Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs
Marine & Fisheries Division

LICENCE ISSUED UNDER THE MARINE AND COASTAL ACCESS ACT 2009, PART 4, MARINE LICENSING

MARINE SEA DISPOSAL LICENCE

Licence for the disposal at sea of material derived from the maintenance dredge of Belfast Harbour

Licence Number: ML2026049

PART 1 – PARTICULARS

1. Licensee(s) Name & Address:

[redacted]
Harbour Office
Belfast Harbour Commissioners
Corporation Square
Belfast
BT1 3AL

2. Name and Address of Producer of Dredged Material

Belfast Harbour

3. Names, and operators, of the vessels to be employed to undertake or support the deposit operation:

Company/Contractor: TBC
Vessel: TBC

This information must be supplied to the Department prior to works commencing, as per Condition 3.

4. Description of works and method of disposal:

The dredging works will likely be carried out by a trailer suction hopper dredger, assisted by a plough vessel and that the dredged material will be transported to the DAERA approved offshore disposal site (see Part 1. Section 6.), where it will be deposited via either bottom doors or split hopper.

This information must be confirmed and supplied to the Department prior to works commencing, as per Condition 6.

5. Nature and quantity of all material to be deposited below Mean High Water Springs:

Quantity for disposal within period 01 October 2026 and 30 September 2029:

Up to 980,000 metric tonnes.

6. Location of disposal site:

Within a 0.5 nautical mile radius of the following coordinates:

54º 45.300' N, 05º 29.600' W – Belfast Dredgings C (Live) - IS591

See **Appendix A** for location map.

7. Valid:

From: 01 October 2026
Until: 30 September 2029

*To Note: As per Condition 5, to ensure the validity of this licence the Licensee(s) must submit sediment analysis data **at least 60 days** before the expiration date of the current data set which expires on **01 March 2029.** The Licensee(s) must ensure that valid sediment analysis data is supplied to MLComplianceandEnforcement@daera-ni.gov.uk and approved by the Department prior to any sea disposal.*

8. Licence Documentation

- Application form – dated 17th June 2026
- Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) – dated April 2026
- Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO) – dated April 2026
- Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) Assessment – dated April 2026
- Sediment Analysis Results – received 28th June 2026
- Dredge Area maps – received 28th June 2026

PART 2 - CONDITIONS

The Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (referred to as the licensing authority) authorise **Belfast Harbour Commissioners** to carry out the loading for disposal from Northern Ireland ports and sea disposal of the material described in Part One of this licence in accordance with the following conditions:

Licence Condition(s):

NOTE: FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE BELOW LICENCE CONDITIONS MAY RESULT IN ENFORCEMENT ACTION BEING TAKEN

General conditions

1. The Licensee(s) must commence works with **12 months** of the date of this licence.

2. All conditions of this licence bind any persons whom, for the time being, owns, occupies or enjoys any use of the works for which this licence has been granted, in relation to those licensed activities authorised under Section 66 of the 2009 Act, whether or not the licence has been transferred to that person.

3. The Licensee(s) must ensure that the Department is informed of any contractor(s) and vessel(s) appointed to carry out part or all of the works by email to MLComplianceandEnforcement@daera-ni.gov.uk **no less than seven working days** before the commencement of the licensed activity. The licence holder must ensure that a copy of this licence and any subsequent revisions or amendments has been provided to, read and understood by any agents, contractors or sub-contractors that will carry on any licensed activity authorised by this licence on behalf of the licence holder.

4. The Licensee(s) must receive written authorisation from the licensing authority to assign or transfer the consent. The licensing authority must confirm in writing to both the original Licensee(s) and any proposed new Licensee(s) that the licence has been transferred/assigned before any works may commence under the new Licensee(s).

5. To ensure the validity of this licence the Licensee(s) must submit sediment analysis data **at least 60 days** before the expiration date of the current data set which expires on **01 March 2029.** The Licensee(s) must ensure that valid sediment analysis data is supplied to MLComplianceandEnforcement@daera-ni.gov.uk and approved by the Department prior to any sea disposal.

   Reason: To ensure that the material is suitable for sea disposal in compliance with OSPAR Guidelines for the Management of Dredged Material.

Prior to the commencement of the Licensed Activity

6. A method statement for the disposal operation, as detailed in the submitted application form, must be submitted to MLComplianceandEnforcement@daera-ni.gov.uk at least **four weeks** before the commencement of works.

