

NISA Fisheries Engagement Project Update

■ Overview of NISA

The North Irish Sea Array, also known as NISA, is an offshore wind energy project being proposed off the coast of counties Dublin, Meath and Louth. The NISA project is currently in the early stages of development, with surveys, consultations and assessments to be carried out over the next year, to inform the design of the proposed project. We are endeavouring to take a considered approach to harnessing the wind energy in this area, in order to deliver real climate action, in a locally appropriate way.

In 2019, engagement was commenced with the fishing industry and our Fisheries Liaison Officer (FLO) was appointed. The purpose of this brochure is to provide the fishing community with information on the project, the current position and proposed next steps. As part of our commitment to engaging with the fishing community, we have outlined some of the feedback that we have received and details on how the NISA project design has evolved to incorporate and address issues raised.

■ Our Engagement Objectives

- Establish solid lines of communication
- Provide information on what is being proposed
- Receive feedback from fishers identifying concerns and opportunities
- Develop a design approach that will allow for continued fishing of the waters
- Provide information on planned surveys to avoid or minimise inconvenience
- Develop dialogue to establish best ways and means of:
 - Protecting fishing incomes
 - Working with the fishing industry during the operational lifetime of the windfarm to develop the sustainability of the fishing industry, making lives easier and better

■ Timelines

2019	2020	2021	2022 - 2023	2024 - 2025	2026 - 2028
Initial engagement with fisheries	Engagement and feedback	Preliminary design established	Planning	Construction	Operation
	Design	Surveys commence			

■ Initial Engagement

The NISA project team have been engaging proactively with individuals and representatives of the fishing industry since late 2019, prior to any foreshore application license being submitted for consideration.

During this time, we have initiated contact and engaged with as many fisheries stakeholders as possible. These included:

Organisations	Groups and Individuals in the following areas	
Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM)	Howth	Skerries
North East RIFF	Balbriggan	Lough Shinny
South East RIFF	Drogheda	Clogherhead

If we have not previously been in contact with you, we would like to hear your thoughts on our proposal.

■ Feedback and Response

Since our initial engagement, we have collected valuable feedback from both individuals and organisations.

Standing over the commitments that we made to the fishing industry at the outset, we have taken feedback onboard which has fundamentally influenced the current design layout of the NISA proposal. It is our intention to continue to work to design a proposal that will allow for the effective mutual sharing of this marine space.

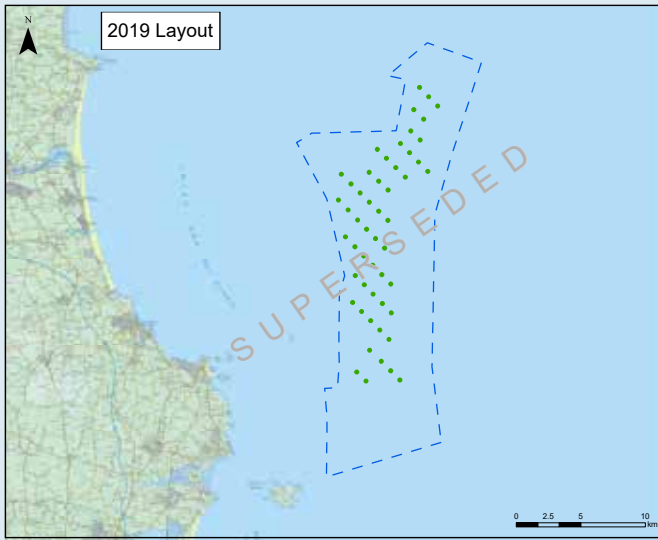
Incorporating fisheries considerations into the wind farm design will add project costs, however, we believe that in the long term, this approach will allow for the best results for both the fishing industry and for NISA through establishing an offshore wind farm that works in its local context.

Our long-term aim is not only to allow the wind farm area to be fishable, but also for NISA to support a sustainable fishing industry in the area.

