



APPENDIX 14-2

**LANDSCAPE CHARACTER
ASSESSMENT TABLES**

Laurclavagh Renewable Energy Development, Co. Galway

Appendix 14-2 – LCA Assessment Tables





DOCUMENT DETAILS

Client: **Laurclavagh Ltd.**

Project Title: **Appendix 14-2 – LCA Assessment Tables**

Project Number: **210627**

Document Title: **Laurclavagh Renewable Energy Development, Co. Galway**

Document File Name: **Appendix 14-2 - LCA Assessment Tables - F - 2024.03.08 - 210627**

Prepared By: **MKO
Tuam Road
Galway
Ireland
H91 VW84**



Rev	Status	Date	Author(s)	Approved By
01	Draft	2023.11.09	SF	MW
02	Final	2024.03.08	SF	MW

1. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT TABLES

1.1 County Galway

LCU 6a - Black River Basin Unit	
Distance from site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCU	The 8 proposed turbines are located within this Landscape Character Unit (LCU). At its furthest point this LCU stretches approximately 16km from the nearest turbine. The Proposed Grid Connection underground cabling route runs through this LCU to the northeast of the Proposed Wind Farm site.
LCU Key Characteristics <i>(Appendix 4 of the Galway County Development Plan (GCDP) 2022-2028)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ “Undulating long-occupied working landscape with high levels of settlement. Large regular fields and numerous parkland remnants. Low enclosure except for localised areas of mature parkland trees. ➤ Most of Galway’s settlement and agriculture, with associated roads and infrastructure, occur within this busy working landscape. ➤ The appearance and character of the majority of this landscape type remains dominated by grass-based agriculture. Fields generally have low enclosure, with limestone walls evident in many areas. The wider landscape is punctuated by stands of large mature trees”
Landscape Sensitivity	<p>This LCU is located within the Landscape Character Type (LCT) ‘Central Galway Complex’. Appendix 4 (Landscape Character Assessment) within the GCDP 2022-28 states the Sensitivities within this LCT are “<i>open countryside offers frequent extensive panoramic views from local high points.</i>” As seen on Map 8.2 within Chapter 8 of the GCDP (2022-28), this landscape is rated as ‘Low’ sensitivity.</p> <p>Taking into the designations within the GCDP, the landscape sensitivity is determined to be Low.</p>
Visibility of the Proposed Project within the LCU	The ZTV shows full theoretical visibility of the proposed turbines within this LCU. Actual on the ground visibility, assessed during site visits determined that there would be more limited visibility in parts of the LCU beyond 5km from the proposed turbines, where the relatively flat topography takes advantage of vegetation screening in the landscape to limit views of the proposed turbines. While there will be locations from beyond 5km where the turbines will be visible, at that distance and within the flat landscape of the LCU, the turbine will appear as smaller background elements where views are available. Viewpoints 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08 and 15 are located within this LCU along with Photowire Viewpoints A, B, C, G, H, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, R, S, T, U, V, W and X
Cumulative Landscape Effects	<p>No other existing, permitted or proposed turbines are located within this LCU. The two existing Cloonlusk turbines and permitted Turbine at Cloonascragh are located in Galway LCU 5a to the east of this LCA beyond 7km from the nearest proposed turbine.</p> <p>The cumulative ZTV in Figure 14-15 of Chapter 14 shows areas of theoretical visibility of the Proposed Project turbines along with these other wind farm developments. From some areas to the northeast of the proposed turbines, where there are open views, there will be limited combined in</p>

	succession visibility of the proposed turbines with the Cloonlusk turbines. The proposed turbines and the Cloonlusk turbines will not be visible combined in combination from any areas within this LCU. Therefore, no significant cumulative landscape effects are likely to arise within this LCU as a result of the Proposed Project.
Magnitude of Change (Definition from Section 1.5.2 of Methodology Appendix 14-1)	Moderate: <i>“A more limited loss of or change to landscape features over a medium extent which will result in some change to landscape features and aesthetics. Could include the addition of some new uncharacteristic features or elements that would lead to the potential for change in landscape character in a localised area or part of a landscape character area. Would include moderate effects on the overall landscape character that do not affect key characteristics. The effects could be long to medium term and/or partially reversible.”</i>
Significance of Effect	Low x Moderate = Minor = Slight (EPA, 2022) <i>An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities</i>
Mitigating Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Proposed Project is located within an area designated as ‘Low’ sensitivity within the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 ➤ There are large parts of this LCU where there will be no visibility of the Proposed Project, or where the Proposed Project will be seen as a small background feature, and so the greatest effects on landscape character will be localised to parts of the LCU in close proximity to the Proposed Wind Farm site (i.e. within 5km of the proposed turbines). ➤ The proposed turbines are not located in close proximity to any sensitive landscape features.
Residual Effect	Slight (EPA, 2022) <i>An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities</i>