   Reason: To ensure that the works methods are approved by the Department prior to works commencing

7. The licence holder must ensure that dredging and disposal operations may only commence once the sampling has been undertaken, as detailed in Condition 5, and that the licensing authority has confirmed, in writing, that it is satisfied that the material should not be precluded from dredging and disposal activities at the designated sites.

   Reason: To ensure that the material is suitable for sea disposal in compliance with OSPAR Guidelines for the Management of Dredged Material.

8. The Licensee(s) must confirm in writing to the licensing authority via MLComplianceandEnforcement@daera-ni.gov.uk that the disposal vessel(s) has position fixing capability within a +/- 20m range **no less than 24 hours** before the commencement of the licensed activity.

   Reason: To ensure material is deposited within the appropriate disposal area.

9. Recordable position fixing equipment must be used to ensure disposal within a 0.50 nautical mile radius of the stated disposal site, Belfast Dredgings C, as referred to in Part 1, Section 6 of this licence.

   Reason: To ensure material is deposited within the appropriate disposal area.

10. The Licensee(s) must survey the seabed of the disposal site before disposal operations in additional to a reference site. The survey must include photography/video of the benthos and grab sample. This survey information should be provided in a report format (including still images) to

MLCompliance&Enforcement@daera-ni.gov.uk within **8 weeks** upon completion of each sea disposal campaign (as per Condition 19).

Reason: To ensure material is deposited within the appropriate disposal area.

11. Local mariners and fishermen's organisations must be made fully aware of the works activity through a local notification. This must be issued at least **five days** before the commencement of the works. A copy of the notification must be submitted to MLComplianceandEnforcement@daera-ni.gov.uk within 24 hours of issue.

    Reason: To ensure that local water users are aware of the works activity.

12. Zone34@hmcg.gov.uk must be notified prior to the commencement of the works. A copy of the notification must be submitted to MLComplianceandEnforcement@daera-ni.gov.uk within 24 hours of issue.

    Reason: To ensure that the local coastguard is aware of the works activity.

13. A notification of the commencement of the licensed activities must be sent to The Source Data Receipt team, UK Hydrographic Office at sdr@ukho.gov.uk, at least **10 days** before commencement of the works. The information supplied must include the start date and end date, a description of the works, positions of the work area (WGS84), and details of any marking arrangements. A copy of the notification must be sent to MLComplianceandEnforcement@daera-ni.gov.uk within **five days** of the notification being sent.

    Reason: To ensure that the UK Hydrographic Office is aware of the works activity.

During the Licensed Activity

14. The Licensee(s) are required to dispose of materials at the Disposal Area(s) stated in Part 1 Section 6 of this licence (Belfast Dredging C). If in the case of 'force majeure' (stress of weather or any other cause threatening the safety of human life or the vessel) dredged material is deposited in any other area, full details of the circumstances should be notified to the licensing authority in writing **within 24 hours** of the event.

    Reason: To ensure appropriate mitigation if material is deposited outside the appropriate disposal area.

15. The Licensee(s) must ensure that a log of all the disposal operations is kept and be made available on request by the Department.

    Reason: To ensure that an up-to-date log of all disposal operations is available to the Department.

16. The mitigation measures contained within the HRA, MCZ Assessment, and the BPEO submitted in support of the application for this licence should be adhered to at all times during the proposed works.

    Reason: to ensure that disturbance and physical damage to Marine Protected Areas, intertidal and subtidal habitats and communities is minimised.

Upon Completion of the Licensed Activity

17. The Licensee(s) must confirm to the licensing authority by way of a report and map the area specifically dredged to produce the disposal material to MLCompliance&Enforcement@daera-ni.gov.uk within **8 weeks** upon completion of each sea disposal campaign.

Reason: To ensure only suitable material is disposed of at sea in compliance with OSPAR Guidelines for the Management of Dredged Material.

18. The Licensee(s) must ensure that vessel log details (attached as an Annex to this licence) should be completed **within one week** after the end of each month of dredging and disposal operation.

    a. The Licensee(s) may decide to use their own vessel log template with prior written agreement of the licensing authority.
    b. The vessel log should be accompanied by timed and dated tracked plots indicating the route taken, to and from, each disposal event in addition to the position and time for each disposal.
    c. If Licensee(s) cannot provide track plots, they must reach agreement with the licensing authority on a suitable method of recording and reporting the position and time for each disposal prior to disposal commencing.

    Reason: To ensure material is deposited within the appropriate disposal area.

