

## DECC

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### IOSEA6

#### SCOPING REPORT - APPENDIX C

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## C.7 LANDSCAPE AND SEASCAPE



## C.7 LANDSCAPE AND SEASCAPE

This section aims to describe the various Regional and Transboundary seascape types, national parks and county level designated areas.

This section describes the baseline, existing environmental sensitivities and potential sensitivities of Landscapes and Seascape to the Plan. The baseline draws on information from IOSEA4 and IOSEA5, providing updates where applicable.

### C.7.1 Seascape Character Types

Seascape has been defined most recently in the National Marine Planning Framework as referring to "landscapes with views of the coast or seas, and coastal areas and the adjacent marine environment with cultural, historical and archaeological links with each other" (DHLGH, 2021). Additionally, the National Landscape Strategy and European Landscape Convention (ELC) includes human interaction with seascape/and or landscape, describing it as "an area perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors" (European Land Convention, 2012; DECC UK, 2016).

However, a broader definition from Hill et al. (2001) includes:

- Views from land to sea
- Views from sea to land
- Views along coastline; and
- The effects on landscape of the conjunction of sea and land.

Seascape can be divided into two categories: visual resource and marine character. Visual resources include: views of the coast and sea from land, views from the sea to land; and views from the sea to the sea are all examples of visual resources. Marine character refers to how a person perceives a region based on a combination of qualities at the surface, in the water column, and on the seabed (DHLGH, 2021). Seascape character assessments were developed to identify, assess, and characterise the regional seascape. Characterising the seascape provides an evidence base for Marine Spatial Planning and marine policy (Minogue et al., 2020)

#### C.7.1.1 Regional Seascape Character Types

In 2020 the Marine Institute supported an assessment of Ireland's Regional Seascape Character Assessment. The study undertook an initial identification of character types at a regional scale. These character types were defined as "Recognisable geographical areas with a consistent overall character at a strategic level" (Minogue et al., 2020). The assessment was undertaken around the coastline of Ireland and 13 marine Seascape Character Types (SCTs) were defined (two identified offshore) (Minogue et al., 2020). The purposes of identifying SCTs is to provide a good framework for analysing change among seascapes with similar characters as pressures will influence them in similar ways. Figure C-33, (Drawing Reference: P2510-LANDS-001) displays the distribution of the RSCAs around the Irish coast.

# IOSEA6 - ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

## LANDSCAPE, SEASCAPE AND VISUAL AMENITY

### Regional Seascape Character Types

Drawing No: P2510-LANDS-001

B

#### Legend

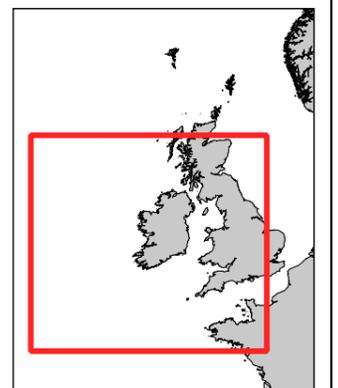
- IOSEA6 Area
- National Park
- EEZ Boundary
- 12 NM Limit

#### Seascapes Character Type

- SCT1
- SCT2
- SCT3
- SCT4
- SCT5
- SCT6
- SCT7
- SCT8
- SCT9
- SCT10
- SCT11
- SCT12

#### Offshore Geological Basin

- Celtic Sea Basin
- Porcupine Basin
- Slyne - Erris Basin

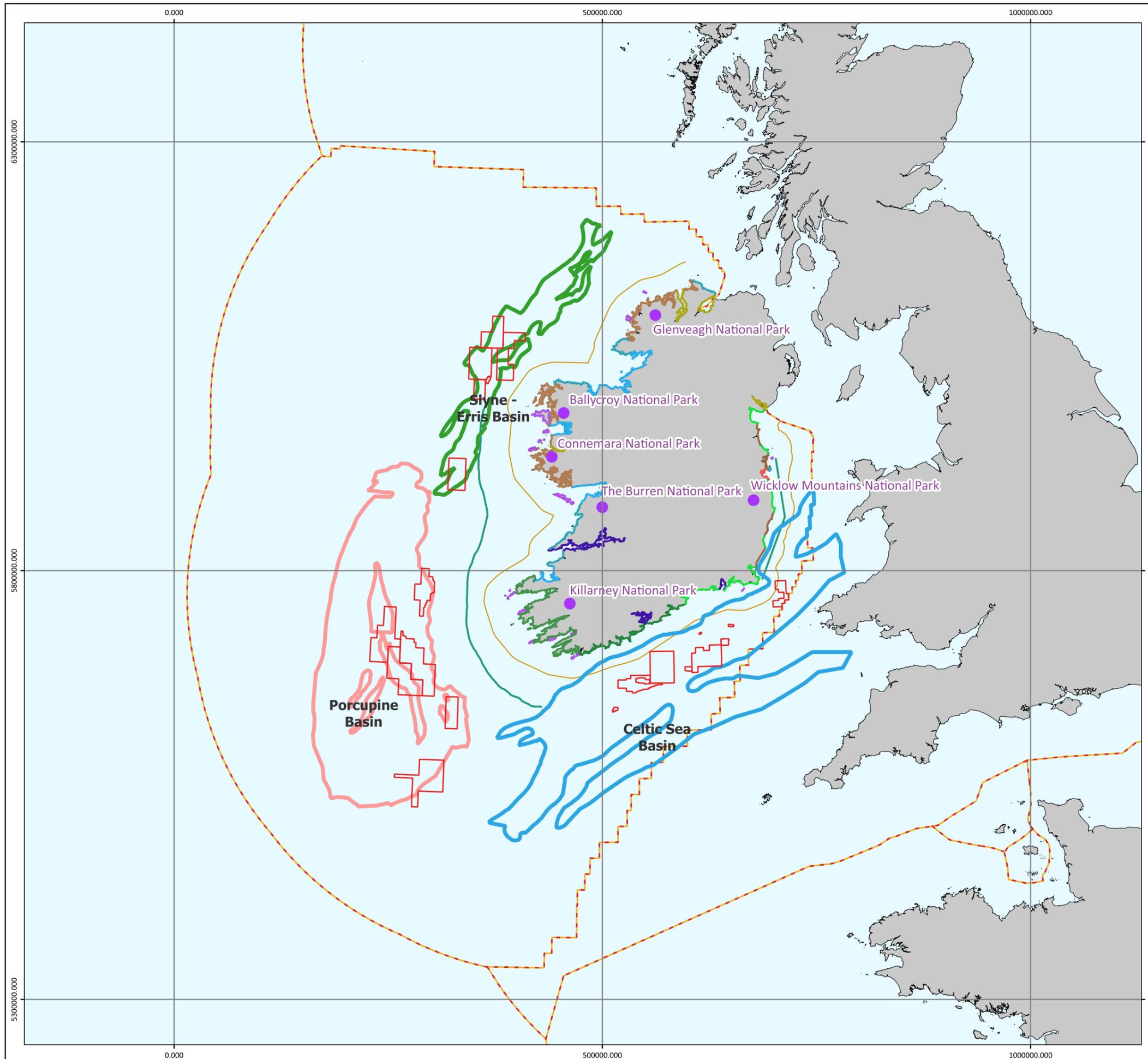


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<b>Created By</b>	Lewis Castle
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<b>Approved By</b>	Emma Langley



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### C.7.1.2 Slyne-Erris Basin and Porcupine Basin

There were eight SCTs identified along the Atlantic Coast in total and these SCTs are adjacent to the IOSEA6 Slyne-Erris Basin and Porcupine Basin areas Figure C-33, (Drawing Reference : P2510-LANDS-001). An offshore SCT was also identified in the character assessment, '13. Offshore waters with high energy wave climate' which is within both the IOSEA6 Study Areas Slyne-Erris Basin and Porcupine Basin. The offshore SCT is characterised by high energy waves from the Atlantic Ocean. Table C-36 highlights the SCTs as described by Minogue et al. 2020 located along the coast, parallel to the western IOSEA6 Study Areas.

### C.7.1.3 Celtic Sea Basin

The IOSEA6 Celtic Sea Basin is situated along the east and south-east coast of Ireland. Five SCTs are present along the coast adjacent to the Celtic Sea basin and one SCT is within this IOSEA6 Study Area. The SCT within the IOSEA6 Celtic Sea Basin is classed as '12. Shallow offshore waters' and is predominately found along the eastern coast of Ireland. The SCT is associated with the Irish sea and is characterized by sandbanks that may be elongated, rounded or irregular 'mound shapes' or sloping plains of sediments that ranges from gravel to fine sand; and important nursery grounds for fish and feeding grounds for seabirds and mammals such as seals. Table C-37 highlights the SCTs as described by Minogue et al. 2020, located along the coast parallel to the Celtic Sea Basin IOSEA6 Study Area.

