



APPENDIX 5-3

TOURISM IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Proposed Maughanaclea Renewable Energy Development, Co. Cork

Tourism Impact Assessment



Prepared for MKO Ireland

by

CHL & Associates

March 2026

CHL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	Introduction and Background	1
2.	Statement of Authority.....	2
3.	Site Location.....	2
4.	Policy	4
5.	Definitions and Assessment Method.....	7
6.	Baseline Assessment of Tourism in the Area	10
	6A Character.....	10
	6B Significance	13
7.	Potential Impacts of Proposed Project.....	22
8.	Cumulative Impact.....	33
9.	Conclusions.....	35

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1. The purpose of this Appendix is to provide tourism assessment and expertise to the EIAR for the Proposed Maughanaclea Renewable Energy Development, as outlined in Chapter 4: Description of Proposed Project of this EIAR.
- 1.2. This Appendix has been prepared by CHL & Associates. It assesses the potential for impacts on tourism arising from the Proposed Project.
- 1.3. The Proposed Project consists of the Proposed Wind Farm (see 1.4 below) and the Proposed Grid Connection (see 1.7 below).
- 1.4. The Proposed Wind Farm consists of: 14 turbines, each with a hub height of 102.5m, tip height of 169m and rotor diameter of 133m; and a 110kV onsite substation.
- 1.5. The Site measures approximately 1,175 hectares.
- 1.6. The Site is located approximately 2.5km east of Kealkill, 9.5km northeast of Bantry and 12.2km west of Dunmanway. Ballingeary is located 8.5km north of the nearest proposed turbine (T01).
- 1.7. The Proposed Grid Connection consists of the 110kV underground cabling connection from the proposed 110kV onsite substation to the existing Dunmanway 110kV substation.
- 1.8. The Proposed Grid Connection underground cabling route is approximately 20.5km long and primarily located along the public road corridor following the R585, L-4909, L-4609, L-4615, R587 and R586.
- 1.9. Due to the temporary nature of the works and any potential effects associated with the Proposed Grid Connection underground cabling route, it has been screened out from this Tourism Impact Assessment.

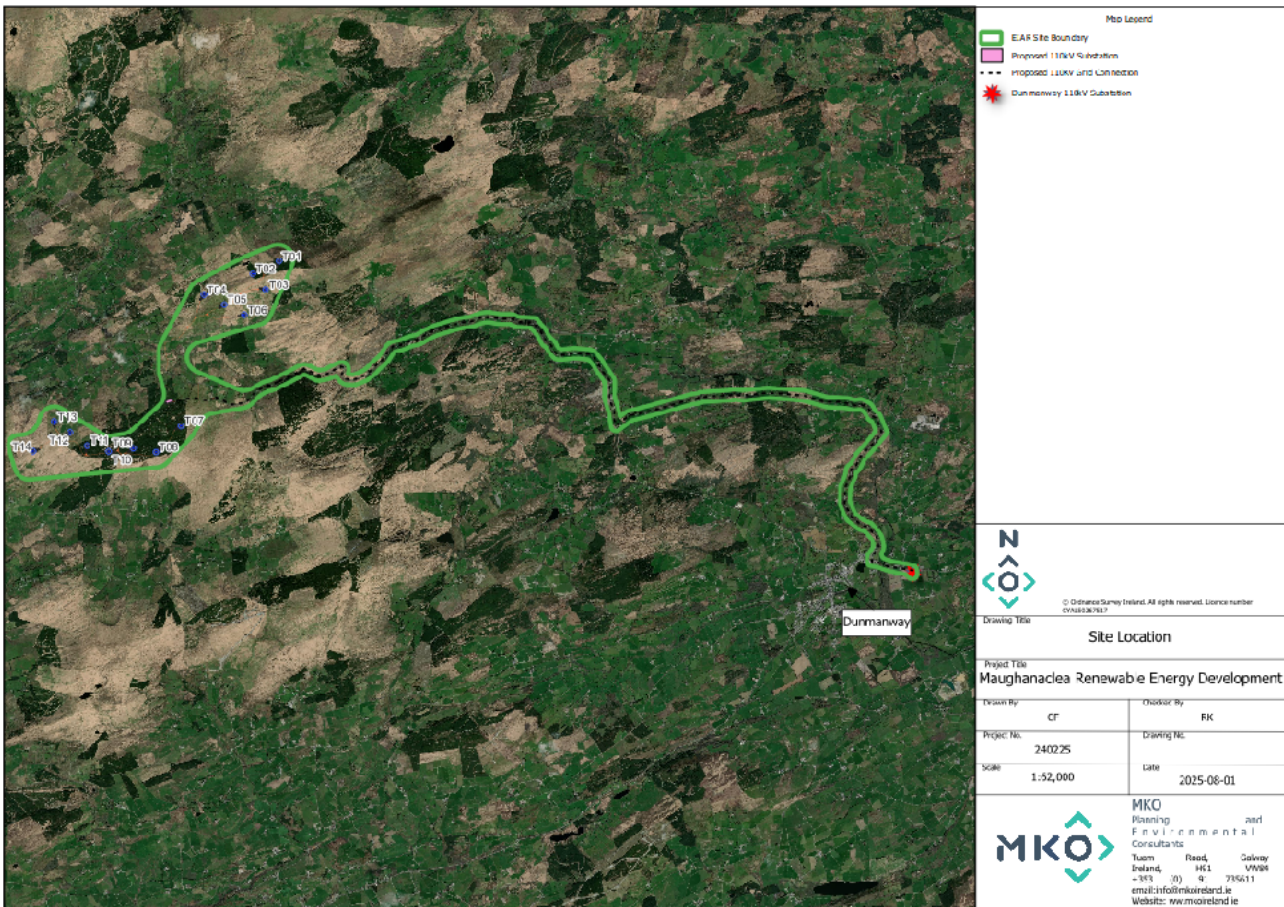
2. Statement of Authority

- 2.1. CHL & Associates is a leading consultancy firm in tourism development, planning and implementation. Originally established in 1984 as CHL Consulting, CHL has worked extensively throughout the island of Ireland on tourism strategic planning and product development, including tourism and economic impact analyses.
- 2.2. This Tourism Impact Assessment has been prepared by Freya Watson, Director at CHL. Freya holds a B.A. (Hons.) from UCD, a variety of ongoing CPD qualifications in Marketing, Finance, Project Management, Conflict Resolution and Branding, and has over thirty years' experience in tourism. Her work with CHL has included strategic and business plans, options appraisals, feasibility studies, audits, sectoral analyses and tourism plans. Her clients have included local authorities, government departments and other public bodies, as well as community and non-profit groups, and private investors. Prior to CHL, Freya held a variety of managerial positions with Fáilte Ireland, including in Destination Development, Heritage, and Innovation and Strategy.

3. Site Location

- 3.1. The Proposed Wind Farm is located within a rural setting in West Cork, approximately 2.5km east of the village of Kealkill, 9.5km northeast of the town of Bantry, and 12.2km west of Dunmanway.
- 3.2. The Proposed Wind Farm is made up of two turbine clusters - a northern and southern cluster - with a total of 14 wind turbines. See Figure 1.
- 3.3. The southern cluster of turbines is accessed via an existing forestry road off the R585. It is proposed to access the northern cluster via a new site entrance road off the R585 in the townland of Maughanaclea.

FIGURE 1: AERIAL OF PROPOSED WIND FARM AND PROPOSED GRID CONNECTION



- 3.4. Elevations within the Proposed Wind Farm site range from 426m AOD to 116m AOD¹.
- 3.5. The Site is not located within any Special Area of Conservation or Special Protection Areas and, as stated in Chapter 6: Biodiversity, *"The avoidance principle has been applied as part of the Proposed Project and as such good quality Annex I habitats and Article 17 habitats have been completely avoided"*.
- 3.6. A number of Designated Sites lie within the wider Zone of Influence of the Proposed Wind Farm site, and these are identified and assessed in Chapter 6: Biodiversity. None of these are significant from a tourism perspective, and the conclusions of Chapter 6 is that the Proposed Project will not have an adverse impact on European or National Sites.
- 3.7. From a County Development perspective, the Site is located within Landscape Character Area 15a: Ridged and Peaked Uplands.

¹ Metres Above Ordnance Datum

- 3.8. Any impact of the Proposed Project on designated sites mentioned in 3.5 and 3.6, as well as other protected landscapes in the wider area, will be appropriately assessed as part of the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) process. This is relevant in the context of consideration of the landscape as a tourism asset.

