Rooaunalaghta Green Energy Ltd.

Rooaunalaghta Wind Farm

Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report

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Project Director: Gareth Coughlin

Project Manager: James O'Connor

Authors: Susan Iremonger, James O'Connor

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APEM Group Woodrow
Upper Offices
Ballisodare Centre
Station Road
Ballisodare
Co. Sligo
F91 PE04
Ireland

Tel: +353 71 9140542
Web: www.woodrow.ie

Registered in Ireland No. 493496

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

APEM Group Woodrow (hereafter referred to as Woodrow) was engaged by Rooaunalaghta Green Energy Ltd., to undertake a Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) for the proposed wind farm at Rooaunalaghta, Co. Mayo, together with associated infrastructure (henceforth referred to as the proposed project).

1.2. Site Description

The proposed wind farm site is located approximately 2.5 km southwest of Shrule, Co. Mayo and approximately 3.5 km northwest of Headford, Co. Galway. The lands of the site are primarily comprised of agricultural fields bounded by stone walls, hedgerows and treelines with pockets of scrub and woodland in the eastern half of the site (refer to **Figure 1**).

The proposed wind farm site is located on either side of the R334 Regional Road, which runs in a northwest-southeast direction connecting Headford and Ballinrobe. The area surrounding the site can be described as rural with a mostly dispersed settlement type (though some clustering at Moyne). The nearest settlements are Moyne village to the southeast of the site and Glencorrib to the northwest, both along the R334.

The proposed wind farm site encompasses an area of approximately 222 ha and comprises a contiguous, irregularly shaped land parcel. The site extends approximately 1.2 km in a northwest/ southeast direction and approximately 3.2 km in a northeast/ southwest direction. Topography across the site ranges in elevation from approximately 25 m to 60 m AOD. Access to the proposed wind farm site is provided directly from the regional road (R334), which connects with the N84 National Secondary Road at Headford, Co. Galway.

The proposed project includes installation of the 33 kV private grid connection cable, a 110 kV Substation and 110 kV grid connection, as seen in **Figure 2**.

1.3. Purpose of this Document

The aim of this report is to provide supporting information to assist the Competent Authority (in this case An Coimisiún Pleanála (ACP)) to carry out an AA screening of the proposed project at Rooaunalaghta, Co. Mayo, in accordance with the requirements of Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). The purpose of this AA screening is to determine the potential Likely Significant Effects (LSE), if any, that the proposed project may have, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, on European Sites in view of their conservation objectives, within the potential 'Zone of Influence' (ZoI) (see **Section 2.2.1**) of proposed project. This report focuses on the proposed works to be carried out as outlined in **EIAR Chapter 2** and described briefly in **Section 3** herein**.**

The report sections, paragraphs and tables relate in sequence to the process of assessing the potential impact of the proposed project in the context of sequential requirements of Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive.

1.4. Brief Description of the Proposed Project

The layout of the proposed wind farm provides for 13 no. wind turbines (refer to **Figure 1**) and has been designed to minimise the potential environmental effects of the wind farm, while at the same time maximising the energy yield of the wind resource passing over the proposed wind farm site. A comprehensive constraint identification exercise, as described in **EIAR Chapter 3**, has been carried out to ensure that turbines and ancillary infrastructure are sited in the most appropriate areas of the proposed wind farm site.

The proposed project will connect to the national grid *via* an electrical grid connection. There will be a proposed control building at the northeastern edge the proposed wind farm site (near T8) which gathers all the power from the individual turbines (refer to **EIAR Chapter 2**).

It is proposed that the turbine components will be delivered to the proposed wind farm site *via* Galway Harbour in Galway City as shown in **Figure 3**. The Turbine Delivery Route (TDR) has been identified from a detailed traffic and transport assessment.

The detailed Swept Path Analysis uses both a non-segmented 67 metres (m) turbine blade in length carried on a standard transporter and a tower clamp vehicle for the turbine towers was carried out from port to the proposed wind farm site entrance as seen in **Figure 3**. All technical specifications and details of works along the TDR route are detailed in the **EIAR Chapter 2**.

The proposed wind farm site is located on lands under the ownership and control of local landowners. The third-party private landowners have consented to the application and proposed project.

Key components of the proposed project are summarised as follows:

- 13 no. wind c 150 m, a rotor diameter of 136 m, a hub height of 82 m, and all associated foundations and hard-standing areas in respect of each turbine;
- Creation of two new site entrances onto the R334 regional road;
- Construction of two temporary construction compounds with associated temporary site offices, parking areas and security fencing;
- One borrow pit. All works associated with the opening, aggregate and spoil extraction, and rehabilitation of the borrow pit (see **EIAR Chapter 2, Section 2.7.9**);
- Construction of approximately 6.8 km of new internal site access tracks and upgrade of approximately 1.5 km existing internal site access tracks, to include passing bays and all associated drainage;
- Construction of two temporary soil storage areas including associated drainage;
- Construction of a 340 m temporary new access track to connect to the adjacent operating quarry (approximately 150 m of which will be subject to further consent);
- Construction of drainage and sediment control systems;
- Construction of new on-site control building;
- Construction of one permanent 110 kV electrical substation compound, including:
    - One control building containing worker welfare facilities;
    - Electrical infrastructure and grid ancillary services equipment;
    - New site entrance onto the L2104;
    - Parking;
    - Lighting;
    - Fencing;
    - Wastewater holding tank;
    - Rainwater harvesting equipment;

    - Communications equipment and storage;
    - Associated electrical plant;
    - All associated infrastructure, services, and site works including landscaping;
- All works associated with the connection of the proposed wind farm to the proposed 110 kV loop-in substation, which will be *via* 33 kV underground cable connection (approximately 8.3 km in length), including 6 no. watercourse crossings, and the onward connection from the substation to the existing overhead line *via* 110 kV cables and steel lattice end masts with removal of one poleset;
- All associated underground electrical and communications cabling connecting the wind turbines to the proposed wind farm control building;
- All associated infrastructure and services including site works and signage;
- Construction of a lidar unit, and associated foundation and hard-standing area; and,
- All related site works and ancillary development including site drainage, security gates, fencing, permanent and temporary signage, berms, landscaping, tree/hedgerow/wall removal, soil excavation and biodiversity mitigation and enhancements, including hedgerow and tree planting.
- Temporary additional works required within the public road corridor to accommodate delivery of oversize turbine components.

The proposed project includes a Turbine Delivery Route (TDR) extending from Galway Harbour to the proposed wind farm site (see **Figure 3**). Temporary accommodation works are required at a single location along the route within Galway City, comprising the localised reinforcement of an existing footpath to facilitate the delivery of turbine components. In addition, minor hedgerow and vegetation trimming, together with the temporary removal and reinstatement of roadside signage, may be required at selected locations along the route. No other significant ground disturbance, hardstanding or infrastructure works are proposed along the TDR.

A 10-year planning permission and 35-year operational life from the date of commissioning of the entire wind farm with a permanent 110 kV substation and associated grid connection is being sought for the proposed project. The entire proposed project has been considered and assessed as part of the EIAR; however, the current planning application relates to the wind farm, sub-station and GCR.

Ancillary works associated with the proposed project include site entrances, temporary construction compounds, borrow pit development, drainage and sediment control measures, underground electrical and communications cabling, a lidar unit, worker welfare facilities at the substation, as well as landscaping and reinstatement works. See **Chapter 2** (Description of the proposed project) of the accompanying EIAR for more detail.

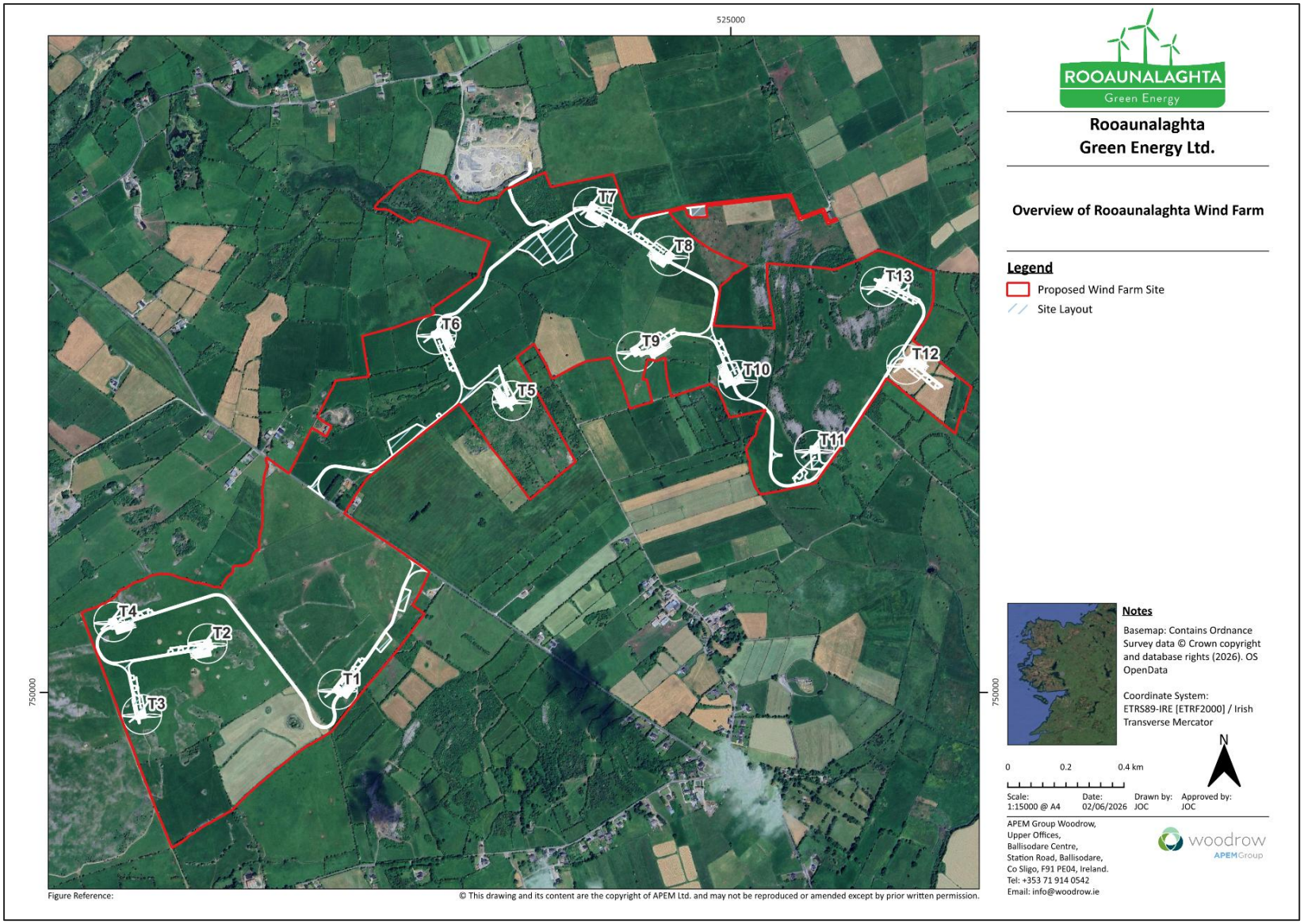


Figure 1: Overview of the proposed wind farm site layout and study area
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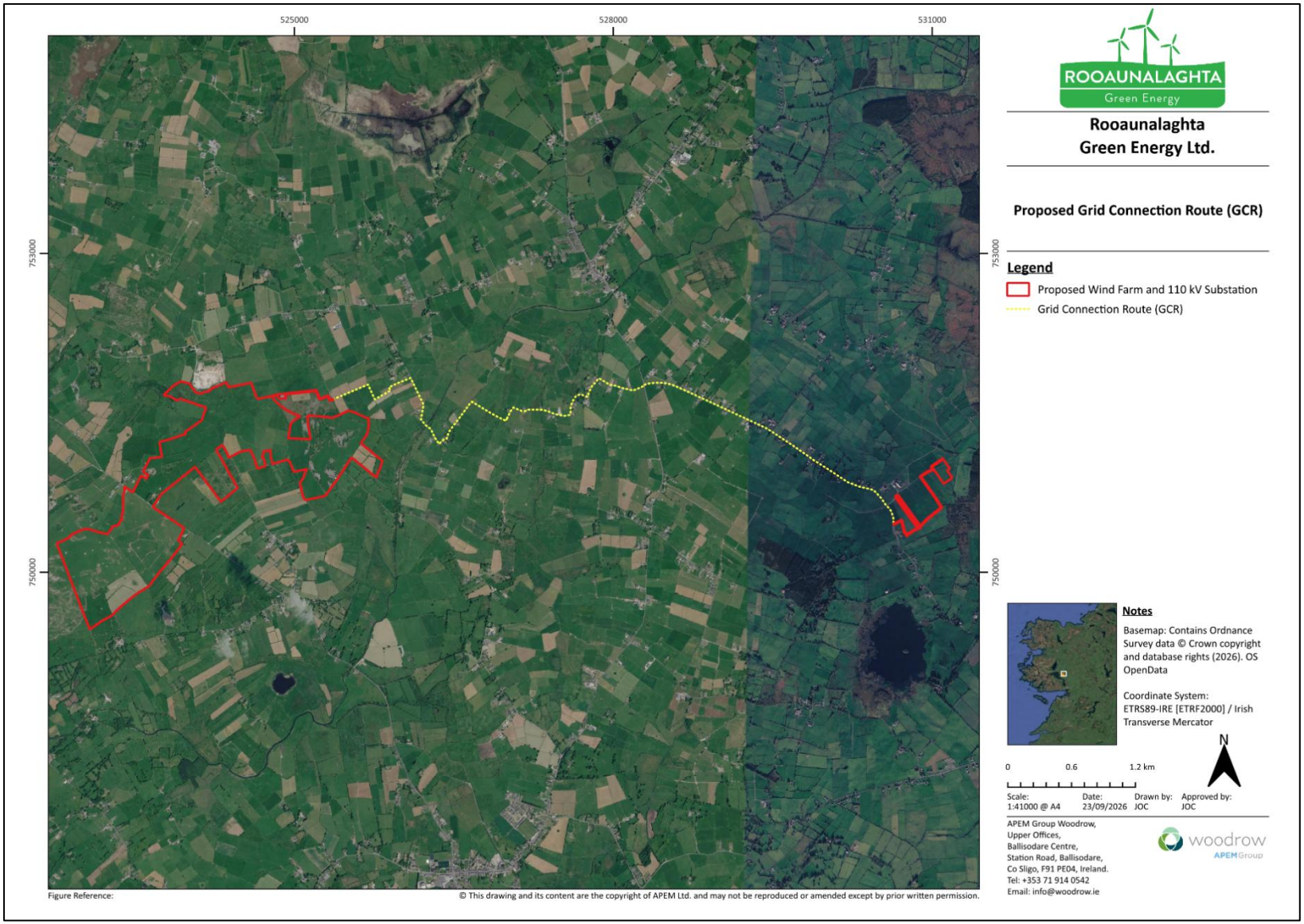


