities in the maritime domain, both above and below-surface, is going to be increasingly important in the coming years. These capabilities, built to counter state threats, are inherently dual-use, and can support other maritime security missions such as search-and-rescue, fisheries protection, environmental monitoring, and counter-narcotics.

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

Complex maritime security, which must rely on digital systems necessary for maritime operations, makes the Cyber attack landscape a significant threat to Irelands' security and economy, not least on shipping and maritime surveillance.

When further investment is made in maritime Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance (ISR) and air defence, considerations should include interoperability with RAF and RN. Common or joint procurement with the UK could mitigate some challenges of development, while developing Irelands own niche capabilities in certain elements of a system or software.

Technology trends in long-range uncrewed underwater vehicles (UUVs) are worth tracking. These technologies are already in use by leading naval forces, and similar to UAVs in the Air domain, are coming down in cost as well as increasing in sophistication.

They provide hostile state actors the ability to probe and potentially pre-position assets around critical infrastructure in a technique known as 'holding at risk'. This is a form of pseudo-deterrence that is a well-established part of subsea warfare. UUVs pose significant challenges in terms of detection; and have the advantage of being deniable should they be discovered.

One route to preparing for the threat from such capabilities is to increase development and operational adoption of similar capabilities in defensive roles. For example, Ireland could leverage commercial operators of UUVs from the offshore energy sector to quickly boost its naval knowhow in this area, as well as providing useful seabed situational awareness. Within the Royal Navy, this model is called COCONO – Commercially Owned, Commercially Operated, Naval Oversight.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

The geographic focus should be a function of the risk and what coverage exists already to monitor that area. In terms of risk, the focus should be on areas of high concentration of undersea infrastructure, where there have previously been incidents of suspicious activity. Ireland's North West coast for instance has seen cases of the Yantar, a Russian spy ship, loitering suspiciously over fibre-optic cables.

Understanding what coverage exists in terms of sensors (e.g. coastal radar), or patrol assets (e.g. maritime ISR aircraft), would require an in-depth study. The UK recently conducted such a study via the Joint Maritime Security Centre (JMSC), which was delivered by consultants from [redacted] A similar exercise could be run looking at Ireland's coastal sensors and options for filling any gaps. It is likely that the UK would welcome collaboration on this, given the overlapping areas of interest.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Prioritisation would require an in-depth study of what exists today, and what can be procured in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Some examples for consideration should include:
1. Coastal radar - off the shelf, all-weather, maintainable, and still vital in the face of emerging threats.
2. Space based ISR - ideal for wide-area surveillance, multi-spectral, multi-mission, and can be used beyond Ireland's EEZ as needed.
3. Surface autonomy – to increase efficiency, reduce costs and could include a policing role.
4. Uncrewed underwater vessels. Leveraging the latest in shore and ship launched UUVs, developing operational experience in monitoring infrastructure, responding to alerts, and working as part of wider coalitions.
5. Airborne ISR UAVs. Uncrewed Aerial Vehicles are the future of maritime surveillance. Ireland should be leading by example in their adoption and operational practice. Including Counter-drone technology for coastal and maritime asset security.Those drafting the strategy should engage owners of critical maritime infrastructure, understand the incidents they have faced, how they responded and how they plan to mitigate in future. It is equally important to understand what risks are offset through private sector mechanisms such as insurance.
Beyond this, the state needs to consider its role as a last line of defence and lead for countering the most serious threats.

The strategy authors should examine the journey the UK has been on in this. For example, it has recently been confirmed in the UK's Strategic Defence Review that the Royal Navy assumes national responsibility for protection of critical undersea infrastructure. This has removed an uncertainty that has grown over the past decade in terms of who is doing what and clarified the role of national defence assets.

6. Strong understanding of the threat. The Irish Defence Forces need to be capable of articulating this well for policy makers, as well as for tactical and operational commands. They should also work towards capabilities that allow the exchange of classified intelligence with partners, particularly the US and UK.

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

Those drafting the strategy should engage owners of critical maritime infrastructure, understand the incidents they have faced, how they responded and how they plan to mitigate in future. It is equally important to understand what risks are offset through private sector mechanisms such as insurance.

Beyond this, the state needs to consider its role as a last line of defence and lead for countering the most serious threats.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

As a member of the European community, Ireland knows well the merits of promoting security abroad to ensure prosperity and resilience at home. This is as true in the maritime domain as any other at the moment. Ireland should therefore ensure it has the capabilities to contribute to international operations in the Baltics, Mediterranean, and Red Sea as needed. Co-operation does not require the full spectrum of capabilities - for example, it may prioritise 'sensors' over 'shooters'. However, it does require an increasing focus on interoperability and alignment on standards such as NATO STANAGs in order to be an effective partner.

The strategy also shouldn't shy away from the importance of working with the UK. As Ireland's closest neighbour, there are shared threats, shared vulnerabilities, shared resources, shared values, and a lot of potential for closer collaboration. The UK faces challenges (for example in fiscal position) where Ireland has strengths. And vice-versa, the UK has strengths (for example in the Royal Navy), where Ireland could benefit from a lot of operational experience.

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 timelines permit, an action plan is always appreciated by stakeholders. It allows other parts of government to align, as well as provides a signal to which industry can respond.

Elements of such an action plan should include a clear outline of threats and risks, a whole of government approach to allocation of funds, early partnerships with industry and flexible regulation to enable rapid change, where required.

The challenge with a detailed action plan, is that the security landscape is highly volatile at the moment, and so any plan needs to have enough built-in agility to cope with changes in priorities.

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

Attacks from the sea, whether by Vikings or the Spanish Armada, have shaped Ireland's towns and coastal defences over centuries. Technology is evolving faster than ever though, and threat actors will leverage this to evade and outpace current defences.

Keeping on top of this challenge requires a mix of innovation, experimentation, collaboration, and operational know-how. Ensuring that the personnel tasked with this are informed and empowered to fulfil their mission is critical and will be the true test of Ireland's ability to boost its maritime security in the coming years.

As [redacted] expertise and technology that could support Ireland as they develop their Maritime strategy. We have expertise in maritime operational analysis, our experience working with naval forces around the world, as well as our deep technical knowledge of defence capabilities. We look forward to tracking the progress of Ireland's Maritime Security Strategy and would be delighted to discuss in more detail in the coming months.

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

Contact

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Lack of modern 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

Cyber (IT/OT) crimes.
Energy infrastructure dependencies
Lack of Surveillance and security around our Irish coast lines

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

3000 character(s) maximum

There needs to an umbrella approach with various arms beneath this umbrella. A new structure supporting and enhancing existing and outdated structures

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, coast guard, revenue and future technology. People remain key to an autonomous 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

Yes.
Private sectors can operate and fulfil requirements at short notice and with modern up to date systems.
Then can support existing resources and develop newer techniques.

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

Advisors but not role undertaking. This should be left to the Irish work force as we have a sense of pride, ownership and duty.

We have the skllls , people and determination to make a difference for Ireland, globally

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,.

Outline requirements, current and future.
Assign budgets to novel tech and systems to allow for rapid action and recruitment

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]

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

russia

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 is/will be biggest threat. we have neglected taking care of our own security. we need to increase resources: personnel, equipment, intelligence for sea security and land.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Id say naturally the areas with these cables should be a 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

No expert in this field but I'd hazard a guess; infrastructure and technology. ability to minitor our own waters and deal with threats quickly and efficently.

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

Probably should be included

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

100%, we cant hide behind our neutrality, strength in union, collaboration etc.
Russia does not care about our neutrality and sees us a soft target.

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.
Increase/improve resources 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

not really except to say, this issue carries with it some urgency

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 has continiously as of recent years had the russian navy off our coast, so close it's been just off 12 miles off of Dublin and cork, russian spy ships off dublin and submarines off of Cork and yet the news papers state and neglect to mention that the Royal Navy and Airforce have intercepted them and been the ones to shadow and follow them, while we we do sens our C295s all we do is watch while the Royal Navy and Airforce have warded them away with warships and helicopters or jets. The neglect to mention we are so vulnerable and neglect to mention how the Royal Navy and Airforce have continuously protected us.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Ireland has a large amount of undersea cables going through our economic exclusive zones and territorial waters yet we lack all capabilities to realistically defend them. Ireland needs to have a stronger defensive pack with the United Kingdom for one and second needs to aquire fighter jets to ward off unwanted vessels but needs to also aquire more ships and larger ships that can board other vessels and push them out. Radar and undersea listening posts would be needed.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Focus on protecting obviously people which in turn would mean protecting the cables as if they are cut could cause massive disruptions to communication and other sorts of tech.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Fighter Jets, radar to listen out and find unwanted or unwelcome vessels or planes to then send fighter jets to intercept. New naval vessels with greater capabilities, undersea listening and closer defence ties to other nations mainly Britain as we don't want to get dragged into NATO if we join defensive pacts with other nations.