4. Policy

- 4.1. The overall policy context pertaining to the Proposed Project is covered by a comprehensive policy and legislation review in Chapter 2: Background to the Proposed Project.
- 4.2. Within a policy context, the matter for consideration in this Appendix is the potential impact of the Proposed Project on tourism. Therefore, points below at 4.3 to 4.20 capture additional elements of policy specifically relating to tourism.
- 4.3. Tourism is clearly identified as an important element of the Irish economy and is frequently referred to in both the National Planning Framework First Revision (NPF)² and the National Development Plan 2021-2030 (NDP).
- 4.4. The NPF also identifies the importance to tourism of natural and built heritage: *"Ireland has an abundance of iconic natural heritage areas...and cultural heritage sites...(and) there are many other nationally distinct areas, that are not only a key part of our cultural heritage but also important to our tourism industry..." Ireland's "archaeological heritage is" also recognised as 'a major cultural... resource'.*
- 4.5. The NPF identifies a key policy for areas of the southwest traversed by the Wild Atlantic Way as *"integrated planning, management and development to maximise...the visitor experience"*. At the same time, it also identifies another key policy as *"harnessing the potential of the region in renewable energy"*. Throughout the NPF there is an emphasis on needing to support rural living through diversification and by providing for balanced

² Published April 2025.

development in all areas: *"The Irish countryside...will continue to be a living and lived-in landscape...based on agriculture, forestry, **energy**, inland waterways, marine, **tourism** and rural enterprise."* (Emphasis author's own).

- 4.6. NPF National Policy Objective 30 states: *"Facilitate the development of the rural economy, in a manner consistent with the national climate objective, through supporting a sustainable and economically efficient agricultural and food sector, together with forestry, fishing and aquaculture, energy and extractive industries, the bio-economy and diversification into alternative on-farm and off-farm activities, while at the same time noting the importance of maintaining and protecting biodiversity and the natural landscape and built heritage which are vital to rural tourism."*
- 4.7. NPF National Policy Objective 73 further emphasises this requirement for appropriate sharing of the landscape: *"Support the co-location of renewable technologies with other supporting technologies and complementary land uses, including agriculture, amenity, forestry and opportunities to enhance biodiversity and promote heritage assets, at appropriate locations..."*
- 4.8. The NDP identifies that individual sector policies will be developed, including for tourism (see 4.10). These sectoral programs of investment are intended to: *"Enhance well-being at individual and community level and promote social cohesion; advance an agenda for social, economic and environmental sustainability... while also supporting and enhancing guardianship of our unique cultural... heritage"*.
- 4.9. The NDP identifies a strategic investment priority to *"support and grow tourism in rural communities..."*
- 4.10. The new National Tourism Policy Framework 2025-2030 (NTPF) sets out policy proposals for the development of tourism in Ireland, in alignment with the principles and policies of the NPF and NDP, and other relevant national strategies and policies, as identified in the EIAR. It is structured around the three pillars: Environmental, Economic and Social.

- 4.11. The NTPF emphasises the economic and social value of tourism in Ireland, as well as the importance of ensuring that *"Ireland is recognised as an authentic sustainable destination"*, using the UNWTO definition of sustainable tourism as *"tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities."*³ This is the VICE model - Visitors, Industry, Community and Environment - increasingly found in tourism development strategies, and which allows for an approach that enables balanced development.
- 4.12. The NTPF reiterates the importance of *"Ireland's natural environment (as) an essential component of the tourism offering"*, stating that *"Fáilte Ireland as a designated body under the Planning Acts will input as required to ensure development proposals do not damage Ireland's habitats and protect the overall quality of the tourism offering"*.
- 4.13. The NTPF highlights that the *"tourism sector is also highly dependent on resilience in... areas such as our buildings, transport, biodiversity, water supply and **energy infrastructure.**"* (Emphasis author's own).
- 4.14. The Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media supports Government policies and efforts in the area of tourism through its economic development agency, Fáilte Ireland.
- 4.15. Fáilte Ireland *"recognises the importance of developing the State's renewable energy sector and transition to a low carbon energy. It is the policy of Fáilte Ireland to support the sustainable development of electricity generation by sustainable and renewable sources and support its contribution towards a sustainable energy supply at appropriate locations and in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development"*⁴.
- 4.16. In the context of the Proposed Project, Fáilte Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027 (WAWRTDS) is the most relevant strategic document as the Site lies within this designated tourism region.

³ "Managing tourism development for sustainable and inclusive recovery", OECD Tourism Papers, No. 2021/01.

⁴ Fáilte Ireland correspondence on a variety of projects, including a consultation submission to EirGrid, June 2021.

- 4.17. The WAWRTDS adopts the VICE model as its framework for tourism development and aligns with the UNWTO definition of sustainable tourism (see 4.11).
- 4.18. WAWRTDS Strategic Objective 4 is to *“protect the cultural authenticity and ‘wildness’ of the Wild Atlantic Way”*.
- 4.19. The WAWRTDS also identifies the development of a number of Destination and Experience Development Plans (DEDP) for specific regions, one of which is West Cork. The DEDPs ground the ambitions and strategic direction of the WAWRTDS into a series of priority projects at a more localised level.
- 4.20. The West Cork and Kenmare Destination and Experience Development Plan (WCKDEDP) incorporates two older Plans that were active in the area: the Three Peninsulas DEDP and the Múscraí Gaeltacht Tourism Action Plan (see Section 6). It provides prioritised actions for the area outlined in Figure 2 (Section 6), which encompasses the Proposed Project site.

5. Definitions and Assessment Method

- 5.1. Fáilte Ireland’s EIA/ELAR Guidelines for the Consideration of Tourism and Tourism Related Projects⁵ provides guidance for those conducting EIA/EIAR for projects that may have an impact on tourism, and this guidance is integrated into the approach adopted for this TIA.
- 5.2. An immediate study area of 5kms of the Site is considered for direct impacts. However, the tourism context of the Site is considered from a much broader perspective that includes that of visitors touring through the area. The wider tourism context of West Cork as a whole is also considered - an area defined for tourism purposes by the WCKDEDP (see Figure 2, Section 6, for illustration).

⁵ EIA/ELAR Guidelines for the Consideration of Tourism and Tourism Related Projects, Fáilte Ireland, July 2023.

5.3. In order to bring clarity to the assessment of the tourism impact of a proposed development, it is necessary to be clear about the terminology used. The following definitions apply in this TIA.

5.3.1. **Visitor:** A visitor is a traveller taking a trip to a main destination outside his/her usual environment, for less than a year, for any main purpose (business, leisure or other personal purpose) other than to be employed by a resident entity in the country or place visited. These trips taken by visitors qualify as tourism trips⁶.

5.3.2. **Tourism:** Tourism refers to the activity of visitors⁷.

5.3.3. **Tourist:** A visitor is classified as a tourist if his/her trip includes an overnight stay⁸.

5.3.4. **Tourism asset:** A tourism asset can be considered to refer to anything that attracts visitors and contributes to the country's tourism industry. This includes core tourism infrastructure such as accommodation and restaurants, tourism activities and destinations, as well as the natural and built heritage, and intangible elements.

5.4. Note that these definitions exclude local residents from being considered as visitors or as falling within the parameters of tourism, although local residents may use recreational amenities and enjoy products and services that can be also considered tourism assets. This is particularly relevant when considering the high footfall experienced by some trails and outdoor amenity spaces that attract a high level of repeat local business. Popularity of a trail or amenity space does not, of itself, mean that it is popular with tourists or that it has significance as a tourism asset.

⁶ *International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics*, UNWTO.

⁷ *International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics*, UNWTO.

⁸ *International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics*, UNWTO.

- 5.5. The approach adopted in this TIA is to follow the five steps below, in line with the guidance from Fáilte Ireland and the EPA⁹.
- 5.5.1. Establish the baseline character of the area from a tourism perspective (see 6A below).
 - 5.5.2. Establish the significance of any tourism assets or activities likely to be affected by the Proposed Project (see 6B below).
 - 5.5.3. Determine whether the Proposed Project impacts on any assets/activities identified at 5.5.2. (see 7 below).
 - 5.5.4. Assess whether the impact significantly compromises the tourism importance or value of the assets/activities identified at 5.5.2. (See 7 below).
 - 5.5.5. Address any significant and known concerns or oppositions to the Proposed Project in the area and the proposed cumulative impact. (See 8 below).
- 5.6. In establishing whether a feature is a tourism asset, we will be guided by the previous points in relation to what tourism is, and by how strategy relating to tourism in Ireland identifies what is of relevance to visitors (in particular 4.4, 4.18 and 5.1 above).
- 5.7. In gauging the importance or value of a tourism area or asset, the following factors can be used.
- 5.7.1. The area/asset's existing performance in terms of attracting visitors, as measured by visitor numbers.
 - 5.7.2. If the above is not available, a proxy measure is the extent of tourism infrastructure and demand in the area (accommodation, attractions, activities etc.).

⁹ *Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports*, EPA. See also Footnote 5.

5.7.3. In addition to 5.5.2 above, the area/asset's visibility and profile for consumers is a further proxy measure to the importance of tourism (e.g. through established tourism websites).

5.8. In considering potential impact (Sections 7 and 8 below), this TIA will follow as far as is practical the advice laid out by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)¹⁰. These identify impact characteristics in terms of quality, significance, extent and context, probability, duration and frequency.

5.9. In support of the desk research carried out for this TIA, CHL also undertook an inspection of the Site and wider area. This built on a previous site visit in May 2025 and took place on Wednesday 24th and Thursday 25th September 2025, under good weather conditions.

6. Baseline Assessment of Tourism in the Area

6A Character

6.1. Fáilte Ireland identifies beautiful scenery and natural and un-spoilt landscape as the primary reasons tourists visit and enjoy Ireland¹¹, and an area's strength in these will help to support tourism.