Figure 2: Grid Connection Route for the proposed project

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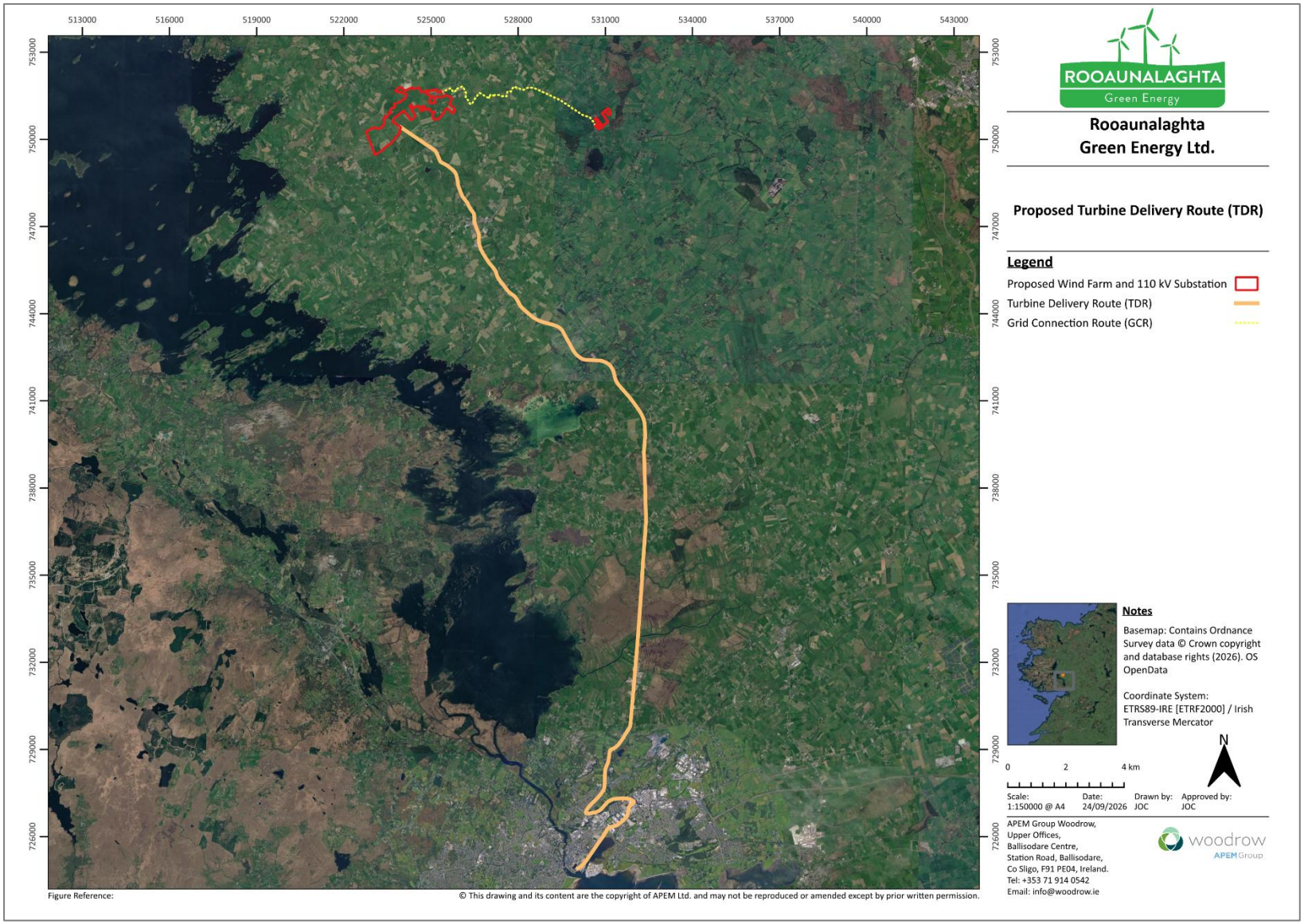


Figure 3: Proposed Turbine Delivery Route (from Galway Port) for the proposed project

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1.5. Objectives of the Appropriate Assessment Approach

The AA approach in Ireland is driven by the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) which is transposed into Irish Law by Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) (the "PDA 2000"), as well as the Planning and Development Act 2024, in respect of land use plans and proposed project requiring development consent and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011), as amended for all other activities, plans or projects. The objective of AA is to safeguard the long-term survival of habitats and species designated under European Sites, as defined in the PDA 2000, including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC).

The Habitats Directive promotes a hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation and compensatory measures to be addressed in the AA process (OPR, 2021) as follows:

- Firstly, a plan / project should aim to avoid any potential for negative impacts on European Sites;
- Secondly, mitigation measures should be applied during the AA process to the point where no adverse impacts on the site(s) remain;
- Thirdly a plan / project may have to undergo an assessment of alternative solutions. Under this stage of the assessment, compensatory measures are required for any remaining adverse effects, but they are permitted only if (a) there are no alternative solutions and (b) the plan / project is required for Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (the 'IROPI test'). European case law highlights that consideration must be given to alternatives outside the plan / project boundary area in carrying out the IROPI test.

1.6. Stages of Article 6 Assessment

The European Commission's guidance promotes a staged process, as set out below, the need for each being dependent upon the outcomes of the preceding stage:

1. Screening for Appropriate Assessment;
2. Appropriate Assessment;
3. Assessment of alternative solutions; and
4. Assessment where no alternative solutions remain and where adverse impacts remain.

The final stage is the Imperative Reason of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) test and requirement for compensatory measures.

1.6.1. Stage 1: Screening for Appropriate Assessment

Stage 1 of the process is intended to identify whether a project is 'likely to have a significant effect' either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, upon a European Site, referred to as 'Screening for AA'.

If the screening process identifies effects to be significant, potentially significant, or uncertain, or if the screening process becomes overly complicated, then the process must proceed to Stage 2 of AA. Screening is undertaken without taking into account any mitigation aimed at avoiding or reducing impacts that a project may have on European Sites.

1.6.2. Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment (Natura Impact Statement)

The stage considers whether the plan or project, alone or in combination with other projects or plans, will have adverse effects on the integrity of a European Site with respect to the site's structure and function and its conservation objectives after having taken account of any mitigation measures proposed to avoid, reduce or offset negative effects.

The proponent of the plan or project will be required to submit a Natura Impact Statement (NIS), i.e., the report of a targeted professional scientific examination of the plan or project and the relevant European Sites, to identify and characterise any possible effects on the site in view of the site's conservation objectives, taking account of in-combination effects. This should provide information to enable the competent authority to carry out the AA. If the assessment is negative, i.e., adverse effects on the integrity of a European Site cannot be excluded, then the process must proceed to Stage 3, or the plan or project should be abandoned.

1.6.3. Stage 3: Assessment of Alternative Solutions

If adverse effects upon the site's integrity cannot be ruled out, then Stage 3 will need to be undertaken to assess whether alternative solutions exist. If no alternatives exist that have a lesser effect upon the European Site(s) in question, a project can only be implemented if there are IROPI as detailed in Article 6(4).

1.6.4. Stage 4: Imperative Reasons of Over-riding Public Interest

If a plan or project is found to have adverse effects on the integrity of European Sites and there are no other options available, the plan can only proceed if it can be proven that there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest that supersede the negative effects. In such cases, compensatory measures will be necessary.

1.7. Legislative Context

The legislation relevant to this report is as follows:

- The Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC;
- The Birds Directive 2009/147/EC;
- European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended; and
- Planning and Development Acts 2000 (as amended) – PART XAB.

1.7.1. Requirement for Appropriate Assessment

The requirement for AA is set out in Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive requires:

> *"Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [Natura 2000] site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, shall be subjected to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or*

project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public."

The Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) has issued several rulings relating to AA. These rulings cover when it is necessary, what it should aim to achieve, and the standards it must adhere to. These rulings have considered the developments in the interpretation and application of directives and national laws resulting as of case law of the European and Irish courts, with regard to Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

1.7.2. Screening for Appropriate Assessment

An AA Screening provides the information necessary to fulfil the requirements of Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive 1992 and Regulation 42 of the (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011), as amended (i.e., Habitats Regulations), in determining the potential impacts on internationally designated sites arising from the Development. Regulation 42(1) of the Habitats Regulations requires that:

"A screening for Appropriate Assessment of a plan or project for which an application for consent is received, or which a public authority wishes to undertake or adopt, and which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site as a European Site, shall be carried out by the public authority to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge and in view of the conservation objectives of the site, if that plan or project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects is likely to have a significant effect on the European site."

The Habitats Directive was transposed into Irish law in a planning context, through Part XAB of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 (as amended). This sets out the circumstances under which an AA is required, the stages of that assessment which must be undertaken, and the responsibilities of the Competent Authority in considering whether or not to approve consent for proposed plans or projects.

Section 177U(1) of this Act states that:

"A screening for appropriate assessment of a draft Land use plan or application for consent for proposed development shall be carried out by the Competent Authority to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if that Land use plan or proposed development, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on the European site."

Section 177U(4) of this Act states that:

"The Competent Authority shall determine that an appropriate assessment of a draft Land use plan or a proposed development, as the case may be, is required if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the draft Land use plan or proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site."

If, following the screening process, a Likely Significant Effect is predicted or cannot be ruled out; under s177U(4) of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 (as amended), an AA is required in order to determine the potential for impact on the integrity of a European Site.

1.8. Case Law

This AA screening was undertaken in accordance with the of case law, including judgments of the Irish and European Courts.

Case law[1] has established that measures designed to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of a development on a European Site (i.e., specific mitigation measures) cannot be considered at the screening stage of the AA process (i.e., Stage 1) and where this arises, the plan or project must be assessed fully. However, a 2023 ruling on the Eco Advocacy CLG v An Bord Pleanála and Keegan Land Holdings Limited [2021] IEHC 265 has clarified that standard design features inherent to a project, such as drainage systems that remove contaminants, may be considered at the screening stage, provided they are not specifically introduced to mitigate impacts on a European Site. Hence, while specific mitigation measures aimed at avoiding or reducing impacts the proposed project may have on European Sites may not be taken into account at the screening stage, built-in standard design elements with the incidental effect of reducing the harmful effects of the plan or project, can be considered as part of the screening process.

1 People Over Wind and Peter Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta (C-323/17); and, Heather Hill Management Company clg v An Bord Pleanála [2019] IEHC 450.

2. METHODS

2.1. Data Collection

2.1.1. Desk Study

On determining the ZoI (see **Section 2.2.1**), a desk study was carried out to collate information available on European Sites within this ZoI. The following legislation, regulatory documents and relevant sources of information were consulted:

- Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009 as amended in 2010). Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities.
- Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities. Circular NPWS 1/10 & PSSP 2/10.
- European Community Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) – The Habitats Directive (European Commission 1992).
- European Commission (2021) Commission Notice - Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.
- European Commission (2021) ANNEX to the Commission Notice - Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitat's Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2019).
- Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) (2021) OPR Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management.
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Maps[2].
- National Parks and Wildlife Services online Map Viewer[3].
- Ireland's National Geospatial Data Hub online Map Viewer[4].
- Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) Open Data Hub[5].
- Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) Data and Maps[6].
- Mayo County Council Planning Portal (2026)
- Mayo County Council Development Plans 2022–2028 (2025)
- Galway County Council Planning Portal (2026)
- Galway County Council Development Plans 2022–2028 (2022)
- Wilson, S. and Fernández, F. (2013). National survey of limestone pavement and associated habitats in Ireland. Irish Wildlife Manuals, No. 73. NPWS, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Ireland.
- National Biodiversity Data Centre[7]
- TOBIN – An AtkinsRéalis Company (2026). Rooaunalaghta Green Energy Ltd. Environmental Impact Assessment Report **(EIAR)** https://rooaunalaghtagreenenergyplanning.ie/
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2 EPA Maps. Available at: https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/ [Accessed April 2026]

3 NPWS Designations Viewer. Available at: https://dahg.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/ [Accessed April 2026]

4 Geohive Map Viewer. Available at: https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/ [Accessed April 2026]

5 IFI Open Data Hub: Available at: https://opendata-ifigeo.hub.arcgis.com/ [Accessed April 2026]

6 GSI Data and Maps: Available at: https://www.gsi.ie/en-ie/data-and-maps/ [Accessed April 2026]

7 NBDC Map Viewer and Datasets. Available at: https://www.maps.biodiversityireland.ie/

A full list of references is provided in **Section 7**.

2.1.2. Site Visits

Surveys of the proposed wind farm site and its environs were conducted between September 2022 and April 2026, in order to establish an ecological baseline at the proposed project, including along the GCR and TDR. These comprised Phase 1-type habitat surveys (including classification following Fossitt Level 3 (Fossitt, 2000)and Annex I verification), detailed botanical quadrat surveys at turbine locations, and targeted surveys for mammals (including otter (*Lutra lutra)*) (refer to **EIAR Appendix 6-3**). In addition, separate ornithological (2022-2026) and aquatic ecology studies were completed, including supplementary aquatic surveys undertaken in August 2026 to update the fisheries and aquatic ecology baseline (2023-2025), together with a full season of bat activity monitoring completed in 2024 and an additional roost emergence survey undertaken in 2026 (refer to **EIAR Appendix 6-4** (bats), **EIAR Appendices 6-5** and **6-7** (aquatic ecology) and **EIAR Appendix 7-8** (ornithology)). These surveys assisted in establishing the potential connectivity with European Sites, the presence of Invasive Alien Species (IAS) and any Qualifying Interests (QIs) or Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) that may occur within the study area or within the immediate vicinity of the proposed project.

2.2. Approach to Screening for Appropriate Assessment

Section 3.2.3 of the Guidance for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2010) states that a screening assessment should include any European Site within or adjacent to the plan or project area and any European Site within the likely ZoI of the plan or project.

The approach taken in preparing the AA screening is summarised as follows:

- Identify European Sites within the potential ZoI of the proposed project;
- Identify the QIs of the European Sites and review their conservation objectives;
- Review whether there is potential for the QI to be affected by a project based on information such as the vulnerabilities of the European Site, proximity to the Site and the nature and scale of the works associated with a project;
- Consider the likelihood of the identified potential impacts, in the absence of mitigation, occurring based on the information collated and professional judgement;
- Consider the likelihood of cumulative effects arising from a project in-combination with other plans and projects; and
- Identify the likelihood of significant effects on European Sites occurring because of a project.

Following the above process, for each European Site (and their QIs/SCIs) considered within the AA screening, it will be concluded that either:

- There are no LSEs on the European Site(s) and their QIs, and therefore no further assessment is required; or,
- The potential for LSEs on the European site(s) and their QIs/SCIs cannot be discounted and therefore Stage 2 AA (NIS) is necessary.

A precautionary approach is applied and so if the potential for LSE cannot be excluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt, then the relevant site will be screened into the subsequent stages of the NIS process.

2.2.1. Zone of Influence

The ZoI for a project is the area over which ecological features may be affected by biophysical changes as a result of a project and associated activities. This is likely to extend beyond the proposed project, for example where there are ecological or hydrological links beyond the site boundaries. The ZoI will vary for different ecological features depending on their sensitivity to an environmental change (CIEEM, 2018).

Guidance from the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR, 2021) states that the ZoI for a project should be established on a case-by-case basis using the Source-Pathway-Receptor (S-P-R) model. The S-P-R model is applied to this assessment with reference to the nature, size and location of a project and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors.

In order to identify potential pathways between the proposed project and European Sites, the following data and information were consulted:

- Catchment data were used to establish or discount potential hydrological connectivity.
- Groundwater and bedrock information were used to establish or discount potential hydrogeological connectivity, having regard to the findings of the Hydrology and Hydrogeology Assessment (**EIAR Chapter 9**).
- Air and land connectivity was assessed based on the proposed project description and proximity to European Sites.

Additionally, the ZoI includes consideration of collision risk to SCI bird species within 20 km (SNH, 2016), particularly where proposed infrastructure may pose a risk to bird flight paths, both within the proposed wind farm site and in the surrounding area. This includes potential indirect pathways such as impacts to flight lines of migratory species and connectivity with *ex situ* habitats.

To assess the potential for significant effects arising from the proposed project, a number of key indicators were considered that would take into account the effects of site work, e.g., rock removal, rock displacement, land reclamation, dumping, grike filling, trampling and scrub removal, including:

- Loss of habitat area or alteration;
- Habitat/species fragmentation;
- Disturbance and/or displacement of species;
- Changes in population density; and
- Changes in water quality and resource.

No limitations were encountered that would preclude a robust assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed project on European Sites.

2.2.2. In-combination Effects

In-combination effects can result from individually insignificant but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time or concentrated in a location. In-combination effects can occur where a proposed project results in individually insignificant impacts that, when considered in-combination with impacts of other proposed or permitted plans and projects, can result in significant effects (CIEEM, 2018).