**Table C-36 Description of Seascape Character Types (SCTs) related to the Slyne-Erris Basin and Porcupine Basin (Descriptions directly quoted from Minogue et al., 2020)**

Name	Principal Drivers	Key Characteristics
<p>1. Large limestone Bay with low lying/ undulating hinterland (and coastal wetlands)</p>	<p>Predominantly limestone and calcareous shale bedrock. Erosional processes of the waves create large, indented bays. Land /sea interface informed by sloping topography. Associated with the Atlantic Ocean. Shallow bays ranging from -2m to -72m OD.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Large, open sweeping bays.</li> <li>▪ Low-lying hinterland terrain hosting subglacial landforms (e.g. drumlins, moraines) that indicate ice flow direction seaward towards large bays.</li> <li>▪ Can include extensive sandy beaches for example Banna Strand, Co. Kerry Rosnowlagh Beach, Donegal Bay and Strandhill, Co. Sligo). Sand dunes are also present.</li> <li>▪ The islands of Clew Bay are a renowned feature of this bay – often called drumlins, but more correctly termed, drowned ribbed moraines.</li> <li>▪ Long sweeping views along and across bays is a feature.</li> <li>▪ Macro tidal ranges (&gt;4m) present at all Atlantic Sea limestone bays -Clew Bay, Galway to Tralee Bay, Dingle Bay.</li> </ul>
<p>2. Large Estuary</p>	<p>Partially enclosed coastal body associated with confluence of large rivers. Complex tidal patterns of tidal channels associated with ebb and flow of tidal streams. Mudflats, and small islands present. Commonly zone of deposition. Sloping landform with inlets and small islands. Deciduous woodland fringes occasional shorelines. Transitional zone between freshwater and marine water with rich habitat for a range of flora and fauna. Long history of human activity and habitation associated with sheltered rich estuarine environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rich estuarine habitat very important for range of mammal species including grey seal, otter and in the Shannon, bottle nose dolphin.</li> <li>▪ Very important habitat for wide range of wildfowl, reflected in designation under EU Birds Directive and Habitats Directive for other species and habitats.</li> <li>▪ Diverse estuarine habitats including mudflats, sandflats and saltmarsh.</li> <li>▪ Rich resources and shelter is reflected in evidence of extensive human activity from Neolithic to contemporary.</li> <li>▪ Important communications and transport corridor.</li> <li>▪ Historic urban core with modified estuarine edge and industrial activities associated with sheltered mouth of the river.</li> <li>▪ Scale of this SCT varies from small to large depending on scale and screening provided by local vegetation and sloping topography. Long views afforded from wider parts of estuary and onto the sea.</li> </ul>
<p>3. Sea Lough/Fjord with raised hinterland</p>	<p>Long narrow penetration of sea water extending inland from ocean. Glacial valleys drowned when sea levels rose after the last glaciation. Most include series of small islands, some reclaimed historically. Generally shallow (-.1m to -.24m)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fjords are elongate, exhibiting an almost consistent width, and bounded by elevated terrain, with greater enclosure and more sheltered than large bays.</li> </ul> <p>Large sea loughs generally comprising coastal plain with raised sloping hills and headlands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tidal mudflats can be a common component of the seascape.</li> <li>▪ Views are generally constrained across the narrow lough or to the head of the sealough. At the mouth of a sealough, open sea views and greater sense of exposure are available.</li> <li>▪ Navigation buoys to guide ships are a visible presence.</li> <li>▪ Sheltered sealoughs often include aquaculture.</li> <li>▪ Defensive use historically, particularly Lough Foyle and Lough Swilly.</li> </ul>

Name	Principal Drivers	Key Characteristics
		<p>Urban and industrial development sometimes accompany these SCTs at the head of sea lough.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Often ferry service is present (may be seasonal) to reduce travel times around the sea lough.</li> </ul>
4. Sandstone peninsulas with drowned valleys (Rias)	<p>Sandstone bedrock. Submerged coastal valleys or estuaries resulting from sea level rise.</p> <p>Typically v-shaped and deepen progressively towards the ocean.</p> <p>Islands, peninsulas and sounds combine with small beaches.</p> <p>Mountains associated with the drowned valleys</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indented with numerous inlets, small bays and islands.</li> <li>Distinctive peninsulas with prominent headlands.</li> <li>Diverse habitats comprising inshore, intertidal, sandy and rocky shores and cliff habitats.</li> <li>Combination of mountains and sea create elevated views and highly scenic character.</li> <li>Views vary from long extensive views from elevated areas with strong maritime influence to more intimate views associated with smaller bays and harbours.</li> <li>Early Christian features strongly associated with these SCTs.</li> <li>Gaeltacht communities</li> <li>Extensive literature associated with the Blaskets in particular</li> <li>Historical naval military significance in Bantry Bay.</li> </ul>
5. Complex metamorphic and igneous indented coastline small bays and small islands.	<p>Diverse geology comprising metamorphic and igneous rocks.</p> <p>Complex coastline. Shallow inlets.</p> <p>Numerous small bays and islands.</p> <p>Lowlying landform often framed by mountains.</p> <p>Raised beaches a feature of Northernmost part of SCT5 on Donegal coast.</p> <p>Beaches and inlets vary between white sandy shores and rocky, indented inlets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indented and diverse SCT that reflects geological variety and influences.</li> <li>This SCT comprises a large number of islands, often very close to the shore but also larger Islands such as Achill.</li> </ul> <p>Sand dunes and sand beaches are a common feature, interspersed with more rugged, Indented, rocky shorelines with green and brown seaweed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frequently quite low lying, though mountain ranges frame the hinterland views, particularly the Nephin, Sheeffry, and Twelve Bens mountains.</li> <li>The complex seascape includes numerous bays that offer shelter and comprise usually small settlements around piers or harbours.</li> <li>Views range from exposed ocean views of the Atlantic along the western coastal fringe to more intimate, diverse views associated with the south and east facing shorelines and indented coast.</li> </ul>
6. High granite/sandstone cliffs and plateau	<p>Metamorphosed sedimentary and clastic sedimentary rocks exposed to high-energy waves. Atlantic wave action and erosion.</p> <p>Commonly vertical/sheer cliffs.</p> <p>High plateau hinterland.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thick horizontal rock layers visible in cliffs (Moher, Downpatrick, Kilkee, Bromore, Kerry Head).</li> <li>Sheer, steep drops into sea at Howth, Slieve League, Benwee Head and Erris Head.</li> <li>The resistant bedrock results in sea stacks and caves.</li> <li>Important areas for seal colonies and seabirds.</li> <li>Full Atlantic influence apparent at western locations of this SCT.</li> <li>Generally long panoramas from elevated cliffs across large limestone bays with views also drawn to the incised coastal edge with sea cliffs.</li> <li>Occasional small bays comprising rocky shore.</li> <li>Macro tides present.</li> </ul>
11. Large Islands	<p>Variable geology Landmasses separated from mainland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inhabited (except Blaskets) Achill may be the exception, without a deep channel separating it from mainland</li> </ul>

Name	Principal Drivers	Key Characteristics
	<p>Open, wind-swept terrain Sea cliffs frequent Often Gaeltacht areas</p> <p>Isolated landform not accessible by foot at low tide</p> <p>Accessible via ferries and boats with some islands such as Achill and Valentia now linked via causeway/bridge.</p> <p>Atlantic and Celtic Sea only permanently inhabited</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Intertidal resources and fishing traditions.</li> <li>▪ Havens commonly on more sheltered eastern bays.</li> <li>▪ Several islands though not to be permanently occupied, are inhabited over summer months in the Gaeltacht areas</li> <li>▪</li> </ul>
<p>13. Offshore waters with high energy wave climate</p>	<p>Characterised by high energy waves from the Atlantic Ocean.</p> <p>Tidal waves in the open Atlantic are generally small, increasing as they move eastwards across the shelf towards Ireland's west coast.</p> <p>Macro tides associated with western bays.</p> <p>Deeper off shore waters.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Full offshore waters of Atlantic Ocean.</li> <li>▪ High wave energy.</li> <li>▪ Largest waves recorded off Aran Islands (Storm Doris 2017), and Killard Point (Co Clare 2015).</li> <li>▪ The waves are further enhanced by the funnelling effect of bays and estuaries.</li> <li>▪ Cultural associations with Edge of the World – Hy- Brasil folklore along the Atlantic waters.</li> </ul>

**Table C-37 Description of Seascape Character Types (SCTs) in relation to the Celtic Sea Basin (Descriptions directly quoted from Minogue et al., 2020)**

