



NATIONAL MARINE RESEARCH VESSELS

VESSEL CHARTER GUIDELINES 2024 – 2025



INTRODUCTION

The Marine Institute operates the national marine research fleet (RV *Celtic Explorer*, RV *Tom Crean* and ROV *Holland I*) on behalf of the Irish Government and the Irish marine community, on a charter basis. The Research Vessels Operations (RV Ops) team within the Marine Institute manage and monitor all aspects of ship-time scheduling to ensure the efficient operation and implementation of all survey programmes in the research fleet's schedules.

The call for vessel charters for 2024 and 2025 is now open and we are inviting organisations to apply for ship-time, for research, development or monitoring purposes.

Further information including technical specifications on the Marine Institute's [Research Vessels](#) is available on our website.

The following provides information on the terms of vessel charter and the application procedure.

Please Note:

- **Applicants may seek grant-aid to cover all or part of the vessel charter costs for Research Surveys or Ship-Based Training Programmes.**
- **For information on eligibility for grant-aid and additional application requirements please click [here](#):**
- **Applications for grant-aid are being accepted for 2024 (*Celtic Explorer* and *Tom Crean*).**

CLOSING DATE for Receipt of Ship-time Applications:

17:00 Wednesday 31st MAY 2023

1. WHEN APPLYING FOR SHIP-TIME, PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING POINTS

- 1.1 Ship-time requests for 2024 and 2025 must be submitted via Research Vessel Operations' online [Survey Planning System \(SPS\)](#). Please contact [RV Ops](#) to obtain a username and password for SPS. Ship-time applications will only be considered on the basis of completed applications being submitted by **17:00 Wednesday 31st May 2023**.
- 1.2 Co-operative survey/training programmes, involving a range of scientific disciplines that maximise the usage of vessel time, will be more favourably regarded. When completing the SPS application form, please bear in mind the following:
- Application Form should be completed in full.
 - Please provide as much information as possible.
 - Clearly demonstrate the objectives of the proposed survey programme. Commitments to international organisations such as ICES should be mentioned and relevant information provided, this should not be confined to general statements such as 'contribution towards scientific knowledge'.
 - Please attach a preliminary survey programme including a work schedule and any relevant maps outlining the proposed survey area.
 - **Applicants applying for grant-aid to cover vessel charter costs must refer to the Grant-Aid Guidelines for additional requirements. These are available to download from the [Ship Time Programme 2024](#) page on the Marine Institute Website.**
- 1.3 Users should always bear in mind that vessel transits over a working year can take a considerable amount of time and expense and users should consult with colleagues who may wish to work within the same geographical area to increase operational efficiency of the vessels.
- 1.4 While the Marine Institute will always endeavour to give each vessel user the timeslot requested, this is not always possible. A detailed ship-time schedule will be drawn up and circulated in late 2023 for the 2024 survey year and in late 2024 for the 2025 survey year. Vessel users will be asked to confirm via SPS that they are satisfied with the timeslot allocated to them. Once agreed, any changes from original requests cannot be guaranteed.
- 1.5 All non-commercial users of the Marine Institute's research vessels will be charged a daily rate during 2024 and 2025 as per the table below. Costs may be revised in 2024.

Vessel	Celtic Explorer	Tom Crean
Daily Rate	€22,000	€16,000

Vessels Daily Rates 2024/2025

The daily rate will cover the cost of crewing, basic equipment requirements, victualling and fuel*. Users will be charged for any additional costs (e.g. craning or transportation costs) incurred by the Marine Institute whilst preparing for or undertaking the survey. These additional charges will be passed on to the client at cost.

*Users are advised that the Celtic Explorer and Tom Crean's normal mode of operation is with one main engine operating in "silent mode". This is the most fuel efficient mode of operation for passage and survey. A second engine can be employed at the master's discretion in inclement weather to maintain a minimum speed of 7/8 Knots during passage and as required during trawling operations, and in the event of an emergency. If vessel users require vessel speeds in excess of that available above, this should be flagged with RV Ops in advance. If increased passage speeds beyond those highlighted above are required during the course of a survey the Chief Scientist should discuss with the master who will discuss with shore based management.

Please note the following Terms and Conditions:

- **In the event of adverse weather, the full day rate will apply.**
- **In the event of user equipment failure, the full day rate will apply.**
- **Normally, 24 hours is allotted at the start of each survey to allow sufficient time for mobilisation which includes; loading and installation of vessel and user equipment, crew changes, bunkering, refuelling and other maintenance activities as required. Depending on the equipment requirements for the survey additional mobilisation days may be required and this can be agreed at pre cruise planning phase.**
- **24 hours is allotted at the end of each survey to allow sufficient time for demobilisation which includes; loading and installation of vessel and user equipment, crew changes, bunkering, refuelling and other maintenance activities as required.**
- **Users may be required to accommodate the mobilisation of equipment for the next user during their demobilisation day in order to help minimise mobilisation times.**
- **Mob/demob times may vary depending on nature of survey and other required mobilisation activities.**
- **While efforts will be made to facilitate early departure and/or late arrival, this cannot always be guaranteed and users should plan accordingly.**
- **Surveys on the RV *Celtic Explorer* exceeding 30 days will have one 24hr port call; this has been included in the above rate.**
- **Surveys on the RV *Tom Crean* exceeding 21 days will have one 24hr port call; this has been included in the above rate.**

2. OPERATIONAL INFORMATION

- 2.1 Equipment requirements should be clearly indicated and limited to those actually needed. Allocation of certain items of equipment will be at the Marine Institute's discretion. Modification to, or unauthorised use of, equipment is forbidden. Vessel users should consult with Research Vessel Operations well in advance of a programme in order to ensure that requirements are clearly understood. Please note that vessel users' equipment and third party equipment used by the vessel user is carried and operated on the vessels at the equipment owner's risk.
- 2.2 When planning a programme, scientists must bear in mind that the services supplied by the vessels and associated personnel are not unlimited and should be confined to a purely support role. **Non-vessel equipment logistics are the responsibility of the scientist.**
- 2.3 If there is an intention to deploy any type of mooring equipment the Chief Scientist should submit a detailed description of the mooring rig and the proposed nature and location of deployment to the Research Vessel Operations 3 months in advance of the programme. The Chief Scientist should also arrange to have appropriate Marine Notices circulated. This can be done by contacting the Maritime Safety Directorate, Dept. of Transport and Marine (<http://www.dttas.ie/maritime>). A foreshore licence may be required for certain deployment activities and it will be the responsibility of the applicant to secure an appropriate licence if applicable.
- 2.4 If it is intended to carry out research on-board the vessel in foreign waters, **a minimum notification of 7 months must be given.** An 'Application for the Consent to Conduct Marine Scientific Research in foreign waters' must be completed. Forms can be obtained by contacting Research Vessel Operations or downloading them from the [Marine Institute website](#).
- 2.5 If it is intended to carry out research within the boundaries of the offshore marine Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), vessel users must complete an application for marine scientific research within the Offshore SACs which is available from the [National Parks and Wildlife Service](#), Dept. of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (and on the SPS system). Applicants must also be aware of the possible requirement to complete a notifiable action form or to seek clearance for certain activities within the inshore SACs. Please contact the [National Parks and Wildlife Service](#) for further information on the exact locations of the sites and the details of the specific nature of the protected habitats and for permission to carry out marine scientific research within these areas.
- 2.6 If it is intended to use seismic equipment or multi-beam or acoustic survey equipment in any bays, estuaries or inlets then the vessel users must refer to the NPWS' [Guidance to Manage the Risk to Marine Mammals from Man-made Sound Sources in Irish Waters](#). This may require risk assessment of your operations and use of mitigation procedures during your survey.

3. THE HOLLAND 1 DEEPWATER ROV

The Marine Institute operates a 3000m rated deepwater ROV system. The ROV can be operated from the *Celtic Explorer* and the *Tom Crean* and may also be operated from other appropriate vessels, subject to Research Vessel Operations' approval.

All users of the Marine Institute's ROV will be charged a daily rate during 2024/25 as per the table below.

ROV	Service
€12,500	Research Operations
€15,000	Mob/De Mob

ROV Daily Rates

For further information and technical specifications: [Marine Institute's Deepwater ROV](#)

4. "Laochra na Mara" and "Aisling na Mara" gliders.

The Marine Institute operate two 1000m rated Teledyne Webb /Slocum gliders "*Laochra na Mara*" (G3) and "*Aisling na Mara*" (G3) which are available to the user community for Oceanographic surveys. The gliders can be operated from the *Celtic Explorer* or *Tom Crean* and may also be operated from other appropriate vessels, subject to Research Vessel Operations' approval. The system is capable of operating for up to 90 days autonomously whilst collecting CTD and other data to depths of 1000m.

For further information and technical specifications: [Marine Institute's Gliders](#).

5. CHIEF SCIENTISTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 The Chief Scientist will receive a copy of the Vessel User Guidelines upon allocation of ship time and it is his/her responsibility to ensure that each member of the scientific complement reads them. Each member of the scientific party must sign a form to indicate that they have read and agree to abide by the guidelines on boarding the vessel. Copies of the guidelines are also available on-board the vessel.
- 5.2 A Safety Familiarisation briefing will take place on board the vessel before each survey commences. It is the Chief Scientist's responsibility to ensure that each member of the scientific complement attends.
- 5.3 The Chief Scientist should ensure that all scientific personnel have undergone a medical assessment in accordance with the ENG 11 medical standard for those working at sea and that all scientists present their original up-to-date ENG 11 certificate on boarding the vessel. A list of

certified medical practitioners who undertake the ENG11 medical can be found at the following [link](#).

If a scientist joining the survey is pregnant, she must obtain doctor's clearance to participate in the survey, which should include details of work involved and distance from the shore. According to the 'Seafarer Medical Examination System' "The employment of pregnant workers at sea should be prohibited after the 28th week of pregnancy". Please see [Marine Notice 34 of 2020, Section 12](#), for further information.

- 5.4 The chief scientist should also circulate the RV Ops pre survey medical declaration form for completion to all their scientific personnel intending to sail on the vessel. This form should be returned to the email address on the form and further information may be sought by RV Ops depending on the existence and nature of any medical issues.
- 5.5 The Chief Scientist should ensure that all scientific personnel have completed a Personal Sea Survival Techniques course (or equivalent STCW 95 compliant) before participating on scientific programmes. Details of organisations offering personal survival techniques courses can be obtained by contacting Research Vessel Operations or downloaded at the following [link](#).

Note: all scientists joining the Celtic Explorer and Tom Crean will be required to undertake further training in *Ship's Security Awareness*. Chief Scientists will be informed of this in advance of the survey.

- 5.6 In the event of proposed use of any hazardous materials/chemicals the Chief Scientist should advise the Vessel Manager in writing and ensure that appropriate transport, storage and usage methods are adhered to. The Chief Scientist should also bring Safety Data Sheets (SDS) on-board during mobilisation.
- 5.7 The Chief Scientist should be aware of the **crewing requirements** for each vessel and take these into account when preparing sailing instructions.

Note: In the event of a global Pandemic or similar health emergency a smaller scientific complement may be specified for each vessel and this will be communicated to all chief scientists.

The **Celtic Explorer** can accommodate a total of 35 people; the crewing requirements for various activities are given below.

Type of Survey	Crew	Scientists
Passive Survey ¹	13	20
Fishing Survey	15	20
ROV Survey ²	20-23	13-15 ³

Celtic Explorer Crewing Requirements

¹ Passive survey is a survey which requires a limited amount of deck operations.

² Crewing depends on the nature of the ROV survey.

³ Detailed crew and scientist numbers will be confirmed prior to survey.

The **Tom Crean** can accommodate a total of 26 people; the planned crewing requirements for various activities are given below:

Type of Survey	Crew	Scientists
Passive Survey	11	13
Fishing Survey	12/13	14/13 max
ROV Survey	15/16	10 max

Tom Crean Crewing Requirements

For **student training cruises** up to 12 students/scientists can be accommodated (without medical or additional training certification).

Surveys requiring **deck operations at night** require additional crew. Applicants are asked to be as specific as possible in detailing the amount of deck operations required over a 24hr period to allow Research Vessel Operations to determine the exact crewing requirements.

- 5.8 In the event of any difficulty, or reason for complaint while on board, the Chief Scientist should first address this to the Master of the vessel. In all other circumstances the scientist should contact Research Vessel Operations in the first instance at rv@marine.ie and should refer to the Vessel User Guidelines for information.
- 5.9 Cruise Summary Report (CSR): To ensure the appropriate curation of all data generated on the research vessels, Chief scientists are obliged to complete a cruise summary report utilising the onboard “MIKADO” software package before departing the vessel.
- 5.10 The Chief Scientist will be asked to complete a Post Cruise Assessment Form on completion of the cruise. SPS will remind the Chief Scientist to log on and complete this form. Other members of the scientific complement are asked to complete a Customer Satisfaction Form which will be left in their cabins along with the Vessel User Guidelines. A post cruise report must also be submitted to Research Vessel Operations on completion of the cruise via SPS.
- 5.11 Researchers are asked to furnish a **Cruise Report** on the research survey to the Marine Institute. This must be submitted, within three months of completion of the survey, digitally and in hard-copy, using a template provided by the Marine Institute. Users are also asked to submit a shapefile or csv file with detail of data acquired in the course of a survey also *following survey completion*. If deemed suitable, the Cruise Report, or a Synthesis Report, may be published by the MI.

6. APPLICATION PROCEDURE & CLOSING DATE

Applications for vessel charter must be submitted using the online [Survey Planning System](#).

CLOSING DATE for Receipt of Ship-time Applications:

17:00 Wednesday 31st MAY 2023

NOTE:

Applicants applying for **grant-aid** to cover vessel charter costs should note the **two-step** procedure

involved in this and the need to complete the SPS application in sufficient time as the Application Code is required in order to apply for grant-aid. Refer to the [Grant-Aid Guidelines](#) for information.