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

If by involve meaning buying weapons, yes we should have them involved but we don't have any private military companies in Ireland, closest would be the likes of BAE. Having the private sector involved with manufacturing gear would allow us to prioritize a strategy that could work greatest, alike to the Swedish with their Stridsvagn 103 where they had a tank designed to fit their stratagy and their fighting style which was to hold back a sobiet invading force, so we need to focus on having ships and vehicles that work for our strategy, defense.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

I think that Ireland should be weary of anything with NATO as to other nations like Russia they could use that as a excuse to be more aggressive. To counter Russias growing aggression we should form a closer bond with the defensive pact with the UK, more co-operation, more operations and drills together, more working to form a coalition that could operate effectively almost as one. Having a defense alliance with the EU is good but also the problem is we could get dragged into war. To summarize what I think is we need to have a coalition between our country and the British, the next step in our defensive pact, work doing more exercises.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes. In the event of say cables cut we need to be able to know what to do, with our defensive pact which we will state to the UK, in the event if cables are cut and communications or other sorts are damaged we need to be able to be organized and catch who did it or even catch them in the act or before they try. If there is no plan and cables are cut it would be a useless scramble to try do something we are unable to do, no ships with enough people to set said right now, no planes to intercept, we are weak and defenseless.

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

Up the percentage of GDP spend on densense drastically.

Contact

Contact Form

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

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

3000 character(s) maximum

We have inadequate defence forces both by sea and by land and we are unable to adequately patrol and defend our international waters. Recent activity by the Russian Navy mapping under sea cables highlights this problem. I believe that if our defence forces are paid adequately that we would be able to recruit the numbers required to deliver a satisfactory service.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

I think our biggest threats will be from drug traffickers and the Russian state threatening under sea cables .
We need to increase the size of our Navy and of course recruit properly trained personnel to staff it.
With advances in drone technology it should be possible for our navy and Air Force to patrol our seas and coastline. But even if we do have this type of technology, we will still need ships and personnel to intervene against bad actors.
There is a certain attitude in Ireland that if we say we are neutral that everybody will leave us alone. I think that this is a really bad approach and just invites trouble. We should enter partnership with our neighbours in Britain France, and the rest of Europe to help us to Patrol and defend our international waters.
At one time we could depend on the United States to watch out for our interests but with Donald Trump in charge we have to watch out for ourselves.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

It seems to me that what we need to watch out for most are our under sea cables.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

We need to increase the size of our navy, our Air Force and the number of ships, drones and surveillance aircraft that are needed to adequately control our international waters and coastline. If there isn't already satellite imagery available then we should go about obtaining it.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

I think the private sector should be closely involved with securing our vital infrastructure.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

I think we should be cooperating closely with our European neighbours, Britain and NATO.
In the present world it is not possible to be neutral and to be safe, we need to have close cooperation with like minded democracies who respect human rights and international law.
With regard to the triple lock it it is a nonsense to expect anything reasonable from a security council which is dominated by Russia China and the United States. They all abuse human rights when it suits them.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

I think whatever plan is put in place it needs to be acted on immediately, there is no time to be wasted on talk and committees.

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 defence personnel should be paid properly and given the training and equipment to do the job.

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

Contact

Contact Form

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

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Russia is a serious threat.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Russia is a major threat.
A couple of years ago 2022 the Russians held a naval exercise off the coast of Ireland, the navy didn't and still doesn't have the capability to stop them.
The Irish fishing fleet went into the area to stop the Russian naval exercise to the amusement of the entire world and the international embarrassment of my country.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes. Equip the navy properly.

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 with sonar and to be armed.

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.
The defence of our territory is the responsibility of the state.
Incidentally S&R should also be.

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 in Ireland interest along with Europe . NATO that we have an extremely close relationship.
Neutrality doesn't and had never worked. Despite our neutrality during WW2 sorry the ' Emergency ' check out operation Green the German plan to invade Ireland.

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.
Equip the navy with more and better vessels immediately.

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 don't have enough vessels by a long way. the have two maritime patrol aircraft, nowhere near adequate. No ship borne helicopter capability and no sonar capability.

We can't defend our island from any sea borne threat.

Russia.

Our shores are wide open to drug smuggling and people smuggling gangs.

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

Contact

Contact Form

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Ireland's critical submarine cable infrastructure is vulnerable to regulatory and policy failings that undermine the State's attractiveness as, and resilience in, a critical node of global subsea connectivity. International bandwidth is now as indispensable a national lifeline as energy; yet the framework governing submarine cables in the Irish Exclusive Economic Zone ("EEZ") and Territorial Sea is out of step with best practice and with Ireland's treaty obligations, exposing the State to risks.

First, physical resilience is being eroded by under-investment in new, geographically diverse cable routes. Long-haul operators and hyperscale investors will not route additional systems through a jurisdiction where planning, installation and—critically—repair authorisations are slow, opaque or vulnerable to protracted judicial review. Recent Marine Area Planning Act ("MAPA") processes have imposed permit requirements whose extraterritorial reach is inconsistent with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, diminishing Ireland's credibility with neighbouring coastal States. The resulting uncertainty prolongs mean-time-to-repair, increases insurance premia and ultimately incentivises investors to land in the United Kingdom, France or Denmark instead.

Secondly, the current permitting approach fails to distinguish between high-impact marine activities and the limited, largely benign footprint of modern fibre-optic cables. Although critical national infrastructure ("CNI") can lawfully benefit from derogations under the Habitats Directive, the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority has so far declined to use them. By treating cable lay and maintenance operations as if they posed the same ecological threat as aggregate extraction or offshore construction, Ireland self-imposes a conservatism that is neither mandated by EU law nor replicated by competitor jurisdictions: it adds costly delays and disincentivises investment.

These factors contribute to insufficient cable diversity which heightens the impact of any cable strike; cumbersome permit regimes delay restoration; and lower investor confidence constrains the capital required to rectify the position. Addressing the threat therefore demands a recalibrated regulatory framework that (i) gives effect to Ireland's international obligations, (ii) introduces a light-touch, pre-authorised repair regime, and (iii) explicitly employs Habitats Directive derogations for CNI. Absent such reforms, Ireland risks conceding its strategic advantage as the EU's Atlantic gateway and exposing the State to disproportionate economic and security impacts from what should be routine, rapidly remediable cable incidents.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

In an increasingly complex global security environment, the risk of sabotage to critical underwater infrastructure, such as submarine communication cables, is significant. Non-state actors involved in terrorism may seek to disrupt vital data flows, while hostile foreign powers could view Ireland's waters as a potential staging ground for broader regional aggression. To address these challenges, Ireland should develop a comprehensive response mechanism that integrates military and civilian agencies, strengthens real-time surveillance, and fosters cross-border intelligence sharing with regional partners.

Any plans to expand and modernise naval forces should include preparation for large-scale terrorism or aggression targeting undersea CNI. During these crises, the normal roster of civilian repair ships may prove insufficient to address sudden and extensive cable damage. To mitigate operational downtime—and to preserve national security —military vessels should be available, outfitted with specialised repair technology and crewed by trained repair personnel. This contingency capacity would allow near-term restoration of compromised communication links, even in hostile waters or in the midst of armed conflict.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

The empirical evidence from fault data is unequivocal: the overwhelming majority of cable outages arise in depths of less than 200 m and are attributable to fishing gear or ships' anchors. Consequently, the near-shore approaches where cables ascend the continental shelf must be treated as inherently vulnerable. The hazard is not a purely physical function of depth. It is magnified wherever spatial planning measures—such as offshore wind farms or exclusion zones around subsea features —compress disparate cable routes into a narrow corridor. Each such corridor multiplies systemic risk; if two or more systems lie within close proximity of one another the loss of redundancy transforms what should be a manageable incident into a nationally significant outage.

The most effective mitigation is coordinated marine spatial planning undertaken jointly with the offshore renewable, fisheries and hydrocarbon sectors so that new installations do not force legacy cables into chokepoints. To aid this further, where adverse impacts are negligible cables should be considered compatible with marine protected areas (or special areas of conservation) thus deconstraining the route planning. Where planning solutions prove impracticable, the residual exposure can be managed by enhanced physical and operational security: real-time surveillance, rapid-response patrols and, where lawful, remote sensing of seabed activity. While coastal states have no right to intercept foreign flagged vessels suspected of interfering with submarine cables in the EEZ under international law, such measures may nevertheless prove useful as a deterrent.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Please see our answer to question 2 where we suggest investment in navel repair vessels and repair skills.