Other plans and projects to be considered would include the following types of future development within the same ZoI:

- Proposals for which consent has been applied which are awaiting determination in any regulatory process (not necessarily limited to planning permission);
- Projects which have been granted consent (not limited to planning permissions) but which have not yet been started, or which have been started but are not yet completed (i.e., under construction);
- Other operational, approved, or proposed major developments; and
- Proposals which have been refused permission, but which are subject to appeal, and the appeal is undetermined.

Different types of actions can cause cumulative impacts and effects. As such, these types of impacts may be characterised as:

- Additive/incremental – in which multiple activities/projects (each with potentially insignificant effects) add together to contribute to a significant effect due to their proximity in time and space (CIEEM, 2018); and
- Associated/connected – a development activity enables another development activity, e.g., phased development as part of separate planning applications. Associated developments may include different aspects of the proposed project which may be authorised under different consent processes. It is important to assess the potential impacts of the 'project' as a whole and not ignore impacts that fall under a separate consent process (CIEEM, 2018).

In addition to future developments identified through the Galway County Council (2026) and Mayo County Council Planning Portal (2026), relevant local planning policies, such as the Galway County Council (2022) and Mayo County Council Development Plans 2022–2028 (2025), were also considered.

3. DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The layout of the proposed wind farm provides for 13 no. wind turbines (see **EIAR Chapter 2**) and has been designed to minimise the potential environmental effects of the wind farm, while at the same time maximising the energy yield of the wind resource passing over the proposed wind farm site. A comprehensive constraint identification exercise (as described in **EIAR Chapter 3**), has been carried out to inform the siting of turbines and ancillary infrastructure within the most suitable areas of the site.

The proposed project will connect to the national grid *via* a 33 kV electrical connection from a proposed on-site control building at the northeastern part of the proposed wind farm site (near T8), which will collect power from the turbines and export it *via* the GCR (refer to **EIAR Chapter 2**).

Turbine components will be delivered to the proposed wind farm site *via* Galway Harbour in Galway City as shown in **Figure 3**, with the TDR has identified through a detailed Traffic and Transport Assessment. A Swept Path Analysis has been undertaken using a 67 m turbine blade and tower transport vehicles to confirm route feasibility. All associated works along the route are detailed in the **EIAR Chapter 2**.

The proposed wind farm site is located on lands under the ownership and control of local landowners. The third-party private landowners have consented to the application and proposed project.

Key components of the proposed project are summarised as follows:

- 13 no. wind turbines with a blade tip height of 150 m, a rotor diameter of 136 m, a hub height of 82 m, and all associated foundations and hard-standing areas in respect of each turbine;
- Creation of two new site entrances onto the R334 regional road;
- Construction of two temporary construction compounds with associated temporary site offices, parking areas and security fencing;
- One borrow pit: All works associated with the opening, aggregate and spoil extraction, and decommissioning of the borrow pit;
- Construction of new internal site access tracks, to include passing bays and all associated drainage. Proposed track widths of 5m with an increase to 9.5m in parts, with total lengths of new tracks approximately 6.8 km and upgrades of an additional 1.5 km (details in **EIAR Chapter 2**, **Section 2.6.3**);
- Construction of drainage and sediment control systems;
- Construction of new on-site control building;
- Construction of one permanent 110 kV electrical substation compound, including:
    - One control building containing worker welfare facilities;
    - Electrical infrastructure and grid ancillary services equipment;
    - Parking, lighting and fencing;
    - Wastewater holding tank;
    - Rainwater harvesting equipment;
    - Communications equipment and storage;
    - Associated electrical plant;
    - All associated infrastructure, services, and site works including landscaping.
- The proposed 110 kV substation will be accessed *via* a proposed new site entrance onto the L2104 in Co. Galway

- All works associated with the connection of the proposed wind farm to the proposed 110 kV substation, which will be *via* 33 kV underground cable connection (refer to **EIAR Chapter 2** for details);
- A permanent 110 kV substation compound including control building, electrical plant, ancillary equipment, parking, lighting, fencing, wastewater storage, rainwater harvesting and communications equipment;
- All associated underground electrical and communications cabling connecting the wind turbines to the proposed wind farm control building;
- All associated infrastructure and services including site works and signage;
- Construction of a lidar unit, and associated foundation and hard-standing area; and
- All related site works and ancillary development including site drainage, security gates, fencing, permanent and temporary signage, berms, landscaping, soil excavation and biodiversity mitigation and enhancements, including hedgerow and tree planting.

The proposed project includes a Turbine Delivery Route (TDR) extending from Galway Harbour to the proposed wind farm site (see **Figure 3**). Temporary accommodation works are required at a single location along the route within Galway City, comprising the localised reinforcement of an existing footpath to facilitate the delivery of turbine components. In addition, minor hedgerow and vegetation trimming, together with the temporary removal and reinstatement of roadside signage, may be required at selected locations along the route. No other significant ground disturbance, hardstanding or infrastructure works are proposed along the TDR.

A 10-year planning permission and 35-year operational life is sought for the proposed project, noting that the EIAR assesses the entire proposed project while certain elements may be subject to separate future consents.

For more detail on the proposed project, refer to **EIAR Chapters 2 and 3**.

4. RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT

The proposed project, including the GCR and 110 kV substation, is located within the Corrib hydrological catchment in a rural agricultural setting, with the majority of the proposed project situated within the Black (Shrule) sub-catchment (SC_010), which drains to the Black River (EPA Code: 30B02). The landscape consists almost entirely of improved grassland, interspersed with hedgerows, treelines and areas of scrub. The proposed wind farm is bisected by the Regional road R334, and the GCR connects with the local road L2104, to the east of the proposed project. The Black River is located c. 180 m to the east of the proposed wind farm, and the Rooaounalaghta Stream (EPA Code: 30R03) forms a hydrological pathway between the proposed wind farm site and the Black River, which flows into Lough Corrib. The Black River and its tributary, the Shancloon Stream (EPA Code: 30S32) are also crossed by the proposed GCR.

EIAR Chapter 8 (Land, Soils and Geology) provides information on the geology and soils of the proposed wind farm site, while **EIAR Chapter 9 (Hydrology and Hydrogeology)** contains information on the underlying aquifer and groundwater vulnerability. The underlying bedrock is mainly limestone with some glacial till[8]. The underlying bedrock aquifer is regionally important (karst aquifer), and the vulnerability categorised as 'extremely vulnerable to human activities' and 'rock at or near the surface'. Soils are mainly brown earths with limestone rocks.

4.1. Site Visits

Site visits confirmed the following EU Annex I habitats (Fossitt, 2000) present in the proposed wind farm site (see **EIAR Chapter 6 (Biodiversity)**, including the relevant technical appendices, for full details of baseline surveys): [8240] Limestone pavements*, [6210] Semi-natural dry grassland and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*), [4030] European dry heaths, and two areas of [3180] Turloughs, extending to outside the boundary of the proposed wind farm. Of note, [8240] Limestone pavements* are a QI of Cloughmoyne SAC (000479), which adjoins the proposed wind farm.

Bat surveys undertaken within the proposed project area recorded a range of bat species, including lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*), albeit at low levels of activity. While lesser horseshoe bat is a QI of Lough Corrib SAC (000297), the nearest known records associated with the SAC are located along the north shore of Lough Corrib, approximately 13.4 km from the proposed project. This distance exceeds the core foraging range of lesser horseshoe bat (NPWS, 2018; Collins, 2023).

Regarding alien invasive species listed under the Third Schedule of the European Communities Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477 of 2015), one North American mink (*Neovison vison*) was incidentally observed in the proposed wind farm. Mink is classified as invasive in Ireland and is known for its ecological impacts, particularly on ground-nesting birds, small mammals and aquatic species. Other non-native species recorded included rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*). Signs such as droppings and burrows were noted during the targeted mammal surveys, and one individual was observed when flushed between T5 and T6. Rabbits are classified as a Medium Impact Invasive Species.

[8] Source: https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/ (Accessed May 2026)

Along the GCR corridor, four invasive alien plants were observed: rock cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*), cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), winter heliotrope (*Petasites fragrans*), and sycamore trees (*Acer pseudoplatanus*). Additionally, butterfly bush (*Buddleia davidii*) and winter heliotrope (*Petasites fragrans*) occurred along the TDR.

Surveys for otter were also completed as per Irish guidelines for the *Treatment of Otters prior to the Construction of National Road Schemes* (National Roads Authority [NRA], now Transport Infrastructure Ireland [TII], 2008). Surveys were conducted in the proposed wind farm as well as along the GCR where bridge crossings were involved, including at the Black River and Shancloon Stream (refer to **EIAR Chapter 6** for details). These surveys confirmed recent otter activity, with field signs concentrated along the Black River (EPA Code: IE_WE_30B020300) near the eastern boundary of the proposed wind farm as well as near the GCR crossing of the Black River and also at the Shancloon Stream, downstream of the proposed 110 kV substation (see **EIAR appendix 6-3, Figure 7**). The evidence gathered suggests that otter utilise the watercourse areas surveyed and riparian habitat as part of a wider home range, for hunting and commuting. This is due to the high foraging potential of the watercourses, supported by ample prey availability. One incidental sighting of an otter feeding during a breeding bird survey in May 2024, c. 500 m southeast of the proposed wind farm boundary (see **EIAR Appendix 6-3, Figure 7**) supports this conclusion.

Aquatic surveys for water quality (water chemistry and Q-values), fish habitat suitability, and white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) were carried out in August 2023, whilst a walkover survey was completed in November 2025, to ensure that there had been no material change in land use and that baseline conditions remained unchanged (refer to **EIAR Appendix 6-5**). Although there are no known records of freshwater pearl mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera*) within the Black River, the species occurs within the wider Lough Corrib catchment, primarily associated with the Owenriff River (EPA Code: 30O02), which is not hydrologically connected to the proposed project. As such, a Stage 1 survey was undertaken in August 2024 to confirm their absence. Survey sites were chosen taking into account the location of watercourses in relation to the proposed wind farm (see EIAR Aquatic Ecology Baseline Report (**EIAR Appendix 6-5, Appendix D**). Given the hydrological connectivity of the Black River and downstream Lough Corrib (see **Figure 4)**, the Black River and its tributaries, including the Rooaunalaghta and Cloughmoyne streams, which run close to the proposed wind farm, were the focus of the surveys.

Additional aquatic ecology surveys were completed in August 2026 to update the baseline and confirm existing conditions within the receiving environment. These surveys included fisheries, aquatic habitat, macroinvertebrate and eDNA surveys of the Black River and associated tributaries, together with surveys of selected standing water habitats within and adjacent to the study area (refer to **EIAR Appendix 6-7**). The results broadly corroborated the findings of the earlier surveys and confirmed the continued importance of the Black River as the principal aquatic receptor within the study area.

Water chemistry results for the Black River indicate good quality with generally low nutrient concentrations. This is supported by macroinvertebrate survey results, with macroinvertebrate surveys indicating generally good ecological quality within the Black River catchment. Additional surveys undertaken in August 2026 broadly corroborated these findings, although biological quality was somewhat lower at certain locations, likely reflecting the unusually low flow conditions prevailing at the time of survey (see **EIAR Appendices 6-5** and **6-7**). Two survey locations recorded observations that were different from most, one being a dense growth of macrophytes (*Fontinalis* and *Cladophor*a)

and occasional filamentous algae, probably linked to localised conditions of high light availability and possibly episodic nutrient inputs, the other having elevated nitrate concentrations, likely linked to the intensive agricultural activity through dairy farming in the catchment (see **EIAR Appendix 6-5 and 6-7**).

The Black River provides good fish habitat throughout, although spawning and nursery habitat is considered mostly suboptimal owing to siltation and filamentous algae growth. Salmonid and mixed juvenile habitat was prevalent. Adult salmonid passageway (fast moving glides and runs) and resting and holding areas (deep runs and glides) were also found along the reach. Salmonids were observed feeding in glide habitat and three salmonid fry were observed in samples in one survey location. Additional fisheries surveys completed in August 2026 confirmed the continued presence of juvenile salmon within the Black River, corroborating its value as salmonid nursery habitat despite historical channel modification and low summer flow conditions. Suitable lamprey habitat was recorded within the Black River catchment and, while lamprey were not recorded during fisheries surveys, the species was subsequently detected through eDNA sampling completed in August 2026 (see **EIAR Appendix 6-7**). Lamprey species can be assumed to be present at or downstream of the proposed works. The Shancloon Stream provides a limited range of aquatic habitats and is considered unsuitable for supporting salmonid and lamprey species (see **EIAR Appendix 6-5**).

No evidence of white-clawed crayfish was recorded during field surveys and the species was not detected through eDNA sampling undertaken as part of the 2026 survey programme (see EIAR **Appendices 6-5** and **6-7**). This would suggest that this species is likely absent from the Black River. However, there is suitable habitat present to support this species, and the sites surveyed have the potential for reintroduction in due course, subject to confirmation that crayfish plague is not present in the catchment.

While freshwater pearl mussel occurs elsewhere within the wider Lough Corrib catchment, the species was not recorded during the Stage 1 survey completed in 2024 and was not detected through eDNA sampling undertaken in 2026 (see **EIAR Appendix 6-7**). As such, there is no evidence to suggest the species occurs within the Black (Shrule) sub-catchment.

Three years of ornithological baseline surveys confirm that the proposed wind farm site and its environs support a diverse but regionally typical assemblage of farmland and wetland birds; all SCI birds were recorded during the study period, with the exception of Arctic tern (*Sterna paradisaea*), common tern (*Sterna hirundo*) and common scoter (*Melanitta nigra*) (refer to **EIAR Chapter 7** and **Appendix 7-8**). Across all species groups, the proposed wind farm site is assessed as being of generally low suitability for high sensitivity species. Land cover within the site is dominated by farmland, scrub and improved grassland habitats, supporting mostly widespread and adaptable species (see **EIAR Appendix 6-3**). No evidence was found of breeding by any SCI species. Large wintering populations of some species, e.g., shoveler (*Spatula clypeata*) and tufted duck (*Aythya fuligula*) were consistently associated with nearby wetlands, some of which regularly supported nationally important numbers. Within the proposed project, waterbird activity was relatively low and largely confined to wet grassland, shallow depressions, and field margins. The surveys recorded some observations of Greenland white-fronted goose (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*) during the wintering period. These were transient flights, indicating use of the wider landscape (within a 5 km radius of the proposed project), but not evidence of regular feeding, roosting or defined flight corridors through the proposed project. Hen harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) was observed but the records implied only sporadic use of the wider

landscape. There was no evidence of roosting or functional dependence on the proposed project, and most records of these birds occurred below rotor swept height.