LCU 5a - North River Clare Basin Unit	
Distance from site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCA	This LCU is located approximately 4.4km east of the nearest proposed turbine (T8). A small section of the Proposed Grid Connection underground cabling route runs through the southwest of this LCU.
LCA Key Characteristics (Appendix 4 of the GCDP 2022-2028)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>“Extensive, largely level plain with low enclosure. A long-settled working landscape of large regular stone-walled fields. Extensive areas of bog in east. Transition zone from bog areas to east.</i> ➤ <i>Settlement occurs throughout this landscape, interconnected with a dense network of small roads that also serve extensive areas of dispersed rural housing on smaller holdings.</i> ➤ <i>A history of less intensive development has resulted in a wealth of intact family-based local knowledge, place names and relatively undisturbed sites of historical importance”</i>
Landscape Sensitivity	This LCU is located within the landscape character type ‘Northern Galway Complex’. Appendix 4 (Landscape Character Assessment) within the GCDP 2022-28 states the Sensitivities within this LCT are <i>“open countryside offers frequent extensive panoramic views from local high points.”</i> As seen

	<p>on Map 8.2 within Chapter 8 of the GCDP (2022-28), this landscape is rated as 'Low' sensitivity.</p> <p>Taking into consideration the designations within the GCDP, the landscape sensitivity is determined to be Low.</p>
<p>Visibility of the Proposed Project within the LCU</p>	<p>The ZTV shows the majority of this LCU has full theoretical visibility of the proposed turbines. Approximately 5km north of the proposed turbines there is a large area of no visibility as Knockma Hill screens views from this direction. Beyond 5km there is partial visibility as a small number of the proposed turbines are visible north of the hill. In reality, visibility of the proposed turbines will be limited to elevated vantage points within this LCU. Beyond 10km the ZTV shows that there are multiple areas of no visibility of the proposed turbines due to the local undulations in the landscape. Due to the predominately flat nature of the landscape, beyond 5km the majority of the views will be screened by intervening vegetation as seen in AltVP22. VP09 and PWVP-D show slightly elevated views along the N83 and N17, these locations are some of the only locations the proposed turbines will be visible from in this LCU. The proposed turbines are visible in the background of these views. Photowire Viewpoints E and F are also located within this LCU. PWVP-E shows no visibility from near Tuam Town.</p>
<p>Cumulative Landscape Effects</p>	<p>The two existing Cloonlusk turbines and the permitted Turbine at Cloonascragh, are located beyond 7km of the proposed turbines within this LCU. The proposed Shanclon turbines, located beyond 10km, and the proposed Clonberne and proposed Cooloo turbines, located beyond 15km, are also located within this LCU. As shown by the cumulative ZTV the majority of the LCU has theoretical visibility of the proposed turbines with other cumulative wind farm developments. Within this LCU it is unlikely there will be views of the proposed turbines in combination with the proposed Clonberne or proposed Cooloo turbines due to the flat nature of the landscape and intervening vegetation. It is unlikely that there will be locations from within this LCU where the proposed turbines and the Cloonlusk and Shanclon turbines will be seen in combination. There will be some locations to the north of this LCU where there will be views of the proposed turbines in one direction, and views of the Cloonlusk turbines and proposed Turbine at Cloonascragh to another direction, creating in succession views, where an observer has to turn their head to observe both wind farms in two different directions. These views will be limited and therefore there is unlikely to be any cumulative effects on the landscape and character of this LCU.</p>
<p>Magnitude of Change (Definition from Section 1.5.2 of Methodology Appendix 14-1)</p>	<p>Slight: <i>"The loss of or change to landscape features of limited extent, or changes to landscape character in smaller areas. Changes would not affect key characteristics. The addition of any new features or elements to the landscape would only result in low-level changes to the overall aesthetics of the landscapes. Changes to the landscape are more evident at a local level and not over a wide geographical area. The effects could potentially be medium to short term and/or reversible."</i></p>
<p>Significance of Effect</p>	<p>Low X Slight = Minor/Negligible = Not Significant An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.</p>

Mitigating Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Proposed Project is located within an area designated as ‘Low’ sensitivity within the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 ➤ There are large parts of this LCU where there will be no visibility of the Proposed Project, or where the Proposed Project will be seen as a small background feature, and so the greatest effects on landscape character will be localised to parts of the LCU in close proximity to the Proposed Wind Farm site (i.e. within 5km of the proposed turbines). ➤ The proposed turbines are not located in close proximity to any sensitive landscape features.
Residual Effect	<p>Not Significant (EPA, 2022) <i>An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.</i></p>