To improve submarine cable resilience, Ireland should also invest to resolve capacity and stability issues in the national power grid. Grid reinforcement—particularly through additional high-capacity transmission corridors — would unlock stalled data-centre investment. A flourishing data-centre sector will in turn incentivise the private financing of new, diverse and fully redundant trans-Atlantic and intra-European subsea fibre-optic cables making landfall in Ireland, materially enhancing the resilience of Ireland's communications infrastructure.

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

Private sector entities who own or operate critical maritime infrastructure have an intimate knowledge of the assets they manage, along with their specialised expertise in operational logistics, maintenance requirements, and fault-awareness, which can all support elements of the National Maritime Security Strategy. By involving private owners and operators, the strategy can enhance coordination of operations and repairs, ensuring that critical infrastructure remains resilient under strain or threat. Additionally, the private sector can offer valuable training resources and insights, equipping policy makers and military personnel with practical perspectives on the technical, operational, and commercial realities that shape day-to-day maritime activities. Such educational exchanges help bridge gaps between policy planning and field-level implementation, fostering solutions that are both fit for purpose and mindful of real-world constraints.

In other jurisdictions—for example the United Kingdom—collaborative and voluntary industry structures have achieved good results. For example, frameworks such as the Subsea Cables Consultative Industry Group (SCCIG) and the Joint Maritime Security Centre Single Point of Contact (JMSC SPOC) demonstrate that industry-driven fault reporting and shared situational awareness can help reduce downtime, improve strategic oversight, and foster an environment of proactive risk management.

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

Modern maritime threats—whether physical, cyber-enabled or environmental—flow across jurisdictional lines with little regard for flag, alliance or trading bloc. For that reason, the new National Maritime Security Strategy should support a network of international partnerships.

The Strategy should reiterate Ireland's commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. UNCLOS is the legal foundation upon which all other cooperative arrangements rest. Respecting the Convention necessarily means declining to impose submarine licensing or permit requirements on legitimately conducted foreign activities in Ireland's Exclusive Economic Zone, save where expressly authorised by UNCLOS.

Because maritime threats are indifferent to European Union borders, cooperation must be pursued with immediate neighbours— the United Kingdom, France and Iceland—as energetically as with EU partners. The Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO offers a flexible vehicle for classified information-sharing and capability development without compromising Ireland's policy of military neutrality. Similarly, the Joint Expeditionary Force provides a ready-made coalition of like-minded northern European States capable of rapid maritime response and persistent presence operations in the North Atlantic and Arctic approaches. Ireland is uniquely positioned—geographically and politically—to complement, and potentially to join, the JEF, amplifying its deterrent posture while retaining sovereign control over deployment decisions.

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

We support an Action Plan as a means of improving transparency, accountability and continued consultation with industry.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Ireland's long-term maritime security strategy should not rely on domestic sovereign repair capability - the submarine sector is too small to handle all contingencies, and Ireland has historically experienced very low fault rates (around one every two years). Instead, the Strategy could consider how Ireland invests in trusted international partnerships and strengthen collective repair and maintenance arrangements. Such collaboration is necessary in peacetime as well as times of conflict or heightened tension.

The Strategy should also address the need to plan for ship retirements and the inevitable replacement or refurbishment of the regional repair fleet. An immediate priority involves conducting a detailed assessment of existing repair ships, identifying their remaining service life, and setting out plans to replace or retrofit ageing vessels to maintain adequate coverage. The looming retirement of senior crew members on repair ships poses an additional challenge. The Strategy should also develop training initiatives that nurture the necessary skills and expertise among younger seafarers, ensuring a workforce that remains skilled and adaptable.

An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence

Contact

Contact Form

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Although we have support from international partners and allies to support our limited ISR resources not having sufficient resources ourselves leaves us vulnerable. This vulnerability in the maritime domain is above and below the surface. State and non-state actors can and do take advantage of our vulnerabilities. Resources urgently needed to provide a full picture of activities in our EEZ and the capabilities in place to deter and or respond.

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 security environment is fluid with new and emerging threats arising all the time.
Our vulnerabilities above and below the surface results in every area at risk.

No Air Picture available (Reported progress to address)
No Available resource for interdiction
No Surface Picture available (Reported progress to address)
No Subsurface Picture available (Reported progress to address)

Threats come in all forms in our AOR –
Damage to the marine environment
Illegal or overfishing
Interference to surface and subsea infrastructure
Transportation of Narcotics, Weaponry, People smuggling.
To name but a few.

We need cooperation with international partners and allies.
Increase available resources to monitor Ireland's EEZ and take action if and when needed.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Monitor Ireland's EEZ.
We must also take into account that our AOR will increase once a United Ireland is in place and this also must be in the planning.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Increase available resources to monitor Ireland's EEZ.
This includes sufficient numbers of MPA (Maritime Patrol Aircraft).
This should include a proportion of aircraft capable of ASW and ASuW.
These capabilities are non-existent in Irelands present inventory.

The surface fleet as laid out as part of LOA 3 in the Commission on the future of the Defence Forces with a capability to deter should be the minimum.
The fleet should have the capabilities to defend the security of Irelands interests with in and out of our EEZ.
All vessels should be resourced to monitor the Air Space, Surface and Subsurface and contribute to the overall Security picture. The fleet should be capable of operating UAS and some vessels have the capability to operate Rotary Wing assets recovering a capability that was lost some years ago.
These Rotary Wing assets should also be capable of ASW and ASuW.

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

Private sector interests who have assets within Irelands EEZ should be involve to a point and should be supportive of Irelands maritime security requirements.
We must be conscious of the information that can be shared on the grounds of National Security.
Note our Security strategy cannot be dictated to by private sector interests but it is so important we have the resources to protect our maritime infrastructure.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Deeper cooperation with international partners and allies is needed.
I know this state cannot provide the full spectrum of security alone.
Ireland must work and share intelligence with its international partners and allies.
This does not mean we abdicate our responsibilities by limiting our resources and capabilities by having others take over our maritime security responsibilities in our AOR..
Sharing intelligence with our EU and international partners and allies.
Aligning resources, Developing Strategy, Involvement in R+D projects, partaking in training exercises with international partners to ensure we are capable of interoperable when it comes to defence and security in the maritime environment.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

I am sorry but we cannot keep stalling our National Security strategy in all domains Air, Space, Land, Cyber and Maritime.
It is URGENT we take the necessary steps to the secure the state and its people.
Our limited resources and capabilities in all domains Air, Space, Land, Cyber and Maritime must be addressed.
Yes an Action Plan but not part of delaying tactics. Actions must take place in tandem. The roll out of actions as part of the transformation of the Defence Force under LOA2 from the Commission on the future of the Defence Forces has been far to slow in the present Security Environment. We cannot wait for more reports, working groups etc, the time for action for our Maritime Security is now.
The minimum level should be the implementation of LOA 3 when it comes to Maritime Security including Air resources.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

This Independent State is just over 100 hundred free but Ireland and its people have existed for millennium.
In this time we have benefited from the maritime environment that surrounds this wonderful island.
We have never faced the level of security challenges we face today. It is urgent that we take our security seriously and resource all aspects of the states security apparatus sufficiently to deter and if needed respond.
Any resource we invest in can be described as an insurance. We only know how important it is when something happens.

Contact

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Current biggest threats are the impunity that others can enter our waters either taking our fish stocks, poising a threat to our waters subsea cables and interconnectors and lastly protecting Ireland from drug shipments. Both our naval and aircorp are completely under resourced without proper sonar or radar to detect and intercept threats. As someone who lives on the southwest coast there has been a significant declined in sightings of our naval fleet off our coast compared to 10 years ago when they were regular visitors in Bantry and Schull. This fact just backs up the press outlining serious resourcing issues in the naval service.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Subsea Cable Security is in the short term the biggest economic threat that needs urgent attention. As a nation it is fundamental that we place a significant deterrent in place to ensure we can address any threats. On the south east coast we may have an upcoming immigration risk as Britian shores up its coastline from this threat from France.

Our challenge as a country is to step up root and branch with our naval and aircorp. Given our sea area size versus our landmass our defence resources are wrongly aligned. We need a much smaller army and a far greater navy and aircorp armed with modern technology and weapons.