Name	Principal Drivers	Key Characteristics
<p>2. Large Estuary</p>	<p>Partially enclosed coastal body associated with confluence of large rivers.</p> <p>Complex tidal patterns of tidal channels associated with ebb and flow of tidal streams.</p> <p>Mudflats, and small islands present.</p> <p>Commonly zone of deposition Sloping landform with inlets and small islands.</p> <p>Deciduous woodland fringes occasional shorelines.</p> <p>Transitional zone between freshwater and marine water, with rich habitat for a range of flora and fauna.</p> <p>Long history of human activity and habitation associated with sheltered, rich estuarine environments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rich estuarine habitat very important for range of mammal species including grey seal, otter and in the Shannon, bottle nose dolphin.</li> <li>▪ Very important habitat for wide range of wildfowl, reflected in designation under EU Birds Directive; and Habitats Directive for other species and habitats.</li> <li>▪ Diverse estuarine habitats including mudflats, sandflats, saltmarsh.</li> <li>▪ Rich resources and shelter is reflected in evidence of extensive human activity from Neolithic to contemporary.</li> <li>▪ Important communications and transport corridor</li> <li>▪ Historic urban core with modified estuarine edge and industrial activities associated with sheltered mouth of the river.</li> <li>▪ Scale of this SCT varies from small to large depending on scale and screening provided by local vegetation and sloping topography. Long views afforded from wider parts of estuary and onto the sea.</li> </ul>
<p>4. Sandstone peninsulas with drowned valleys (Rias).</p>	<p>Sandstone bedrock. Submerged coastal valleys or estuaries resulting from sea level rise.</p> <p>Typically v-shaped and deepen progressively towards the ocean.</p> <p>Islands, peninsulas and sounds combine with small beaches. Mountains associated with the drowned valleys</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Indented with numerous inlets, small bays and islands.</li> <li>▪ Distinctive peninsulas with prominent headlands.</li> <li>▪ Diverse habitats comprising inshore, intertidal, sandy and rocky shores and cliff habitats.</li> <li>▪ Combination of mountains and sea create elevated views and highly scenic character.</li> <li>▪ Views vary from long extensive views from elevated areas with strong maritime influence to more intimate views associated with smaller bays and harbours.</li> <li>▪ Early Christian features are strongly associated with these SCTs.</li> <li>▪ Gaeltacht communities and extensive literature associated with the Blaskets in particular.</li> <li>▪ Historical naval military significance in Bantry Bay.</li> </ul>
<p>8. Low Lying and estuarine coastal plain with long, narrow sandy beaches.</p>	<p>East coast on the Irish Sea. Erosion of drift geology.</p> <p>Narrow beaches a feature.</p> <p>Low lying topography.</p> <p>More common association with estuaries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Frequently a series of small to medium beaches mixture of sand or shingle, the exception being Curraclloe, Co. Wexford, one of the longest strands in the country.</li> <li>▪ Sand dunes present though many modified over the years.</li> <li>▪ Popular seaside towns. Views both eastwards to Irish Sea that are more exposed. Varies with more moderate, intimate views framed by smaller headlands and beaches</li> <li>▪ Estuarine habitats very important for seabirds and wintering birds.</li> <li>▪ Popular recreational use.</li> </ul>

Name	Principal Drivers	Key Characteristics
9. Complex indented and estuarine	<p>Diverse geology.</p> <p>Post glacial and oceanic influences form indented, complex coastline.</p> <p>Associated with Celtic sea with primarily south facing beaches.</p> <p>Headlands are smaller in scale and extent than neighbouring Ria SCTs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Historically several fishing villages present. Some fishing activity still takes place, influence of Dublin via expansion of commuter belt present in some areas.</li> <li>▪ Indented estuarine coast with small peninsulas, scale and extent of indentation varies according to bedrock and force of sea.</li> <li>▪ Wooded fringe along more sheltered estuaries and inlets in the south.</li> <li>▪ Rocky shorelines with green and brown seaweed contrasts with smaller sandy beaches.</li> <li>▪ Generally undulating or Low lying topography and shallow estuaries and inlets</li> <li>▪ Variety of larger islands close to shore or connected by bridge/ causeway and numerous rocks named reflecting the importance of understanding navigation into this complex coastal fringe.</li> <li>▪ Historical communications route with many defensive towers, association with Spanish Armada route for some SCTs.</li> </ul>
11. Large Islands	<p>Variable geology Landmass separated from mainland</p> <p>Open, wind-swept terrain Sea cliffs frequent Often Gaeltacht areas</p> <p>Isolated landform not accessible by foot at low tide</p> <p>Accessible via ferries and boats, islands such as Achill and Valentia now linked via causeway/bridge.</p> <p>Atlantic and Celtic Sea only Permanently inhabited</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inhabited (except Blaskets) Achill may be the exception, without a deep channel separating it from mainland</li> <li>▪ Intertidal resources and fishing traditions</li> <li>▪ Havens commonly on more sheltered eastern bays</li> <li>▪ Several islands though not permanently occupied, are inhabited over summer months</li> <li>▪ Gaeltacht areas</li> </ul>
12. Shallow offshore Waters	<p>Large extensive distinct banks that may be elongated, rounded or irregular 'mound shapes' or sloping plains of sediments that ranges from gravel to fine sand (NPWS)</p> <p>Important nursery grounds for fish and feeding grounds for seabirds and mammals such as seals.</p> <p>Predominantly along the eastern coast associated with Irish Sea.</p> <p>Erosion of coastal sediments on eastern seaboard are partially arrested by supply of sediments from offshore banks (NPWS 2007)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sandbanks in Irish waters comprises distinct banks (i.e. elongated, rounded or irregular 'mound' shapes) that may arise from horizontal or sloping plains of sediment that ranges from gravel to fine sand.</li> <li>▪ They are primarily composed of sandy sediments permanently covered by water, at depths of less than 20 m below chart datum (though the banks may extend to water depths greater than 20 m).</li> <li>▪ The diversity and types of community associated with this habitat are determined particularly by sediment type together with a variety of other physical, chemical and hydrographical factors.</li> <li>▪ The greatest resource of sandbanks is found in the Irish Sea, though present in Celtic Sea and western seaboard at mouth of the Shannon</li> <li>▪ 19<sup>th</sup> Century works to identify and provide safety by Beacon Buoys</li> <li>▪ Significance to navigation shown in historical maps, these are frequently wreck sites also.</li> </ul>

#### C.7.1.4 Regional Seascape Character Areas

SCAs are described as being "a unique geographical area of land, intertidal and marine area with a recognisable sense of place and identity" (Minogue et al., 2020). The aim of identifying SCAs is to "provide a good framework within which to draw out patterns of local distinctiveness and those factors influencing sense of place" with the purposes of using these to develop policies or strategies which highlight how an area of seascape is different. (Minogue et al., 2020).

In total 17 SCAs were identified around the Irish coast, The IOSEA6 Study Areas are adjacent to the following 11 SCAs (Figure C-34; Drawing Reference: P2510-LANDS-002):

- Atlantic Galway Bay and Islands;
- Atlantic North Mayo and Galway;
- Atlantic Sligo Bay;
- North Atlantic Islands, Headlands and Beaches;
- Atlantic South-west Rias, Bays and Islands;
- Shannon Estuary and Tralee Bay;
- Atlantic Clare Cliffs;
- South-east Irish Sea;
- Celtic Sea Bays and Beaches;
- Cork Harbour and Estuary; and
- Atlantic Celtic Bays and Estuaries.

The locations and details of these SCAs are described in Tables C-28 to C-29.

# IOSEA6 - ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

## LANDSCAPE, SEASCAPE AND VISUAL AMENITY

### Seascape Character Areas

Drawing No: P2510-LANDS-002

B

#### Legend

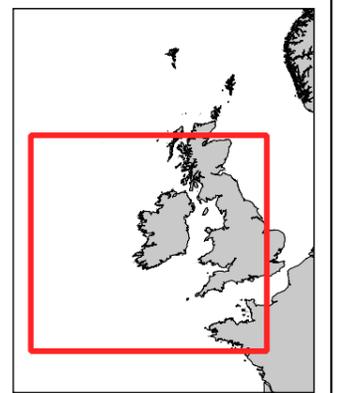
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-  EEZ Boundary
-  12 NM Limit

#### Offshore Geological Basin

-  Celtic Sea Basin
-  Porcupine Basin
-  Slyne - Erris Basin

#### Seascapes Character Area

-  SCA1
-  SCA2
-  SCA3
-  SCA4
-  SCA5
-  SCA6
-  SCA7
-  SCA8
-  SCA9
-  SCA10
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-  SCA12
-  SCA13
-  SCA14
-  SCA15
-  SCA17