LCU 6b - Southern River Clare Basin Unit	
Distance from site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCA	<p>This LCU is located approximately 3.5km southeast of the nearest proposed turbine (T8).</p>
LCA Key Characteristics <i>(Appendix 4 of the GCDP 2022-2028)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ “Undulating long-occupied working landscape with high levels of settlement. Large regular fields and numerous parkland remnants. Extensive wetland areas near Lough Corrib. Low enclosure except for localised areas of mature parkland trees. ➤ Most of Galway’s settlement and agriculture, with associated roads and infrastructure, occur within this busy working landscape. ➤ The appearance and character of the majority of this landscape type remains dominated by grass-based agriculture. Fields generally have low enclosure, with limestone walls evident in many areas. The wider landscape is punctuated by stands of large mature trees”
Landscape Sensitivity	<p>This LCU is located within the landscape character type ‘Central Galway Complex’. Appendix 4 (Landscape Character Assessment) within the GCDP 2022-28 states the Sensitivities within this LCT are <i>“open countryside offers frequent extensive panoramic views from local high points.”</i> As seen on Map 8.2 within Chapter 8 of the GCDP (2022-28), this landscape is rated as ‘Low’ sensitivity.</p> <p>Taking into consideration these designations within the GCDP, the landscape sensitivity is determined to be Low.</p>
Visibility of the Proposed Project within the LCU	<p>The ZTV in Figure 14-1 in Chapter 14 of this EIAR shows that there is full theoretical visibility of the proposed turbines throughout the majority of this LCU. There are areas of no theoretical visibility beyond 7km from the proposed turbines, due to the local undulations in the landscape. Actual visibility of the proposed turbines from areas beyond 5km will be limited to areas of higher elevation due to screening from vegetation throughout the flat landscape. VP10, located to the east of this LCU shows an elevated view over the flat vegetated landscape, all turbines are visible from this viewpoint as it is located on an elevated road. As seen in VP12 there may also be limited locations within the LCU where there are open views of the landscape on bridges. The proposed turbines appear as background features in this view.</p>

Cumulative Landscape Effects	The Cumulative ZTV in Figure 14-15 within Chapter 14 shows that there is a large area of cumulative theoretical visibility between 5-15km. In reality, it is unlikely that there will be visibility of the proposed turbines in combination with other wind energy developments due to the vegetation screening views within the landscape. There may be views of the proposed turbines in combined in succession views with the existing Cloonlusk turbines from very few elevated views within this LCU. It is unlikely there will be any significant cumulative effects on the landscape and character of this LCU.
Magnitude of Change (Definition from Section 1.5.2 of Methodology Appendix 14-1)	Slight: <i>“The loss of or change to landscape features of limited extent, or changes to landscape character in smaller areas. Changes would not affect key characteristics. The addition of any new features or elements to the landscape would only result in low-level changes to the overall aesthetics of the landscapes. Changes to the landscape are more evident at a local level and not over a wide geographical area. The effects could potentially be medium to short term and/or reversible.”</i>
Significance of Effect	Low X Slight = Minor/Negligible = Not Significant An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.
Mitigating Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Proposed Project is located within an area designated as ‘Low’ sensitivity within the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 ➤ Due to the flat nature of the majority of this LCU there will be limited visibility of the proposed turbines ➤ The proposed turbines are not located in close proximity to any sensitive landscape features.
Residual Effect	Not Significant (EPA, 2022) <i>An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.</i>

LCU 4b - Lower Corrib Environs Unit	
Distance from site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCA	This LCU is located approximately 3.6km west of the nearest proposed turbine (T1).
LCA Key Characteristics <i>(Appendix 4 of the GCDP 2022-2028)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ “Very complex patterns of shore and water - many islands, shallows, reedbeds and highly indented shores. Extensive wetland areas separate lake from settled hinterlands.”
Landscape Sensitivity	This LCU is located within the Lake Environs Landscape Type. This landscape character type defines its sensitivities as <i>‘Highly sensitive to change in appearance and character by new development of scale’</i> . Within Map 06 of Appendix 4 in the GCDP, this LCU is located within a ‘Special’ Landscape Sensitivity designation, this is described as <i>‘high sensitivity to change’</i> . Taking into consideration these designations within the GCDP, the landscape sensitivity is determined to be High .