Realistically we all know the Irish Army is not a battle ready unit so why keep investing in something that can never really make a difference in a real conflict. We can however make a difference in protecting our sea and airspace. The army can be adjusted to support the navy / aircorp with marine type troops and airborne units to provide skilled deployable manpower to compliment the navy / aircorp operations.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Subsea Cables and Energy Interconnectors are highly important followed by wind energy assets and fishing grounds.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Our naval service must be present and extremely active throughout our waters with better equipped ships and motivated personnel . This naval service needs top cover support from our Air Corp to provide a layered capability and understanding as to what actors are present in our waters. It’s a combination of vessels , aircraft, radar and sonar plus motivated personnel that is needed. What is the correct ratio of vessels / aircraft needed to patrol a sea area 10 times larger than our land mass and where do we currently stand ?

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. This is national security so we shouldn't be passing the buck to private for profit companies. Perhaps an annual fee for this security can be levied on offshore wind : interconnectors or subsea cables.

Perhaps our fishing fleet could be given concessions if they were to also Co operate with the navy and report suspicious activity at sea. This could be an area that investment can be made and national interest fostered as at present the fishing fleets also see the navy as an enforcement threat to them.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

As a country we have under invested for so long that we certainly need third party support in the interim. We should invite our EU allies to avail of our ports and deep water ports so their naval patrol vessels can be part of the Western Europe Sea Defence. We are stronger and more effective together. We should even consider European Military Aircraft having access to Knock / Shannon / Kerry and Cork airports as we currently have no capability to address any aerial threats.

All of the above will generate business for the Irish economy.

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

We need urgency in this matter and as a tax paying member of the public I welcome this initiative by the Department of Defence. What we don't need is more committees and working groups to waste more time. Simply honestly ask ourselves the question : have we the right capability to patrol and secure our territorial waters. We all know the answer and what is needed is urgency. This can start by simply ensuring that our existing fleet is crewed and operational ax this had been a huge issue which probably is going to be one of the most important things to sort in the short term.

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. As per my point in the previous question what we need is the naval and air corps to be attractive placed for personnel to join. What we need to consider is a contract that encourages persons to join on the basis that it's not a career for life but a career contract for say 5 years that rewards personnel with a Defense Forces qualification akin to a university diploma that highlights the skills they have acquired which can be adopted to civilian workplace. We don't need personnel with long careers in the Defense Forces but we do need a regular throughput hence the 5 year contract works. Lastly to make this option even more attractive is to introduce a taxation incentive to those who serve such as for every year of full service you accumulate a €10k tax free allowance up to a max of €50k (5 years) which you bring with you on departure from the Defense Forces to position you to settle into civilian life workplace with higher take home pay until firmly established.

We don't need our Defense forces oversea on UN duties as the world had changed. Some specialist units are needed and we need to re-focus our Defense Forces to where the real threats are and where we can make a difference. Having 8,000 or 9,000 troops sitting in barracks is the wrong resources in the wrong place for the current threats we face. By European Standards our army is not a battle ready entity so for national security we would be better served as a nation if we were to divert some of these resources into the Garda to bolster their feet on the ground in a way that impact the day to day security of civilians from everyday crime. What is the point in having an under invested army sitting in barracks when there are real issues to be tackled on the streets.

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

Currently the threat by illicit marine salvage and treasure hunting is the primary threat to Ireland's UCH. Our underwater heritage has significant value within our marine environment, both from a cultural and natural heritage perspective - many historic wreck sites are also now rich biodiverse sites that are adding to the ecosystem. Many too contain the remains of those who were lost when ships sunk, and are thus gravesites. Disturbance in the absence of a best practice approach is tantamount to desecration. There is also the risk of pollution if sites are targeted and many WWI and WWII wrecks were carrying polluting material, whether oil or cargo.

Security therefore can relate to the protection of our submerged heritage, ensuring the regulatory authorities work together to secure the protection of these finite sites and areas.

Unauthorised survey, salvage and looting can lead to loss of heritage, including potentially human remains, loss of habitat and potentially pollution.

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

From a UCH perspective policing and surveillance is and will continue to be the primary challenge. Ensuring we have a collaborative approach to policing, availing of opportunities to link into advances in surveillance techniques and communication and engagement, will be the best way to continue to and build on existing networks that are in place.

[redacted] forms part of a network of government agencies who collaborate on information sharing and surveillance monitoring of marine activities, marine salvage cases, unauthorised diving on historic wrecks, etc. The network comprises NMS, Department of Transport (IRCG), Commissioners of Irish Lights, Revenue Commissioners (Receivers of Wreck), Department of Defence, including Naval Service, and Maritime Authority Regulatory Authority (MARA).

It would be essential to continue and build upon this network, to ensure security across several areas - protection of UCH but also monitoring of potentially polluting wrecks, safety in navigation, etc.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Ireland's maritime domain contains some 18,500 recorded shipwrecks (NMS Wreck Inventory of Ireland Database) with many of those being protected historic wrecks. These sites are spread across that domain, in both inshore and offshore regions. The natural heritage also forms a significant part of this maritime domain, with wrecks also often representing important biodiversity sites and ecosystems. Marine Protected Areas and the new Pairc Náisiúnta na hÉireann in south west Kerry being areas of critical significance. Securing the protection of these domains, from both a cultural and natural heritage perspective, would be of particular importance due to their cumulative value.

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] would consider technologies that build on and advance surveillance techniques to ensure more expansive and effective policing and enforcement, with collaboration among key government agencies, is the primary way to more effectively monitor and protect UCH.

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, certainly. Private sector and community can play a key role in securing the wellbeing of our maritime domains. Both from an environmental and cultural perspective, this is a share heritage, and marine coastal developments should include definitive measures to address security, including monitoring, management and active engagement when issues arise. From reporting on individual suspected cases of security breaches (e.g. looting, smuggling, etc.) to more high-tech potential infringements (cyber crime), having in place a communications strategy is key to ensuring knowledge sharing.

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

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Ireland is in the closing stages of the process of ratification of the 2001 UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, which it is hoped will be finalised during the course of the Autumn of 2025. This will enable Ireland to cooperate beyond our territorial waters on issues of underwater cultural heritage protection. Engagement and collaboration with other States Parties, not just across Europe but globally, will ensure a far wider reach on maritime security relating to cultural heritage management and protection. Currently, the National Monuments Service works closely in cases of marine salvage or looting with the Receivers of Wreck in the UK, with colleagues in the EU and through various networks, including representation on international bodies such as ICOMOS-ICUCH (International Committee on Underwater Cultural Heritage) and the Advisory Council on Underwater Archaeology (ACUA), to liaise on cases of potential damage to underwater archaeological sites. Such a collaboration can be better improved through the development of a national Maritime Security Strategy, supporting and building on these networks to form an international web of communications and information sharing.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes. Actions will ensure that targets are set and these need to be met, if possible. Actions encourage adequate resources are put in place to achieve targets and also encourage cooperation across multiple stakeholders to build on existing and advance future technologies for better, more effective maritime security.

It would be the [redacted] recommendations that the Maritime Security Strategy contain a dedicated Action that proposes the continued cooperation between key stakeholders, particularly between the Department of Defence and Department of Heritage on matters related to the protection of Ireland's underwater cultural heritage within the maritime domain.

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

Having reviewed several other Maritime Security Strategies, e.g. New Zealand's strategy 2024, EUMSS, Europe's Maritime Safety Strategy (EMSA 2024) and Global Maritime Safety Strategy 2025-2028, Denmark, most, apart from NZ, do not mention heritage, culture or archaeology, tangible or intangible heritage.

Ireland's Maritime Security Strategy should recognise the cultural significance of the waters around Ireland. This is a finite resource, particularly Ireland's underwater cultural heritage (UCH) in the form of historic shipwrecks. Ireland's UCH contains archaeological, historical and intangible links to our past as a maritime nation, and which today continues to have significant cultural, social and economic value by way of the blue economy.

We acknowledge the important role of the Naval Service in policing and protecting UCH and liaising with the [redacted] over the years, including in cases of maritime salvage and looting of wrecks and we would look forward to building on that and such relationships to be enbedded within the proposed Maritime Security Strategy.

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

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1. Our naval service doesn't have enough ships or crews. I think the coastline should be divided up into 8 sectors. Each sector should have two capable patrol ships. One ship should be at sea in each sector at all times.
2. The ships we have cannot defend themselves adequately. They should at least have airborne radar and sonar. They are completely defenceless from underwater threats such as mines or tornadoes. They are also completely defenceless against incoming low altitude missiles. Their sterns are completely vulnerable. Gpmg's and human aimed 20mm cannon are a joke. They should be fully capable of defending themselves in order to defend our coastline and undersea infrastructure.
3. Air surveillance. Two C295's are totally inadequate. There should be a squadron of at least 6 due to maintenance requirements. These should also be equipped with torpedoes because the naval service can't be everywhere, and the naval service cannot counter any undersea threat, stationary or moving.