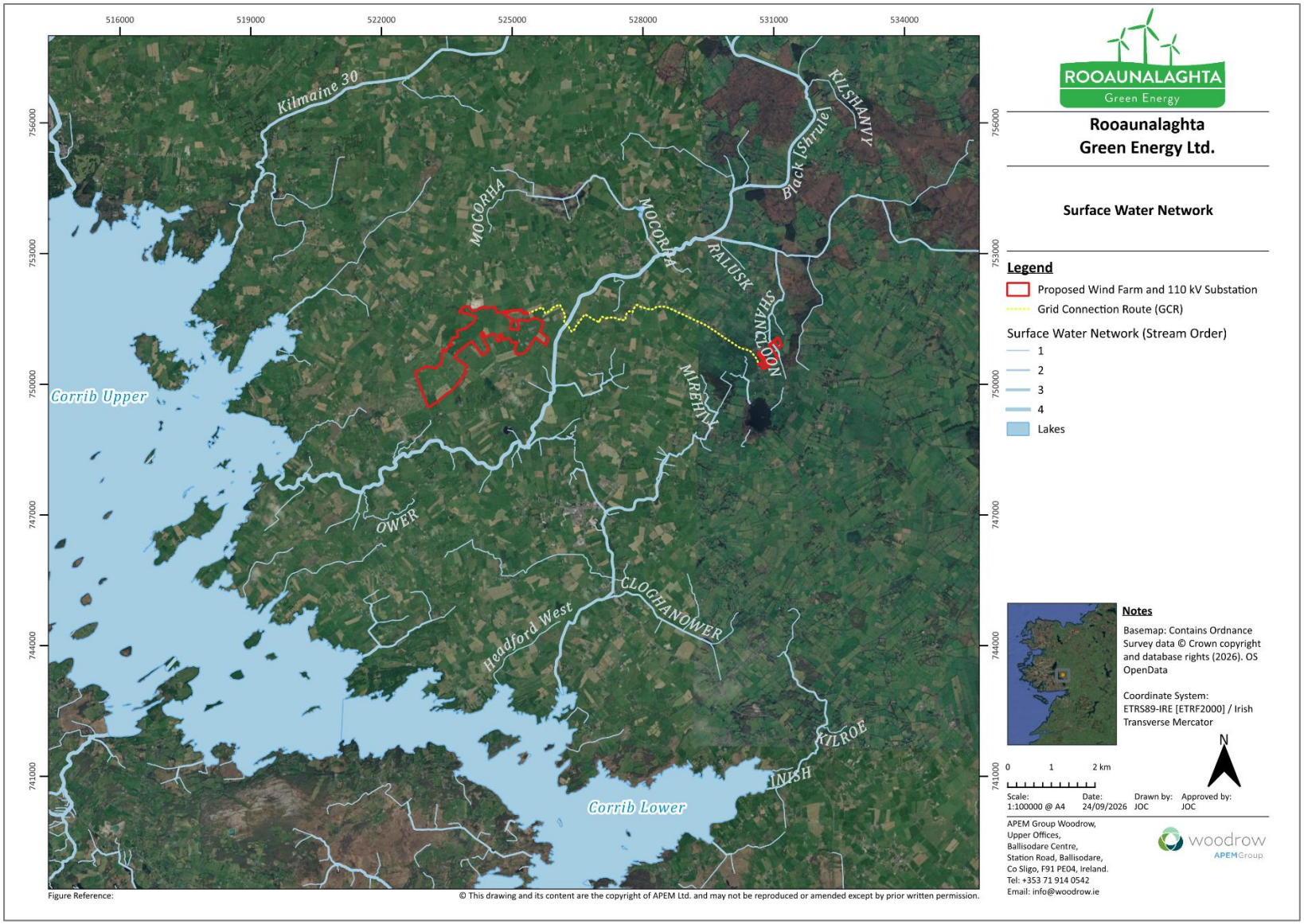


Figure 4: Surface water network surrounding the proposed project

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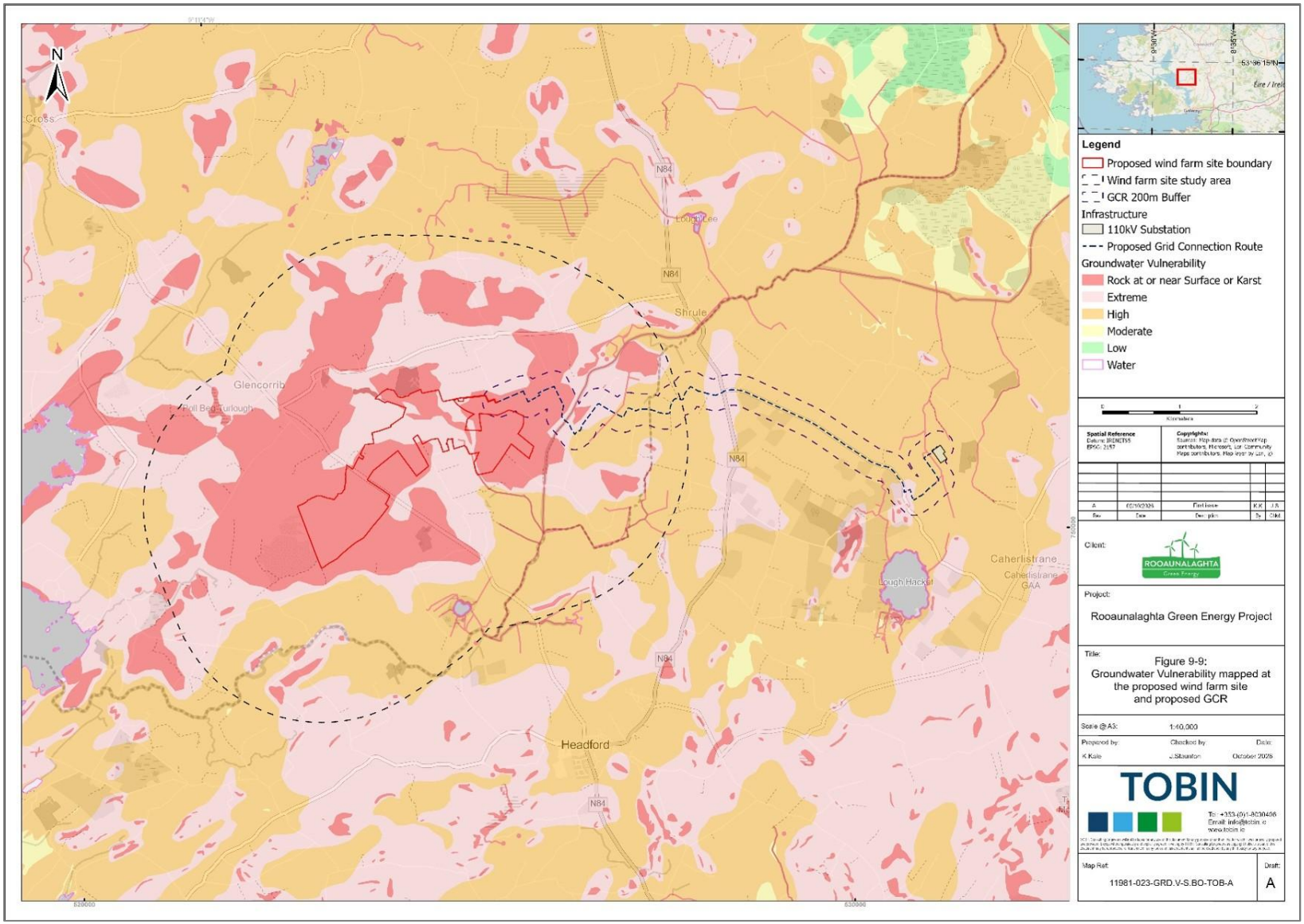


Figure 5: Groundwater vulnerability in the context of the proposed project (from Chapter 9 of the EIAR)

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5. SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

This section of the report identifies the potential ZoI of the proposed project, provides information on the European Sites within the identified ZoI and sets out the potential impacts and the likelihood of significant effects.

5.1. Potential Source of Impacts

The Proposed Project is not necessary to the management of any European Site, but it adjoins Cloughmoyne SAC (000479) (see **Figure 6**). The following elements of the proposed project were considered for their potential to result in likely significant effects.

5.1.1. Construction Phase

- Uncontrolled releases of sediments and/or other pollutants to air due to earthworks;
- Surface water run-off containing sediments and/or other pollutants (e.g., hydrocarbons) into nearby waterbodies or the surface water network;
- Surface water run-off containing sediments and/or other pollutants into the local groundwater, including through infiltration pathways;
- Impacts to limestone pavement *via* rock removal, displacement, land reclamation, dumping, grike filling, trampling and scrub removal;
- Loss of riparian habitat for semi-aquatic species such as otter;
- Elevated levels of noise, airborne particles, and ground disturbance associated with excavation, drilling, or similar groundworks;
- Additional artificial lighting introduced to the area during construction, potentially affecting light-sensitive species;
- Heightened levels of human activity and site traffic during the construction phase, which may lead to disturbance of nearby fauna; and,
- Spread of invasive species.

5.1.2. Operation Phase

- Surface water run-off containing sediments and/or other pollutants (e.g., hydrocarbons) from swales, particularly in the vicinity of the borrow pit, into nearby waterbodies or the surface water network;
- Turbine collision risk for SCI bird species associated with Lough Corrib SPA;
- Additional artificial lighting during the operational phase, potentially affecting light sensitive species; and,
- Regular human presence and activity for maintenance purposes, potentially leading to disturbance of fauna in the area.

5.1.3. Decommissioning Phase

Potential impacts arising from the decommissioning phase are expected to be broadly similar to those outlined for the construction phase, despite occurring at reduced levels (e.g., excavation). These activities may result in disturbance due to elevated noise levels and increased artificial lighting, as well as potential deterioration of water quality in receiving watercourses arising from groundworks, refuelling operations, or improper storage of hazardous materials on site.

5.2. Potential Pathways

Potential impacts arising from the construction, operation and decommissioning of the proposed project may affect European Sites *via* one or more direct or indirect pathways. Examples of such pathways are outlined in the following sections.

The TDR was also considered as part of the screening assessment. The route follows the existing road network between Galway Harbour and the proposed wind farm site, with temporary accommodation works limited to a localised area of footpath reinforcement within Galway City, together with minor vegetation trimming and temporary signage removal where required. Given the limited scale and temporary nature of these works, potential impact pathways are restricted to short-term disturbance, dust generation and the potential spread of invasive species.

5.2.1. Direct Pathways

- Hydrological connectivity *via* streams or drains that flow from the proposed project into surface waters linked to a European Site;
- Connectivity *via* groundwater, including potential changes to groundwater quality, groundwater flow, groundwater levels or groundwater recharge that may affect a groundwater-connected European Site;
- Airborne emissions such as dust or noise that travel through the atmosphere and impact habitats or species in nearby designated sites; and,
- Land-based transmission, including the movement of machinery or spoil across land surfaces that may lead to contamination, habitat damage, or the spread of invasive species.

5.2.2. Indirect Pathways

- Disruption to flightlines or commuting corridors used by mobile species (e.g., bats or birds) between roosting and foraging grounds within or near a European Site;
- Visual or acoustic disturbance arising from human activity, blasting, lighting, or turbine operation, which may alter species behaviour even at a distance; and,
- Changes to hydrological regimes (e.g., groundwater drawdown), which may gradually alter the ecological character of a wetland connected to a European Site.

5.3. Identification of European Sites

In accordance with the guidance outlined in **Section 2.2.1**, an initial 20-km search radius was applied to identify European Sites with potential connectivity to the site. This distance represents the maximum likely range over which potential effects on mobile species (such as SCI bird species) could occur, in accordance with SNH (2016) guidance. However, the ZoI of the proposed project was determined on the basis of potential impact pathways rather than distance alone. Accordingly, European Sites within the 20 km search area were assessed using the S-P-R framework, and European Sites beyond 20 km were also considered where longer-range hydrological, hydrogeological or ecological pathways could arise.

Following this approach, four designated sites requiring further consideration were identified. The geographical locations of these sites in relation to the proposed project are shown in **Figure 6**, and distances are presented in **Table 1**. Cloughmoyne SAC (000479) adjoins the southwestern boundary

of the proposed wind farm site, while the Black River corridor, which forms part of the Lough Corrib SAC, is located c. 147 m from the proposed wind farm and is intersected by the GCR.

European Sites occurring in the vicinity of temporary accommodation works associated with the TDR were also considered as part of this screening assessment.

A total of 18 SACs and four SPAs were examined in detail for S-P-R, and this process determined any European sites that were considered as being in the ZoI of the proposed project. **Figure 6** shows possible hydrological connectivity routes. The rationale for excluding/including European sites is shown in **Table 2**. This analysis concluded that three European sites were in the final ZoI of the proposed project (see **Section 5.2**).

Regarding the TDR, this follows the existing network from Galway Docks through Galway City, continuing along the N84 to Headford and the R334 towards Cross (**EIAR Chapter 6**, **Section 6.4.5.1**). Minor works are proposed at one pinch point location in Galway city, at the junction of the R336 and the L5034. At this location, a footpath needs to be reinforced for the turbine passage. Construction works related to the TDR will involve only temporary construction works, similar to small-scale road works. Considering that no modifications to watercourse crossings are required along the TDR, no effects on water quality or the receiving freshwater environment are anticipated from this element of the proposed project. Furthermore, no suitable habitats supporting SCI bird species occur within the area affected by the works and no ecological connectivity to any European Site has been identified. As no likely S-P-R links were identified for the TDR, it is not considered further in this AA Screening.

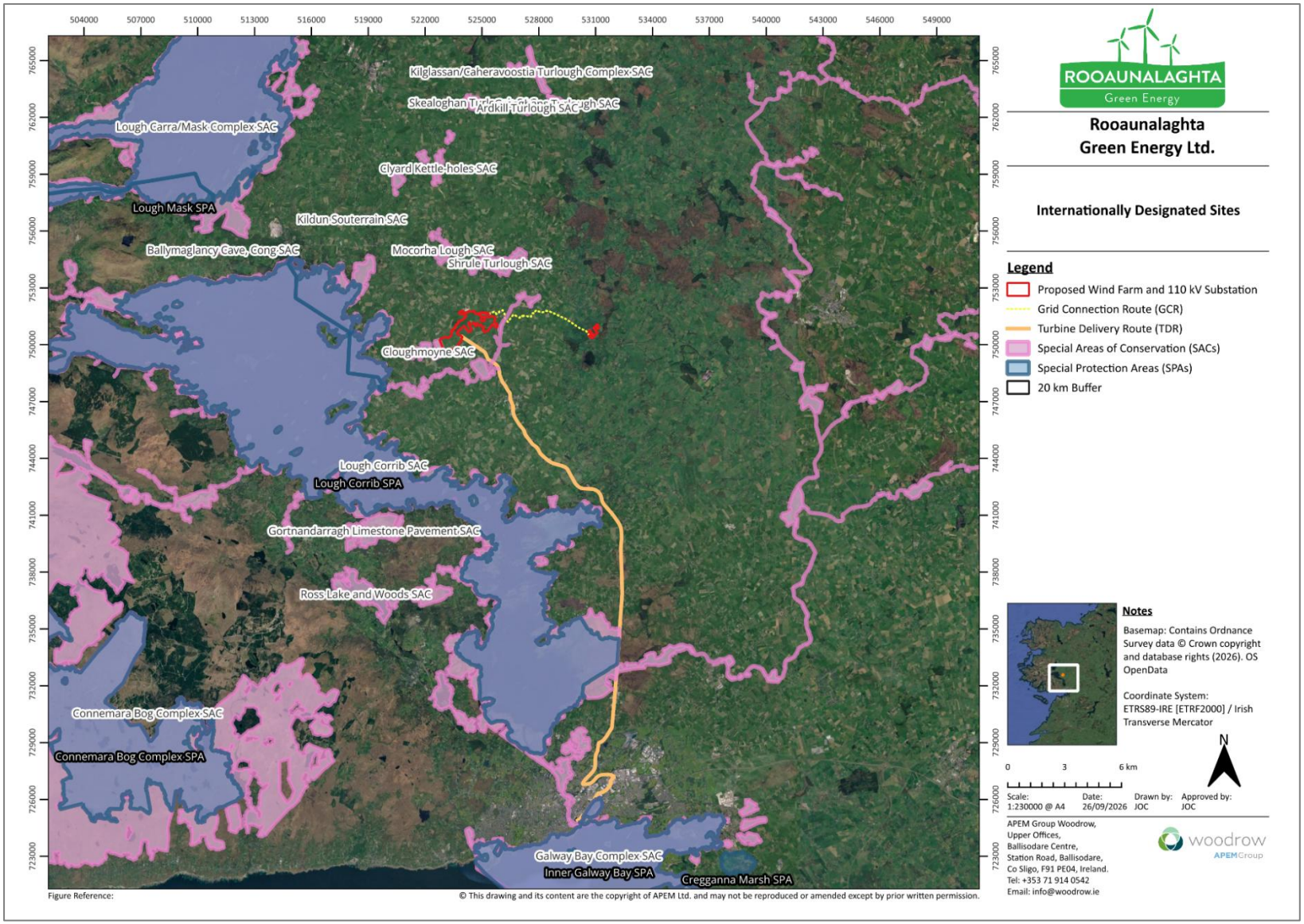


Figure 6: Location of the proposed project in relation to European Sites

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Table 1: European sites with potential connectivity to the proposed project

European Site (Site Code)	List of QI/SCI [Relevant Code]	Distance from the Proposed Project		Connectivity (Source-Pathway-Receptor)	Considered Further in Screening? Y/N
		Wind Farm	GCR, Substation, or TDR (nearest point)		
Cloughmoyne SAC (000479)	• Limestone pavements [8240]	Adjoins western boundary of the development.	c. 2.9 km south-west.	**Yes** – The SAC adjoins the proposed project along the southwestern boundary of the wind farm. As such, LSE on the QI feature (limestone pavement) of this SAC cannot be excluded.	Yes – see **Table 2** for QI features potentially affected, as well as an assessment of LSE.
Lough Corrib SAC (000297)	• Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains *(Littorelletalia uniflorae)* [3110] • Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the *Littorelletea uniflorae* and/or *Isoeto Nanojuncetea* [3130] • Hard oligo mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of *Chara* spp. [3140] • Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitricho Batrachion* vegetation [3260] • Semi natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates *(Festuco Brometalia)* (*important orchid sites*) [6210] • *Molinia* meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey silt laden soils *(Molinion caeruleae)* [6410] • Active raised bogs [7110] • Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]	c. 147 m east at its nearest point.	SAC is intersected by the GCR.	**Yes** – This European Site occurs c. 147 m from the proposed wind farm site (at its nearest point) and is also intersected by the GCR. Hydrological connectivity occurs between the proposed project and this European Site *via* surface water and groundwater pathways. Surface runoff from the proposed wind farm drains to the Black River *via* connecting waterbodies, and links downstream with Lough Corrib. The GCR includes a road crossing of the Black River within the SAC. Aquatic QI habitats and species, including otter, may be affected by any water quality deterioration caused by sedimentation, or release of other substances including hydrocarbons into the surface water. As such, LSE on QI features of this SAC cannot be excluded. Due to the groundwater vulnerability of the proposed project site, the potential for effects on groundwater quality, groundwater flow and groundwater levels cannot be ruled out.	Yes – see **Table 2** for QI features potentially affected, as well as an assessment of LSE.