6.2. The Proposed Project site is located within the wider West Cork Region - an established tourism destination featuring a number of tourism hubs that are located along the popular coastal route from Kinsale to Bantry and on towards Kenmare in County Kerry. West Cork is identified by Fáilte Ireland in the WCKDEDP as encompassing the area illustrated in Figure 2.

¹⁰ *Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports*, EPA.

¹¹ *Overseas Holidaymakers' Attitudes to Ireland*, Fáilte Ireland.

FIGURE 2: WCKDEDP TOURISM AREA¹², ILLUSTRATING SITE LOCATION



6.3. West Cork is recognised as a popular summer destination for domestic families and as an attractive region for its coastal scenery and supporting outdoor activities, including: walking, cycling, sailing and other water-based activities. It also has a reputation for food and artisan crafts. It appeals to a wide age range, with 32% of domestic trips being taken by unconstrained adults aged over 45 years and 41% by families¹³. It is also a popular destination for tourists visiting friends and family, with 41% of overseas visitors to County Cork mainly in Ireland for that reason¹⁴.

6.4. Most of this activity is clustered along the coast and in the main coastal towns of Clonakilty, Skibbereen and Bantry. Specific locations have developed reputations for outdoor activity and for culture, in particular: the Sheep's Head peninsula and the area

¹² *West Cork and Kenmare Destination and Experience Development Plan*, p.03, October 2023, Fáilte Ireland; <https://www.failteireland.ie/Regional-experience-brands/Wild-Atlantic-Way/Wild-Atlantic-Way-experience-development/West-Cork-and-Kenmare-DEDP.aspx>. Site location added separately.

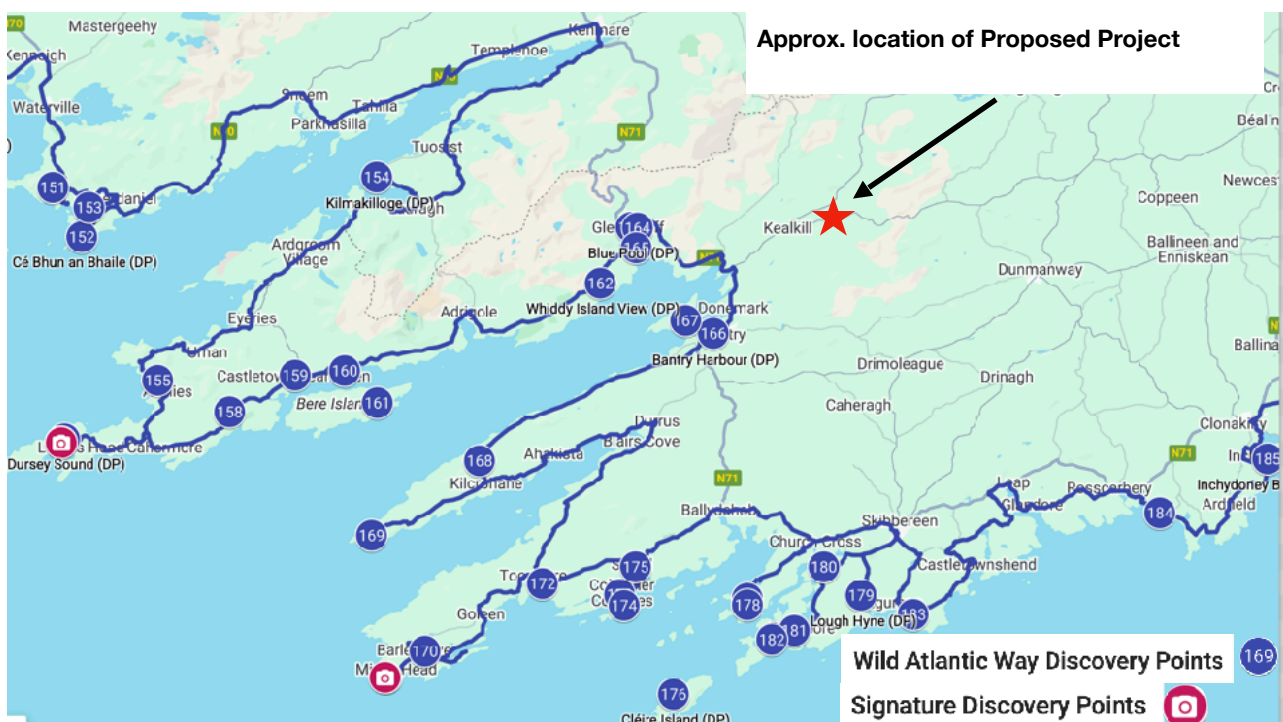
¹³ *Cork Key Tourism Facts 2024*, Fáilte Ireland.

¹⁴ *Cork Key Tourism Facts 2024*, Fáilte Ireland.

around Bantry for walking; Schull, Baltimore and Rosscarbery for waterbased activity; and Skibbereen and Clonakilty for culture, food and shopping.

6.5. West Cork is also the starting point for a journey westwards and northwards on the designated Wild Atlantic Way touring route - see Figure 3. While the coast is the main attraction for visitors, tourism agencies are encouraging visitors to explore away from the popular coastal route.

FIGURE 3: WEST CORK SECTION OF THE WILD ATLANTIC WAY



6.6. The more western part of West Cork is identified as being at an early stage of tourism development with a low tourism profile, and some domestic market recognition: classified as Aspiring or Pioneering by Fáilte Ireland in the WCKDEDP. This contrasts with the eastern part of the region which is considered to have greater tourism recognition and designated as either Progressing or Enhancing.¹⁵

¹⁵ "The eastern half of West Cork & Kenmare falls broadly into either the Progressing or Enhancing categories (established destinations with good domestic market recognition or a high international recognition factor). The western half of West Cork and Kenmare is categorised into Aspiring or Pioneering categories (destinations with low profile and destination recognition or good domestic market recognition)", WCKDEDP.

- 6.7. The WCKDEDP recognises that tourism in the region is also highly seasonal: *“Visitation to most parts of West Cork & Kenmare with the exception of Kinsale, tends to be seasonal with a high proportion of day trippers”*.
- 6.8. The long term vision outlined for the region in the WCKDEDP is that it will be *“recognised as a leading national outdoor activity destination through the quality of its outdoor trails and on-water experiences”* and as a *“premier food in tourism destination”*.
- 6.9. Looking at the Proposed Project location more specifically, as outlined in 3.1-3.3 above, the Site is located in a remote and mountainous area of West Cork, accessible from the R585 northeast of Kealkill.
- 6.10. It can be noted again that the Site is not located within a protected landscape, as referenced in 3.5 above and addressed in detail in the EIAR.