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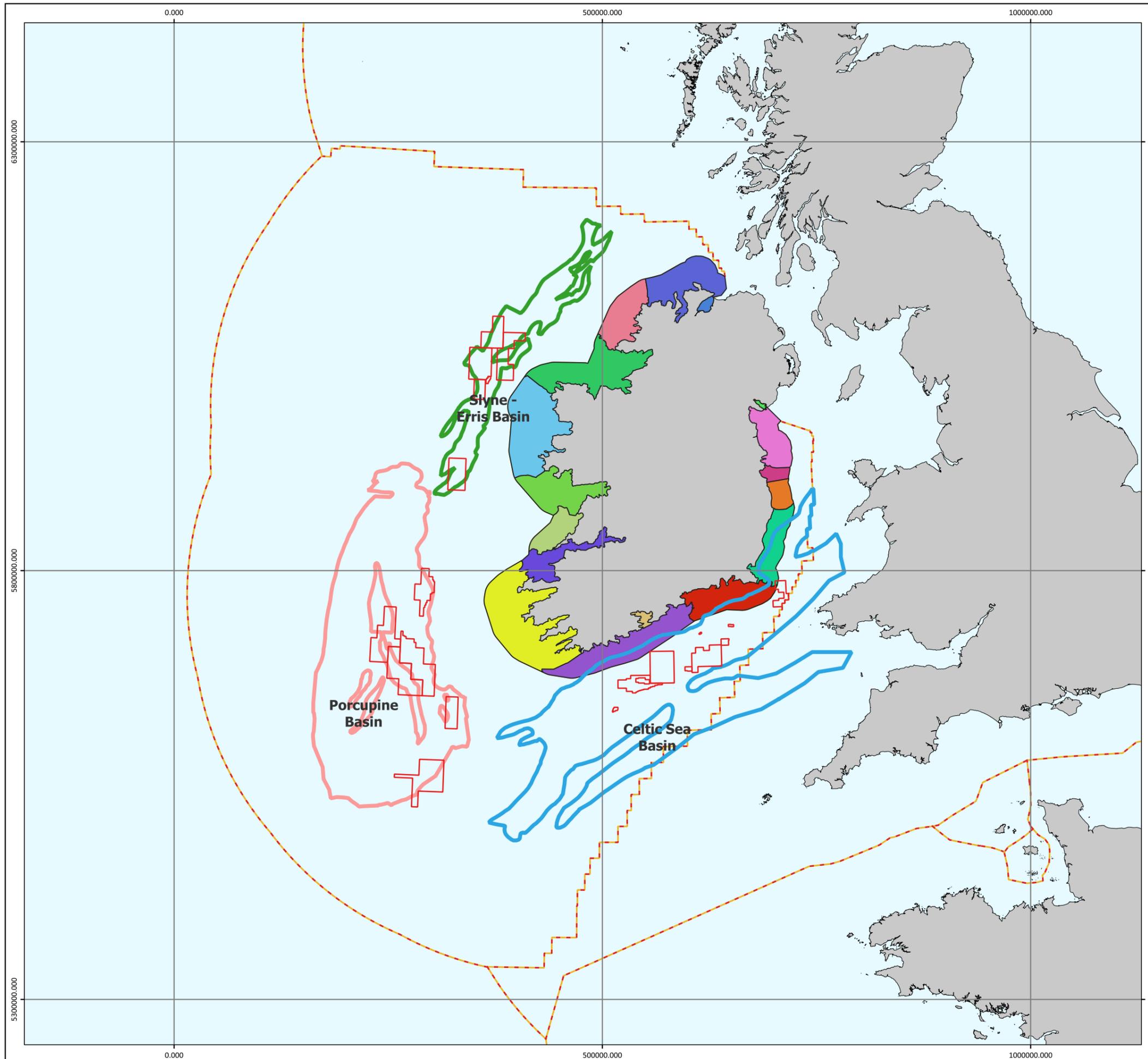
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<b>Created By</b>	Lewis Castle
<b>Reviewed By</b>	Emma Kilbane
<b>Approved By</b>	Emma Langley

An Roinn Comhshaoil,  
Aeraíde agus Cumarsáide  
Department of the Environment,  
Climate and Communications

**intertek**

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**Table C-38 Description of Seascape Character Areas (SCAs) in relation to the Slyne-Erris Basin (Descriptions directly quoted from Minogue et al., 2020)**

Name	Location	Key Characteristics
SCA 3 –North Atlantic Islands, Headlands and Beaches	Rathlin O’Birne Island, Co. Donegal extending 12NM offshore to Horn Head, Co. Donegal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Varied seascape character reflecting the geological history and the influence of glacial processes. The area has the largest population of Irish speakers in the country.</li> <li>▪ Force of the Atlantic particularly pronounced at northern part of this SCA with a remote, wild oceanic character associated with Horn Head and Bloody Foreland.</li> <li>▪ Whilst the presence and power of the Atlantic remains a key influence, the western part of much of this SCA is more sheltered owing to the islands, beaches and estuaries, this being particularly noticeable at the seascape associated with the Rosses.</li> <li>▪ Tory and Arainn Mhór, the largest and most populous islands with numerous other islands being a defining characteristic. Some of these, whilst no longer inhabited full time, do support seasonal habitation and livestock grazing. The history of these islands provides a historical narrative and insight to human history and activity within this SCA.</li> <li>▪ Seasonal migration to Scotland from Tory and along the Donegal coast.</li> <li>▪ Fierce storms and rogue waves are a feature of this SCA and the numerous islands offered refuge for crews.</li> <li>▪ The sea is so storm prone that on discovering stranded sailors, lifeboat crews often floated barrels of provision their way rather than attempt a rescue’</li> <li>▪ Extensive panoramas of the ocean with island views at horizon present from elevated parts of the coast. More intimate views and inter-visibility between sandy beaches and islands particularly associated with the Rosses.</li> <li>▪ The coastal hinterland comprises rough pasture, blanket bog, dispersed housing with older clachans also visible.</li> </ul>
SCA 4 – Atlantic Sligo Bay	Erris Head, Co. Mayo extending 12NM offshore (encompassing the Aran Islands) to Slieve League, Co. Donegal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Area comprise Bays and harbours including Killybegs, Sligo, Enniscrone, and bays of Moy, Killala, Donegal Bay and Malin Bay. Whilst much of the limestone bay is characterised by sweeping, open, gently sloping, low-lying bays; this contrasts with headlands and offshore features such as sea stacks most notably at Slieve League, Downpatrick, Beenorth-west and Erris Heads.</li> <li>▪ The resistant crystalline rock cliff fronts at Slieve League and north-west Erris frame the entrance to the extensive bay, which once navigated safely, offers a safe haven.</li> <li>▪ The variety of sheltered bays with rich estuaries offer evidence of millennia of human activity and habitation. Principal urban centres, all located at harbours or estuaries, are Sligo town, Donegal town, Killybegs town and Ballina. Popular recreational resorts at Enniscrone, Strandhill and Mullaghmore offering sur-ng, seaweed baths as well as other coastal recreational activities. Largest -shing port (per landing) at Killybegs, Co. Donegal</li> <li>▪ The coastal hinterland varies from expansive blanket bog landscapes, to remote plateaus comprising peaty soils and cliffaces, to more sheltered, fertile agricultural land.</li> <li>▪ here are numerous islands present ranging from Coney Island associated with Coney Island of New York and immortalised by WB and Jack Yeats; the islands range from sandbars such as Bartragh Island, to Inis Murray and Rathlin O’Beirne Island. Abundance of folklore and history associated with coastal and onshore elements such as Stags of Broadhaven</li> </ul>

Name	Location	Key Characteristics
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Long panoramas to the headlands are a feature along the southern coastline and long views also a order across the bay both north and south.</li> <li>▪ Frequently long sea views are framed by islands and headlands, whilst the Ox Mountains and the distinctive pro-le of Ben Bulbin</li> </ul>
SCA 5 – Atlantic North Mayo and Galway	Slyne Head, Co. Galway extending 12NM offshore to Erris Head, Co. Mayo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Atlantic facing coasts comprising a mix of elevated land, with cliffs and occasional sea stacks visible. - The mountains that frame much of this SCA create a series of well-known and iconic seascape vistas. Numerous offshore and nearshore Atlantic islands, notably Clare, Achill, Inisturk and Inishbofin; many of the other islands within this SCA have become uninhabited within the past 80-90 years such as Iniskea islands.</li> <li>▪ The density of offshore and nearshore islands provides a particular character; the legacy of naming of all these islands from large islands to the numerous offshore skerries/carraig reflect the use of the coastline for communications.</li> <li>▪ Cultural and linguistic ties to the sea remain strong for example placenames at Achill, Belmullet.</li> <li>▪ Highly dramatic coastal landscape interacting with the weather systems and force of Atlantic waves.</li> <li>▪ This is particularly pronounced at the northern and western parts of this SCA</li> <li>▪ The eastern and south-eastern inlets, bays and sandy beaches are indented and complex.</li> <li>▪ Sea is consistently present; even when not visible, the sound of the Atlantic is constant through waves or wind. Salt laden winds and rain can result in salt being deposited on windows and “burned” foliage at inland locations.</li> <li>▪ The effect of glaciation of topography is quite pronounced in this SCA particularly around Clew Bay, and the glaciated montane topographies of the Nephin Range, Corraun, Achill, Doo Lough Valley, Killary Harbour and the Twelve Bens.</li> <li>▪ Principle towns include Belmullet, Westport and Clifden; all situated within sheltered bays or harbours.</li> <li>▪ Ferries run to and from Clare Island and Inisturk islands from Roonagh Pier, boat and fishing trips are variously offers within Clew Bay and Killary Fjord; chartered boats and angling trips also available from Achill and Belmullet. Surfing has become a popular activity off Achill and this area generally has a good reputation for outdoor and sea based activities.</li> <li>▪ The coastal hinterland varies from remote plateaus such as Slyne Head, to more blanket peatlands both at elevated and close to sea level. Pasture comprising peaty soils and cliff faces, to more sheltered, fertile agricultural land.</li> <li>▪ Key coastal points are identified that present as a juncture between the wilder, exposed Atlantic and the relatively sheltered eastern/southern bays for example at Blacksod Pier, and Keem Head.</li> </ul>
SCA 6 –Atlantic Galway Bay and Islands	Hags Head, Co. Clare extending 12NM offshore (encompassing the Aran Islands) to Bertraghboy Bay, Co. Galway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Broad sweeping bay with diverse and iconic coastline.</li> <li>▪ Aran Islands are the most westerly islands associated with this SCA, with a number of inshore islands particularly associated with Connemara coastline, connected with many of the causeways and bridges joining the islands of Lettermullan built between 1886 -1891.</li> <li>▪ Aughinish Island, uniquely for Ireland, is joined by road to Co. Galway but is part of Co. Clare; this island was temporarily isolated for five decades following tidal waves originated in the earthquake of Lisbon in 1755.</li> <li>▪ Tourism and particularly strong associations with art and folk music and seafood are identified for this SCA.</li> <li>▪ Distinctive boating tradition of the Galway hookers as well as particular fishing communities associated with this area, notably at Claddagh.</li> </ul>