European Site (Site Code)	List of QI/SCI [Relevant Code]	Distance from the Proposed Project		Connectivity (Source-Pathway-Receptor)	Considered Further in Screening? Y/N
		Wind Farm	GCR, Substation, or TDR (nearest point)		
	• Depressions on peat substrates of the *Rhynchosporion* [7150] • Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the *Caricion davallianae* [7210] • Petrifying springs with tufa formation *(Cratoneurion)* [7220] • Alkaline fens [7230] • Limestone pavements [8240] • Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles [91A0] • Bog woodland [91D0] • *Margaritifera margaritifera* (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029] • *Austropotamobius pallipes* (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092] • *Petromyzon marinus* (Sea Lamprey) [1095] • *Lampetra planeri* (Brook Lamprey) [1096] • *Salmo salar* (Salmon) [1106] • *Rhinolophus hipposideros* (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303] • *Lutra lutra* (Otter) [1355] • *Najas flexilis* (Slender Naiad) [1833] • *Hamatocaulis vernicosus* (Slender Green Feather-moss) [6216]				

European Site (Site Code)	List of QI/SCI [Relevant Code]	Distance from the Proposed Project		Connectivity (Source-Pathway-Receptor)	Considered Further in Screening? Y/N
		Wind Farm	GCR, Substation, or TDR (nearest point)		
Shrule Turlough SAC (000525)	• Turloughs [3180]	c. 1.9 km north.	c. 1.8 km north.	**Yes –** While no surface water connectivity exists between the proposed project and this SAC, a portion of the proposed wind farm site occurs within the same groundwater body and regionally important karstifed aquifer. On a precautionary basis, and given the potential for hydrogeological connectivity, LSE on the QI of the SAC cannot be excluded.	Yes – see **Table 2** for QI features potentially affected, as well as an assessment of LSE.
Mocorha Lough SAC (001536)	• Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the Caricion davallianae [7210]	c. 2.7 km north.	c. 3.6 km north-west.	**No** – **EIAR Chapter 9** confirms no hydraulic connectivity. The SAC is located c. 2.7 km from the proposed wind farm site, is associated with a different aquifer setting to that underlying the proposed project and has no identified surface water connection. Given the differing hydrogeological setting and absence of a direct hydrological pathway, no pathway has been identified.	No
Clyard Kettle-Holes SAC (000480)	• Turloughs [3180] • Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the Caricion davallianae [7210]	c. 6.8 km north.	c. 7.4 km north.	**No** – **EIAR Chapter 9** confirms no hydraulic connectivity, with local groundwater flows directed southwest away from the SAC. As such, ecological, hydrological, or landscape connectivity between this SAC and the proposed project can be excluded.	No
Kildun Souterrain SAC 002320)	• *Rhinolophus hipposideros* (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303]	c. *7.5* km west	c. 8.8 km north-west.	**No** – The sole QI for this SAC is the lesser horseshoe bat, and the proposed project is outside its core foraging range (NPWS, 62026; Collins, 2023). As such, ecological, hydrological, or landscape connectivity between this SAC and the proposed project can be excluded.	No

European Site (Site Code)	List of QI/SCI [Relevant Code]	Distance from the Proposed Project		Connectivity (Source-Pathway-Receptor)	Considered Further in Screening? Y/N
		Wind Farm	GCR, Substation, or TDR (nearest point)		
Gortnandarragh Limestone Pavement SAC (001271)	• Limestone pavements [8240]	c. 8.8 km south	c. 11.6 km west.	**No** – There is no ecological, hydrological or landscape connectivity between this SAC and the proposed project. Any direct emissions arising from the construction phase (e.g., dust) will settle out over such a distance. As such, ecological, hydrological, or landscape connectivity between this SAC and the proposed project can be excluded.	No
Skealoghan Turlough SAC (000541)	• Turloughs [3180]	c. 10.6 km north	c. 10.7 km north.	**No** – **EIAR Chapter 9** confirms no hydraulic connectivity, with local groundwater flows directed southwest away from the SAC. As such, ecological, hydrological, or landscape connectivity between this SAC and the proposed project can be excluded.	No
Ardkill Turlough SAC (000461)	• Turloughs [3180]	c. 10.7 km north	c. 10.44 km north.	**No** – **EIAR Chapter 9** confirms no hydraulic connectivity, with local groundwater flows directed southwest away from the SAC. As such, ecological, hydrological, or landscape connectivity between this SAC and the proposed project can be excluded.	No
Greaghans Turlough SAC (000503)	• Turloughs [3180]	c. 11.4 km north	c. 10.6 km north	**No** – **EIAR Chapter 9** confirms no hydraulic connectivity, with local groundwater flows directed southwest away from the SAC. As such, ecological, hydrological, or landscape connectivity between this SAC and the proposed project can be excluded.	No

European Site (Site Code)	List of QI/SCI [Relevant Code]	Distance from the Proposed Project		Connectivity (Source-Pathway-Receptor)	Considered Further in Screening? Y/N
		Wind Farm	GCR, Substation, or TDR (nearest point)		
Lough Carra/Mask Complex SAC (001774)	• Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the *Littorelletea uniflorae* and/or *Isoeto Nanojuncetea* [3130] • Hard oligo mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of *Chara* spp. [3140] • European dry heaths [4030] • Semi natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco Brometalia*) (important orchid sites) [6210] • Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the *Caricion davallianae* [7210] • Alkaline fens [7230] • Limestone pavements [8240] • Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno Padion*, *Alnion incanae*, *Salicion albae*) [91E0] • *Rhinolophus hipposideros* (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303] • *Lutra lutra* (Otter) [1355] • *Hamatocaulis vernicosus* (Slender Green Feather moss) [6216]	c. 11.5 km north-west	c. 13.5 km north-west	**No** – The separating distance rules out direct effects on the QIs apart from those through hydrological pathways. Regarding these, the surface water connection between the proposed project and the SAC is c. 25 km, indirect (neither directly upstream nor downstream), and through river and lake connections, including Lough Corrib, a lake of c. 18,240 ha (NPWS, 2022). Due to the length and complexity of the surface hydrological connection (see above) and the assimilation capacity of the intervening waters, particularly Lough Corrib, there will be no LSEs on water quality of the SAC. Some QI habitats are sensitive to groundwater, and the proposed project is partly within the same Groundwater Body as the SAC (Cong-Robe), but GSI data [9] shows no traced underground connectivity to the proposed project (see **EIAR Chapter 9**). Regarding the mobile QI otter, female otter typically have a home range of 7.5 km ± 1.5 km SD, males can range up to 19.3 km, understood to be a hydrological distance (Ó Néill, 2008; Ó Néill *et al*., 2009). The SAC is outside this distance, being c. 25 km distant. No pathway for water quality or disturbance effects on this QI is identified.	No

[9] Geological Survey of Ireland dataset: IE_GSI_Traced_Underground_Connections_40K_IE32_ITM, last accessed 11/03/2026.

European Site (Site Code)	List of QI/SCI [Relevant Code]	Distance from the Proposed Project		Connectivity (Source-Pathway-Receptor)	Considered Further in Screening? Y/N
		Wind Farm	GCR, Substation, or TDR (nearest point)		
				Equally, the separation distance between the proposed project and the SAC is greater than the core foraging range of the lesser horseshoe bat (NPWS, 2018; Collins, 2023). As such, ecological, hydrological, or landscape connectivity between this SAC and the proposed project can be excluded.	
Kilglassan/Caheravoostia Turlough Complex SAC (000504)	• Turloughs [3180]	c. 11.9 km north	c. 11.4 km north	**No** – **EIAR Chapter 9** confirms no hydraulic connectivity, with local groundwater flows directed southwest away from the SAC. As such, ecological, hydrological, or landscape connectivity between this SAC and the proposed project can be excluded.	No
Ross Lake and Woods SAC (001312)	• Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of *Chara* spp. [3140] • *Rhinolophus hipposideros* (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303]	c. 12.3 km south	c. 15.5 km south-west	**No** – The distance between the SAC and the proposed project is greater than the core foraging range of the lesser horseshoe bat (NPWS, 2018; Collins, 2023), so connectivity between the proposed project and European Site can be excluded for this QI. The surface water connection between the proposed project and the SAC is c. 38.5 km, indirect (neither directly upstream nor downstream), and through river and lake connections, including Baile Uí Choirc (Loch, EPA name) and Lough Corrib, a lake of c. 18,240 ha (NPWS, 2022). Due to the length and complexity of the hydrological connection and the assimilation capacity of the intervening waters, there will be no likely significant effects on water quality of the SAC.	No

European Site (Site Code)	List of QI/SCI [Relevant Code]	Distance from the Proposed Project		Connectivity (Source-Pathway-Receptor)	Considered Further in Screening? Y/N
		Wind Farm	GCR, Substation, or TDR (nearest point)		
				As such, ecological, hydrological, or landscape connectivity between this SAC and the proposed project can be excluded.	
Ballymaglancy Cave, Cong SAC (000474)	• Caves not open to the public [8310] • *Rhinolophus hipposideros* (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303]	c. 12.8 km west	c. 14.3 km west	**No** – The proposed project is outside the core foraging range of the mobile species QI (NPWS, 2018). As such, ecological or landscape connectivity between this SAC and the proposed project can be excluded.	No
Connemara Bog Complex SAC (002034)	• Marsh Fritillary *Euphydryas Aurinia* [1065] • Salmon *Salmo salar* [1106] • Coastal lagoons* [1150] • Reefs [1170] • Otter *Lutra lutra* [1355] • Slender Naiad *Najas flexilis* [1833] • Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae) [3110] • Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the Littorelletea uniflorae and/or Isoeto-Nanojuncetea [3130] • Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160] • Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation [3260] • Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix* [4010]	c. 17.8 km west	c. 20.7 km west	**No** – The surface water connection between the proposed project and the SAC is c. 26.8 km, indirect (neither directly upstream nor downstream), and through river and lake connections, including Lough Corrib, a lake of c. 18,240 ha (NPWS, 2022). Due to the length and complexity of the hydrological connection and the assimilation capacity of the intervening waters, LSEs on lake, riverine or wetland QIs of this SAC due to hydrological connectivity are ruled out. There will be no LSE on SAC populations of the mobile species Atlantic salmon due to the length, complexity and assimilative capacity of the hydrological connection. Regarding the mobile QI otter, female otter typically have a home range of 7.5 km ± 1.5 km SD, males can range up to 19.3 km, understood to be a hydrological distance (Ó Néill, 2008; Ó Néill *et al.,* 2009). The SAC is outside this hydrological distance, being c. 26.8 km distant.	No

European Site (Site Code)	List of QI/SCI [Relevant Code]	Distance from the Proposed Project		Connectivity (Source-Pathway-Receptor)	Considered Further in Screening? Y/N
		Wind Farm	GCR, Substation, or TDR (nearest point)		
	• European dry heaths [4030] • *Molinia* meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) [6410] • Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130] • Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140] • Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150] • Alkaline fens [7230] • Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and *Blechnum* in the British Isles [91A0]			No pathway for water quality or disturbance effects on this QI have been identified. There are no pathways for LSEs on marsh fritillary. There will be no effects from any groundwater deterioration to groundwater-dependent QIs as the Groundwater Bodies in the proposed project is not connected to that of the SAC (see **EIAR Chapter 9**). As such, ecological, hydrological or landscape connectivity between this SAC and the proposed project can be excluded.	
Carrowkeel Turlough SAC (000475)	• Turloughs [3180]	c. 17.4 km north	c. 15.7 km north	**No** – **EIAR Chapter 9** confirms no hydraulic connectivity, with local groundwater flows directed southwest away from the SAC. As such, ecological, hydrological, or landscape connectivity between this SAC and the proposed project can be excluded.	No
Galway Bay Complex SAC (000268)	• Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] • Coastal lagoons [1150] • Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] • Reefs [1170] • Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] • Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]	c. 25 km south	<10 m along TDR	**No –** while the proposed project includes temporary accommodation works along the TDR within Galway City, these works are limited to localised footpath reinforcement within an existing urban environment approximately 1 km from the nearest boundary of the SAC. There is no hydrological connectivity between the works area and the SAC, and the intervening road infrastructure and urban landscape preclude any meaningful pathway for likely significant effects.	No

European Site (Site Code)	List of QI/SCI [Relevant Code]	Distance from the Proposed Project		Connectivity (Source-Pathway-Receptor)	Considered Further in Screening? Y/N
		Wind Farm	GCR, Substation, or TDR (nearest point)		
	• *Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] • Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) [1330] • Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [1410] • Turloughs [3180] • Juniperus communis formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130] • Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) [6210] • Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the Caricion davallianae [7210] • Alkaline fens [7230] • Limestone pavements [8240] • *Lutra lutra* (Otter) [1355] • *Phoca vitulina* (Harbour Seal) [1365]				
Lough Corrib SPA (004042)	• Pochard (*Aythya ferina*) [A059] • Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*) [A061] • Common Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*) [A065] • Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) [A082] • Coot (*Fulica atra*) [A125] • Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) [A140] • Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) [A179]	c. 2.8 km west	c. 5.2 km west	**Yes** – Many of the SCI birds are waterbirds dependent on water quality and wetland habitats in Lough Corrib, within the SPA. There is a direct downstream connection of c. 9.8 km from the proposed project to the SPA at Lough Corrib. The risk of pollutant substances (e.g., sedimentation, chemicals) entering the SPA from the proposed project through this connection. Any deterioration in water quality	Yes – see **Table 2** for SCI features potentially affected, as well as an assessment of LSE

