



Submission to An Coimisiún Pleanála

In respect of an application for the proposed development of

Ballincor Windfarm and Associated Infrastructure

Made to An Coimisiún Pleanála under

ACP Ref: ACP-324279-26

Observation Submitted on behalf of

Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway

Prepared by:

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Date:

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Observation submitted by the Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway

Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway welcomes the opportunity to make this Observation in respect of the proposed Ballincor Wind Farm (ACP Ref: ACP-324279-26).

This submission is made independently by Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway in its own right as a member of the I-LOFAR Consortium. It is intended to be complementary to, and read alongside, the detailed technical Observation submitted separately by Trinity College Dublin on behalf of the I-LOFAR Consortium in response to ACP-324279-26. Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway endorses the technical assessment and recommendations contained in that submission and does not seek to duplicate them here.

Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway is a founding member of the I-LOFAR Consortium and is an active research user of the Irish LOFAR (I-LOFAR) station at Rosse Observatory, Bir Castle, Birr, Co. Offaly. The facility is a nationally significant research infrastructure and forms Ireland's contribution to the pan-European LOFAR European Research Infrastructure Consortium (LOFAR ERIC). It supports internationally competitive research, postgraduate education, technological innovation and scientific collaboration across Ireland and Europe.

Researchers and students at Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway rely on I-LOFAR for research in radio astronomy, astrophysics, space science, signal processing and related disciplines. The facility also provides unique opportunities for postgraduate training, international collaboration and the development of advanced technical skills. Any significant degradation in the scientific performance of I-LOFAR would therefore have direct consequences for the University's research capability and for Ireland's wider research ecosystem.

Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway recognises and supports Ireland's renewable energy and climate objectives. However, these objectives *must be balanced with the protection of strategic national research infrastructure where significant adverse effects have not been adequately assessed or mitigated.*

Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway is concerned that the Ballincor Wind Farm application documentation and Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) do not provide an evidence-based assessment of the radio frequency interference impacts on I-LOFAR or demonstrate that appropriate mitigation measures can and would be successfully implemented. As outlined in the detailed technical Observation submitted separately by Trinity College Dublin, there remains a significant risk that the proposed development could permanently impair the operation of I-LOFAR if appropriate mitigation is not demonstrated and secured. The implications for the future scientific viability of this facility and the consequent impact to both indigenous research and innovation activities and Ireland's (and so this University's) standing as part of the LOFAR ERIC are as a consequence of enormous concern for Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway.



Accordingly, Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway respectfully requests that An Coimisiún Pleanála give full consideration to the technical evidence presented by Trinity College Dublin on behalf of the I-LOFAR Consortium. In particular, the Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway supports the request that the Applicant be required to provide comprehensive further information, including:

- a robust, evidence-based assessment of radio frequency interference risks prepared by suitably qualified experts;
- a full assessment of both direct emissions and scattering effects on I-LOFAR operations;
- demonstration that any proposed mitigation measures are technically effective, enforceable and capable of maintaining compatibility with I-LOFAR's operational requirements; and
- a revised Environmental Impact Assessment Report incorporating these assessments and any necessary mitigation commitments.

Ollscoil na Gaillimhe - University of Galway respectfully requests that this Observation be taken into account in the determination of the application.