19. The Licensee(s) must survey the seabed of the disposal site after disposal operations in additional to a reference site. The survey must include photography/video of the benthos and grab sample. This survey information should be provided in a report format (including still images) to MLCompliance&Enforcement@daera-ni.gov.uk within **8 weeks** upon completion of each sea disposal campaign (as per Condition 10).

    Reason: To ensure material is deposited within the appropriate disposal area.

20. The Licensee(s) must inform MLCompliance&Enforcement@daera-ni.gov.uk of the finishing date of the work within **28 days** of completion.

    Reason: To ensure the licensing authority is aware of the end of the works.

21. Certified returns to be submitted to MLCompliance&Enforcement@daera-ni.gov.uk by:

    1. The end of January 2027 for disposal during the period 01 October 2026 and December 2026,
    2. The end of January 2028 for disposal between January 2027 and December 2027,
    3. The end of January 2029 for disposal between January 2028 and December 2028,
    4. The end of January 2030 for disposal between January 2029 and 30 September 2029.

    A **NIL return** must be submitted, where applicable.

    Reason: To allow annual disposal returns to be made to CEFAS for the preceding calendar year, to meet International Maritime Organisation and OSPAR reporting requirements.

Signed on behalf of the Department:

[redacted]

Dated: 01 October 2026

NOTE:

(1) The licensing authority would advise that this licence does not negate the licensees' responsibility to gain any other environmental or access permissions that may be required to progress the works.

(2) Under Part 4, Chapter 1, paragraph 72 of the **Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009,** the licensing authority may revoke, vary or suspend this licence if it appears to the authority that the holder is in breach of a condition included in it, or if it appears to the authority that the licence ought to be varied, suspended or revoked because of a change of circumstances relating to the marine environment or human health, including a change in scientific knowledge. A revocation, variation or suspension may also be enforced in the interests of safety of navigation.

(3) A person who deposits material in contravention of the terms of a licence is guilty of an offence under Section 85 of the Act. It is a defence under paragraph 86 (1) for a person charged with such an offence to prove 'force majeure'. However, they are also required to prove that they took steps within a reasonable time to inform the licensing authority of all details pertaining to the incident contained in paragraph 86 (2). The licensing authority shall be obliged to report force majeure cases immediately to the OSPAR Commission.

(4) Attention is drawn to the necessity of complying where appropriate with the **Radioactive Substances Act 1960**, the **Prevention of Oil Pollution Act 1971** and to the **Merchant Shipping (Dangerous Goods) (Amendment) Rules 1968.**

(5) If within 28 days of the issue of a licence the person to whom it was issued requests the licensing authority to give him notice in writing of the reasons for the inclusion of any provision in it, the Authority shall comply with his request within 28 days of receiving it.

(6) Anyone who fails to comply with a condition on a Marine Licence commits an offence under Section 85 of the **Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009** and may be subject to enforcement action. Possible enforcement actions are compliance notices, remediation notices, fixed monetary penalties and variable monetary penalties. In the worst cases, a person found guilty of an offence on summary conviction may be subject to a fine not exceeding £50,000. In addition, a person found guilty of an offence on conviction on indictment, to a fine or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or to both. Further details can be found at our guidance note here: *https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/doe/marine-licensing-guidance-enforcement-under-part-4-marine-and-coastal-access-act%2C-2009-may-2016.pdf*

INFORMATIVES:

Marine Licensing advice

- The Licensee(s) should ensure that copies of the licence are available for inspection by any authorised Enforcement Officer at:
  a. The premises of the Licensee(s)
  b. The premises of the operating facility
  c. The site of the works (including on board vessels).

Maritime & Coastguard Agency advice on Navigational Safety

- The Licensee(s) should consider adopting the Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC), which sets out a national standard for every aspect of port marine safety. The Code is not mandatory; however, it is endorsed by the UK Government, devolved administrations and representatives from across the marine industry sector. It is applicable to both Statutory Harbour Authorities (SHA) and non-SHAs including marinas, terminals, marine berths and jetties. The Department for Transport also publishes the PMSC Guide to Good Practice which provides useful information and detailed guidance on the safe management of these facilities and is intended to supplement the Code. This can be found

here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-guide-to-good-practice-on-port-marine-operations"

DAERA advice on European and National Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

- The Licensee(s) should be aware that proposal is hydrologically connected to Marine Protected Areas and that activities should not adversely impact these sites. Any actions within designated areas but outside the red line boundary or consented scope require approval under **Environment Order (Northern Ireland) 2002** and **The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended)**. In this case the Licensee(s) should contact NIEA, Conservation, Designations and Protection Unit, Clare House, Belfast.
- Guidance for Assessments of Marine Protected Area in the NI inshore area, including Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ) assessments can be found at https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/guidance-marine-protected-area-assessments-ni-inshore-area.
- For more information on the location of MPAs around Northern Ireland, see the DAERA Marine Map Viewer.