The current threats are:
1. Drug trafficking. The volume of drugs flooding the state are a threat to the fabric of the state.
2. The vulnerability of our undersea cables to damage from bad actors dragging anchors across them.
3. Bad actors interfering or tapping into our cables to monitor communication.

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 emergence of both aerial and underwater autonomous unmanned vehicles will allow bad actors with money to attack infrastructure above and below the water for various reasons such as:
1. To cripple an ever more digital economy. This would cause a European stock market crash, digital transactions won't work, there would be riots by people trying to feed themselves. This would be the end of the EU.

2. Purely for monetary gain. Stock market interference.

3. To embarrass the government. Internal bad actors.

I would ensure that we have our own automated underwater drones traversing the routes of the underwater cables at irregular intervals. These should be armed both defensively and offensively.

Ireland needs to ensure that cash is always available to it's citizens. The digital euro should be rejected.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

No. Every corner of our coastline needs to be covered. Drugs are destroying the fabric of the state.

Fully automated drones could be deployed around the cables.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

1. We need to double the fleet.
2. The fleet should be fully capable of defending itself from above and below water. Each ship should have at least one drone cabable of operating in all weather conditions out to 100km's from the ship.
3. We need a full squadron of C295 fully armed aircraft.
4. A fully integrated intelligence map should be able to be generated from the data collected by all assets in real time. All assets should have instant access to this.
5. Advanced encryption technology is a must.

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 they want to contribute that's ok. Ireland is a sovereign state.
However, private operators should be obligated to share information on data attacks, breaches and possible points of entry into their infrastructure.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Data sharing and overlapping patrol areas are a must for all maritime nations. A bad actors won't follow any demarcation line.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

I think there's been enough plans over the last thirty plus years. L.O.A. level 3 needs to be implemented to have a fully integrated command and control infrastructure. Bad actors will not wait for a six month debate in the Dail punctuated by holidays.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

There should be a better relationship between the fishing fleet and the naval service. Fisheries protection seems to have completely ruined the relationship between fellow sailors.

If the relationship can be repaired maybe seafaring families might send their children to the naval service.

Fishing vessels should have a direct line to an intelligence section to share relevant information and/or concerns about activities in their area of operations.

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

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One of the most significant current threats to Ireland's maritime security is the vulnerability of GPS and other GNSS-based systems that underpin navigation, timing, and communication at sea.

Why This Matters:
Maritime navigation, AIS (Automatic Identification System), collision avoidance, and port operations all depend on precise GNSS signals.

Most vessels, ports, and coastal infrastructure do not have adequate backups if GNSS signals are lost or spoofed.

Ireland's strategic position on the Atlantic shipping corridor makes it especially exposed to Positioning, Navigation and Timing disruptions accidental or hostile.

Specific Threat Vectors:
Jamming & Spoofing: Deliberate GPS/GNSS interference near ports, offshore wind farms, or shipping lanes can lead to grounding or navigational errors.

Consequences:
Increased risk of maritime accidents or collisions.

Disruption to critical supply chains and port operations.

Loss of confidence in maritime situational awareness, especially for Search and Rescue (SAR), defense, and customs 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?

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1. Dependence on Vulnerable GNSS Infrastructure
As maritime operations become increasingly digital and autonomous, they rely more heavily on GPS/GNSS for navigation, timing, and coordination.

The absence of resilient backups for GPS/GNSS systems creates a systemic vulnerability across ports, fisheries, offshore wind platforms, and SAR systems.

2. Proliferation of GPS/GNSS Disruption Technologies
GPS/GNSS jamming and spoofing devices are cheap and increasingly accessible, even to non-state actors.

Future hybrid threats (e.g. grey zone interference near Irish ports) could silently disrupt maritime operations without firing a shot.

3. Cyber-Physical Convergence
Future vessels and ports will integrate GPS/GNSS with IoT, autonomous navigation, and AI-based control systems.

A false or manipulated time or position signal could lead to real-world hazards: grounding, port shutdowns, or failed rescue missions.

4. Geopolitical and Climate-Driven Disruptions
As global shipping routes shift (e.g. Arctic, North Atlantic), strategic pressure on Ireland's maritime zone increases.

A failure of GPS/GNSS-based time or position data in a high-traffic or high-stakes context (e.g. military escort, offshore evacuation) could have cascading effects.

How Ireland Should Prepare
Invest in resilient Positioning, Navigation and Timing infrastructure: atomic clocks, and terrestrial timing (e.g. eLoran, R-Mode).

Establish real-time GPS/GNSS threat monitoring at key maritime chokepoints (e.g. Dublin Port, Cork Harbour).

Mandate GPS/GNSS redundancy in critical port systems and offshore navigation for public and private operators.

Coordinate a national maritime Positioning, Navigation and Timing policy integrating defense, transport, energy, and telecom stakeholders.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Strategically Critical for Maritime Resilience
1. Major Ports and Harbours
Dublin Port, Cork Harbour, Shannon-Foynes, and Rosslare Europort:
These are high-traffic zones where GPS/GNSS outages could cause serious safety and economic disruptions.
Why it matters: Navigation, cargo scheduling, and port access are all time-dependent.

2. Offshore Renewable Energy Zones
Ireland's offshore wind farms (e.g. Celtic Sea projects) depend on precise PNT for positioning and maintenance.
Why it matters: Position errors could damage assets or endanger crew during maintenance.

3. Search and Rescue (SAR) Zones
The West and Northwest Atlantic coast is a key area for SAR operations that require exact timing and geolocation.
Why it matters: Any time/position error could delay response and cost lives.

4. Maritime Border and EEZ Monitoring Areas
Irish Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) surveillance—especially for fishing and illegal activity—relies on GNSS.
Why it matters: Mispositioning vessels could lead to enforcement failures or legal ambiguity

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 Investments to Safeguard Ireland's Maritime Interests
To effectively protect Ireland's maritime domain these strategic investments should be prioritised:

1. Positioning/Navigation Resilience Infrastructure
Deploy terrestrial backups (e.g. atomic clocks, eLoran, R-Mode) at key ports and coastal facilities.

2. GPS/GNSS Monitoring & Alerting
Establish coastal GPS/GNSS interference detection stations, especially near ports and offshore energy zones. We might be able to use already deployed facilities (coordination with Tailte Eireann/ OSi).

Integrate real-time alerts for spoofing/jamming into maritime traffic control systems and SAR operations.

3. Cybersecurity Capabilities
Enhance cybersecurity for GPS/GNSS-linked systems (AIS, port management, ECDIS, navigation software).

Create a national GNSS/Positioning, Navigation and Timing incident response protocol for ports and maritime agencies.

4. Training and Simulation
Train naval, coast guard, and port operators in GNSS-denied navigation procedures.

Fund Positioning, Navigation and Timing failure simulation exercises for high-priority zones (e.g. Dublin Port, offshore wind corridors).

5. International Coordination
Work with EU Positioning, Navigation and Timing bodies (e.g. EUSPA) and IMSO to align standards and share GNSS threat intelligence.

Promote Positioning, Navigation and Timing standards compliance in shipping and offshore operators active in Irish 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

Why Involve the Private Sector?
Private operators manage much of Ireland's critical maritime infrastructure—including port facilities, offshore energy installations, and shipping logistics platforms.

These systems rely heavily on GPS/GNSS for navigation, cargo handling, and operations.

Disruptions to Positioining, Navigation and Timing services will affect not only national security but also commercial continuity, supply chains, and trade.

What Role Can They Play?
1. Invest in Resilience
Co-fund deployment of GPS/GNSS backup systems (e.g., eLoran, atomic clocks).
Upgrade internal systems to ensure robustness and continuity during outages.

2. Participate in Monitoring & Information Sharing
Feed real-time GPS/GNSS anomaly reports into national maritime threat monitoring networks.
Collaborate on incident response planning for GNSS spoofing or timing loss.

3. Adopt and Promote Standards
Apply Positioning, Navigation and Timing resilience guidelines in procurement and operations.
Require Positioning, Navigation and Timing compliance in vendor and subcontractor systems.

4. Engage in Training & Drills
Participate in GPS/GNSS-denied navigation exercises and port-side contingency simulations.

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

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Ireland’s maritime domain does not exist in isolation. Securing our Positioning, Navigation, and Timing (PNT) infrastructure—especially against GPS/GNSS vulnerabilities—requires international coordination to be effective.