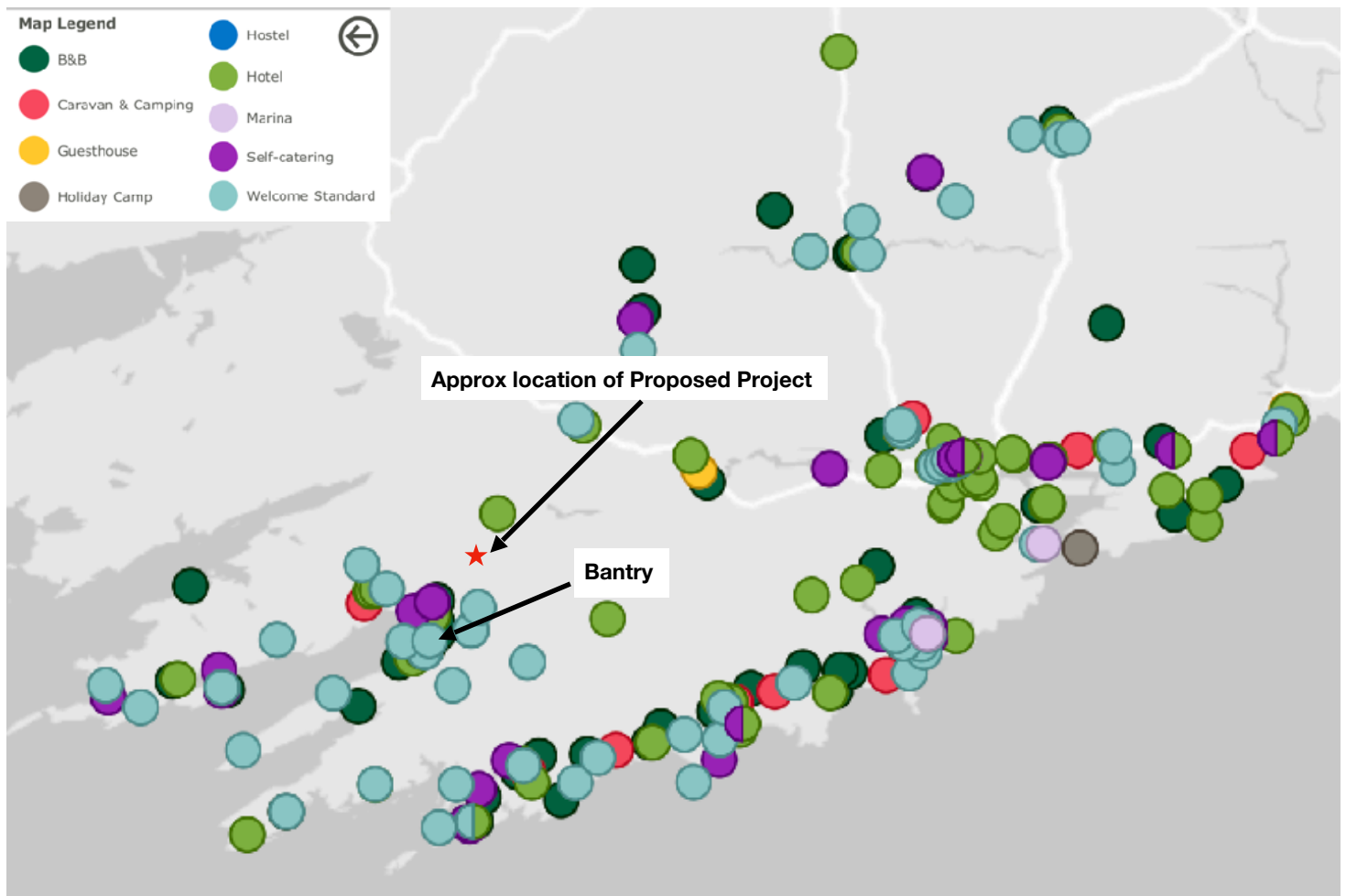
6B Significance

- 6.11. Visitor numbers are not published below county level and therefore tourism estimates are not available either for the Study Area associated with the Proposed Project or more broadly for West Cork.
- 6.12. Visitor numbers for County Cork - including Cork City - illustrate the significance of the County as a whole from a tourism perspective. In 2024, there were 1.8 million domestic trips and 981,000 overseas visitors to County Cork¹⁶.
- 6.13. In the absence of visitor numbers at sub-county level, the distribution of tourism accommodation and visitor attractions can be considered as they provide an opportunity to quantify tourism in particular locations and to establish their significance in tourism terms.
- 6.14. Tourism accommodation is a prerequisite for tourism as it provides the necessary infrastructure to support overnight stays. Conversely, operators will only invest in providing tourism accommodation if there is sufficient visitor demand in an area.

¹⁶ Cork Key Tourism Facts 2024, Fáilte Ireland.

6.15. County Cork has an approximate nightly bed capacity of over 20,000 beds, 39% of which is in Cork City. Outside of the City, tourist accommodation is distributed primarily along the coast, as illustrated in Figure 4.

FIGURE 4: DISTRIBUTION OF TOURIST ACCOMMODATION IN COUNTY CORK¹⁷



6.16. Looking specifically within the Study Area associated with the Proposed Project, there is only one registered accommodation premises within 5 km of the Site: Wild Hideaways Eco Retreat in Meelagh Valley which can cater for up to 12 guests. This suggests that the immediate area is not highly significant in tourism terms.

6.17. Outside of registered tourist accommodation, there are an additional eleven Airbnb premises within the Study Area. This is a form of accommodation that is speculative in

¹⁷ Tourist accommodation registered with Fáilte Ireland, 2025. Note that location of premises is approximate.

nature and is currently undergoing significant change with the introduction of the Short-Term Letting and Tourism Bill 2025¹⁸. It is not possible to determine how many of the twelve premises in the area will remain in business following the full implementation of this Bill. Currently, the twelve premises include 7 houses, 3 apartments/suites, one pub and one yurt.

- 6.18. The Bantry/Ballylickey/Glengarriff area - approximately 8-10 kms away from the Site - is the closest hub of tourism activity as gauged by the clustering of tourist accommodation illustrated in Figure 4 and Table 1. It can be noted that a significant proportion of accommodation in this area is accounted for by caravan and camping, suggesting a thriving domestic family market that is more interested in coast and sea than inland touring.

TABLE 1: LOCATION OF TOURIST ACCOMMODATION IN THE WIDER PROJECT AREA¹⁹

Town/Area	Number of Beds	% of County Cork Total (excl. City)
Bantry	684	5.6%
<i>-of which hotels</i>	471	
Ballylickey	661	5.4%
<i>-of which hotels</i>	45	
Glengarriff	606	5.0%
<i>-of which hotels</i>	217	
Ballyvourney	120	1.0%
Dunmanway	43	0.4%

- 6.19. Looking westwards to County Kerry, the closest accommodation hub is Kenmare - over 40kms away from the Site by road, or approximately 22kms in a straight line. There are also individual properties located in Lauragh, Tuosist and Kilgarvan - but these are also well beyond the range of impact of the Proposed Project

¹⁸ The General Scheme of Short Term Letting and Tourism Bill 2025, Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment.

¹⁹ Tourist accommodation registered with Fáilte Ireland, 2025.

- 6.20. The location of and visitor demand levels at visitor attractions provide further methods of quantifying tourism activity in an area in order to assess significance. A review of visitor attractions across County Cork (excluding the city) clearly identifies that the top attractions are located at a considerable distance from the site of the Proposed Project - see Table 2, which identifies attractions in Blarney, Carrigtwohill and Doneraile as the most visited.
- 6.21. Published data from recognised sources - Fáilte Ireland²⁰, the Association of Visitor Experiences and Attractions (AVEA)²¹ and the Office of Public Works (OPW)²² - does not identify any visitor attraction in the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Project site. Those closest are over 16km away by road and are of a much lower level of visitor demand than the most popular attractions (see Table 2).

²⁰ Fáilte Ireland, <https://www.failteireland.ie/Research-Insights/Activities/visitor-numbers-to-attractions-dashboard.aspx>.

²¹ AVEA, https://avea.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/2023_AVEA_Members_Survey_Final.pdf.

²² OPW, <https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/visitor-numbers-2024-final.pdf>.

TABLE 2: TOP VISITOR ATTRACTIONS IN COUNTY CORK & WIDER PROJECT AREA²³

Visitor Attraction & Location	Distance from Maughanaclea Townland by Road	Distance from Maughanaclea Townland - Straight Line	Number of Months Open	Number of Visitors
<i>Top County Attractions:</i>				
Doneraile Park, Doneraile	96km	66km	n/a	523,800
Blarney Castle & Gardens	70km	50km	12	470,000
Fota Wildlife Park, Carrigtwohill	86km	68km	12	430,024
<i>Attractions in the Wider Area:</i>				
Mizen Head Visitor Centre	58km	46km	10	77,178
Garnish Island (ferry), Glengarriff	20km	14.5km	7	69,981*
Bantry House & Gardens, Bantry	16km	11km	7	21,580

6.21. The absence of any visitor attraction in the immediate area identifiable through official data sources indicates that the area is not of high tourism significance, as concluded at 6.16 above based on the availability of tourist accommodation.

6.22. It is also important to consider the existence of other potential tourism assets that may not be captured through official sources of accommodation and visitor attractions data. Amenities and heritage sites that would be of interest to tourists are two further categories that need to be considered in assessing the tourism significance of the Proposed Project and surrounding area, and a review of tourism and trail websites indicates two that can be considered significant (also see Figure 5 for trails in the wider area listed by Sport Ireland).

²³ Annual Visitor Attractions Survey: Analysis of 2023, Fáilte Ireland. Except *, which is from OPW, 2024.

- St. Fin Barre's Oratory & Gougane Barra Forest Park. There is no visitor data available for St. Fin Barre's Oratory. Most recent data for the Forest Park is over ten years old and indicates approx. 63,000 visitors to the Park (Fáilte Ireland, 2010). This makes it a relatively significant tourism asset and, indeed, its reputation would support this. However, it is beyond the immediate area of the Proposed Project - 17km by road from Cousane and 19km from Maughanaclea - and is therefore not considered to warrant further evaluation. It is worth also noting that visual impact from the location was considered in Chapter 13: Landscape and Visual, where it was concluded that no visual effect would occur.
- The Sheep's Head Way. The Sheep's Head Way is 175km in length²⁴ from the Sheep's Head peninsula to Gougane Barra, with additional loops and sections that also act as locally branded trails - in this case St. Finbarr's Way. Section 13²⁵ of the Sheep's Head Way²⁶ linking Gougane Barra and Drimoleague is about 36km and passes to the south of the proposed southern cluster of turbines. This section is considered to be challenging/strenuous and takes about 2 days to complete. Section 14 of the Sheep's Head Way²⁷ - known locally as the two walks of Póc an Tairbh and Srón na Gaoithe - loops around the mountains north of Kealkill, starting and ending in the village. It is just under 20km in length and takes approx 5 hours to complete. Only experienced walkers are likely to attempt these trails and they would not be considered part of a mainstream tourism market. The vast majority of walkers (85%) prefer short walks of 1km-5kms²⁸, and have a preference for looped rather than linear walks.