DAERA advice on Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)

- The Licensee(s) should be aware that under Article 15 of **the Wildlife (NI) Order 1985 (as amended)**, it is an offence to release or allow escape of non-native species or those listed in Schedule 9.
- The Licensee(s) should ensure invasive non-native species biosecurity measures are in place for all stages of the project and all equipment used (Northern Ireland Biosecurity guidelines) and that DAERA Marine Invasive Non-Native Species Guidance and the Check Clean Dry guidance are followed in order to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive non-native species as required **under the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 (as amended)**.
- For more information see the DAERA Marine Invasive Non-native Species Guidance webpage.

DAERA advice on the prevention of water pollution

- The Licensee(s) should ensure that DAERA Pollution Standing Advice and DAERA Standing advice for development that may have an effect on the water environment (including groundwater and fisheries) is adhered to. This will help to prevent adverse impacts to Marine Protected Areas, habitats and species, as required under the **Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended)**, **The Environment Order (Northern Ireland) 2002** and the **Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011**.
- To reduce the likelihood of accidental spills into the marine environment, no fuel or oil should be stored close to the water and any fuelling required should only occur at a non-hydrologically linked location using a buffer of at least 10m.
- The Licensee(s) should be aware of the importance of ensuring equipment and/or plant is maintained in good working order to minimise the risk of water pollution from hydrocarbons and/or hydraulic fluids.
- Bunding and/or storage facilities should be installed to contain and prevent the release of fuel, oils, and chemicals associated with plant, refuelling, and construction equipment into the marine environment.
- The Licensee(s) should consult the NetRegs Guidance for Pollution Prevention (GPP) documents for further information.

DAERA advice on the prevention of marine litter

- To prevent litter entering the marine environment and adversely impacting Marine Protected Areas, habitats and species, as required under **the Environment Order (Northern Ireland) 2002**, **Draft Marine Plan for Northern Ireland 2018** and the **UK Marine Policy Statement**, we advise that all effort should be taken to reduce the risk of marine litter entering the environment. The DAERA Marine Litter Guidance outlines the policy requirements with regards to marine litter.

DAERA advice on marine wildlife disturbance

- The Licensee(s) should adhere to the DAERA Marine Wildlife Disturbance Guidance Documents at all times to minimise the risk of disturbance to marine wildlife arising from the proposed works.
- The Licensee(s) should be aware that under Article 10 of **The Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985**, it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb, injure, or capture Harbour or Grey seals, or damage or obstruct access to any place used for shelter or protection. Possession of these animals or their parts is also prohibited. A licence may be required if impacts cannot be avoided – consult the DAERA Marine Wildlife Team at Marine.Wildlife@daera-ni.gov.uk. More information on wildlife licences can be found at https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/marine-wildlife-licensing.

DAERA advice on the protection of archaeological objects and the recovery of wreck material

- The Licensee(s) attention is drawn to Article 42 of **the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1995** that requires finders of archaeological objects to report **within 14 days** to a relevant authority.
- The Licensee(s) must report any recovered wreck material to the Receiver of Wreck (Maritime and Coastguard Agency) in accordance with **the Merchant Shipping Act 1995.**
- The DAERA document Guidance Note: For the Discovery of Unanticipated Underwater Archaeological Heritage sets out best practice and legal responsibilities in the reporting of unanticipated finds of archaeological interest made during the course of marine construction and/or dredging projects.

Commissioners for Irish Lights advice on deploying buoys during works

- The Licensee(s) should be aware that if turbidity buoys are intended to be deployed as part of water quality monitoring, the Local Lighthouse Authority (Belfast Harbour Commissioners) will need to apply to Irish Lights for **Statutory Consent** prior to any aid to navigation being deployed.
- Similarly, if any existing aid to navigation buoys are required to be repositioned or temporarily removed to facilitate these dredging works, then the Local Lighthouse Authority (Belfast Harbour Commissioners) will need to apply to Irish Lights for **Statutory Consent** prior to any aid to navigation being repositioned or removed.

Appendix A – Location of the disposal site