Key Partnerships to Prioritise:
1. European Union (EU)
Collaborate with EUSPA (EU Agency for the Space Programme) on GPS/GNSS resilience, monitoring, and shared warning systems.
Align with EU strategies on Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP) and Digital Compass 2030 goals for time /space infrastructure.

2. Neighbouring Countries (e.g. UK, France, Spain)
Coordinate GPS/GNSS interference monitoring in shared sea lanes and border zones.
Share threat intelligence, incident data, and contingency protocols for GNSS outages.

3. NATO (via Individually Tailored Partnership Programme)
Leverage NATO expertise and training in PNT-denied navigation, electronic warfare, and cyber resilience.
Participate in NATO-coordinated GPS/GNSS outage exercises and resilience drills.

4. Global Maritime Organisations
Engage with IMO, IMSO, and IALA on standards for resilient timing/navigation in shipping and port operations.
Support the development of maritime PNT best practices for dual-use (civil + defense) 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

Why an Action Plan Is Necessary
Ensures accountability: defines who does what, by when, and with what resources.
Translates strategic goals into measurable outcomes.
Helps align government, private sector, and international partners under a shared timeline.
Enables funding, prioritisation, and review at regular intervals.

Key Elements of the Action Plan
1. Objectives and Milestones
Clear short-, medium-, and long-term goals for PNT and maritime security enhancements.
Example: “Deploy GPS/GNSS monitoring systems at all Tier 1 ports by 2027.”
Example: “Mandatory GPS/GNSS interference reporting by 2027 for all essential entities as defined by EU's NIS2 directive.”

2. Lead Agencies and Partners
Specify responsibilities for departments like DETE, DoT, Defence Forces, OGCIO, Port Authorities, and NSAI.
Include private sector stakeholders and EU/NATO partners where applicable.

3. Technology and Infrastructure Roadmap
Prioritise rollout of GPS/GNSS interference detection systems, atomic clock backups, terrestrial backups, etc.
Detail integration into ports, SAR systems, offshore platforms, and monitoring centres.

4. Legislative and Policy Measures
Identify necessary legal or regulatory changes to mandate Positioning, Navigation and Timing compliance in critical maritime infrastructure.

5. Funding and Resourcing
Outline budget needs, co-funding opportunities (e.g. EU resilience funds), and timelines for major investments.

6. Training and Exercises
Include timelines for GPS/GNSS-denied simulation drills, staff training, and cross-border coordination events.

7. Monitoring and Review Framework
Define performance indicators and establish an annual review process to track progress and adjust course.

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

Time is a strategic asset: Resilient PNT (Positioning, Navigation, and Timing) is foundational not only to public services and commerce, but also to Ireland's maritime sovereignty.

The growing digitisation of the maritime domain—from ports to offshore energy to search and rescue—means disruptions to GPS/GNSS-based time affect national security, economic continuity, and public safety.

Ireland should treat time resilience as a shared national responsibility, requiring coordination between public authorities, the private sector, and international partners.

Recommendation: Embed PNT (Positioning, Navigation, and Timing) resilience into Ireland's broader maritime strategy, alongside cybersecurity, environmental protection, and defense readiness.

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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?

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Ireland's maritime security is chiefly threatened by the vulnerability of critical undersea infrastructure—transatlantic cables and gas pipelines that carry over 95% of global communications and most of Ireland's energy imports. These assets face risks from under-resourced naval protection and limited surveillance.

Foreign espionage, particularly from Russian naval vessels conducting surveillance and deploying drones, poses a serious threat to Ireland's maritime domain awareness and infrastructure security. The Naval Service currently lacks sufficient patrol vessels, advanced sonar, and radar systems, with key capability upgrades only expected by 2027.

Hybrid threats, including cyber attacks targeting subsea cables and offshore installations, add complexity to the security landscape. Climate change also increases risks through storms and coastal erosion, threatening maritime infrastructure.

Finally, fragmented maritime legislation and the absence of a comprehensive national maritime security strategy limit effective enforcement and coordination.

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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Emerging threats include targeted sabotage of undersea cables and pipelines amid rising geopolitical tensions, hybrid warfare combining cyber and physical attacks, and climate change-driven environmental disruptions.

Ireland must accelerate development of a comprehensive maritime security strategy focused on protecting critical infrastructure. Investments in advanced surveillance technologies—such as unmanned underwater vehicles and integrated command systems—are essential to improve maritime domain awareness.

Expanding naval capacity with multi-role vessels and establishing a west coast naval base will enhance patrol and response capabilities. Strengthening maritime cybersecurity and integrating climate resilience into planning are also crucial.

Finally, consolidating maritime laws and deepening international cooperation with EU, NATO, and regional partners will ensure coordinated, effective defence against evolving threats.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes, the Strategy should prioritise specific geographical areas due to Ireland's vast maritime domain—seven times its landmass—with critical national infrastructure concentrated in certain regions. Particular focus should be given to:

West Coast (especially Galway to Donegal): This area currently lacks adequate naval coverage and hosts key transatlantic subsea cables and energy infrastructure. Establishing a naval base here would address significant security and response gaps.

Entry Points for Undersea Cables and Pipelines: These are high-value, high-risk locations essential for Ireland's data, trade, and energy security.

Offshore Renewable Energy Zones: As offshore wind projects expand, these areas will require increased surveillance and protection.

Busy Shipping Lanes and Ports: Given that 90% of trade and 78% of energy needs rely on maritime transport, safeguarding major ports and shipping routes is vital.

Prioritising these areas will allow Ireland to maximise limited resources, protect critical infrastructure, and respond effectively to emerging threats in its extensive maritime domain.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

To effectively safeguard Ireland's maritime interests, priority investments should focus on:

Naval Fleet Expansion and Modernization

Expand the Naval Service fleet to an optimum of nine to twelve modern multi-role vessels, enhancing patrol, surveillance, and rapid response capabilities across Ireland's vast maritime domain.

Increase operational readiness through double crewing and integration of advanced technologies.

Advanced Maritime Surveillance Technologies

Invest in cutting-edge surveillance tools including autonomous drones with long-range and vertical take-off /landing capabilities for persistent coastal monitoring and drug interdiction.

Deploy unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs), enhanced sonar, radar, and AI-driven command and control systems to improve maritime domain awareness and detect threats to undersea infrastructure.

Protection of Critical Undersea Infrastructure

Prioritize technologies and cooperation frameworks aimed at safeguarding transatlantic fibre optic cables, gas

pipelines, and offshore energy installations, which are vital for communications, energy, and economy.

Strengthen cybersecurity measures specifically tailored to maritime infrastructure to counter hybrid and cyber threats.

Infrastructure Development

Establish new naval bases, particularly on the west coast (e.g., Galway), to close coverage gaps and improve rapid response capabilities.

Support the development of offshore renewable energy zones through strategic planning, such as the National Offshore Renewable Energy Designated Maritime Area Plan (DMAP), ensuring sustainable and secure maritime energy infrastructure.

Research and Innovation Funding

Continue and expand funding for defence technology research, fostering collaboration between Defence Forces, academia, and industry to develop innovative maritime security solutions aligned with national defence policy.

These targeted investments in naval capabilities, surveillance technology, infrastructure, and research will provide a robust, adaptive, and collaborative framework to protect Ireland's extensive maritime domain and critical national interests.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes, the National Maritime Security Strategy should actively involve the private sector, especially as they own and operate much of Ireland's critical maritime infrastructure. Public-private collaboration is essential for several reasons:

Expertise and Rapid Response: Private companies bring specialized knowledge, advanced technology, and the ability to respond quickly to incidents—key advantages in protecting complex assets like undersea cables, ports, and offshore energy installations.

Risk Assessment and Planning: The private sector can help identify vulnerabilities, develop security protocols, and conduct regular risk assessments and drills, ensuring resilience against both physical and cyber threats.

Operational Support: Private security firms can provide trained personnel for surveillance, incident response, and the implementation of security measures, especially in high-risk or remote areas.

Information Sharing: Effective security depends on real-time information sharing between industry and government, enabling coordinated responses to emerging threats.

Innovation and Investment: Private sector involvement encourages investment in cutting-edge surveillance, cybersecurity, and infrastructure protection technologies.

In summary, the private sector should be a core partner in strategy development and implementation, contributing expertise, resources, and innovation to safeguard Ireland's maritime interests.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

International cooperation must play a central role in Ireland's National Maritime Security Strategy given the transnational nature of maritime threats and Ireland's strategic location within a vast Exclusive Economic Zone. Enhanced collaboration with the EU, neighbouring countries, NATO, and other international maritime organisations is essential to effectively safeguard Ireland's maritime interests.