Name	Location	Key Characteristics
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The density of islands, islets and skerries/carraigs provides a particular character concentrated on the northern part of this SCA but also present around Blackhead Bay. The naming and descriptors given to all these features, from large to small, demonstrate the importance of navigating in and around this SCA.</li> <li>▪ Research into the naming and understanding of places, such as the work done by Tim Robinson, gives valuable insights into the sense of place. Oilean Imill (Illaunamid) the island at the tip of Slyne Head with two lighthouses has been interpreted as Edge/Margin island by Tim Robinson; which reflects its remote character before the expanse of ocean.</li> <li>▪ Influence of the sea on land is generally consistent due to low-lying topography, indented coast and more exposed elevated areas.</li> <li>▪ Principal towns include Roundstone, Carna, Carraroe, Galway, Ornamore, Kinvara and Ballvaughan, sited to take advantage and provide haven from the Atlantic.</li> <li>▪ Ferries run to and from Galway and Clare to the Aran Islands and between the islands themselves. Galway Bay is renowned for deep fishing further out in the bay.</li> <li>▪ The coastal hinterland varies from the exposed peninsula around Slyne Head, to rocky indented shorelines with small harbours, urban and industrial landuse around Galway City and Docks and the limestone coastal shelf and pavement of the Burren.</li> <li>▪ Slyne Head, at Illinamaud, and Blackhead provide the key boundaries between the more open, exposed Atlantic Ocean and sheltered Bay.</li> </ul>

**Table C-39 Description of Seascape Character Areas (SCAs) in relation to the Porcupine Basin (Adapted from Minogue et al., 2020)**

Name	Location	Key Characteristics
SCA 7 – Atlantic Clare Cliffs	Loop Head Co. Clare extending 12NM offshore to Hags Head, Co. Clare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The indented coastline is interspersed with some sandy beaches and provide for long established coastal resorts with golf courses, surfing, and mobile homes present.</li> <li>▪ The rocky and indented coastline has a number of shipwrecks including those of the Spanish Armada (commemorated at Spanish Point). San Esteban (246 men) foundered off White Strand and San Marcos (409 men) on the reef off Lurga Point.</li> <li>▪ Promontory forts are a feature including one on Mutton Island. Towerhouses near promontories provide a similar visual focus to the landscape.</li> <li>▪ The coastline alters further south becoming increasingly dramatic as the striking cliffs, arches, stacks and inlets increase along the Loop Head Peninsula. This peninsula has an isolated, remote and increasing wild character.</li> <li>▪ Tourism is long established in this area; Sea bathing was recorded in Kilkee in the 1780s1 though the nineteenth century saw its transformation into a seaside town proper. More recently Loop Head has won European Ecotourism awards in relation to the tourism practices undertaken within this area.</li> <li>▪ The sea is a constant presence and influence on the coast within this SCA which has quite an exposed coastal character, and limited tree cover. Where trees do grow, they lean distinctively away from the prevailing winds.</li> <li>▪ The western facing bays and heads allow for wide ocean views across the sea and waves at sunset.</li> </ul>
SCA 8 – Shannon Estuary and Tralee Bay	Eastwards from Limerick including Shannon Estuary extending 12NM offshore to Loop Head, Co. Clare.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Profoundly influenced by the River Shannon and estuary, this SCA alters considerably with a stronger maritime influence from the Mouth of Shannon westwards.</li> <li>▪ The scale of this SCA varies from the more medium scale estuarine habitat, expanding to vast Atlantic Ocean.</li> <li>▪ This SCA has long been the focus of human activity and habitation, the limestone bay and rich sheltered estuarine environment offering navigational routes, and rich estuarine resources.</li> <li>▪ Major settlements at Limerick City, Tralee and seaside towns of Kilrush and Ballybunnion.</li> <li>▪ The rich estuarine habitats are important for shellfish production but are also key foraging habitats for a number of bird species and this area supports a distinct population of bottlenose dolphins.</li> <li>▪ Dramatic seascapes associated with the cliffs and sea stacks for example at Bromore Cliffs, Loop Head and Kerry Head;</li> <li>▪ Long sandy beaches are present particularly along the Kerry coastline with popular resorts at Ballybunnion and Castlegregory.</li> <li>▪ Foynes a significant deep harbour extending to Limerick Docks; whilst Ferry to Scattery Island from Kilrush town.</li> <li>▪ Views vary from panoramas across the Mouth of Shannon and over the Atlantic to more intimate, moderate scale views across the Shannon Estuary.</li> </ul>
SCA 9 – Atlantic South-west Rias, Bays and Islands	Roaringwater Bay, Co. Cork extending 12NM offshore to the north of Dingle Bay, Co. Kerry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Expansive SCA that encompasses dramatic headlands, numerous large and small islands, rugged indented coastline and iconic seascapes.</li> <li>▪ Rich in historical and archaeological seascapes with extensive and deep relationship between the sea, shore and coast.</li> </ul>

Name	Location	Key Characteristics
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Key seascape features include the Skelligs, Blaskets, Fastnet and Mizen head lighthouses. Islands confer a particular character to this SCA - inhabited islands include Cléire, Sherkin, Durrus, and Valentia.</li><li>▪ Massive sky and sea with long views and changing light and weather; this can result in the ephemeral appearance and disappearance of the offshore islands. Such “shape-shifting” is accompanied by folklore and myths.</li><li>▪ Castlemaine Harbour, sandwiched between the Dingle and Iveragh Peninsula is protected from the ferocity of the Atlantic by Inch and Rossbeigh spits. Kenmare, Bantry and Dunmanus Bays are narrower in scale, and extend inwards to land over 50km (Durse Island to Kenmare).</li><li>▪ The smaller quays, beaches and harbours function as havens and contrast with the dramatic headlands and marine seascape.</li><li>▪ Sailing, fishing, tourism, walking and colaiste summer schools, and Wild Atlantic Way make this area popular for visitors.</li></ul>

**Table C-40 Description of Seascape Character Areas (SCAs) in relation to the Celtic Sea Basin (Adapted from Minogue et al., 2020)**

