An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

Marine Engineering Division

Report on Aquaculture Licence Application

Application Reference No: T06-202

Report Prepared By:	**Raphael Crowley**
Date:	12 April 2024
Applicant(s)	Silver King Seafoods Ltd., Mowi Ireland, Kindrum, Fanad, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal
Location	Deenish Island, Kenmare Bay, Co. Kerry
Applicant Type	Aquaculture/Foreshore Licence Application
Site Area (Ha)	33.48
Species	Atlantic Salmon
Cultivation Method	Net Pens
Intertidal/Non-Intertidal	Sub-tidal
Source of seed	Approved Irish Hatchery
Annual Production Estimates	2,177 Tonnes Maximum Biomass (2 Year Cycle)
Shellfish Waters Designation	Yes ☐ No ☒
Reference:	N/A
Environmental Designation	Yes ☒ No ☐
Reference:	Kenmare River SAC (Site Code: 2158) Deenish Island and Scariff Island SPA (Site Code: 004175)
Development Plans	Yes ☒ No ☐
Reference:	Kerry County Development Plan 2022-2028: Section 9.7.6.2.4 - Objectives KCDP 9-75, KCDP 9-76 Section 9.7.9 - Objective KCDP 9-85 Cork County Development Plan2022-2028: Section 8.20 - Objectives EC:8-18
Pre-Consultation Meeting	Yes ☒ No ☐ Date: Various

Site Suitability Assessment

Site Location
This 33.48Ha site is located to the east of Deenish Island between Ballinskelligs Bay and Kenmare Bay, Co. Kerry. The site is located in depths ranging from approximately 8m to 42m below Lowest Astronomical Tide (LAT) in a relatively exposed location with good tidal exchange. Deenish Island provides a degree of shelter to the existing site which has been operational for many years. Application documents reviewed by MED include the Application Form, Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) documents and drawings associated with the application.

Site Management
This is an application for the renewal and review of an existing aquaculture site in Kenmare Bay. It is proposed to increase the area of the existing site from 14.5Ha to 33.48Ha to cater for additional pens, moorings and site operations as well as a change to a Maximum Allowable Biomass production limit. Smolts will be transferred from land-based facilities in County Donegal to Travara Pier, Co. Cork by road, and taken from here to site by well-boat. Salmon will be grown from smolt to adult as part of a 24 month cycle that includes a 3 month fallowing period for the site at the end of the production cycle. The fish will be farmed in pens with the predicted maximum biomass on site expected to be 2,177 tonnes on a biennial basis. Fish will be harvested to a well-boat and transported to Travara Pier, loaded into road tankers for transport to a processing facility in County Donegal. The site has been inspected annually as part of the MED Finfish Inspection Programme.

Proposed Site Layout and Structures
The applicant has submitted details of site location, layout and site structures. The application drawings indicate an increase from the existing 10No. to 15No. x 40.1m diameter net pens placed in a grid of 5x3 pens on the site.
Details provided of the moorings indicate that a combination of axial and lateral moorings will anchor an underwater grid that is supported at the surface by grid buoys. The floatation collars of the pens are secured via bridles to the grid ropes of the underwater grid. Above the surface, the floatation ring provides a walkway, handrail and bird net supports. Under the surface, the pen nets hang from the floatation collar with a sinker tube providing shape and support to the net wall below which the net changes from cylindrical to conical shape.
Depth at the centre or cones of the pens varies across the site from approximately 20m to 32m below LAT. To cater for this, two types of pen net are proposed. On the shallower western side of the site, 2No. pens with a total pen depth of 12m are proposed, while in the deeper parts a total pen depth of 20m is proposed. The pen located at Sectional Reference C-E has a clearance depth of 2.1m below the 20m net. This is less than the 3.0m clearance recommended by MED under finfish pens. MED recommends a review of this pen to ensure adequate depth clearance under the pen.
A 24m x 10m feed barge will be located to the west of the pens. Food is pumped via air in compressed floating pipes to the individual pens.
It will be a condition of any licence issued that the site comply with the Protocol for Structural Design of Marine Finfish Farms. As per the Protocol, the operator shall submit a detailed design statement by a Competent Person for approval.

Land Based Facilities / Site Access
The Main Report (Volume 2) of the EIAR indicates the access points for the site. Travara Pier, Co. Cork will be used for storage of equipment, delivery of smolts and feed and landing harvested fish and detail of the local road network to the pier was provided. Access from the County Kerry side of Kenmare Bay is proposed by boat with smaller vessels and staff accessing from Bunavalla Pier located in Derrynane Harbour and also from Westcove Harbour to the northeast. Ballycrovane Harbour/Pier, County Cork is also used while Castletownbere and

Killybegs FHCs are used on occasion for larger well-boat type vessels. Details of marine access routes were provided. The Non-technical Summary (Volume 1) of the EIAR does not reference Travara Pier and indicates that Ballycrovane Pier, Derrynane Pier and Castletownbere FHC will be used as access points for the site. MED recommends that AFMD clarifies which access pier will be used.

Navigation

Derrynane Harbour and Bunavalla Pier are located approximately 5km to the northeast of the site. There is inshore fishing and marine leisure vessel activity in the vicinity of the site but the site does not lie on any direct navigation routes. Details of navigation marking for the site were submitted with the application. Any navigational marking scheme for the site should be approved by CIL.

Visual Impact

This aquaculture site has been in existence for many years and has become embedded in the seascape off the Kerry coast. The proposed review includes an increase from 10 to 15 No. finfish pens. This represents an increase in area of visible surface structures from 5.9Ha to 7.3Ha.

The site is visible from the Kerry side of Kenmare Bay and is located approximately 4km from the mainland shoreline. The N70 national secondary route which is part of the Wild Atlantic Way overlooks the location of this site with a carpark and viewing point of Kenmare Bay located at Com an Chiste (Coomakista). Distances from this section of the N70 road to the site range from 4.8km to 5.6km.

The EIAR contains a Visual Impact Assessment which considers the Kerry County Development Plan (CDP) 2015-2021. This CDP has been superseded by the Kerry CDP 2022-2028. The current CDP defines the adjacent landscape as a Visually Sensitive Area with Views and Prospects from the N70 overlooking the location of the site. These definitions are similar in nature to those defined in the previous CDP and assessed in the EIAR.

The farm layout adheres to the best practices outlined in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of Marine Aquaculture, 2001. The licence conditions of any licence, if issued, will specify the orientation of the structures on the sites to minimise the visual impact. All grid floats should be battleship grey in colour with all other surface structures and predator nets being of a neutral or dark colour. All structures that are not in use will be removed from the foreshore.

Considering the distance of the site from the shoreline and nature of the development and structures, including an increase to 15 No. Pens, the visual impact of the development will be low.

Impact / Cumulative Impact

The proposed site is located in Natura sites and this has been assessed as part of the application process with a Natura Impact Statement provided. There is other aquaculture activity including finfish, shellfish and seaweed sites within Kenmare Bay, however there is no cumulative impact due to aquaculture activity at the location of this application. There is tourism, fishing and marine leisure in the area. There are beaches located approximately 6km to the east at Derrynane.

Aspects of this application may impact on both counties Cork and Kerry. As such both Cork County Council and Kerry County Council should be consulted regarding any impacts on local authority infrastructure such as traffic on access routes and use of local authority piers in both counties.

Marine Engineering Division has no objection to the licencing of this site subject to the above.