EU Cooperation: Aligning with the updated EU Maritime Security Strategy enables Ireland to participate in coordinated naval exercises, joint coastguard operations, and information-sharing frameworks like the Common Information Sharing Environment (CISE). This strengthens maritime domain awareness and collective response capabilities within European sea basins.

Neighbouring Countries: Close bilateral and regional cooperation improves early warning, joint patrols, and coordinated incident response, particularly important for protecting critical undersea infrastructure and managing shared maritime risks.

NATO Partnership via ITPP: Ireland's Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO provides access to sensitive intelligence, cyber defence resources, and operational expertise without compromising neutrality. This partnership enhances Ireland's ability to counter hybrid threats, safeguard subsea cables and pipelines, and improve maritime situational awareness.

International Maritime Organisations: Engagement with UN frameworks, including the Law of the Sea Convention, and participation in global maritime security dialogues support rule-based order, legal cooperation, and multilateral responses to threats such as piracy, trafficking, and environmental challenges.

In summary, Ireland's maritime security strategy should embed robust international cooperation as a cornerstone, leveraging partnerships to enhance surveillance, share intelligence, coordinate responses, and build resilience against evolving maritime threats.

This response integrates key points from official Irish government sources, EU strategy updates, and Ireland's NATO partnership framework.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Yes, the National Maritime Security Strategy should be accompanied by a detailed Action Plan to translate strategic goals into concrete, coordinated actions. An Action Plan ensures clear implementation pathways, accountability, resource allocation, and measurable progress.

Key elements of the Action Plan should include:

Maritime Domain Awareness: Establishing integrated surveillance, intelligence sharing, and real-time monitoring systems to detect threats early and maintain situational awareness.

Capability Development: Prioritizing investments in naval assets, surveillance technologies, cyber defence, and infrastructure protection to close capability gaps.

Risk Management and Critical Infrastructure Protection: Defining protocols to safeguard undersea cables, pipelines, ports, and offshore energy installations from physical and cyber threats.

Interagency and Public-Private Coordination: Clarifying roles and responsibilities across government agencies and involving private sector operators of critical maritime infrastructure for joint preparedness and response.

International Cooperation: Embedding mechanisms for collaboration with EU partners, neighbouring states, NATO, and international maritime organizations to enhance collective security.

Training, Exercises, and Preparedness: Organizing regular civil-military maritime exercises, capacity-building programs, and crisis response drills to ensure readiness.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting: Setting measurable milestones, indicators, and review processes to assess implementation effectiveness and adapt to evolving threats.

Such an Action Plan, modelled on successful frameworks like the EU Maritime Security Strategy and the US National Plan to Achieve Maritime Domain Awareness, will provide a practical roadmap to operationalize Ireland's maritime security objectives efficiently and cohesively.

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

3000 character(s) maximum

Ireland's maritime security is at a critical juncture. Given the vastness of our maritime domain—seven times the size of our landmass—and the increasing commercial and strategic activity offshore, a fresh, well-resourced, and forward-looking strategy is urgently needed.

Key additional proposals include:

Accelerate Development and Resourcing: The slow pace of finalizing the National Maritime Security Strategy risks leaving critical gaps unaddressed. Swift completion, backed by adequate funding and personnel, is essential to build credible maritime defence capabilities.

Enhance Autonomous Surveillance and Monitoring: Investment in modern sensors, unmanned underwater vehicles, and AI-enabled maritime domain awareness tools will improve real-time detection of threats to subsea cables and offshore infrastructure.

Clarify Roles and Legal Frameworks: There is a pressing need to harmonize maritime legislation to empower the Naval Service and other agencies with clear enforcement powers and to define roles across defence, law enforcement, and industry.

Develop Indigenous Capabilities: Ireland must reduce reliance on external actors for maritime security, particularly for underwater surveillance, to safeguard sovereignty and respond rapidly to threats.

Strengthen International Cooperation: While maintaining neutrality, Ireland should deepen partnerships with EU, NATO (via tailored partnerships), and neighbouring countries for intelligence sharing, joint exercises, and

coordinated responses to hybrid threats.

Integrate Climate Resilience: Maritime security planning must incorporate climate change impacts, preparing for increased storm activity and protecting vulnerable offshore infrastructure.

Public Engagement and Transparency: Continued public consultation and open dialogue will ensure the strategy reflects broad expertise and builds consensus on priorities.

In sum, Ireland's maritime security strategy must be robust, adaptive, and collaborative, leveraging technology, legal reform, and international partnerships to protect our critical maritime interests in an increasingly contested and complex environment.

Contact

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Questions

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

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

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Ireland's economic wellbeing relies on the continuity of direct foreign investment that comes primarily from US multinationals. From Med-Tech to Pharma, High Tech to Finance, this industry is heavily dependent on the communications and energy infrastructure that is within Ireland's Maritime Domain (MD, and whose security Ireland is responsible to maintain. If we as a nation cannot demonstrate that we have the ability to secure these vital resources, then it may make it difficult to impossible to secure the additional foreign investment that the economy will need as the population continues to grow.

Ireland's current inability to adequately protect its MD has been called out by the Chair of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee and most recently by Japan's Prime Minster. This threat to our economy is real and we need to respond. The risk of not acting is for other nations to assume responsibility for the area's security, posing a real threat to our nation's sovereignty.
The immediate threat to this maritime infrastructure comes from the state sponsored Hybrid War that is already underway in Europe. While some may say that the presence of vessels from the Russian Shadow Fleet in Irish waters is more part of a phony war, it is clear that the purpose is to both map the seabed infrastructure and to continuously test and probe the ability of the Irish Naval Services (INS) to detect and monitor their presence. And, given the current staffing and equipment levels of the INS, it is patently clear that the Service cannot provide adequate surveillance, monitoring and threat detection to secure the communications and energy infrastructure.

This vulnerability arises from the lack of investment in modern surveillance technology to augment the current activities of the INS. The cost and timeframe of scaling the INS to meet the current threat level is significant; the cost of replacing the LE Eithne alone is now estimated to be over €300M and to take three to four years to be delivered. As a comparison, and while not a replacement for physical manpower and vessels, a satellite based monitoring service for Ireland's MD can be delivered as an annual subscription service at a fraction of the cost of running such a vessel. In short, modern technology must be invested in to augment the current surveillance techniques, to allow the INS to rapidly deploy its physical resources to where they are needed.
The INS also plays a significant role in offshore narcotics interdiction. And while there have been some high profile narcotics seizures in recent times, one can safely assume that the volume of narcotics evading detection is very significant. Drug use and the criminal gangs who profit from illegal drugs are a blight on society. As a nation we need to invest significantly to stem the flow of narcotics into this country, to support the INS, Coast Guard and other services who are tasked with intercepting these shipments before they reach Ireland.

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 is confronting significant emerging threats, notably hybrid, subsea, and cyber in nature. Hybrid threats involve non-traditional methods that aim to disrupt sovereign operations and influence public opinion, often through attacks on infrastructure. A key emerging threat is the increased use of autonomous subsea, surface, and airborne drones by bad actors - technologies with rapid innovation cycles that can significantly outpace innovations in naval countermeasures. Submarines pose an increasing risk due to Ireland's shortage of appropriate sensing technology, enabling largely undetected submarine operations within its Maritime Domain (MD). Future cyber threats can significantly impact maritime security and freedom to operate, as demonstrated by GPS jamming in the Baltics, where GNSS reliant services have to be curtailed or adapted. Critical Underwater Infrastructure (CUI), including fibre optic cables, offshore windfarm infrastructure, and electricity /gas interconnectors, are particularly vulnerable due to lack of comprehensive monitoring. Recent reported mapping of CUI by state-sponsored actors suggests the likelihood of future precision targeted infrastructure attacks that could significantly destabilize national energy supply.

The primary future challenge is maintaining comprehensive situational awareness across Ireland's MD. This is becoming increasingly difficult using current approaches due to the use of smaller, smarter, and more autonomous maritime vehicles by certain actors, making them hard to track/detect with traditional physical patrol methods alone. The sheer size of Ireland’s MD presents a significant monitoring challenge that is compounded by existing difficulties faced by the Irish Naval Service in crewing and dispatching naval vessels. Without substantial improvements in monitoring capabilities, there is a tangible risk that third parties may deem it necessary to intervene to protect critical infrastructure within the Irish MD, directly impacting Ireland's sovereign control of its maritime areas.