European Site (Site Code)	List of QI/SCI [Relevant Code]	Distance from the Proposed Project		Connectivity (Source-Pathway-Receptor)	Considered Further in Screening? Y/N
		Wind Farm	GCR, Substation, or TDR (nearest point)		
	• Common Gull (*Larus canus*) [A182] • Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) [A193] • Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) [A194] • Greenland White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*) [A395] • Shoveler (*Spatula clypeata*) [A857] • Gadwall (*Mareca strepera*) [A889] • Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]			may have significant effects of the conservation objectives. Additionally, there are other SCIs that are not waterbirds but which may be at risk of losing foraging and/or nesting habitat, as the proposed project is within their foraging ranges (NatureScot, 2024; Scottish Natural Heritage, 2016) and there may be suitable habitat present on-site (e.g., hen harrier, Greenland white-fronted goose). LSEs from the proposed project on the SPA cannot be ruled out.	
Lough Mask SPA (004062)	• Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*) [A061] • Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) [A179] • Common Gull (*Larus canus*) [A182] • Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*) [A183] • Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) [A193] • Greenland White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*) [A395] • Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	c. 12.8 km north-west	c. 14.0 km north-west	**No** – This screening considers the populations of the species SCIs that are associated with the SPA and their wetland habitat where appropriate. Greenland white-fronted goose can forage on habitats that are in the proposed project, but the distance between the SPA and the proposed project is outside the core foraging range of this species, so disturbance effects are ruled out (NatureScot, 2024; Scottish Natural Heritage, 2016). The other species are waterbirds and preferentially use wetlands for activities. There are no wetlands recorded in the proposed project, and birds would generally use foraging areas closer to the population base (the SPA) to minimise energy expenditure. Habitats in the	No

European Site (Site Code)	List of QI/SCI [Relevant Code]	Distance from the Proposed Project		Connectivity (Source-Pathway-Receptor)	Considered Further in Screening? Y/N
		Wind Farm	GCR, Substation, or TDR (nearest point)		
				proposed project are available to the birds on other lands at a shorter distance from the SPA. Most of the SCI birds are waterbirds dependent on water quality and wetland habitats in Lough Mask. Although there is a hydrological connection from the proposed project to Lough Mask in the SPA, the risk of substances (e.g., sediment, chemicals) being transported through this pathway is unlikely: the hydrological connection is c. 25 km and indirect (neither directly upstream nor downstream) and through Lough Corrib, a lake of c. 18,240 ha (NPWS, 2022). Due to the length and complexity of the hydrological connection and the assimilation capacity of the intervening waters, LSEs on water quality or wetland habitats, and consequently on the wetland and wetland bird SCIs are considered unlikely.	
Lough Carra SPA (004051)	• Common Gull (*Larus canus*) [A182]	c. 17.6 km north	c. 18.1 km north	**No** – This screening considers the population of the species SCI that is associated with the SPA, common gull. Common gull preferentially uses wetlands for activities (Birdwatch Ireland, n.d.) but is also known to forage on grassland. There are no wetlands recorded in the proposed project, and birds would generally use foraging areas closer to the population base to minimise energy expenditure. Habitats in the proposed project are available to the birds on other lands at a shorter distance from the SPA c. 18 km distant.	No

European Site (Site Code)	List of QI/SCI [Relevant Code]	Distance from the Proposed Project		Connectivity (Source-Pathway-Receptor)	Considered Further in Screening? Y/N
		Wind Farm	GCR, Substation, or TDR (nearest point)		
				There will be no LSE due to disturbance or *ex-situ* effects on foraging habitats. This species SCI is dependent on water quality and wetland habitats in the Lough Carra SPA. Although there is a hydrological connection from the proposed project to Lough Carra in the SPA, the risk of substances (e.g., sediment, chemicals) being transported through his pathway is unlikely: the hydrological connection is c. 36 km and indirect (neither directly upstream nor downstream) and through Lough Corrib, a lake of c. 18,240 ha (NPWS, 2022), and Lough Mask, 8,000 ha (NPWS, 2014). Due to the length and complexity of the hydrological connection and the assimilation capacity of the intervening waters, there will be no LSEs on water quality or wetland habitats, and consequently on the common gull SCI through hydrological connection.	
Inner Galway Bay SPA (004031)	• Black-throated Diver (*Gavia arctica*) [A002] • Great Northern Diver (*Gavia immer*) [A003] • Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) [A017] • Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*) [A028] • Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota)* [A046] • Teal (*Anas crecca*) [A052]	c. 25 km south	<10 m along the TDR	**No** – while the TDR passes within <10 m of the SPA at its closest point, the proposed works are limited to localised footpath reinforcement within an existing urban environment in Galway City c. 1 km away. Given the minor scale and temporary nature of the works, existing high levels of background noise and human activity, and the intervening urban land use between the works area and the SPA, no disturbance pathway to SCI bird species has been identified.	No

European Site (Site Code)	List of QI/SCI [Relevant Code]	Distance from the Proposed Project		Connectivity (Source-Pathway-Receptor)	Considered Further in Screening? Y/N
		Wind Farm	GCR, Substation, or TDR (nearest point)		
	• Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*) [A069] • Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) [A137] • Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) [A140] • Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) [A142] • Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) [A149] • Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) [A157] • Curlew (*Numenius arquata*) [A160] • Redshank (*Tringa totanus*) [A162] • Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*) [A169] • Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) [A179] • Common Gull (*Larus canus*) [A182] • Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) [A193] • Wigeon (*Mareca penelope*) [A855] • Sandwich Tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) [A863] • Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]				

Table 2: Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

European Site (Site Code)	QI/SCI Potentially Affected [Relevant Code]	Distance from the proposed project		Pathway	Likely Significant Effects (LSE)
		Wind Farm	GCR (nearest point)		
Cloughmoyne SAC (000479)	• Limestone pavements [8240]	Adjoins western boundary of the proposed wind farm site.	c. 2.9 km west.	Due to the location of the SAC adjoining the proposed project, there is physical connection of bedrock that is important for this QI. The works may cause disturbance of this. Additionally, also due to the proximity of the SAC to the proposed project, any local surface runoff could affect the QI habitat in the SAC through any change in water quality due to works. There is also a risk through increase in dust deposition.	LSE on certain QI features cannot be excluded due to the S-P-R identified. The proposed project may cause a deterioration in quality of Limestone pavements [8240] through bedrock disturbance and dust deposition. Limestone pavements [8240] occur on the proposed project site (see **EIAR Chapter 6**, **Section 6.4.4**). In the western part of the proposed site (which adjoins the SAC), this habitat was described as in "unfavourable" condition mainly due to over-grazing. Effects from the proposed project on this QI habitat in the SAC could include reduction in habitat area and species composition, which would be contrary to the conservation objectives for this habitat in this European Site. Hydrology effects on the QI of this SAC were ruled out in the **EIAR Chapter 9**.

European Site (Site Code)	QI/SCI Potentially Affected [Relevant Code]	Distance from the proposed project		Pathway	Likely Significant Effects (LSE)
		Wind Farm	GCR (nearest point)		
Lough Corrib SAC (000297)	• Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains *(Littorelletalia uniflorae)* [3110] • Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the *Littorelletea uniflorae* and/or *Isoeto Nanojuncetea* [3130] • Hard oligo mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of *Chara* spp. [3140] • Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitricho Batrachion* vegetation [3260] • Semi natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates *(Festuco Brometalia)* (*important orchid sites*) [6210]	c. 147 m east at its nearest point.	Intersecting the GCR	**Hydrological**: Downstream connectivity by surface and groundwater, described in EIAR Chapter 9. Downstream surface water pathway *via* existing river network (refer to **EIAR Chapter 9**). Disturbance of species may also occur through project works.	LSE on certain QI features cannot be excluded due to the S-P-R identified. The shortest surface water connection from the proposed wind farm to the SAC is c. 675 m (to Rooaunalaghta Stream, flowing into Black River[10]) while the GCR intersects the SAC. Due to the locations of certain QIs within the SAC (NPWS, 2017) and the nature of these QIs (lack of significant dependence on soil hydrology) likely significant effects were negligible or absent for the following: • Semi natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates *(Festuco Brometalia)* (*important orchid sites*) [6210] • Active raised bogs [7110] • Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] • Depressions on peat substrates of the *Rhynchosporion* [7150] • Limestone pavements [8240] • Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles [91A0] • Bog woodland [91D0]

[10] See EPA maps using OSM basemap and Appropriate Assessment tool. Source: https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/AAGeoTool. Last visited: 23/06/2026.

European Site (Site Code)	QI/SCI Potentially Affected [Relevant Code]	Distance from the proposed project		Pathway	Likely Significant Effects (LSE)
		Wind Farm	GCR (nearest point)		
	• *Molinia* meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey silt laden soils *(Molinion caeruleae)* [6410] • Active raised bogs [7110] • Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] • Depressions on peat substrates of the *Rhynchosporion* [7150] • Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the *Caricion davallianae* [7210] • Petrifying springs with tufa formation *(Cratoneurion)* [7220] • Alkaline fens [7230] • Limestone pavements [8240] • Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles [91A0] • Bog woodland [91D0] • *Margaritifera margaritifera* (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029]				• *Hamatocaulis vernicosus* (Slender Green Feather-moss) [6216] For the species lesser horseshoe bat [1303], recorded sites are near the north shore of Lough Corrib, approximately 13.4 km from the proposed project site. The distance between the SAC and the proposed project is greater than the core foraging range of the lesser horseshoe bat (NPWS, 2018; Collins, 2023), so connectivity between the proposed project and European Site can be excluded for this QI. Other QI habitats and species in this SAC may be negatively affected by alterations in water quality arising from surface runoff and/or groundwater changes. Mobile aquatic species may be affected both within the SAC waters and also in the connected waters such as tributaries of the Black River, which could also be affected by the proposed project (indirect effects). Sedimentation of spawning redds, would reduce the overall habitat extent for fish species associated with the European Site. LSE on otter may arise as a result of reduced prey biomass (e.g., fish). In the event of a hydrocarbon spill, the ingestion of prey items contaminated with Polycyclic

European Site (Site Code)	QI/SCI Potentially Affected [Relevant Code]	Distance from the proposed project		Pathway	Likely Significant Effects (LSE)
		Wind Farm	GCR (nearest point)		
	• *Austropotamobius pallipes* (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092] • *Petromyzon marinus* (Sea Lamprey) [1095] • *Lampetra planeri* (Brook Lamprey) [1096] • *Salmo salar* (Salmon) [1106] • *Rhinolophus hipposideros* (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303] • *Lutra lutra* (Otter) [1355] • *Najas flexilis* (Slender Naiad) [1833] • *Hamatocaulis vernicosus* (Slender Green Feather-moss) [6216]				Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs), which have a propensity to bioaccumulate in fatty tissue, could biomagnify through respective food webs, possibly promoting toxic effects in these top-level predators. Freshwater pearl mussel surveys for the **EIAR Chapter 6** confirmed that no mussels or shell evidence were present on the Black River, and there are no historical records for this species within the surveyed reaches. Known freshwater pearl mussel populations within the Corrib catchment, including the population on the Owenriff River, are not hydrologically connected to the proposed project and are therefore not considered further in this assessment. The otter food source would be affected by any reduction in the availability fish due to water quality deterioration. Additionally, otters associated with the SAC may be using the proposed project site. There would be a risk of disturbance. Therefore, the following are the QIs of Lough Corrib SAC that could be affected by the proposed project: • Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains *(Littorelletalia uniflorae)* [3110]

European Site (Site Code)	QI/SCI Potentially Affected [Relevant Code]	Distance from the proposed project		Pathway	Likely Significant Effects (LSE)
		Wind Farm	GCR (nearest point)		
					• Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the *Littorelletea uniflorae* and/or *Isoeto Nanojuncetea* [3130] • Hard oligo mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of *Chara* spp. [3140] • Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitricho Batrachion* vegetation [3260] • *Austropotamobius pallipes* (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092] • *Petromyzon marinus* (Sea Lamprey) [1095] • *Lampetra planeri* (Brook Lamprey) [1096] • *Salmo salar* (Salmon) [1106 • *Lutra lutra* (Otter) [1355] • *Najas flexilis* (Slender Naiad) [1833]
Shrule Turlough SAC (000525)	• Turloughs [3180]	c. 1.9 km north.	c. 1.8 km north.	**Hydrogeological:** While no surface water connectivity has been identified, the SAC occurs within a karst environment and a potential groundwater pathway to the QI habitat (Turloughs [3180]) cannot be excluded.	On a precautionary basis, and given the potential subsurface hydrogeological pathway, LSE on the QI habitat (Turloughs [3180]) cannot be excluded. Potential effects could include changes to groundwater quality and groundwater levels, resulting in alterations to the extent,

European Site (Site Code)	QI/SCI Potentially Affected [Relevant Code]	Distance from the proposed project		Pathway	Likely Significant Effects (LSE)
		Wind Farm	GCR (nearest point)		
					frequency or duration of seasonal inundation within the turlough system.
Lough Corrib SPA (004042)	• Pochard (*Aythya ferina*) [A059] • Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*) [A061] • Common Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*) [A065] • Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) [A082] • Coot (*Fulica atra*) [A125] • Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) [A140] • Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) [A179] • Common Gull (*Larus canus*) [A182] • Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) [A193] • Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) [A194] • Greenland White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*) [A395] • Shoveler (*Spatula clypeata*) [A857]	c. 2.9 km west	c. 5.2 km west	**Hydrological:** D Downstream surface water pathway *via* the Rooaunalaghta Stream and associated river network to Lough Carrib SPASPA (refer to **EIAR Chapter 9**). Changes in water quality could affect the wetland habitats and supporting prey resources of qualifying waterbird species. **Disturbance / displacement:** Certain mobile SCI species recorded during ornithological surveys may utilise habitats within or adjacent to the Proposed Development and could be subject to disturbance or displacement during construction and operation.	**Water quality pathway** The proposed project is hydrologically connected to Lough Corrib SPA *via* the Rooaunalaghta Stream and associated downstream watercourse network. Any deterioration in water quality has the potential to adversely affect the wetland habitats and supporting prey resources of the SPA qualifying interests. Therefore, a potential impact pathway exists for the following SCI species and the Wetland and Waterbirds SCI: • Pochard (*Aythya ferina*) [A059] • Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*) [A061] • Coot (*Fulica atra*) [A125] • Shoveler (*Spatula clypeata*) [A857] • Gadwall (*Mareca strepera*) [A889] • Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] LSE cannot be excluded for these features.LSE cannot be excluded for these features. **Mobile bird species and potential interaction with the proposed project** Ornithological surveys undertaken for the proposed project recorded a limited

European Site (Site Code)	QI/SCI Potentially Affected [Relevant Code]	Distance from the proposed project		Pathway	Likely Significant Effects (LSE)
		Wind Farm	GCR (nearest point)		
	• Gadwall (*Mareca strepera*) [A889] • Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]			**Collision risk:** Mobile SCI species recorded within the survey area, including species capable of undertaking regular flights through the wider landscape, may be subject to collision risk during operation where use of the site and surrounding area has been identified. The relevance of this pathway differs between SCI species and is considered further within the NIS with reference to baseline ornithological survey data.	number of SCI bird species associated with Lough CarribCorrib SPA within the wider survey area, including Greenland white-fronted goose, hen harrier, golden plover and gull species. These species have the potential to interact with the proposed project through disturbance/displacement and/or collision risk pathways. Accordingly, LSE cannot be excluded for: • Greenland white-fronted goose (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*) [A395] • Hen harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) [A082] • Golden plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) [A140] • Black-headed gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) [A179] • Common gull (*Larus canus*) [A182] These species are therefore taken forward for further assessment in the NIS. **Species not recorded during surveys** Common scoter (*Melanitta nigra*) [A065], common tern (*Sterna hirundo*) [A193], and Arctic tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) [A194] were not recorded during baseline ornithological surveys and no evidence was identified of use of the proposed wind farm site or surrounding habitats.