Visibility of the Proposed Project within the LCA	<p>The ZTV in Figure 14-1 in Chapter 14 of this EIAR shows that there is full theoretical visibility of the proposed turbines throughout the majority of this LCU. The ZTV shows full theoretical visibility for the majority of Lough Corrib, however, on site appraisals found that the landscape surrounding Lough Corrib was highly vegetated and actual visibility is likely to be substantially less. VP13 is located within this LCU and shows views from an elevated vantage point with views across Lough Corrib. From this location within this LCU the turbines will be visible as background features. From the eastern side of Lough Corrib, i.e. the side closest to the Proposed Wind Farm site there will be no visibility and no change to the character of this area. In general, the proposed turbines will not alter the character of this LCU.</p>
Cumulative Landscape Effects	<p>No existing, permitted or proposed turbines are located within this LCU. It is unlikely that the proposed turbines will be visible with any other turbines from this LCU. No significant cumulative landscape effects are likely to arise.</p>
Magnitude of Change (Definition from Section 1.5.2 of Methodology Appendix 14-1)	<p>Slight: <i>“The loss of or change to landscape features of limited extent, or changes to landscape character in smaller areas. Changes would not affect key characteristics. The addition of any new features or elements to the landscape would only result in low-level changes to the overall aesthetics of the landscapes. Changes to the landscape are more evident at a local level and not over a wide geographical area. The effects could potentially be medium to short term and/or reversible.”</i></p>
Significance of Effect	<p>High X Slight = Moderate/Minor = Moderate An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends</p>
Mitigating Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Proposed Project is located within an area designated as ‘Low’ sensitivity within the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 ➤ Due to the flat nature of the majority of this LCU there will be limited visibility of the proposed turbines. ➤ When the turbines are visible from elevated locations within this LCU they will be visible in the background of the view and not detract from the appearance of this LCU ➤ The proposed turbines are not located in close proximity to any sensitive landscape features and will not be visible from the area of the LCU closest to the Proposed Wind Farm site.
Residual Effect	<p>Slight (EPA, 2022) <i>An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities</i></p>

LCU 4a - Upper Corrib Environs Unit	
Distance from site to Nearest/Furthest Area of LCA	<p>This LCU is located approximately 8.6km west of the nearest proposed turbine (T1)</p>

<p>LCA Key Characteristics (Appendix 4 of the GCDP 2022-2028)</p>	<p>➤ “Many round-backed, mostly wooded islands throughout lake. Majority of shore is tree-fringed. The hinterlands are a mix of small farms, woodland and bog.”</p>
<p>Landscape Sensitivity</p>	<p>This LCU is located within the Lake Environs Landscape Type. This landscape character type defines its sensitivities as <i>‘Highly sensitive to change in appearance and character by new development of scale’</i>. Within Map 06 of Appendix 4 in the GCDP, this LCU is located within an ‘Iconic’ Landscape Sensitivity designation, this is described as <i>‘Unique landscape with high sensitivity to change’</i>. Taking into consideration these designations within the GCDP, the landscape sensitivity is determined to be Very High.</p>
<p>Visibility of the Proposed Project within the LCA</p>	<p>The ZTV in Figure 14-1 in Chapter 14 of this EIAR shows that there is a mix of full and no theoretical visibility of the proposed turbines between 10-15km of this LCU. The ZTV shows full theoretical visibility for the majority of Lough Corrib, however, on site appraisals found that the landscape surrounding Lough Corrib was highly vegetated and actual visibility is likely to be substantially less. As seen in VP14, the turbines are slightly visible over the vegetation in the background of the view. This will be the case for the majority of locations where there is potential visibility of the proposed turbines in this LCU. The turbines will appear as background features and not detract from the scenic amenity of this LCU.</p>
<p>Cumulative Landscape Effects</p>	<p>No existing, permitted or proposed turbines are located within this LCU. Due to the flat nature of this landscape, it is unlikely that the proposed turbines will be visible in combination with any other turbines from this LCU. No significant cumulative landscape effects are likely to arise.</p>
<p>Magnitude of Change (Definition from Section 1.5.2 of Methodology Appendix 14-1)</p>	<p>Negligible: <i>“A change affecting smaller areas of landscape character including the loss of some landscape elements or the addition of features or elements which are either of low value or hardly noticeable. The effects could be short term and/or reversible.”</i></p>
<p>Significance of Effect</p>	<p>Very High X Negligible = Moderate/Minor = Moderate An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends</p>
<p>Mitigating Factors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Proposed Project is located within an area designated as ‘Low’ sensitivity within the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 ➤ Due to the flat nature of the majority of this LCU there will be limited visibility of the proposed turbines. ➤ When the turbines are visible within this LCU they will be visible in the background of the view and will not alter the character of this LCU ➤ The proposed turbines are not located in close proximity to any sensitive landscape features and do not alter the character of Lough Corrib.
<p>Residual Effect</p>	<p>Slight (EPA, 2022) <i>An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities</i></p>