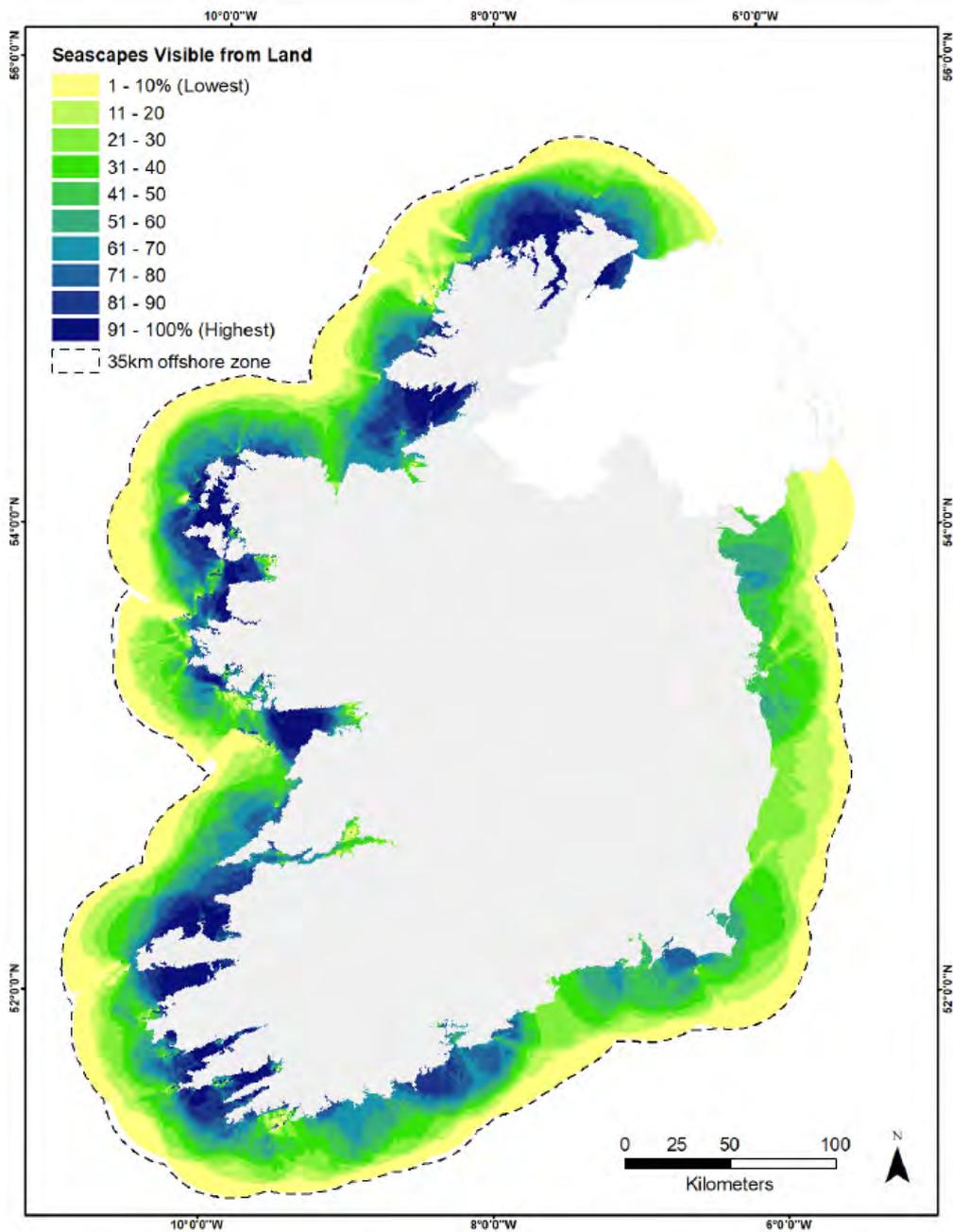
Name	Location	Key Characteristics
SCA 10 – Atlantic Celtic Bays and Estuaries	Helvick Head, Co Waterford extending 12NM offshore to Cape Clear Co. Cork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A complex and extensive SCA; that is subject to influence of both Atlantic Ocean and Celtic Seas.</li> <li>▪ Series of estuaries, bays, headlands, low cliffs and beaches with a broadly consistent coastal form.</li> <li>▪ Key seascape features relate to the series of headlands including Seven Head, Old Head of Kinsale, Ardmore and Helvick Head.</li> <li>▪ Protruding Old Red Sandstone Peninsulas more pronounced in the western part of this SCA are accompanied by cliffs usually between 40 -60m OD</li> <li>▪ Three important historic towns are located in this SCA: Rosscarbery, Kinsale and Youghal. Kinsale and Youghal were both enclosed with towns walls and defences and Rosscarbery may have been walled. All three towns have a long association with the sea throughout their histories.</li> <li>▪ The vertical scale of the cliffs and headlands create a more dramatic character and present closer dramatic views to the sea and along the series of headlands in good visibility.</li> <li>▪ Popular for recreation, tourism, sailing, fishing, arts and food production, this is an active and busy SCA, contrasting with a more remote character associated with the headlands.</li> <li>▪ Strong connections to the sea remain with clear maritime character; the estuaries offer a sense of shelter and haven; the presence and influence of the Atlantic Ocean and Celtic Sea is constant.</li> <li>▪ An Rinn is the most southerly Gaeltacht area in Ireland.</li> </ul>
SCA 11 – Cork Harbour and Estuary	Roberts head on southern part of estuary to Cork City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A deep estuarine form with the River Lee estuary with several rivers and inlets draining into the estuary proper.</li> <li>▪ Extensive, deep harbour with long established maritime character.</li> <li>▪ Flow of goods and people continue with passenger, freight and fishing activities.</li> <li>▪ Maritime importance reflected in location of Irish Naval Service at Haulbowline.</li> <li>▪ Significant influence of Cork city and environs on the wider character area.</li> <li>▪ Cluster of islands with diverse landuse and connectivity across the harbour.</li> <li>▪ Industrial and power generating uses along the harbour.</li> <li>▪ Increasingly rural character as the estuary opens out with rolling farmland overlooking the estuary.</li> <li>▪ Large sheltered character, protected from full force of Celtic Sea and Atlantic Influences.</li> <li>▪ Considerable navigational markers in the estuary to guide ships and boats</li> <li>▪ In addition to Cork City, Cobh, Carrigaline, Passage West main settlements plus smaller settlements overlooking the harbour such as Roches Point.</li> <li>▪ SCA retains an active character with busy navigation associated</li> </ul>
SCA 12 –Celtic Sea Bays and Beaches	Carnsore Point, Co. Wexford extending 12NM offshore to Helvick Head Co. Waterford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This SCA encompasses the comparatively shallow Celtic Sea, enclosed by the western edge of Wales and South-west England with St George’s Channel and the English Channel to the east and the Atlantic Ocean to the west.</li> </ul>

Name	Location	Key Characteristics
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ While the relatively straight coastline means that a wide area of water is visible along most of the coastline, a gentler character of “sea” is perceptible, rather than the wilder characteristics of “ocean” associated with the west of Ireland. These expansive vistas mean that the broad interplay of light, cloud formations and the surface of the water is readily available to viewers along the coast</li> <li>▪ Historic settlements include Waterford City is the county town; other settlements include Dungarvan, Dunmore East and Fethard. Tramore a popular coastal resort.</li> <li>▪ The significant amount of named smaller headlands, sometimes just slight protrusions, demonstrate their historic importance in providing definition and historic navigation especially around the key estuaries where shifting sands could be a danger. These include: Ballyvoyle Head, Dunabrattin Head, Great Newtown Head (with the Metal Man navigation aids), Brazen Head, Beenlea Head,</li> <li>▪ The prevailing south-westerly winds, strong tides, sand banks and offshore islands and rocks mean that the waters are often dangerous as exemplified by the number of historic and more recent tragedies at sea. These prevailing winds also support surfing along some of the region’s beaches, particularly at Tramore.</li> <li>▪ The offshore islands and rocky islets provide a sense of scale where these are visible. The main offshore islands, the Saltee Islands, are uninhabited bird sanctuaries 5km from the coast and a popular day trip from Kilmore Quay.</li> <li>▪ Hook Head is a very distinctive coastal landform with the combination of low vegetation, and water on both sides giving an almost island character to the most extended part of the peninsula.</li> <li>▪ Where shingle forms the coastal edge, such as at Carnsore point, the suck and crash of the waves are particularly distinctive.</li> <li>▪ The effect of the sea on the landscape varies within this region. In areas with cliffs, the inland seascape extent is narrow, and at shallow sandy bays with broad tidal ranges, the effect extends further inland.</li> </ul>
SCA 13 – South-East Irish Sea	Wicklow Head, Co. Wicklow extending 12NM offshore to Carnsore Point, Co Wexford.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ireland at Carnsore Point and forms the juncture between the Celtic and Irish Sea.</li> <li>▪ Ireland’s most south-easterly island Tuskar Rock is within this SCA.</li> <li>▪ Coastal form comprises broad, medium scale bays and estuaries</li> <li>▪ The SCA is renowned for its long sandy beaches and is well established coastal resorts such as Courtown.</li> <li>▪ Long established historical towns that retain a fishing function including Arklow and Wexford. These are active, busy settlements with strong connections to the sea.</li> <li>▪ Dynamic coastline that has seen considerable effects of erosion and deposition associated with Wexford Harbour as at Rosslare Island.</li> <li>▪ Views vary from south to north, with low headlands framing those in the south, as the land rises further north, the mountains provide a montane setting to the coastal areas from Arklow onwards.</li> </ul>

### C.7.1.5 Visibility from Land

An assessment of the sea surface visible from land was carried out as part of the Regional Seascapes Character Assessment (Minogue et al. 2020). Outside of 12 nautical miles, sea surface visibility from land is poor, with most cases having less than 10% visibility. Visual resource mapping was undertaken during the study and Figure C-35 shows the seascapes visible from land. Areas with high values in the sea can be seen by many viewers on land and are, therefore, more 'visible' to viewers on land. The IOSEA6 Study Areas are 12NM offshore (approximately 22km). The Celtic Sea Basin areas are closest to land and may affect the visible seascapes within the higher categories.

**Figure C-35 Visual Resource Mapping - Seascapes Visible from Land (Taken from Minogue et al. 2020)**



## C.7.2 Transboundary Seascape Character Type

Transboundary SCTs include those identified around Northern Ireland. Twenty-four different regional seascape character areas have been identified round the coast of Northern Ireland and are shown in Figure C-36 (Drawing Reference: P2510-LANDS-003).

The closest Transboundary SCA to the IOSEA6 Celtic Sea Basin is SCA 24 – Atlantic, which is located roughly 186 kilometres away on the east coast of Ireland. The closest Transboundary SCA on the west coast of Ireland is SCA 1 – Foyle Estuary, which is around 200 kilometres away. There are no open views to IOSEA6 Study Areas from the western SCAs.