²⁴ <https://www.sportireland.ie/outdoors/walking/trails/sheeps-head-way>

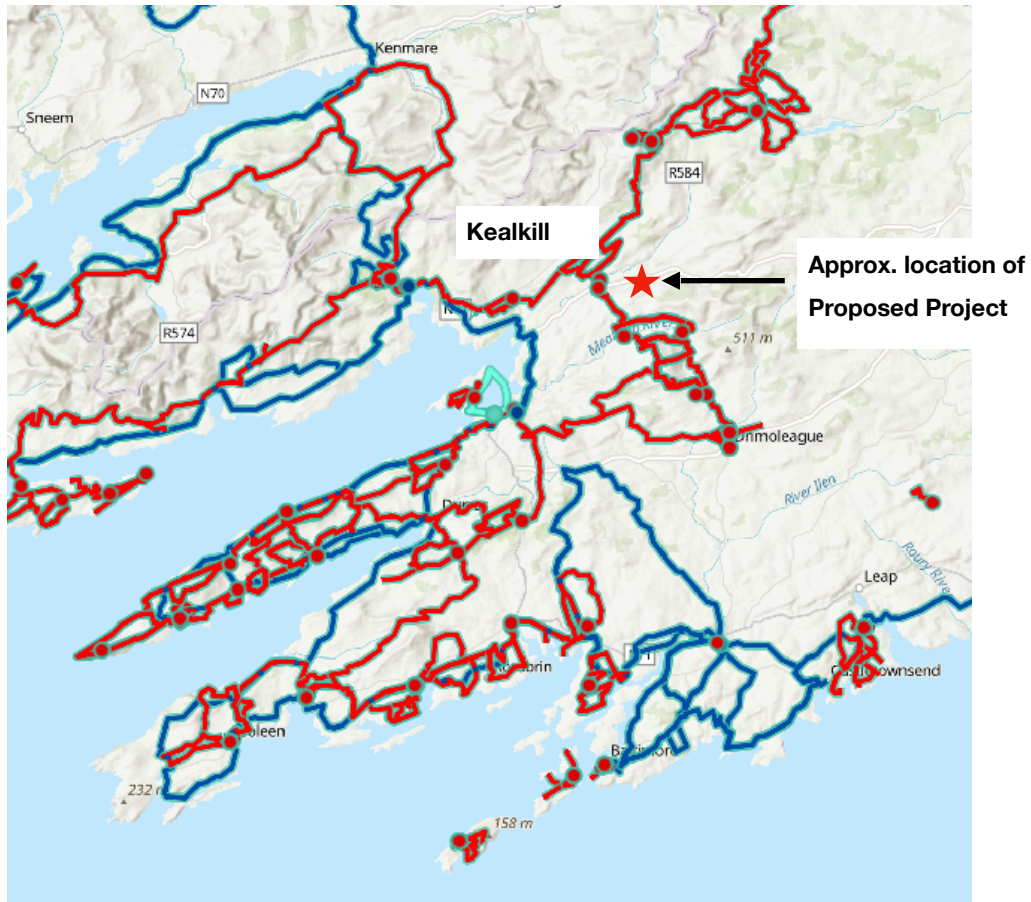
²⁵ [https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/media/document/2023-10/Sheep's Head Way 13.pdf](https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/media/document/2023-10/Sheep's%20Head%20Way%2013.pdf)

²⁶ https://thesheepsheadway.com/trails/eastern-trails/st_finbarrs_pilgrim_path/

²⁷ [https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/media/document/2023-10/Sheep's Head Way 14.pdf](https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/media/document/2023-10/Sheep's%20Head%20Way%2014.pdf)

²⁸ *Tourism Masterplan for the Beara Breifne Way*, Fáilte Ireland.

FIGURE 5: WALKING (RED) & CYCLING (BLUE) TRAILS IN THE WIDER DEVELOPMENT AREA²⁹



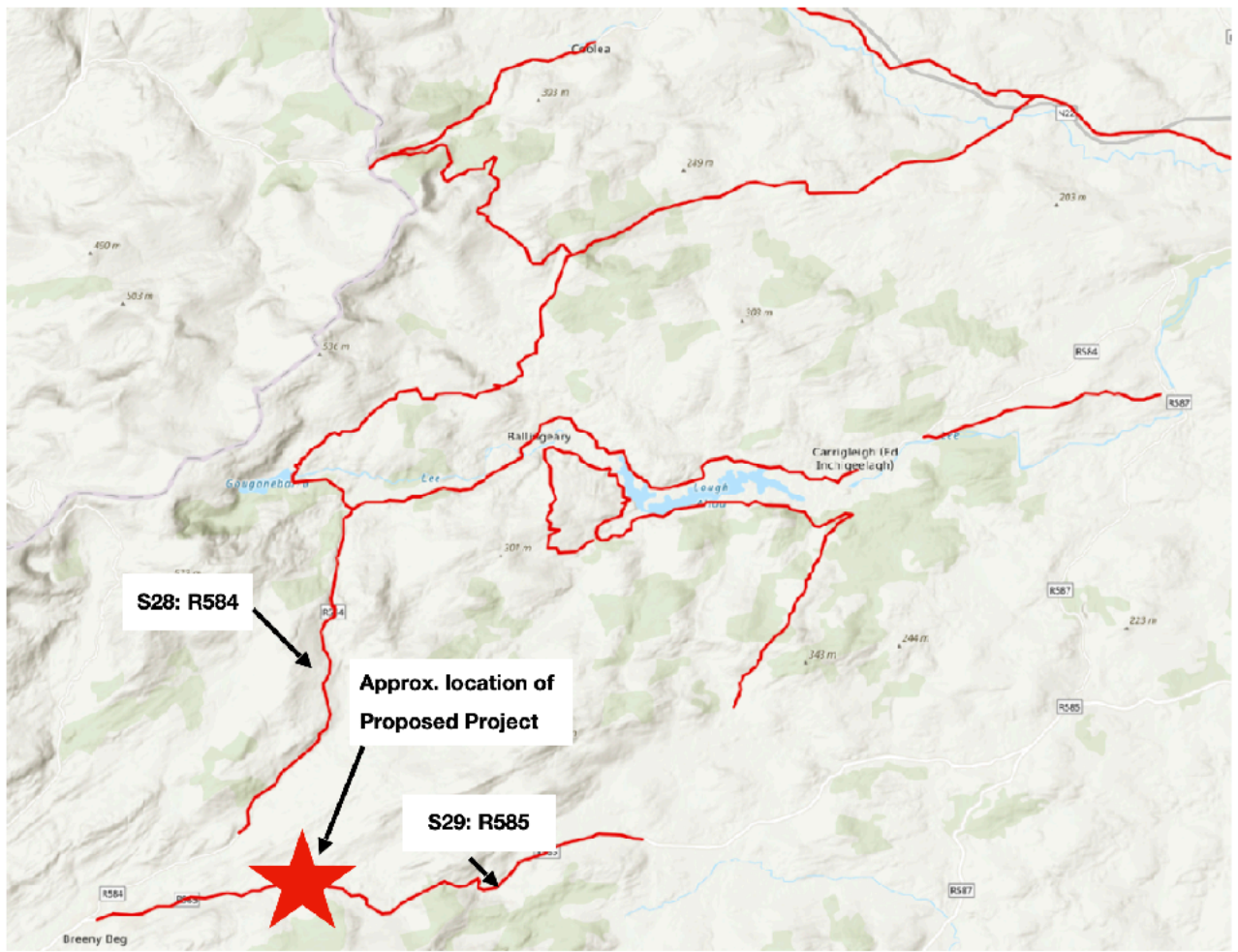
6.23. In addition to the two assets at 6.22, a number of scenic routes are identified as significant in the CDP: S29 and S28, which represent sections of the R585 and R584 respectively. See Figure 6.

6.24. Scenic route S29 is Regional Road R585 to Kealkill via Cousane Gap to Derragh Bridge. It will traverse the centre of the Site and therefore it warrants specific attention.

6.25. Scenic Route S28 is Regional Road R584 from a few kilometres north of Kealkill through the Pass of Keimaneigh to Gougane Barra. Sections of the route are within the immediate area and therefore it also warrants consideration.

²⁹ Sport Ireland.

FIGURE 6: SCENIC ROUTES, CDP³⁰



6.26. A review of the immediate development area through the Government’s Historic Environment Viewer indicates a significant number of small archaeological sites in the area - including standing stones, cairns and ring forts - but does not identify any that have tourism significance. The Viewer was accessed on 26th September 2025.

6.27. There are a number of other sites and assets which appear under a more general review of the area (online and site visit), and which the community might hope would have tourism appeal. They are as follows and are considered to be of modest scale, with very little tourism activity.

- Carriganass Castle in Kealkill, which is a ruined castle that is being cared for and presented by the local community. The on-site information office was closed when

³⁰ ESRI, <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?layers=f2eb3722297b4111baa83dec593b270a>.

CHL visited and showed signs of having been closed for some time - indicating limited tourism appeal.

- Kealkill also acts as a trailhead to the Sheep's Head / Beara Breifne Way, with supporting parking and picnic area. The Sheep's Head Way is considered at 6.22.
- Shehy Highland Park to the east has developed as a local amenity for hiking, guided tours and picnicking, with a small entrance fee.
- A variety of other walking trails, including the Maughanaclea Hills Loop (7.4km long) near Meelagh and the Meelagh Valley Loop (15.3km).
- Two stone circles: Kealkill Stone Circle and Breeny More Stone Circle. The cultural impacts to these monuments are assessed in Chapter 14: Cultural Heritage.

6.26. A final test of significance is the degree to which the area appears as a tourism asset in tourism strategies for the area. Neither the WCKDEDP nor the Three Peninsulas DEDP mention Kealkill, Dunmanway or any of the townlands in which the site of the Proposed Project is located³¹.