European Site (Site Code)	QI/SCI Potentially Affected [Relevant Code]	Distance from the proposed project		Pathway	Likely Significant Effects (LSE)
		Wind Farm	GCR (nearest point)		
					No direct disturbance, displacement, collision risk or habitat loss pathway has therefore been identified for these species. However, as a potential downstream water quality pathway to Lough Corrib SPA cannot be excluded at screening stage, these SCI species are screened in on a precautionary basis and assessed further within the NIS. Baseline ornithology results are presented in **EIAR Chapter 7 – Ornithology**.

5.4. Brief description of European Sites within the ZoI.

The European Sites identified as being within the ZoI of the proposed project are briefly described below. Site descriptions have been prepared and summarised using information from the site synopses and conservation objectives documents, which are available in full on the NPWS designations website[11], but summarised in **Table 3**. The following sites were screened in during the assessment:

- Cloughmoyne SAC (000479);
- Lough Corrib SAC (000297);
- Shrule Turlough (000525); and
- Lough Corrib SPA (004042).

Table 3: Conservation objectives of European sites within ZoI screened in

European Site (Site Code)	Conservation Objectives (from NPWS)
Cloughmoyne SAC (000479)	**8240 Limestone pavements** To restore the favourable conservation condition of Limestone pavements in Cloughmoyne SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets: • Habitat area: stable or increasing, subject to natural processes • Habitat distribution: no decline • Vegetation composition: • At least seven positive indicator species present • Bryophyte cover at least 50% on wooded pavement • Collective cover of negative indicator species on exposed pavement not more than 1% • Cover of non-native species not more than 1% on exposed pavement; on wooded pavement not more than 10% with no regeneration • Scrub cover no more than 25% on exposed pavement • Bracken cover no more than 10% on exposed pavement • Canopy cover on wooded pavement at least 30% • Sufficient quantity of dead wood on wooded pavement to provide habitat for saproxylic organisms • Physical structure: no evidence of grazing pressure on wooded pavement • Indicators of local distinctiveness: maintained
Lough Corrib SAC (000297)	**3110 Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (*Littorelletalia uniflorae*)** To restore the favourable conservation condition of Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae) in Lough Corrib SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets: • Habitat area: stable or increasing, subject to natural processes • Habitat distribution: no decline, subject to natural processes • Typical species: present, in good condition, and demonstrating typical abundances and distribution • Vegetation composition: all characteristic vegetation zones present, correctly distributed and in good condition

[11] Protected Sites in Ireland | National Parks & Wildlife Service, last accessed 30/09/2026

European Site (Site Code)	Conservation Objectives (from NPWS)
	• Vegetation distribution: restore maximum depth of vegetation, subject to natural processes • Hydrological regime: maintain appropriate natural water level fluctuations and hydrological conditions • Lake substratum quality: restore appropriate substrate type, extent and chemistry to support vegetation • Water quality: restore and maintain appropriate transparency, low nutrient concentrations, low phytoplankton biomass, high phytoplankton and macrophyte status, and trace/absent attached algal biomass • Acidification status: maintain appropriate pH, alkalinity and cation concentrations • Water colour, dissolved organic carbon and turbidity: restore/maintain levels appropriate to support the habitat • Fringing habitat: maintain the area and condition of fringing habitats necessary to support the natural structure and functioning of the habitat **3130 Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters** To restore the favourable conservation condition of this habitat, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets: • Habitat area: stable or increasing, subject to natural processes • Habitat distribution: no decline, subject to natural processes • Typical species: present, in good condition, and demonstrating typical abundances and distribution • Vegetation composition: all characteristic vegetation zones present, correctly distributed and in good condition • Vegetation distribution: restore maximum depth of vegetation • Hydrological regime: maintain appropriate natural water-level fluctuations • Lake substratum quality: restore appropriate substrate type, extent and chemistry • Water quality: maintain/restore high transparency, low nutrient levels, low phytoplankton biomass, high macrophyte and phytoplankton status, and trace/absent attached algal biomass • Acidification status: maintain appropriate pH, alkalinity and cation concentrations • Water colour, dissolved organic carbon and turbidity: restore/maintain appropriate levels • Fringing habitat: maintain area and condition required to support habitat functioning **3140 Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp.** To restore the favourable conservation condition of this habitat, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets: • Habitat area: stable or increasing, subject to natural processes • Habitat distribution: no decline, subject to natural processes • Typical species: present, in good condition, and demonstrating typical abundances and distribution • Vegetation composition: characteristic zonation present and in good condition • Vegetation distribution: restore maximum depth of vegetation • Hydrological regime: maintain appropriate water levels and groundwater contribution • Lake substratum quality: restore appropriate substrate type, extent and chemistry

European Site (Site Code)	Conservation Objectives (from NPWS)
	• Water quality: restore/maintain high transparency, low nutrient concentrations, low algal biomass, high macrophyte and phytoplankton status, and trace/absent attached algal biomass • Acidification status: maintain appropriate pH, alkalinity and cation concentrations • Water colour, dissolved organic carbon and turbidity: restore/maintain appropriate levels • Fringing habitat: maintain area and condition required to support habitat functioning **3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitricho-Batrachion* vegetation** To maintain the favourable conservation condition of this habitat, defined by: • Habitat area: stable or increasing, subject to natural processes • Habitat distribution: no decline, subject to natural processes • Hydrological regime: maintain appropriate river flow and groundwater discharge • Substratum composition: maintain appropriate particle size range, quantity and quality • Water quality: maintain quality necessary to support habitat structure and functioning • Typical species: present and in good condition • Floodplain connectivity: maintain active floodplain area • Riparian habitat: maintain area and condition of fringing habitats **6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (important orchid sites)** To maintain the favourable conservation condition of this habitat, defined by: • Habitat area: stable or increasing, subject to natural processes • Habitat distribution: no decline • Vegetation composition: at least seven positive indicator species present, including two high-quality species • Negative indicator species: collectively not more than 20% cover and no individual species more than 10% • Non-native species: cover not more than 1% • Woody species and bracken: cover not more than 5% • Broadleaf herb:grass ratio maintained between 40% and 90% • Sward height: at least 30% between 5cm and 40cm • Litter cover: not more than 25% • Bare soil: not more than 10% • Disturbance: area showing serious disturbance less than 20m² **6410 Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*)** To maintain the favourable conservation condition of this habitat, defined by: • Habitat area: stable or increasing, subject to natural processes • Habitat distribution: no decline • Vegetation composition: at least seven positive indicator species present, including one high-quality species • Negative indicator species: collectively not more than 20% cover and no individual species more than 10% • Non-native species: cover not more than 1%

European Site (Site Code)	Conservation Objectives (from NPWS)
	• Hair mosses (Polytrichum spp.): cover not more than 25% • Woody species and bracken: cover not more than 5% • Broadleaf herb:grass ratio maintained between 40% and 90% • Sward height: at least 30% between 10cm and 80cm • Litter cover: not more than 25% • Bare soil: not more than 10% • Disturbance: area showing serious disturbance less than 20m² **7110 Active raised bogs** To restore the favourable conservation condition of Active Raised Bogs, defined by: • Habitat area: restore active raised bog area to 78.8ha • Habitat distribution: restore distribution and variability across the SAC • High bog area: no decline in extent • Hydrological regime: restore appropriate water levels, flow patterns and topography • Restore adequate transitional areas between high bog and adjacent mineral soils • Vegetation quality: restore high-quality central ecotope, active flushes, soaks and bog woodland • Restore adequate microtopographical features and Sphagnum cover • Typical flora and fauna: restore, where appropriate • Local distinctiveness: maintain notable site features • Negative physical indicators: absent or insignificant • Native negative indicator species: insignificant levels • Non-native invasive species: insignificant levels and less than 1% cover • Air quality: nitrogen deposition not exceeding 5kg N/ha/yr • Water quality: close to natural reference conditions **7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration** No separate conservation objective set Long-term objective is restoration of peat-forming capability through achievement of the Active Raised Bog (7110) conservation objective **7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion** No separate conservation objective set Habitat considered an integral component of good-quality Active Raised Bog (7110) **7210 Calcareous fens with Cladium mariscus and species of the *Caricion davallianae*** To maintain the favourable conservation condition of this habitat, defined by: • Habitat area: stable or increasing, subject to natural processes • Habitat distribution: no decline • Hydrology: maintain natural hydrological regimes • Peat formation: maintain active peat formation where appropriate • Water quality: maintain appropriate nutrient and chemical conditions • Typical vegetation: maintain characteristic mosses and vascular plants • Non-native species: less than 1% cover • Trees and shrubs: less than 10% cover • Disturbed bare ground: not more than 10% (or 1% where tufa is present) • Drainage impacts: not more than 10%

European Site (Site Code)	Conservation Objectives (from NPWS)
	• Local distinctiveness: no decline in rare, threatened or scarce associated species **7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)** To maintain the favourable conservation condition of this habitat, defined by: • Habitat area and distribution maintained • Maintain natural hydrology and groundwater supply • Maintain active tufa formation processes • Maintain water quality and calcium-rich conditions • Typical bryophyte and vascular plant communities present and in good condition • Non-native species at insignificant levels • Minimal physical disturbance, erosion and drainage impacts • Maintain features of local ecological distinctiveness **7230 Alkaline fens** To maintain the favourable conservation condition of this habitat, defined by: • Habitat area: stable or increasing • Habitat distribution: no decline • Maintain natural hydrological regimes • Maintain active peat-forming processes where appropriate • Maintain appropriate water quality and groundwater chemistry • Typical fen vegetation present and in good condition • Non-native species less than 1% cover • Trees and shrubs limited to low cover levels • Minimal bare ground, drainage and disturbance impacts • No decline in rare or characteristic associated species **8240 Limestone pavements** To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Limestone pavements, defined by: • Habitat area: stable or increasing • Habitat distribution: no decline • Positive indicator species maintained • Negative indicator species at low cover • Non-native species restricted to low levels • Control scrub and bracken cover on exposed pavement • Maintain appropriate woodland structure and canopy on wooded pavement • Maintain deadwood resources • Avoid damaging grazing pressure and physical disturbance • Maintain local distinctive features **91A0 Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles** • Habitat area: stable or increasing • Habitat distribution: no decline • Native tree canopy maintained • Natural regeneration of native species occurring • Typical woodland flora and fauna maintained • Deadwood retained in sufficient quantities • Non-native invasive species controlled

European Site (Site Code)	Conservation Objectives (from NPWS)
	• Inappropriate grazing, browsing and disturbance absent or low • Woodland structure and age diversity maintained **91D0 Bog woodland** • Habitat area: stable or increasing • Habitat distribution: no decline • Hydrology maintained or restored • Native tree and shrub cover maintained • Typical bog woodland vegetation present • Sufficient deadwood retained • Non-native invasive species controlled • Physical disturbance and drainage impacts minimised • Local distinctive features maintained **1029 Freshwater Pearl Mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera*)** • Population size maintained or restored • Age structure maintained with successful recruitment of juveniles • Distribution maintained • Suitable host fish populations present • River habitat quality maintained, including clean, stable gravels • High water quality and natural hydrology maintained • Siltation and nutrient enrichment minimised **1092 White-clawed Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*)** • Maintain species distribution and population extent • Maintain suitable water quality and habitat structure • Maintain appropriate refuges and substrate conditions • Prevent introduction and spread of invasive crayfish and disease • Maintain favourable ecological conditions throughout occupied habitat **1095 Sea Lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*)** • Maintain population distribution and abundance • Maintain access to spawning habitat • Maintain suitable spawning and juvenile habitat • Maintain natural river processes and connectivity • Maintain appropriate water quality and flow conditions **1096 Brook Lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*)** • Maintain population distribution and abundance • Maintain spawning and nursery habitat • Maintain natural channel morphology and sediment conditions • Maintain river connectivity and hydrological regime • Maintain high water quality **1106 Salmon (*Salmo salar*)** • Maintain accessible spawning grounds • Maintain abundance of juvenile and adult salmon • Maintain natural river morphology and flow regime • Maintain suitable substrate and nursery habitat

European Site (Site Code)	Conservation Objectives (from NPWS)
	• Maintain water quality sufficient to support all life stages **1303 Lesser Horseshoe Bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*)** • Maintain population size and distribution • Protect known roost sites • Maintain suitable foraging habitat and commuting routes • Maintain woodland, hedgerow and scrub connectivity • Minimise disturbance to roosts and surrounding habitat **1355 Otter (*Lutra lutra*)** • Maintain population distribution and occupancy • Maintain suitable freshwater and coastal habitat • Maintain resting and breeding sites • Maintain fish prey resources and water quality • Maintain habitat connectivity and minimise disturbance **1393 Slender Green Feather-moss (*Drepanocladus vernicosus*)** • Maintain population size and distribution • Maintain suitable hydrological conditions • Maintain appropriate water quality and nutrient status • Maintain suitable fen habitat structure and vegetation composition • Prevent habitat loss, drainage and excessive disturbance **1833 Slender Naiad (*Najas flexilis*)** • Maintain population distribution and extent • Maintain population abundance and viability • Maintain suitable lake substrate conditions • Maintain high water clarity and low nutrient levels • Maintain appropriate pH and water chemistry • Maintain suitable hydrological conditions and habitat quality
Shrule Turlough SAC (000525)	**3180 Turloughs** To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Turloughs in Shrule Turlough SAC, defined by the following attributes and targets: • Habitat area: stable or increasing, subject to natural processes • Habitat distribution: no decline, subject to natural processes • Hydrological regime: maintain the natural groundwater contribution and characteristic flood duration, frequency and extent • Soil type: maintain the natural soil characteristics and distribution • Soil nutrient status: maintain appropriate nitrogen and phosphorus conditions • Physical structure: maintain appropriate levels of bare ground • Chemical processes: maintain natural calcium carbonate deposition and concentration • Water quality: maintain the groundwater and surface-water quality needed to support the habitat • Active peat formation: maintain where this is a feature of the turlough • Vegetation composition: maintain the area of characteristic vegetation communities and their natural zonation • Vegetation structure: maintain appropriate sward height and the extent and condition of any turlough woodland

European Site (Site Code)	Conservation Objectives (from NPWS)
	• Typical species: maintain characteristic plant and invertebrate assemblages in favourable condition • Fringing habitats: maintain the area and condition needed to support the turlough's natural structure and functioning
Lough Corrib SPA (004042)	**A051 Gadwall (*Anas strepera*)** To restore the favourable conservation condition of gadwall in Lough Corrib SPA. Attributes and targets include: • Long term winter population trend stable or increasing. • Sufficient suitable winter habitat to support population abundance. • Disturbance at wintering sites maintained at levels that do not significantly impact population trend or spatial distribution. • Barriers do not significantly impact access to the SPA or ecologically important sites. • Sufficient foraging habitat and forage biomass. • Sufficient roosting habitat to support the population target. **A056 Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)** To restore the favourable conservation condition of shoveler in Lough Corrib SPA. Attributes and targets include: • Long term winter population trend stable or increasing. • Sufficient suitable winter habitat to support population abundance. • Disturbance at wintering sites maintained at levels that do not significantly impact population trend or spatial distribution. • Barriers do not significantly impact access to the SPA or ecologically important sites. • Sufficient foraging habitat and forage biomass. **Pochard (*Aythya ferina*)** To restore the favourable conservation condition of pochard in Lough Corrib SPA. Attributes and targets include: • Long-term winter population trend stable or increasing. • Sufficient suitable winter habitat to support population abundance. • Disturbance at wintering sites maintained at levels that do not significantly impact population trend or spatial distribution. • Barriers do not significantly impact access to the SPA or ecologically important sites. • Sufficient foraging habitat and forage biomass. • Sufficient roosting habitat to support the population target. **Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)** To restore the favourable conservation condition of tufted duck in Lough Corrib SPA. Attributes and targets include: • Long-term winter population trend stable or increasing. • Sufficient suitable winter habitat to support population abundance. • Disturbance at wintering sites maintained at levels that do not significantly impact population trend or spatial distribution. • Barriers do not significantly impact access to the SPA or ecologically important sites. • Sufficient foraging habitat and forage biomass. • Sufficient roosting habitat to support the population target.