# IOSEA6 - ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

## LANDSCAPE, SEASCAPE AND VISUAL AMENITY

### Seascape Character Areas

Drawing No: P2510-LANDS-003

B

#### Legend

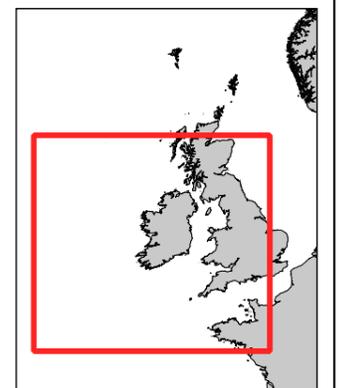
-  IOSEA6 Area
-  EEZ Boundary
-  12 NM Limit

#### Offshore Geological Basin

-  Celtic Sea Basin
-  Porcupine Basin
-  Slyne - Erris Basin

#### Seascape Character Area

- |  |  |
|--|--|
|  1    |  18 |
|  2    |  19 |
|  3    |  20 |
|  4    |  21 |
|  5    |  22 |
|  6    |  23 |
|  7    |  24 |
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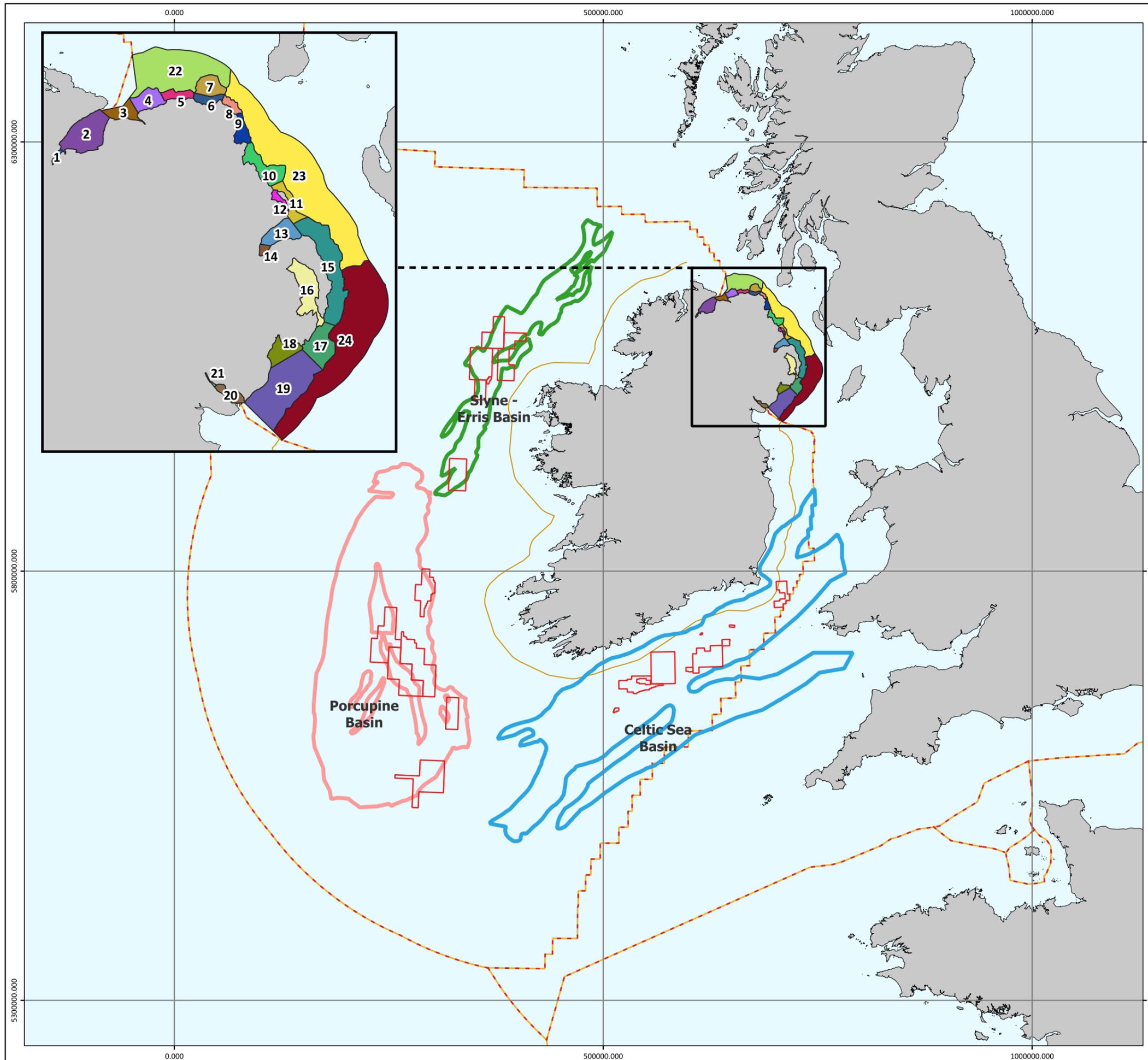


NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION

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<b>Scale @A3</b>	1:4,500,000
<b>Data Sources</b>	MI; DHLGH; DCCAE; GEBCO
<b>File Reference</b>	J:\P2510\Mxd\13_LANDS \P2510_LANDS_001.qgz
<b>Created By</b>	Lewis Castle
<b>Reviewed By</b>	Emma Kilbane
<b>Approved By</b>	Emma Langley



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### C.7.3 World Heritage Sites

World Heritage Sites are primarily concerned with the interpretation and safeguarding of landscapes and buildings of international importance on the grounds of Cultural Heritage, rather than landscape or visual grounds.

There are two World Heritage Sites (WHS) within the Republic of Ireland, and one within Northern Ireland. These are Sceilg Mhichíl WHS, located 12km offshore off the coast of Co. Kerry, and Brú na Bóinne, situated inland on the east of Ireland in Co. Meath and the Giants Causeway in Northern Ireland. Given the location, only the Sceilg Mhichíl WHS would have the potential to experience significant effects as a result of the Plan.

Consequently, the assessment of effects on these designated sites is addressed in the Cultural Heritage section. However, the assessment of impacts on Landscape and Seascape will be closely related to the assessment of impacts on Cultural Heritage in respect of issues of setting and potential visibility.

#### C.7.3.1 Sceilg Mhichíl World Heritage Site

UNESCO classified Sceilg Mhichíl as a World Heritage Site in 1996. The designation was given due to the Islands cultural value as a very early monastery site and remote hermitage in excellent condition. Additionally, Sceilg Mhichíl is one of Ireland's most important seabird breeding grounds due to numbers and diversity of species (DHLGH, 2022). The nearest distance of an IOSEA6 Study Area to Sceilg Mhichíl is approximately 100km from the Porcupine Basin area.

The WHS limit does not cover An Sceilg Bheag (Little Skellig), the neighbouring island, or the adjacent sea area (DHLGH, 2022). A management plan from 2020-2030 has been devised for Sceilg Mhichíl and Objective nine of the plan is to "Maintain and enhance the landscape setting of Sceilg Mhichíl" (DHLGH, 2022). However, this relates to the ongoing works affecting the landscape on the island itself and does not refer to the effect of offshore infrastructure.

#### C.7.3.2 Potential World Heritage Sites

Nominations to the World Heritage List are based on a tentative list put forward by National Governments. A preliminary list is a list of properties that meet the criteria for outstanding universal significance in terms of cultural and/or natural heritage. The current Tentative List was created in 2010 and includes the following sites (UNESCO, 2010):

- The Burren;
- The Historic City of Dublin;
- The Céide Fields and north-west Mayo Boglands;
- Western Stone Forts;
- The Monastic City of Clonmacnoise and its Cultural Landscape;
- Early Medieval Monastic Sites; and
- The Royal Sites of Ireland: Cashel, Dún Ailinne, Hill of Uisneach, Rathcroghan Complex, and Tara Complex.

In January 2019, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) issued a call for applications to create a new Tentative List of World Heritage Properties in Ireland, in accordance with UNESCO recommendations that Tentative Lists be reviewed at least every ten years. The Department received six eligible applications to join the new list:

- The Cultural Landscape of the Burren Uplands, County Clare;
- Inisceiltra (Inis Cealtra / Inishcaltra / Holy Island), County Clare;
- Trans-Atlantic Cable Ensemble: Valentia, County Kerry-Heart's Content, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada;
- Royal Sites of Ireland, Counties Kildare, Westmeath, Tipperary, Roscommon and Meath\*;
- The Passage Tomb Landscape of County Sligo; and

- Glendalough Valley, County Wicklow.

These sites are currently under review by an Expert Advisory Committee and World Heritage Ireland advises that this new Tentative List will replace the existing 2010 list (World Heritage Ireland, 2021). The application list is expected to be presented to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in early 2022.

## C.7.4 National Parks

There are six National Parks identified in the Republic of Ireland, all of which are located in close proximity to the coast and would, therefore, represent key sensitive Landscape and Seascape receptors (National Parks of Ireland, 2021). These are listed below and presented in Figure C-33 (Drawing Reference: P2510-LANDS-001):

- Wicklow Mountains NP – The national Park covers 20,843 hectares and is the largest of Irelands National Parks and the only park located on the east of Ireland (south of Co. Dublin). The park was designated to conserve biodiversity and landscape. There are potential long views to the coast and open sea from Wicklow Mountains National Park.
- Killarney NP – Located south and west of Killarney Town, Co. Kerry the park covers an area of 10,236 hectares of mountainous country including Irelands highest mountain range the MacGillycuddy Reeks.
- Burren NP – Is located in Co. Clare in the south-eastern corner of the Burren and covers an area of 1,500 hectares.
- Connemara NP – This national park is located in Co. Galway and covers 2000 hectares. The park conserves western blanket bog and heathland as the predominant vegetation type.
- Wild Nephin NP – Situated in north-west Mayo it comprises 15,000 hectares of Atlantic blanket bog and the park is part of the Natura 2000 network.
- Glenveagh NP – Is the most northern national park, situated in the north-west of Donegal. The park also falls under the Cloghernagore Bog & Glenveagh National Park Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Derryveagh & Glendowan Mountains Special Protected Area (SPA).