³¹ These are: Kealkill, Maularaha, Ardrah, Maughanaclea, Gortnacowly, Coomleagh West, Ballynamought, Gortloughra, Cousane, Coomclogh.

7. Potential Impacts of Proposed Project

7.1. Having assessed the tourism character of the Proposed Project and its surrounding area, and the significance of tourism assets located there, we now address the subsequent steps in assessing potential impact, namely: whether the Proposed Project will impact the identified assets and, if so, to what degree.

7.2. A key consideration in determining whether a Proposed Project will have an impact on tourism is whether tourists' experiences are affected by the nature of the development. In the case of the Proposed Project, therefore, tourists' attitudes to wind farms and turbines must be considered.

7.3. The most recent research in Ireland in this regard is Fáilte Ireland's Visitor Attitudes on the Environment: Wind Farms (2012). The following are key findings in relation to the impact of wind turbines on the experience of visitors.

- 56% of visitors saw a wind farm while on holiday in Ireland.
- Most wind farms seen by visitors were seen from a car (84%), indicating only a brief encounter as they drove past. Only 6% are seen while walking and the same proportion while cycling.
- Almost half of visitors said that seeing wind farms had no impact on their holiday (48%), and 32% said it had a positive impact.
- *"Seven out of 10 (or 71%) of visitors claim that potentially greater numbers of wind farms in Ireland over the next few years would have either no impact or a positive impact on their likelihood to visit Ireland. Of those who feel that the potentially greater number of wind farms would impact positively on future visits, the key driver is support for renewable energy, followed by potential decreased carbon emissions."*
- While the majority of visitors are clearly not negatively impacted by wind farms, there is a smaller proportion who considered they had a negative impact on their sightseeing experience (21%), and therefore *"the challenge... lies in striking a balance*

between the maintenance of landscape character and scenery as a tourism asset, and facilitating the development of further wind farms to ensure Ireland meets its GHG reduction targets”.

7.4. More recent international studies further support the findings of the earlier Fáilte Ireland research that wind farms can be considered to have a generally neutral impact on tourism. The following are only a selection of many such studies.

7.4.1. A 2020 UK study published in the Journal of Sustainable Tourism had this to say: *“The overarching conclusion in the extant literature that there is no evidence that tourists and tourism economies are positively or negatively affected by the development of onshore-wind- farms in rural UK landscapes is clearly at variance with the way tourists’ views are represented by local anti-onshore-windfarm discourses...”*³²

7.4.2. Another 2020 study by the University of Iceland³³, reviewing international experience, confirms that *“Most existing studies show rather low effects of wind farms on tourists’ decision-making to visit the area”*. The study also had this to say: *“visual impacts on the landscape and its character are identified as the most important impacts of wind turbines on tourism by visitors and local tourism stakeholders”* and that *“the most suitable combination of height, number, colour and distance from main tourist attractions and viewpoints should be identified for each specific project and location”*.

7.4.3. A slightly older study from Wales (2014) has a number of relevant points to make. Firstly, the *“study has shown that the areas most affected by wind farms (currently and in the next decade) account for a very small proportion of Wales’s total visitor economy.”* In other words, wind farms tend to be located away from areas of tourism concentration or where more lucrative uses of land might be a possibility. Secondly, *“the evidence base shows a clear majority of people do not*

³² Tom Mordue, Oliver Moss & Lorraine Johnston (2020) ‘The impacts of onshore-windfarms on a UK rural tourism landscape: objective evidence, local opposition, and national politics’, Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 28:11, 1882-1904, DOI:10.1080/09669582.2020.1769110.

³³ Edita Tverijonaite, Anna Dóra Sæþórsdóttir (2020), ‘Interrelationships of onshore wind farms with tourism and recreation: lessons from international experience for countries with an emerging wind energy sector’.

react negatively to wind farm developments or change their visiting behaviour as a result. However, it also shows that visitor responses and reactions to wind farms are highly subjective and depend on the individual's own judgements and perceptions of the relative merits of onshore wind as a means of energy production". It also found "no evidence that wind farms on visitor routes deter tourists", nor "any evidence of a fall in visitor numbers as a result of disruption during construction".

- 7.5. A further more general consideration is whether manmade energy-related infrastructure can be considered a deterrent to tourism and while this is a broad question, there are many incidents of tourism and such infrastructure coinciding, for example the large pylons along the valley of the Wicklow Gap in the Wicklow Mountains National Park. An example closer to the location of the Proposed Project is the viewing point along the Wild Atlantic Way in the townland of Drumleigh South, where electricity infrastructure is located (ref. Photomontage 9, EIAR Volume 2 Photomontage Booklet).
- 7.6. The assessment of the tourism character and significance of the area in the vicinity of the Proposed Project at Section 6 above illustrates that it can be considered to be of low tourism significance. The closest tourism hub is Bantry is approx. 10kms away and beyond the range of potential impact.
- 7.7. However, a small number of tourism assets have been identified in the immediate area as significant, and these require further assessment in relation to potential impact from the Proposed Project. These are:
- Sections of the Sheep's Head Way/St. Finbarr's Way (see 6.22 above and assessed at 7.7 below).
 - Scenic routes as identified in the CDP: S29 along R585 and S28 along the R584. (See 6.23 above and assessed at 7.8 and 7.9 below).
- 7.8. **The Sheep's Head Way.** As outlined in Table 4 below, it is considered that the Proposed Project has potential to have a negative impact on local sections of the Sheep's Head Way. However, as the impact is not expected to be significant due to the low visitor numbers using the trail (ref. 6.22 above) and the lack of evidence that wind farms are

perceived as negative by tourists (ref. 7.3 and 7.4 above), the impact on the tourism value of the trail is considered to be not significant.

TABLE 4: ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL IMPACT OF PROPOSED MAUGHANACLEA RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT ON LOCAL SECTIONS OF THE SHEEP’S HEAD WAY

Characteristic	Impact	Description
Quality	Negative	<p>The potential visibility of the proposed turbines has been assessed by MKO from points of greatest visibility on the Sheep’s Head Way (see Figures 7 and 8). It has also been further assessed by CHL on a Site inspection.</p> <p>Section 13 of the Sheep’s Head Way stretches between Kealkill and Meelagh and Coomleigh to the south of the Proposed Project location.</p> <p>The proposed turbines will be visible to varying degrees to walkers along the route for a distance of approx. 7km or up to about 2hrs, dependent on weather conditions.</p> <p>Section 14 loops around the mountains to the north of Kealkill for a distance of almost 20km, starting and ending in the village. The turbines will be visible to walkers along the route during the stretches closest to the village.</p> <p>Figures 7 and 8 illustrate the potential visibility from distances close to the trail. Figure 8 also indicates the location of the proposed Gortloughra wind farm. Figure 9 illustrates the Sheep’s Head Way route as a whole.</p>
Significance	Not significant	
Extent and Context	<p>The proposed turbines will be visible to varying degrees for approx. 7kms of the trail.</p> <p>Expected low visitor numbers affected due to low level of demand for linear walking trails in Ireland.</p>	
Probability	Likely	
Duration and frequency	<p>Long term, i.e. for the lifespan of the wind farm.</p> <p>See also Extent and Context.</p> <p>However, it should be noted that the impact on individual tourists is brief, i.e. lasting less than a day.</p>	

FIGURE 7: PHOTOMONTAGE AT 90° ILLUSTRATING VIEW FROM SHEEP'S HEAD WAY, SOUTH OF PROPOSED TURBINES³⁴

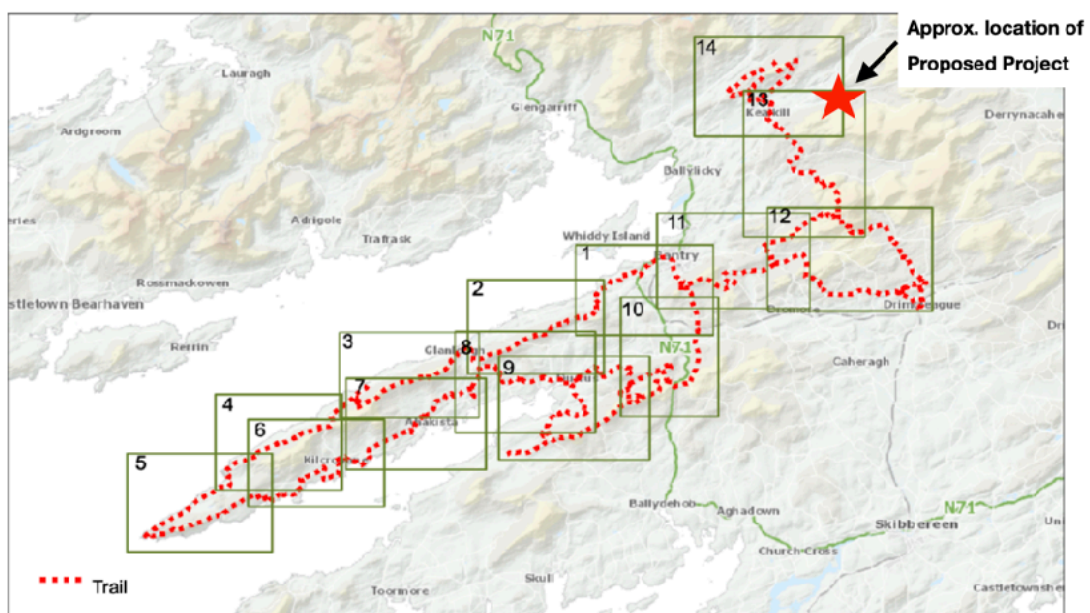


³⁴ View from Sheep's Head Way in the townland of Barnagowlane West, approx. 2.7km south of the nearest proposed turbine. Photomontage 5, EIA Volume 2 Photomontage Booklet, MKO.