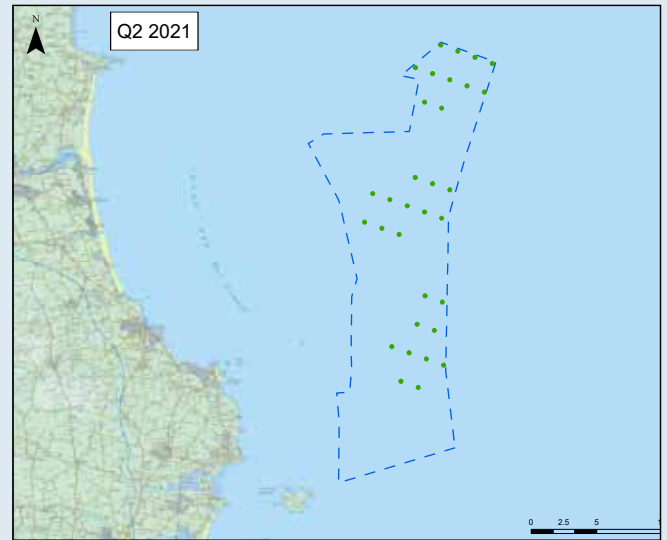
Your Feedback	Our Response
Exclusion Zones	
The possibility of exclusion zones being created within and/or around offshore wind farms was highlighted as a concern. It was stated that it was imperative that fishing grounds are not permanently lost. The demand for space within the Irish Sea has increased and there was a worry that fisheries would be permanently displaced.	In order to address these concerns, NISA is being designed to eliminate any project need for exclusion zones during the operational lifetime of the wind farm. This is largely through adopting the “pod” concept but also by designing the individual pod layouts with the fisheries in mind. Feedback sought from governing bodies and organisations has indicated that it is <u>not</u> envisaged that there will be a regulatory requirement for exclusion zones.
Impacts on Navigability	
It was noted that the proposed turbines may present a hazard for navigation. A fear was expressed that the turbines would present obstacles that would prevent the safe navigation of the area, regardless of any official exclusion zones or lack thereof.	To ensure safe and efficient navigation within and around the NISA wind farm, we have made several changes to the design and layout. We have reduced the number of turbines and increased the separation distances between individual turbines. The current layout provides for 1.1km corridors through the wind farm. This will provide better permeability. Grouping the turbines into “pods” provides open areas between each pod for easier navigation.
Trawling Directions	
Feedback from the fishing community highlighted that the proposed turbines may impact on established trawl directions and if this were to be the case it would likely leave the area unfishable to those involved in the trawling industry.	To ensure that trawling can continue within the proposed wind farm the turbines have been oriented to provide navigable corridors to allow for continued trawling. These corridors have been aligned with the general direction of towing.
Impacts on Incomes	
Feedback was received to say that this proposal could have a fundamentally detrimental effect on certain sectors of the fishing industry.	Not alone is NISA being developed with the fisheries to the forefront of consideration in terms of design, NISA is also seeking to identify areas where there may be impacts on fishing and to take action on these. Following (and potentially during) construction, community benefit funds will become available. The fishing community will be in a position to avail of this funding. Building on established positive relationships, NISA can deliver real and tangible benefits for all of those involved in the local commercial fishing community