## C.7.5 Gardens and Designed Landscapes

A survey is currently being undertaken for the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media to identify and assess Gardens and Designed Landscape (GDLs) within the Republic of Ireland. Those GDLs that are located on the coast and have been assessed as being a significant site or of historical importance, represent key sensitive Landscape and Seascape receptors.

### C.7.5.1 County Level Designations and Classifications

County level designations and classifications are those identified by the individual county councils within the Republic of Ireland. The relevant designations and classifications for each of the coastal council areas are listed in Tables C-31 to C-33.

**Table C-41 Protected areas and County landscape designations adjacent to the Slyne-Erriis Basin**

Study Area Counties	World Heritage Sites (WHS) and Potential World Heritage Sites (pWHS)	National Parks	County Level Designations
Co. Donegal	-	Glenveagh National Park. There may be long views along the coast and out to sea from Derryveagh Mountains (Glenveagh National Park) situated inland from Donegal's west coast.	Areas of Especially High Scenic Amenity (AEHSA), Views and Prospects (Donegal CoCo, 2017)
Co. Leitrim	-	-	Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Areas of High Visual Amenity (AHVA), Outstanding Views and Prospects (Leitrim CoCo, 2022)
Co. Sligo	The Passage Tomb Landscape of County Sligo (pWHS)	-	Normal Rural Landscapes, Sensitive Rural Landscapes, Visually Vulnerable Landscapes, Scenic Routes (Sligo CoCo, 2017)
Co. Mayo	The Céide Fields and north-west Mayo Boglands (pWHS)	Wild Nephin National Park. Distant views of the coast may be possible from the Owenduff /Nephin Mountains.	Vulnerable landscapes, Scenic Routes, Protected Views, sensitive Landscapes, Less sensitive Landscapes
Co. Galway	The Burren (pWHS)  Western Stone Forts (Dun Aonghusa, Aran) (pWHS)	Connemara National Park. Connemara National Park is situated at Diamond Hill and the Twelve Bens with views to the outer coast and islands including Ballynakil Harbour.	Class 5 Unique landscapes, Class 4 Special Sensitivity landscapes, Class 3 High Sensitivity landscapes (Galway CoCo, 2021)
Co. Clare	The Burren (pWHS)  The Cultural Landscape of the Burren Uplands (pWHS)  Iniscealtra (Inis Cealtra / Inishcaltra / Holy Island) (pWHS)	Burren National Park. The Burren Uplands National Park is located inland but may have long views to the coastline.	Vulnerable Landscapes, Scenic Routes, Areas of High Amenity  Clare's Living Landscapes, Landscape Character Assessment of County Clare, (Clare County Council, 2021)

**Table C-42 Protected areas and County landscape designations for the Porcupine Basin**

Study Area Counties	World Heritage Sites (WHS) and Potential World Heritage Sites (pWHS)	National Parks	County Level Designations
Co. Clare	<p>The Burren (pWHS)</p> <p>The Cultural Landscape of the Burren Uplands (pWHS)</p> <p>Iniscealtra (Inis Cealtra / Inishcaltra / Holy Island) (pWHS)</p>	<p>Burren National Park. The Burren Uplands National Park is located inland but may have long views to the coastline.</p>	<p>Vulnerable Landscapes, Scenic Routes, Areas of High Amenity</p> <p>Clare's Living Landscapes, Landscape Character Assessment of County Clare, (Clare County Council, 2021)</p>
Co. Kerry	<p>Sceilg Mhichíl (WHS)</p> <p>Trans-Atlantic Cable Ensemble: Valentia, County Kerry-Heart's Content, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada (pWHS)</p>	<p>Killarney National Park situated between Mangerton Mountain and the MacGillicuddy Reeks has distant views to the Kenmare River inner bay.</p>	<p>Rural Secondary Special Amenity, Protected Views, Rural Prime Special Amenity Areas. Visually sensitive Areas, Language planning areas, Gaeltacht Service Towns (Kerry Co.Co, 2021)</p>
Co. Cork	-	-	<p>Scenic Coastal Routes, Scenic Areas, Areas of Very High Landscape Value/Sensitivity</p>

**Table C-43 Protected areas and County landscape designations for the Celtic Sea Basin**

Study Area Counties	World Heritage Sites (WHS) and Potential World Heritage Sites (pWHS)	National Parks	County Level Designations
Co. Wexford	-	-	Vulnerable Landscapes, Sensitive Landscapes
Co. Waterford	-	-	Vulnerable Landscape, Sensitive Landscapes
Co. Cork	-	-	Scenic Coastal Routes, Scenic Areas, Areas of Very High Landscape Value/Sensitivity

### C.7.6 Existing Environmental Problems

The more recent growth of offshore renewables, particularly offshore wind farms, has resulted in a larger awareness of landscape/seascape challenges, as most have been limited to water depths of up to 60m due to technical and economic constraints (i.e. primarily in nearshore waters). Pressures to landscape and seascape currently are in relation to oil and gas cable and pipe landfall as platforms are too far offshore to be visible on land. Arklow Bank Offshore Wind farm is currently the first and only offshore, wind farm installed in Irish waters located 10km offshore it is visible from Brittas bay beach and other coastal areas. Applications to install offshore wind farms particularly on the south-east coast of Ireland have increased in a number of years with the potential for some of this infrastructure to be viewed from land. Onshore pressures, such as continuous urban expansion and the development of the onshore renewables industry, are exacerbated by changes in the environment and seascape.

### C.7.7 Potential Sensitivities to the plan

A summary of the potential pressures and sensitive aspects of the topic are displayed in Table C-44.

**Table C-44 Summary of potential pressures of the Plan on Landscape, Seascape and Visual Amenity**

Plan activity	Aspect	Pressure	Sub-Topic	Key sensitivities
Seismic survey and drilling	Physical presence of survey vessels and drilling rig / vessels	Visual	Seascape Character Type	Potential for negative visual effects which could also affect the Seascape/Landscape character, but likely to be negligible due to the distance from the coast.
			Transboundary Seascape Character Type	
			World Heritage Sites	
			National Parks	
			County Level Designations	
Seismic survey and drilling	Accidental events (e.g. loss of diesel, chemicals, base oil; worst case scenario - blowout)	Hydrocarbon & PAH contamination	Seascape Character Type	Hydrocarbon contamination from a large event i.e. blowout can has the potential to effect the quality of the receptors.
			Transboundary Seascape Character Type	
			World Heritage Sites	
			National Parks	
			County Level Designations	
Drilling	Well testing (flaring)	Visual	Seascape Character Type	Potential for negative visual effects which could also affect the Seascape/Landscape character, but likely to be negligible due to the distance from the coast.
			Transboundary Seascape Character Type	
			World Heritage Sites	
			National Parks	
			County Level Designations	
Seismic survey and drilling	In-combination effect		Seascape Character Type	No potential impact predicted for the receptors.
			Transboundary Seascape Character Type	
			World Heritage Sites	
			National Parks	
			County Level Designations	

## C.7.8 Data Gaps

Table C-45 Summary of the data gaps in the topic Landscape and Seascape

Section	IOSEA5 identified data gap	Update for IOSEA6	IOSEA6 Data Gap	Availability of other datasets
Seascape Character Type	There are currently no data gaps that have been identified as part of the Seascape and Visual Assessment scoping report.	The previous IOSEA5 data has been improved by the 2020 Regional Seascape Character Assessment.	Offshore wind visibility to the coast has been assessed however there is no visual assessment in relation to oil and gas infrastructure.	N/A
World Heritage Sites		In 2021 six applications to Ireland's New Tentative List were made.	There are currently no data gaps that have been identified as part of the Seascape and Visual Assessment scoping report.	A review is currently taking place of the World Heritage tentative list. A revised list will be submitted to UNESCO once this has been completed. World Heritage Ireland advised this would take place will take place in early 2022, however no updates have is available so far (World Heritage Ireland, 2022). It is suggested for future SEAs to revisit the tentative list to advise of changes. The WHS tentative list is reviewed every ten years and should be considered for new SEAs.

## C.7.9 Predicted future baseline for the topic

Applications for foreshore licences in Ireland has increased in the last number of years, as the foreshore licensing is transitioning to a new regime known as the Maritime Area Consent (MAC). The current qualified projects with MAC applications are: Oriel Wind Park; RWE's Bray and Kish Banks; Codling Wind Park, made up of Codling 1 and Codling 2; Fuinneamh Sceirde Teoranta's Skerd Rocks; and the North Irish Sea Array. The impact of visual effect of wind turbines has been undertaken detailing severity of impacts 0 to 24km out to sea. The assessment highlighted those greatest visual impacts will be on the western coastline and noted that there is no area where turbines are not expected to have no visual impact (Minogue et al., 2020). These have the potential to be built out in the future and as such would make up the future baseline. It is also anticipated that there would be a gradual increase overall shipping / boating activities.

## C.7.10 References

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