FIGURE 8: PHOTOMONTAGE AT 90° ILLUSTRATING VIEW FROM SHEEP'S HEAD WAY, NORTH WEST OF PROPOSED TURBINES³⁵



FIGURE 9: SHEEP'S HEAD WAY ROUTE MAP³⁶



³⁵ View from Sheep's Head Way in the townland of Barnagowlane West, approx. 2.7km south of the nearest proposed turbine. Photomontage 18, EIA Volume 2 Photomontage Booklet, MKO.

³⁶ <https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/media/document/2024-02/shw-overview-map.pdf>

7.9. **Scenic Routes.** As outlined in Table 5, it is considered that the Proposed Project will have limited impact on sections of scenic route S29 - the R585 between Kealkill and Cousane Gap. The impact on the tourism value of the route is considered to be not significant for a number of reasons. These are:

7.9.1. The low level of tourism in the area. A key factor in assessing potential impact on tourism is the establishment in the first instance of the existence and level of tourism in the area that could be impacted - as discussed at 5 above. As seen from the analysis in 6 above, the majority of tourism activity in West Cork is situated along the coast.

7.9.2. The modest length of the route, which reduces the duration of any potential impact on tourists.

7.9.3. The manner in which tourists experience West Cork. From a tourism perspective, the vast majority of tourists are touring the area by car, which means they are continually moving unless stopping at a particular town or attraction. With regard to scenic route S29, the dominant views when travelling south are towards Bantry Bay and the distant Caha Mountains - which will remain unimpeded by the location of the proposed turbines.

7.9.4. The lack of evidence that wind farms are perceived as negative by tourists, with reference to 7.3 and 7.4 above.

TABLE 5: ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL IMPACT OF PROPOSED MAUGHANACLEA RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT ON SCENIC ROUTE S29

Characteristic	Impact	Description
Quality	Neutral	<p>The potential visibility of the proposed turbines has been assessed by MKO from the point of greatest visibility on the R585 at Cousane Gap (see Figure 10 below).</p> <p>This route has also been further assessed by CHL on a Site inspection.</p> <p>The scenic route identified as S29 is approx. 14kms long and takes about 13mins to drive. The route is winding and is lacking the necessary lay-bys/viewing points that would make it a tourism route (see Figure 11). In addition, the location of the proposed turbines is only visible from certain sections of the route, i.e. at Cousane.</p> <p>It is noteworthy that the most striking views are when travelling south and are towards Bantry Bay and the Caha Mountains rather than towards the hills where the proposed turbines would be located.</p>
Significance	Not significant	
Extent and Context	Limited visibility of the proposed turbines at a distance for those driving, walking or cycling along sections of R585 only (see Figure 10).	
Probability	Likely	
Duration and frequency	<p>Long term, i.e. for the lifespan of the wind farm.</p> <p>See also Extent and Context.</p> <p>There will be a moderate temporary impact during the construction phase as work vehicles access the Site from the R585.</p> <p>However, it should be noted that the impact on individual tourists is momentary, i.e. lasting only a few minutes if touring by car.</p>	

FIGURE 10: PHOTOMONTAGE AT 90° ILLUSTRATING VIEW FROM R585 OF TURBINES³⁷

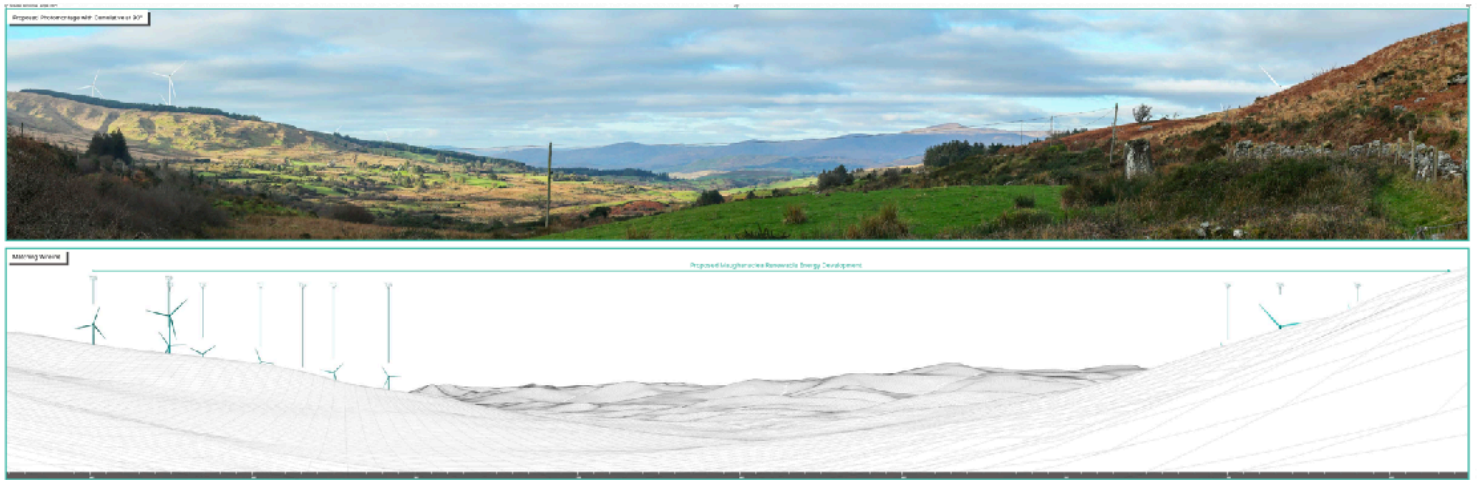
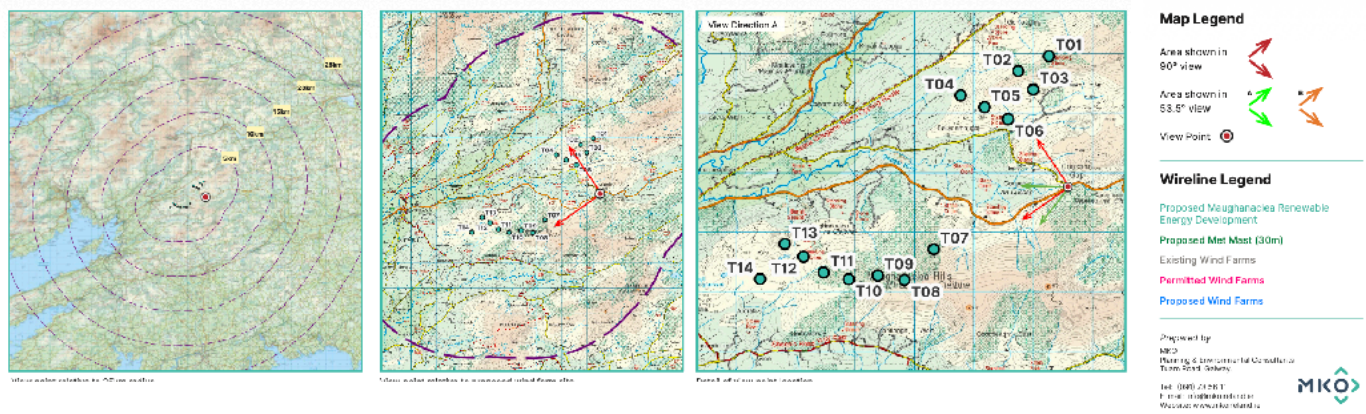


FIGURE 11: VIEW FROM THE R585 AT COUSANE GAP OF WHERE PROPOSED TURBINES WILL BE MOST VISIBLE³⁸ (REF. LEFTMOST SECTION OF FIGURE 10)



³⁷ View from the R585 Regional Road at Cousane Gap, approximately 1.5km south east from the nearest proposed turbine. Photomontage 10, EIAR Volume 2 Photomontage Booklet, MKO.

³⁸ CHL Site Visit, September 2025.

7.10. As outlined in Table 6, it is also considered that the Proposed Project will have limited impact on sections of scenic route S28 - the R584 through the Pass of Keimanagh to Kealkill. However, due to the modest length of the route and limited visibility in sections, the low level of tourism in the area (as discussed at 6 and at 7.8 above) and the lack of evidence that wind farms are perceived as negative by tourists (ref. 7.3 and 7.4 above), the impact on the tourism value of the route is considered to be not significant.

