

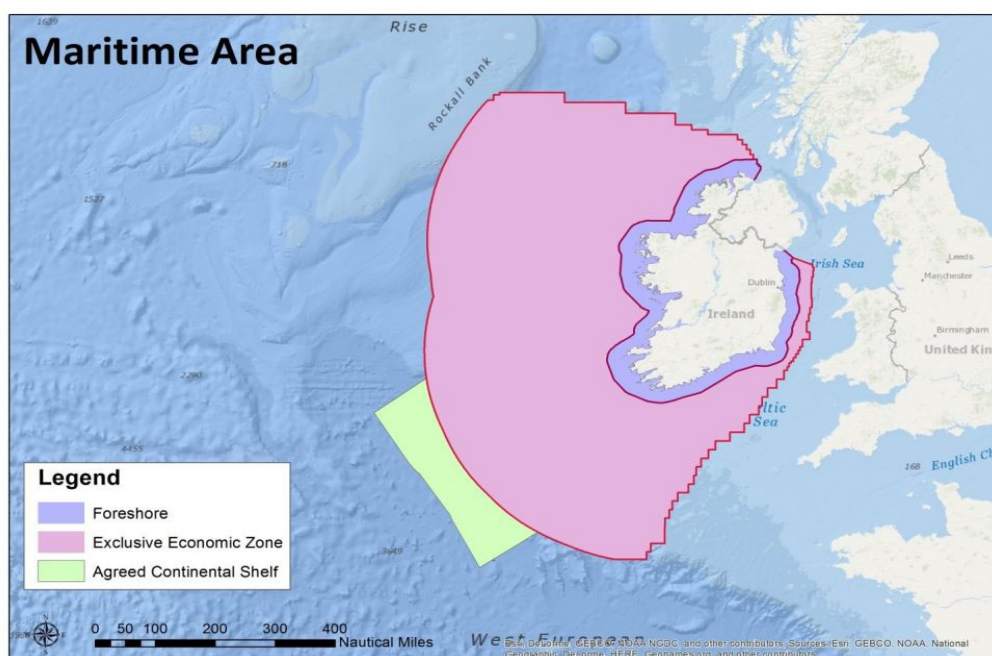
SEA supporting Maritime Spatial Plan and Offshore Renewable Energy Plan, Ireland

Source: Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources' Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (OREDPP) Strategic Environmental Assessment Statement (Ireland). Available at <https://assets.gov.ie/77208/2ecbb6ad-4b05-4394-90f4-522df666c10a.pdf>.

Maritime spatial plan

The first Maritime Spatial Plan (2021) provides a long-term planning framework for how Ireland will use, protect, and enjoy the seas up to 2040. This plan is made under the Irish Maritime Area Planning Act (2021) that was transposed from the EU Maritime spatial planning directive (2014). The maritime area is restricted to the 200-mile exclusive economic zone; see map. In the plan, 16 sectors are distinguished, and present and future use will be agreed upon. The entire maritime area is divided into smaller areas for which plans are made, identifying the opportunities for development such as offshore wind. Use is made of GIS and comprehensive public participation.

- **Key issues and method:** In the SEA (2021), alternatives for most of the identified sectors were developed, assessed, consulted, and compared. The SEA also suggested mitigating measures to offset negative impacts identified.



Offshore renewable energy plan

In 2023, the development of this plan started. The plan aims to select sites for project development, especially wind farms up to 5 gigawatts in 2030, in areas selected in the maritime spatial plan. Due to the considerable depth of large parts of the maritime area, the opportunity of applying floating wind farms was studied as well.

- **Key issues and method:** The SEA supporting the development of this plan will be finished in 2024. The SEA process facilitated public consultation and discussions on conflicting interests between, for example, fisheries and wind farms in the selected areas.

Influence: The first SEA facilitated a public debate on the future use of the maritime area of Ireland and resulted in the exclusion of some activities, for example, wind farm development, because fisheries and biodiversity prevail. In the second, SEA-specific sites were identified for the development of wind farms accepted by the majority of the public.