CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO DESIGNATE AN ADDITIONAL 49 WATER BODIES FOR PROTECTION OR IMPROVEMENT UNDER THE SHELLFISH WATERS DIRECTIVE (2006/113/EC) (CLOSING DATE 10 OCTOBER 2008)

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food invites comments from interested parties on the proposal to designate an additional 49 water bodies for protection or improvement under the above Directive. Comments should relate to any of the following aspects, site selection, site boundary and location of the water sampling point.

The aim of the Shellfish Waters Directive is to protect or improve shellfish waters in order to support shellfish life and growth. It is designed to protect the aquatic habitat of bivalve and gastropod molluscs, which include oysters, mussels, cockles, scallops and clams. The Directive requires Member States to designate waters which need protection in order to support shellfish life and growth.

The Directive sets physical, chemical and microbiological requirements that designated shellfish waters must either comply with or endeavour to improve.

In 2006 pollution reduction programmes were established for 14 sites selected for designation. The current proposal is to extend the designation to an additional number of important shellfish growing areas. The 49 additional sites which it is proposed to designate have been identified as appropriate for selection because:

1. They are aquaculture sites or wild shellfish harvesting sites which have been active in the preceding 3 years and
2. The waters are in need of protection or improvement.

A number of sites have been included which do not meet the above criteria because of exceptional circumstances.

The boundaries of the 49 additional sites have been drawn to ensure that they encompass all of the active licensed aquaculture being carried on within them. The points within each of the sites at which it is proposed to take water samples for quality testing have also been identified.

The additional sites proposed for designation together with the proposed boundaries and water sampling points are shown on the map which has been drawn up for each of the areas.

The maps are available for inspection on the Department’s website at http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/index.jsp?file=Fisheries/CoastalZone/ShellFish/shellfish.xml and at certain Garda Stations and Public Libraries. A list of the Garda Stations and Public Libraries at which the maps can be inspected is available at the website address above or on request from either of the addresses below.

Comments should be submitted by email or by post to the address below:

by email: shellfishwaters@agriculture.gov.ie

by post: Shellfish Waters Designation, Coastal Zone Management Division, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Building C, West Cork Technology Park, Clonakilty, Co. Cork.

Comments must be received, at the latest, by 10 October 2008.