European Site (Site Code)	Conservation Objectives (from NPWS)
	Common Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*) To maintain the favourable conservation condition of common scoter in Lough Corrib SPA. Attributes and targets include: • Long-term breeding population trend stable or increasing. • Sufficient productivity to maintain the population trend. • No significant loss of nesting habitat distribution in the long term. • Sufficient area of high-quality nesting habitat. • Disturbance at breeding sites maintained at levels that do not significantly impact breeding population trend or nesting habitat distribution. • Barriers do not significantly impact access to the SPA or ecologically important sites. • Sufficient foraging habitat and prey resources. **Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*)** To restore the favourable conservation condition of hen harrier in Lough Corrib SPA. Attributes and targets include: • Long-term winter population trend stable or increasing. • Sufficient extent of suitable foraging habitat and prey biomass. • Sufficient number and extent of suitable roosting sites. • Disturbance at roost sites maintained at levels that do not significantly impact wintering hen harrier populations. **Coot (*Fulica atra*)** To restore the favourable conservation condition of coot in Lough Corrib SPA. Attributes and targets include: • Long-term winter population trend stable or increasing. • Sufficient suitable winter habitat to support population abundance. • Disturbance at wintering sites maintained at levels that do not significantly impact population trend or spatial distribution. • Barriers do not significantly impact access to the SPA or ecologically important sites. • Sufficient foraging habitat and forage biomass. • Sufficient roosting habitat to support the population target. **Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*)** To maintain the favourable conservation condition of golden plover in Lough Corrib SPA. Attributes and targets include: • Long-term winter population trend stable or increasing. • Sufficient suitable winter habitat to support population abundance. • Disturbance at wintering sites maintained at levels that do not significantly impact population trend or spatial distribution. • Barriers do not significantly impact access to the SPA or ecologically important sites. • Sufficient foraging habitat and forage biomass. • Sufficient roosting habitat to support the population target. • Sufficient area and quality of supporting habitat outside the SPA. **Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*)** To restore the favourable conservation condition of black-headed gull in Lough Corrib SPA. Attributes and targets include:

European Site (Site Code)	Conservation Objectives (from NPWS)
	• Long-term breeding population stable or increasing. • Sufficient productivity to maintain the population. • Sufficient availability of suitable nesting sites throughout the SPA. • Sufficient prey biomass to support the population. • Disturbance at breeding sites maintained at levels that do not significantly impact breeding populations. • Disturbance at ecologically connected areas maintained at levels that do not significantly impact breeding populations. • No significant increase in barriers to connectivity. **Common Gull (*Larus canus*)** To restore the favourable conservation condition of common gull in Lough Corrib SPA. Attributes and targets include: • → Long-term breeding population stable or increasing. • → Sufficient productivity to maintain the population. • → Sufficient availability of suitable nesting sites throughout the SPA. • → Sufficient prey biomass to support the population. • → Disturbance at breeding sites maintained at levels that do not significantly impact breeding populations. • → Disturbance at ecologically connected areas maintained at levels that do not significantly impact breeding populations. • → No significant increase in barriers to connectivity. **Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*)** To restore the favourable conservation condition of common tern in Lough Corrib SPA. Attributes and targets include: • Long-term breeding population stable or increasing. • Sufficient productivity to maintain the population. • Sufficient availability of suitable nesting sites throughout the SPA. • Sufficient prey biomass to support the population. • Disturbance at breeding sites maintained at levels that do not significantly impact breeding populations. • Disturbance at ecologically connected areas maintained at levels that do not significantly impact breeding populations. • No significant increase in barriers to connectivity. **Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*)** To restore the favourable conservation condition of Arctic tern in Lough Corrib SPA. Attributes and targets include: • Long-term breeding population stable or increasing. • Sufficient productivity to maintain the population. • Sufficient availability of suitable nesting sites throughout the SPA. • Sufficient prey biomass to support the population. • Disturbance at breeding sites maintained at levels that do not significantly impact breeding populations. • Disturbance at ecologically connected areas maintained at levels that do not significantly impact breeding populations. • No significant increase in barriers to connectivity.

European Site (Site Code)	Conservation Objectives (from NPWS)
	Greenland White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*) To restore the favourable conservation condition of Greenland white-fronted goose in Lough Corrib SPA. Attributes and targets include: • Long-term winter population trend stable or increasing. • Sufficient suitable winter habitat to support population abundance. • Disturbance at wintering sites maintained at levels that do not significantly impact population trend or spatial distribution. • Barriers do not significantly impact access to the SPA or ecologically important sites. • Sufficient foraging habitat and forage biomass. • Sufficient roosting habitat to support the population target. • Sufficient area and quality of supporting habitat outside the SPA. **Wetlands** To maintain the favourable conservation condition of wetlands within Lough Corrib SPA. Attributes and targets include: • → No significant loss of wetland habitat area within the SPA. • → No significant impact on the quality or functioning of wetland habitats within the SPA.

5.4.1. Cloughmoyne SAC (000479)

Cloughmoyne SAC is of considerable conservation significance for its good quality limestone pavement, a rare and threatened habitat, and for the presence of two rare plant species (NPWS, 2013; 2019). At this site the limestone pavement supports a typical flora and is associated with areas of species-rich calcareous grassland and heath. Of particular note is the presence of the very rare and legally protected (Flora (Protection) Order, 1999) species Limestone Fern (*Gymnocarpium robertianum*).

5.4.2. Lough Corrib SAC (000297)

Lough Corrib is situated to the north of Galway city and is the second largest lake in Ireland, with an area of approximately 18,240 ha (the entire site is 20,556 ha). The lake can be divided into two parts: a relatively shallow basin, underlain by Carboniferous limestone, in the south, and a larger, deeper basin, underlain by more acidic granite, schists, shales and sandstones to the north. The surrounding lands to the south and east are mostly pastoral farmland, while bog and heath predominate to the west and north. A number of rivers are included within the SAC as they are important for Atlantic Salmon. These rivers include the Clare, Grange, Abbert, Sinking, Dalgan and Black to the east, as well as the Cong, Bealanabrack, Failmore, Cornamona, Drimneen and Owenriff to the west. In addition to the rivers and lake basin, adjoining areas of conservation interest, including raised bog, woodland, grassland and limestone pavement, have been incorporated into the site (NPWS, 2017; 2022).

5.4.3. Shrule Turlough SAC (000525)

Shrule Turlough SAC is designated for the priority Annex I habitat Turloughs [3180]. The site comprises a large seasonal karst wetland supporting a diverse range of wetland, fen and grassland communities. Of particular note are extensive stands of Great Fen-sedge (*Cladium mariscus*) and Black Bog-rush (*Schoenus nigricans*) fen, together with a number of plant species considered uncommon within Irish turlough systems. The site is considered to be of high conservation importance due to its size, ecological condition and the diversity of habitats associated with the turlough basin.

5.4.4. Lough Corrib SPA (004042)

Lough Corrib SPA is an internationally important site which supports in excess of 20,000 wintering waterbirds, including a population of pochard that is, itself, of international importance. A further six species of wintering waterfowl have populations of national importance. The site also contains a nationally important communal roost site for hen harrier. Lough Corrib is the most important site in the country for breeding common scoter. Its populations of breeding gulls and terns are also notable, with nationally important numbers of black-headed gull, common gull, common Tern and Arctic Tern occurring (NPWS, 2014; 2023).

5.5. In-Combination Assessment

The plans and projects identified in **Table 3** and **Table 4** were reviewed for their potential to act in-combination with the proposed project. The search area comprised wind farms and other notable developments within 20 km of the proposed project, together with smaller-scale developments within 2 km. The 20 km search area was applied to capture developments with potential to affect mobile ecological receptors and reflects published guidance on ecological connectivity for mobile ecological receptors such as birds (SNH, 2016). The 2 km search area was considered sufficient to identify smaller-scale developments capable of giving rise to localised ecological impacts. Only those developments identified as having a potential S-P-R linkage to the relevant European Sites were taken forward for further consideration.

Particular attention was given to developments within the Black (Shrule) sub-catchment, where overlapping effects on water quality could arise. In addition, the adjacent quarry was considered due to its proximity to the proposed project and the potential for overlap in construction-related disturbance and dust-generating activities. Smaller-scale developments were screened out where they lacked a credible S-P-R linkage to the relevant European Sites and were therefore not considered capable of contributing to significant in-combination effects. This primarily included individual residential and agricultural developments of limited scale and influence.

The principal potential in-combination pathway identified relates to deterioration in water quality within the Black River catchment and associated downstream European Sites arising from multiple developments within the same receiving environment. Additional pathways include impacts on groundwater-dependent habitats, habitat degradation and disturbance to QIs. On this basis, LSEs arising in-combination with the proposed project cannot be excluded and are therefore considered further within the NIS.

Table 3: Wind farms within 20 km of the proposed wind farm site

Wind Farm Name (Planning reference)	No. of Turbines	Location (approx. distance from proposed wind farm site*)	Status
Shancloon Wind Farm (ACP Ref. 323699)	11	In the townlands of Beagh, Beagh More, Cloonbar, Cloonweelaun, Cloonnaglasha, Cloonteen, Corillaun, Derrymore, Ironpool, Shancloon, Toberroe and Tonacooleen, Co. Galway (approx. 6.5 km northeast)	Planning permission refused on September 21st 2026
Laurclavagh Wind Farm (ACP Ref. 319307)	8	Laurclavagh and adjacent townlands, Co. Galway (11.6 km southeast)	Pending planning decision
Ardderro Wind Farm (ACP Ref. 303086)	25**	Townlands of Ardderroo, Letter and Finnaun, Co. Galway (16.1 km southwest)	Operational
Knockranny Wind Farm (ACP Ref. 243094 and 318723)	11	Knockranny, Ardderroo, Letter, Moycullen, Co. Galway (16.3 km southwest)	Currently under construction
Uggool Wind Farm (GCC Ref. 111735)	16	Uggool, Co. Galway (16.9 km southwest)	Operational
Seecon Wind Farm (GCC Ref. 11429 and ACP Ref. 307117***)	7**	Seecon, Finnaun, Co. Galway (18.2 km southwest)	Pending construction
	16**	Seecon, Lettercraffro, Derradda, Finnaun and Shannapheasteen, Co. Galway (18.3 km southwest)	Operational
Lettercraffroe Wind Farm (GCC Ref. 101454)	8	Lettercraffroe, Co. Galway (18.6 km southwest)	Operational
Cloonascragh Turbine (GCC Ref. 221175)	1	Cloonascragh, Tuam, Co. Galway (19.5 km east)	Pending construction

*Measured from the boundary of the proposed wind farm site to the closest wind turbine of the wind farm considered for cumulative impacts.

**Some of which are >20 km from the proposed wind farm site.

***This application concerns nine turbines across two wind farms. The two turbines within the Cloosh Wind Farm (GCC Ref. 20198) are located >20 km from the proposed wind farm site and therefore not considered in the cumulative impacts assessment.

Table 4: Projects with the potential for in-combination effects with the proposed project

Planning Ref. no.	Description of development	Location [approx. distance from proposed project]*	Status	Grant Date	Reason for inclusion
MCC 24510	Waste recovery facility for the acceptance, recovery and processing of up to 5,000 tonnes per annum of construction and demolition (C&D) waste, including concrete, brick, tile and soil and stone to produce recycled aggregates for export and use in the construction industry.	Carrowoughteragh, Shrule, Co. Mayo [14 m north]	Approved. Status of construction unknown.	06/02/2025	Proximity to proposed project
MCC 22970	Retention permission for the extraction of rock to an elevation of 25m OD over and area of 2.6 ha and further permission to extract rock by blasting methods to an elevation of 25 m OD over an area of 0.87 ha within the existing quarry boundary, based on the reasons and considerations as outlined in the First Schedule and in accordance with the 20 conditions set out in the Second Schedule attached.	Carrowoughteragh, Shrule, Co. Mayo [14 m north]	Approved. Status of construction unknown.	01/12/2023	Proximity to proposed project
MCC 2560928	For works to uprate the existing Castlebar-Dalton 110 kV overhead line (OHL) (27.8 km in length, with a total of 144 no. supporting structures). The proposed project will comprise, amongst other works, the replacement ("restringing") of the existing OHL circuit conductor wires with a new higher capacity conductor between substations; the replacement of some structures; the strengthening of some tower foundations; painting of some towers; associated temporary site development works to gain access to the existing structures; etc.	Existing Castlebar - Dalton 110 kV overhead power line, See Particulars for multiple townlands, Co. Mayo [620 m northwest]	Approved. Status of construction unknown.	12/02/2026	Proximity to river within the same sub-catchment
GCC 2461601	Construction of 65 no. residential dwellings, one 2-storey duplex building, and a single storey creche building with associated play area, bin store, parking and set down areas. The development also includes, amongst other proposed elements and ancillary works, the provision of public and private open spaces, bicycle and car parking, landscaping and boundary treatments, public	Headford, Cong Road, Co. Galway [3.2 km south]	Approved. Status of construction unknown.	18/07/2025	Proximity and potential hydrological connectivity

Planning Ref. no.	Description of development	Location [approx. distance from proposed project]*	Status	Grant Date	Reason for inclusion
	lighting, connection to services, surface water drainage works residential carparking, road works, ESB substation, etc.				
GCC 201353 ACP 310697	Construction of 54 no. dwelling units, car parking and all associated services.	Headford, Co. Galway [3.6 km southeast]	Under construction, partly operational	17/12/2021	Unlikely connectivity, but within same catchment (Corrib, 30) and <500 m from river.
GCC 2460556 ACP 320253	Revisions to a housing development previously permitted under GCC 212388. The development will consist of the construction of seven additional houses; variation of conditions; provision for bin storage collection points; connection to services, and all associated site works.	Eallagh, Headford, Co. Galway [3.9 km southeast]	Approved. Status of construction unknown.	01/05/2025	Unlikely connectivity, but within same catchment (Corrib, 30) and <500 m from river.
GCC 25125	Extension of duration for permission to construct 21 no. residential units, including connection to services, the provision of a temporary construction site access route, site compound, and all ancillary site services.	Headford, Co. Galway [4.2 km southeast]	Under construction.	12/06/2025	Unlikely connectivity, but within same catchment (Corrib, 30) and <500 m from river.
MCC 2560545	Construction of 12 no. residential units, including the provision of landscaped public open space, play areas, public lighting, connection to services, and all associated site works.	Ballymacgibbon North, Cross, Co. Galway [5.8 km northwest]	Pending decision.	N/A	Given proximity to river, with potential to effect northern half of lake in particular.
MCC 2460297 ACP 321245	Amendment to P17/585 (subject to an extension of duration granted under P17/5850) for the development of a therapeutic village to provide respite facilities and all associated site works.	Lislaughera, Cong, Co. Mayo. [7.5 km northwest]	Under construction.	03/07/2025	Potential impact on water quality in upper Lough Corrib.
*Measured from the closest element of the proposed project, including GCR.					

6. CONCLUSION OF SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

In accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, this AA Screening report has examined the details of the proposed project and the relevant European Sites.

The proposed project is not within a European Site and is not necessary for the management of any European Site. It adjoins Cloughmoyne SAC (000479) which has limestone pavements (8240) near to the western side of the proposed project site. Connectivity was identified with other European Sites. LSE were excluded for most of the European Sites considered. However, based on the best scientific evidence, this AA Screening report concludes that LSE on certain QIs and SCIs for each of the following European sites resulting from the proposed project, acting either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, cannot be ruled out in view of their conservation objectives:

- Cloughmoyne SAC (000479);
- Lough Corrib SAC (000297);
- Shrule Turlough SAC (000525); and
- Lough Corrib SPA (004042).

A Stage 2 AA is therefore required to determine whether adverse effects on the integrity of the sites can be excluded, in light of their conservation objectives.

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