NISA Design

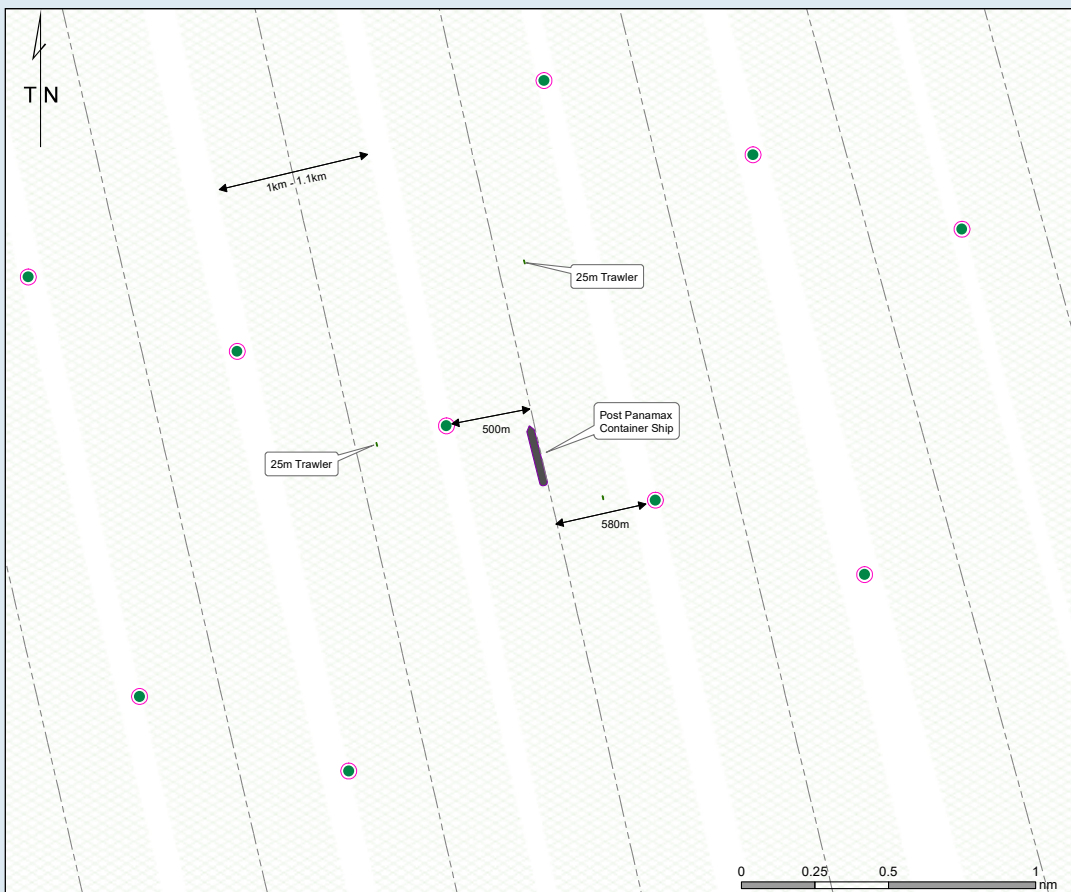
Initial Design



Current Design – Pod Concept



Navigation within the Pods



Benefits to the fishing industry of the Pod approach:

- Navigable corridors to facilitate continued trawling
- Corridors aligned with the general direction of towing
- Fewer turbines
- Ease of navigation through the wind farm
- Ease of navigation around the pods
- Significant turbine spacing

■ Next Steps

We believe that the design features now incorporated into the NISA proposal demonstrate our commitment to working with the fishing industry. Our vision is that NISA will not only allow for the continued existence of the fishing industry in this area, but that it will support the development and evolution of a sustainable fishing industry here.

Next steps include:

2021 – Site Investigation Surveys

2024 – 2025 Construction

2026 – 2028 Operation

■ Proposed Site investigation surveys

Applications have been made to the foreshore unit of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, for the NISA project. These applications have been sought in order to allow information to be gathered on the sea bed in both the main NISA site investigation area and also in an area closer to shore which is being assessed for its suitability for accommodating the cables coming onshore.

It is our intention to carryout these survey works as soon as all of the necessary consents are in place and suitable vessels secured etc. As with our approach to the design of the wind farm, we will be actively working to minimise any potential disruption from these surveys and we will take onboard any feedback that you might have in this regard. As part of this proactive engagement we will advise as soon as any survey dates are confirmed in order to provide advance notice of vessels being active in the area.

If you have any queries or comments regarding the proposed surveys, please do not hesitate to contact our project Fisheries Liaison Officer (FLO) for further information and to provide feedback.

Contact Us

For all fishing related inquiries, please contact our FLO at:

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■ Construction & Operation–Ensuring coexistence

During the construction of the wind farm, it will be important to provide safeguards for those who traditionally fish these areas.

- Construction will take approximately 2 years to complete. During this period, it is likely that safety zones will need to be in place
- It is foreseen that, during this period, there may be impacts on fishing activities in the area
- Building on our fisheries orientated design proposals, NISA is committed to endeavouring to ensure that fishers traditionally fishing in this area can continue with their businesses
- We will work to ensure that no fisher is at an avoidable loss because of the construction of the wind farm
- Proposals for a mechanism that will allow for the coexistence of the wind farm and fishing industry during the construction period will need to be developed

Following construction, the operational phase of the wind farm will commence. It is expected that the operational life of the wind farm will be in the region of 30 years and may extend longer. It is in this long-term context that we believe the early consultation with the fishing industry can really pay dividends. This is not alone in the design changes that have been made to ensure the fishability of the area but also in the ongoing efforts to establish how NISA can assist in delivering a sustainable fishing future for the local fishing community.

■ Talk to our Fisheries Liaison Officer

From the initial stages, we have recognised that the fishing community as central stakeholders in this process. Mark O'Reilly, who is the fisheries liaison officer (FLO) for NISA, has been in place from the earliest stages of development and more recently, has been joined by Trudy McIntyre. Both Trudy and Mark have extensive experience of the fishing industry and are ideally placed to identify both potential issues and areas of opportunity from both sides as our project develops. We would encourage anyone who has a query, concern or who has feedback in relation to NISA to contact either Trudy or Mark to discuss the project. This engagement is critical to establishing a long-term positive outcome for both the wind farm and the fishing community.



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