TABLE 6: ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL IMPACT OF PROPOSED MAUGHANACLEA RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT ON SCENIC ROUTE S28

Characteristic	Impact	Description
Quality	Neutral	<p>The potential visibility of the proposed turbines has been assessed by MKO from the point of greatest visibility on the R584, due south of the Pass of Keimaneigh (see Figure 12 below).</p> <p>This route has also been further assessed by CHL on a Site inspection.</p> <p>The relevant sections of scenic route identified as S28 is approx. 11kms long and takes about 17mins to drive. The route is winding and is limited in terms of lay-bys/ viewing points that would make it a tourism route. In addition, the location of the proposed turbines is only visible from certain sections of the route, i.e. due south from the Pass of Keimaneigh. It is not expected that the proposed turbines will be visible from the Pass of Keimaneigh itself due to restricted line of sight from the road (see Figure 13).</p>
Significance	Not significant	
Extent and Context	Limited visibility of the proposed turbines at a distance for those driving, walking or cycling along sections of R584 only (see Figure 12).	
Probability	Likely	
Duration and frequency	<p>Long term, i.e. the lifespan of the wind farm.</p> <p>See also Extent and Context.</p> <p>However, it should be noted that the impact on individual tourists is momentary, i.e. lasting only a few minutes if touring by car.</p>	

FIGURE 12: PHOTOMONTAGE AT 90° ILLUSTRATING VIEW FROM R585 OF TURBINES³⁹



FIGURE 13: PASS OF KEIMANEIGH: NARROW VISIBILITY DUE TO HIGH WALLS OF THE PASS⁴⁰



³⁹ View from the R584 Regional Road in the townland of Curraglass, approximately 4.2km north from the nearest proposed turbine. Photomontage 7, EIAR Volume 2 Photomontage Booklet, MKO.

⁴⁰ CHL Site Visit, May 2025.

8. Cumulative Impact

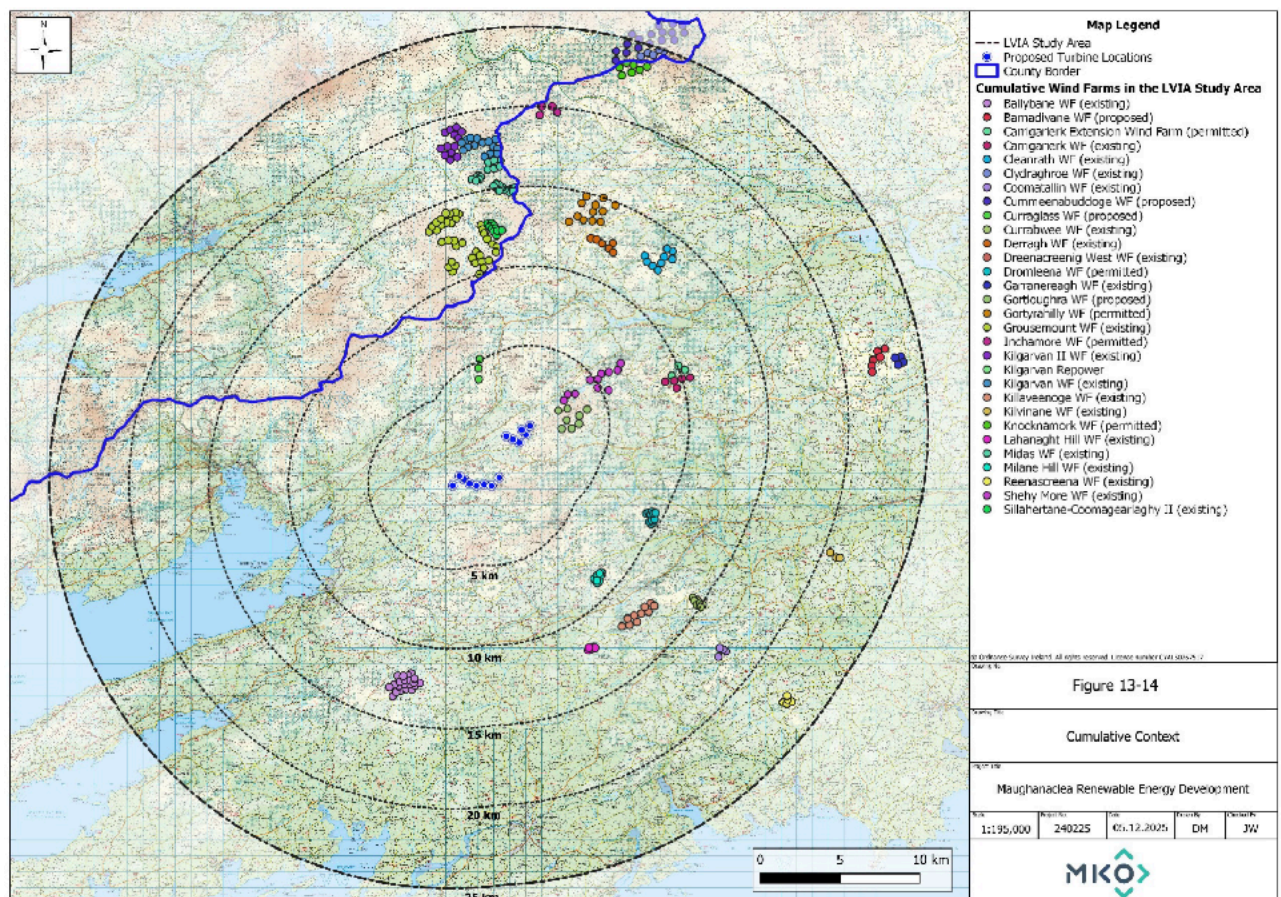
8.1. Assessment of the cumulative landscape impact of wind farm development on tourism and amenity sites in the area is also an important factor to consider. The location of existing, permitted and proposed wind farms has been considered by MKO and is detailed in Chapter 13: Landscape and Visual. Visibility of existing wind farm turbines was also considered by CHL as part of the site inspection, during which the following notes were made. References are made to Photomontages produced by MKO for the Proposed Project where appropriate, but it must be remembered that the experience of tourists is rarely static, unlike other sensitive receptors in the environment, as they are generally moving at pace through the landscape.

- Some wind turbines from Shehy More Wind Farm are visible in the distance driving along sections of the R584 travelling from Ballingearry in the direction of the Pass of Keimaneigh but their impact is moderate and momentary. (This is beyond the 5km viewpoint of Photomontage 7 in the EIAR Volume 2 Photomontage Booklet).
- Driving southwards from the Pass of Keimaneigh to Kealkill no turbines are visible. (Photomontage 7 in the EIAR Volume 2 Photomontage Booklet provides a view from south of the Pass).
- Doubling back and driving the R584 northwards, the tips of the same turbines from the Shehy More Wind Farm are visible for a few kilometres but no longer visible by the time you reach Future Forests Garden Centre, coming back into view sporadically as the road twists and turns. The impact is considered slight and momentary.
- Taking the R585 for about 2kms northwards out of Kealkill, the tips of four turbines at Grousemount Wind Farm are visible in the far distance. The impact is considered slight and momentary. (Photomontage 15 in the EIAR Volume 2 Photomontage Booklet provides a view from this area).

- Reviewing the landscape from the R585 at Cousane Gap in the context of the visibility of the proposed turbines for the Maughanaclea Renewable Energy Development, the tips of a Grousemount Wind Farm turbine are barely visible in the far distance. The impact is considered not significant and momentary. (Photomontages 10, 11 and 12 in the EIAR Volume 2 Photomontage Booklet provides views from this area).

8.2. Considering the visibility of existing turbines along with the permitted and proposed wind farms indicated in Figure 14, and taking into consideration the undulating nature of the landscape, the screening by trees and hedges, and the movement of tourists along their journeys, it is concluded that there will be no significant cumulative impact on tourism arising from the Proposed Project.

FIGURE 14: CUMULATIVE CONTEXT MAP⁴¹



⁴¹ Chapter 13: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, MKO

9. Conclusions

- 9.1. The Proposed Project is located in West Cork, a popular summer destination for domestic families and a region that is attractive due to its coastal scenery and supporting outdoor activities, including: walking, cycling, sailing and other water-based activities.
- 9.2. Most tourism activity is clustered along the coast and in the main coastal towns of Clonakilty, Skibbereen and Bantry, as evidenced by the distribution of tourist accommodation in these areas.
- 9.3. The more westerly areas of West Cork are considered by Fáilte Ireland to have a low tourism profile, with some domestic market recognition, and to have a highly seasonal pattern of tourism as well as consisting of a high proportion of day trippers.
- 9.4. The Proposed Project location and immediate surrounding area has a low level of tourism assets. Two assets have been identified in this TIA as warranting further consideration with regard to potential impact: the local sections of the Sheep's Head Way; and scenic routes S28 and S29 along Regional Roads R584 and R585.
- 9.5. It is considered that the Proposed Project has the potential to have a negative impact on the local sections of the Sheep's Head Way. However, the impacts are assessed as not significant.
- 9.6. It is considered that the Proposed Project will have limited impact on the two scenic routes identified in the area: S28 along sections of the R584 and S29 along sections of the R585. However, the impacts are assessed as not significant.
- 9.7. It is considered that there will be no significant cumulative impact on tourism arising from the Proposed Project.
- 9.8. On balance, this TIA concludes that the Proposed Project as described in Chapter 4: Description of the Proposed Project in the EIAR will not have a significant negative impact on tourism in the area nor on the value of tourism assets.

CHL

www.chl.ie