Invitation to tender for research into the colocation of marine activities in Ireland's territorial waters.

The Irish Environmental Network (IEN) is the umbrella network for national Environmental Non-Government Organisations (ENGOs) in the Republic of Ireland. It is made up of over 38 national ENGOs that work both individually and jointly to protect and enhance the environment, and to place environmental issues centre stage in Ireland and internationally. The IEN represents and supports national ENGOs, through capacity building and funding support and advocacy work.

The work of IEN members covers a broad range of areas including habitat conservation, wildlife protection, environmental education, sustainability, waste and energy issues, as well as environmental campaigning, awareness raising and advocacy.

The MARÉIRE project, funded by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC), aims to be a unifying voice for Irish ENGOs in the offshore renewable energy sector. By engaging early in the process, the project will ensure the marine environment is considered in all phases of development. With a focus on advocacy and finding a balance between mitigating the climate crisis and protecting biodiversity, MARÉIRE will provide expert, scientific and evidence-based information while recognising its diverse audience.

Deadline for Applications: 13th November, 5pm

Overview

Ireland has a growing demand for multiple uses of its marine space: offshore renewable energy (ORE), fisheries, marine protected areas (MPAs), aquaculture, shipping, tourism/recreation, etc. However, with these developing and growing industries come concerns about **spatial squeeze**, i.e. competing claims to marine space and limited capacity for expansion; cumulative environmental impacts (e.g. biodiversity loss, habitat degradation, pollution); social impacts (fishing communities, local livelihoods); and economic costs/benefits to take into consideration. Debate continues around whether colocation (multiple activities in the same place) is more beneficial or feasible (e.g. ORE+fisheries, ORE+MPAs) in some cases, or whether **adjacent siting** may mitigate conflicts better in others (such as through spillover effects or buffer zones).

As a result, there is a need for research to identify which maritime activities are well suited to colocation, which are not, under what circumstances, and what trade-offs and synergies may occur as a result (economic, environmental, social).

Based on the Marine Institute's "Ireland's Ocean Economy" report from December 2024, Ireland's maritime industries can be broken down as follows:

- Shipping & Maritime Transport
- Tourism in Marine and Coastal Areas
- International Cruise
- Marine Retail Services
- Sea Fisheries
- Marine Aquaculture
- Seafood Processing

- Seaweed, Marine Biotechnology and Bioproducts
- Marine Manufacturing, Construction and Engineering
- Advanced Marine Technology Products and Services
- Marine Renewable Energy
- Oil and Gas Exploration and Production
- Marine Commerce

It is expected that the present project would focus on these industries (or a subset thereof), as well as, importantly, Marine Protected Areas or other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs).

Objectives

For the above described activities, we seek to:

- Assess whether, where and how colocation is **feasible**, and under what conditions (technological, regulatory, ecological, socio-economic).
- Estimate the **costs, barriers and benefits** (environmental, social, economic) of colocation versus non-colocation or adjacency.
- Model different spatial scenarios for Ireland's marine zones to simulate outcomes under different colocations or adjacency arrangements.
- Identify trade-offs, synergies, and potential conflict zones while considering cumulative impacts.
- Provide recommendations about which combinations of activities are best suited to colocation, which should be kept separate or adjacent.
- Address uncertainties, data gaps, and propose monitoring/mitigation strategies.

These objectives are open to discussion and modification. If modified, the tenderer should outline their objectives and justifications in their application.

Delivery

The final deliverable will be a detailed report covering: detailed methodology, scenario modelling and outcomes, comparative cost benefit analyses, maps, recommendations. In addition, we expect a lay-summary to be produced containing the key findings which can be easily communicated to stakeholders, policy-makers and the general public.

The findings will also be expected to be presented at a stakeholder workshop or webinar.

The consultant will be expected to:

- Present the findings to IEN member groups
- Engage with the IEN/MARÉIRE team and member groups at key milestones to review progress and preliminary findings.
- Produce a clear, well-structured detailed report (in Harvard citation style or similar)
- Provide a short summary document (2–3 pages) of key insights for policymakers and NGOs.

The successful consultant or consultant team will report to the MARÉIRE Project coordinator and other IEN staff.

Criteria for Appointment

Applications can be made by individuals or organisations to be carried out by one or more persons. PhD researchers wishing to integrate the present work into their thesis are welcome to apply, they should demonstrate the added value to the overall thesis as well as clearly laying out the need for additional funds to carry out this work.

Applicants must demonstrate:

- A minimum of 2 years' experience conducting research projects of similar complexity and scope.
- Strong research, analytical, and critical thinking skills.
- Proven ability to write clear, structured, and accessible research reports.
- In-depth knowledge of marine spatial planning, marine environmental science and Irish/EU marine legislation.

Desirable Attributes

- Experience working with environmental NGOs or within the non-profit or public sectors.
- Knowledge of with GIS/spatial modelling, scenario modelling, cost benefit analysis
- Experience with stakeholder engagement processes.

Criteria

Submissions will be evaluated in accordance with following criteria:

Criteria	Commentary	Weighting
Value for Money	Your submission should include a detailed breakdown of costs; this must include the proposed number of days work, and the daily fee rates.	30%
Previous experience & understanding of brief	Evidence of skills/experience including brief portfolio of relevant work is required (At least 3 examples); information/CVs on who will be delivering the project	30%
Delivery methodology	Tenderers must describe the methodology they will use to carry out the project with specific reference to both the tasks and the processes and approach to be followed.	40%
Timeframe	Ability to complete work within the agreed timeframe	Pass/Fail

Failure to include all of the above may lead to disqualification.

Timeframe and Reporting

The programme will run for 12 months from January 2026, with the following milestones anticipated:

- Tender selection and signature of contract – November 2025
- Project Initiation and agreed priority actions – January 2026
- Interim report – early October 2026
- Final report – early December 2026 (+/- 3 months)

The successful tenderer will be required to report regularly to the MARÉIRE Project coordinator.

Budget

A maximum sum of €25,000 + VAT is available for this contract, which must include all other expenses including any travel, personal expenses, events or other engagements.

Tenderers should price accordingly to gain a competitive advantage.

Tenders received over this amount will not be considered.

Proposal Submissions

All submissions must be submitted via email to Dr Jenny Bortoluzzi at jenny@ien.ie by **5pm, 13th November 2025.**

We are not bound to accept either the lowest or any of the quotes received.

The MARÉIRE project is hosted by the Irish Environmental Network and funded by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC).