

Why Capital Dredging is Necessary

“Capital Dredging” means the removal of sediments to create new or expand existing navigational channels, berthing pockets and turning basins to establish new dredge design levels (DDLs). It involves the removal and relocation of natural previously undisturbed seabed to increase water depths.

Periodically ports need to enhance or increase infrastructure capacity through capital dredging programs by deepening and widening navigational channels, berthing pockets and turning basins.

This is due to the increasing numbers of ships trading with ports with ongoing trade growth and also due to the arrival of larger ships that form an increasingly greater proportion of the global shipping fleet. Larger ships are used to achieve economies of scale that result in reduced shipping costs and hence cheaper trade.

Relying on smaller ships would lead to additional import / export costs, more shipping traffic and ultimately an undersupply of suitable ships as smaller, older vessels are decommissioned. The use of older and smaller vessels will also potentially lead to poorer environmental performance due to increase shipping movements, increased noise, poorer emission controls and navigational risks (breakdowns, collisions and groundings).

Failure to undertake capital dredging and provide new or deeper channels, swing basins and berths will result in lost trade opportunities and inefficient port operations, with direct economic and social costs to business and the community. Dublin Port Company intends to carry out a Capital Dredge programme to deepen its navigation channel to 10.0m Chart Datum.