Building a comprehensive maritime situational awareness capability that leverages state-of-the-art technological solutions is absolutely paramount to prepare for these complex and evolving future threats. This necessitates a significant increase in monitoring capabilities that cover the entire maritime domain enabling early risk identification and serving as a powerful deterrent to potential threat activity. A monitoring solution needs to span comprehensively from space to seabed, complementing the existing committed investment in future infrastructure (sonar, coastal radar), and incorporating a range of sensing modalities that support persistent, wide-area, low-latency, and cost-effective monitoring. The solution must be a highly interconnected and autonomous system, with integrated sensor fusion, and with a level of autonomy that can ensure constant monitoring and enable rapid actioning in response to detected threats.

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

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Ireland's Maritime Security Strategy should have as its focus the whole of Ireland's Maritime Domain (MD) and should not simply focus on specific geographical areas. Were it to focus on specific areas, its ability to react and take effective action would be greatly diminished and undermine the ability of the strategy to achieve its goals.

Ireland's capability to monitor its maritime environment needs to be greatly enhanced to allow it to monitor its MD. Having this capability in place will maximise Ireland’s ability to respond to both protect those maritime areas which are of critical importance and secure our coastline and waters against criminal activity. Understanding that Ireland will never have physical naval resources sufficient to target all areas of the MD, the need for a reliable and complete picture of all activities within that area is a critical necessity to maximise the effective utilisation of those resources available to the Irish authorities. Deploying a monitoring solution which uses all available technologies from fixed sensors, vessels, drones, aircraft and satellite will allow the Irish authorities to deploy resources based on an intelligence-led understanding of potential risks while retaining the flexibility to respond quickly as the nature of these risks and their sources change over time.

While accepting that the scale of Ireland’s maritime area of responsibility requires that the available physical resources be focussed on specific areas of the MD at any one time, these focus areas need not, and should not, be fixed as the threats which the country will face over time will not remain fixed. What is required is an intelligence-led solution which has the flexibility to adapt to these changing circumstances and direct the available resources in a way which maximises their effectiveness.

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

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Technology investments should not be made into standalone capabilities in a piece-meal fashion. Investment should be made into AI-powered maritime domain awareness platforms which fuse data from radar, sonar, AIS, Optical, SAR and RF satellites, along with automated threat detection and anomaly analysis, including vessel detection, identification and tracking systems exploiting machine learning to flag suspicious patterns of behaviour.

Increased use of submarine technologies, including unmanned submarines, increases the need to be able to perform sub-surface monitoring in our seas. This can be accomplished through various forms of acoustic monitoring whether located on undersea cables, or other sensor arrays or via patrol ships.

There has been a notable absence of any mention of space capabilities from recent Irish strategy statements in the security area. The space layer forms a critical part of any comprehensive security strategy, especially for the maritime domain. Earth Observation (EO) satellites uniquely offer an ability to monitor very wide areas and can bring to bear a variety of sensing modalities such as multi-spectral, hyper-spectral, Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR), RF sensing and thermal sensing. SAR satellites are particularly powerful for monitoring in any conditions of cloud cover and also at night.

EO satellite capabilities used to be accessible only to larger nations and were expensive, slow and highly technical in nature, requiring skilled analysts to make any sense of the imagery data. New capabilities are allowing much broader access to EO data and insights, now within minutes of the acquisition of the image by the satellite and at greatly reduced cost levels. EO satellites can now be readily deployed to provide monitoring services over extensive areas of interest and can be supplemented with on-demand tasking of satellite assets for tracking priority targets.

Many countries within Europe have recently been investing in sovereign EO satellite constellation capabilities. The costs of these systems have come down so much in recent years that it's now highly cost effective for nations to own and operate and/or share access to EO satellite resources to provide constant monitoring services which are tailored to the specific problems each country faces, whether on land or at sea. Access to such EO imagery data is also exploited in broader clusters of organisations beyond government, such as academia and industry for applications in climate monitoring and commercial use cases.

For less than the cost of a single naval patrol ship, Ireland could have its own sovereign constellation of EO satellites, constantly monitoring wide areas of the Irish maritime domain and, in real-time, providing crucial insights to Irish authorities to help to most efficiently target scarce resources of personnel and patrol vessels.

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

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Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) have significantly benefited Irish infrastructure development and should be extended to protect critical maritime infrastructure vital for the economy's energy and communications.
Private sector involvement in a national maritime defense platform should encompass:
Utilizing Existing Infrastructure: Integrating current infrastructure into the defense platform's sensor network.
Social Media Monitoring: Employing social media for threat assessment.

AIS Data Integration: Incorporating Automatic Identification System (AIS) data into the sensor network.
SF Signals Intelligence & Mobile Communications Networks: Using mobile networks as part of the sensor network.

- Offshore Wind Installations: Leveraging these for sensor placement.

- ROV Deployment: Utilizing Remotely Operated Vehicles for infrastructure monitoring.

- Autonomous Vessels and Drones: Deploying these for enforcement.

- AI Agents: Implementing AI to automate enforcement in Ireland’s Maritime Domain.

Industry and academic stakeholders, particularly FDI multinationals in social media, could contribute by providing free API access to their platforms for maritime threat assessment data. The effectiveness of seabed sensors, especially those with fiber optic cables, in threat detection through Distributed Acoustic Sensing (DAS) is proven. TCD's "Sea-Scan" project [redacted] is active in this area.

Mobile communications network operators could collaborate on radio spectrum monitoring and mobile network traffic analysis for threat assessment. NUI Maynooth has expertise in mobile networks, AIS, and passive radar. Offshore wind operators like SSE Airtricity could offer access to their installations for sensor deployment.

Companies such as CathX Ocean and the University of Limerick (UL) could address submarine threats to seabed infrastructure. NUI Maynooth (Tim McCarthy) and XOcean could contribute drones and autonomous surface vessels, while [redacted] could offer satellite solutions, data-fusion, and AI-powered coastguard agents.

Significant potential exists for collaboration among the Department of Defence, university researchers, and private industry on maritime defense projects, pooling resources and expertise. It would be highly strategic for governmental and industry stakeholders to establish a testbed. This testbed would integrate a hydrophone array, fiber optic cables, AIS receivers, RF SigInt, passive and active radar systems, drones, aircraft, and satellites to create a sovereign data platform for testing and validating these advanced technologies.
Such a testbed could be co-funded by industry (operators and users) and the government, with government contributions potentially sourced from a small additional levy, an increase in the corporation tax rate, the DTIF, and EU funding from frameworks like Horizon and EDF.

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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Considering Ireland's size, resources and location, international cooperation should be a central pillar of Ireland's new National Maritime Security Strategy, given the complexity and scale of threats facing the Maritime Domain (MD), including sabotage, espionage, illegal fishing, smuggling, and attacks on critical undersea infrastructure. Ireland's maritime domain is not only vast but also deeply interconnected with European and global interests, especially in terms of energy, communications, and trade.

Key reasons for prioritizing international cooperation:

Shared Threats: Many risks—e.g. attacks on undersea cables, organized crime, and environmental hazards are transnational and cannot be effectively addressed by Ireland alone. Sharing intelligence via the partner CISE and MARSUR Network nodes provides the foundational infrastructure to enable intelligence-led operations.

Critical Infrastructure: The majority of transatlantic data passes through cables in Ireland's MD, making it a point of strategic interest for the EU and its partners.
Resource Optimization: Ireland's naval and surveillance capabilities are limited relative to the size of its MD, making collaboration essential for effective monitoring and rapid response.

Geopolitical Context: The Defence Policy Review (2024) explicitly calls for the new strategy to be prepared "in cooperation with national and international stakeholders," reflecting the need to support the security and defence of Europe as a whole.

Scope of international cooperation should include:

EU Partners: Deepening ties with EU member states, regulatory and control agencies is crucial, given shared regulatory frameworks, joint interests in digital and energy infrastructure, and existing mechanisms for maritime surveillance and crisis response Example agencies (EMSA in Maritime Surveillance, M-AOCN in Narcotics interdiction and EFCA in Fisheries Protection, Frontex in Border Security and ERCC for Emergency Response.
Neighbouring Countries: Bilateral and regional cooperation with the UK and other neighbouring states is vital for intelligence sharing, possibly enabling joint or interleaved agency patrols around shared critical gas or other infrastructure, and coordinated incident response, especially in shared or adjacent waters.

NATO and Other Organisations: While Ireland is militarily neutral, its Individually Tailored Partnership Programme (ITPP) with NATO and engagement with other international maritime bodies can provide access to advanced technologies, intelligence, and best practices in maritime security. Excellent collaborative work is ongoing with European Defence Agency (EDA) on Research and Development, accelerating and standardising procurement and ensuring interoperability (EU SAFE Scheme). The strategy should also leverage the existing Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) frameworks to address common challenges such as cybersecurity threats and adoption of autonomous systems.

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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