Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

CP0799 Louth 220kV Station Works [Exempted Development] County Louth

In accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) and Regulation 42(1) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended ('the Regulations'), EirGrid has undertaken Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge and the Conservation Objectives of relevant European sites, whether CP0799 Louth 220kV Station Works [Exempted Development] ('the Development') individually or in-combination with other plans or projects will result in likely significant effects on a European site(s).

The Development involves the installation of three lightening masts within Louth substation.

All works are to be carried out entirely within the boundary of the existing energised substation. All works for the Development will be carried out above ground. No vegetation clearance or intrusive works will be required for the Development.

Analysis of Pathways to European sites

Based on the works involved, the following possible impacts/effects are considered potentially relevant as a result of the Development:

- Disturbance of qualifying species (e.g. visual, noise, vibration or artificial light). According to published research[1], the maximum distance to which non-breeding bird species for which Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are designated may theoretically travel to forage is 20km from the boundary of such a site (though in reality, most species foraging distances are significantly lower than this). Cutts *et al.* (2013)[2] provides species-specific information on the sensitivity of several bird species which are qualifying features of SPAs to disturbance impacts from construction works.

Consequently, the following European sites are considered to be within the potential zone of influence (ZoI) of the Development:

- Stabannan-Braganstown SPA (site code 004091[3]). Located approximately 10.8km southeast of the Development at closest. Designated for the Special Conservation Interest (SCI) greylag goose *Anser answer*.
- Dundalk Bay SPA (site code 004026[4]) located approximately 11.3km north-east of the Development at closest. Designated for a number of wintering SCIs, and wetland habitat.

There is no hydrological connectivity between the Development and any European site. The Development is not within or hydrologically connected to a known freshwater pearl mussel *Margaritifera margaritifera* catchment. There is therefore no potential for likely significant effects on freshwater pearl mussel associated with any European site.

SCI may occur outside of their European site boundaries, and disturbance may occur at a distance up to 500[2] from any works. All works associated with the Development will take place within the existing substation boundary containing hard standing and electrical installations, an area containing no suitable habitat for foraging SCI species. Due to the relatively minor nature

[1] Scottish Natural Heritage (2016). Assessing Connectivity with Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Version 3 – June 2016 (online). Available at: https://www.nature.scot/doc/assessing-connectivity-special-protection-areas (Accessed 23 April 2026).

[2] Cutts, N., Hemingway, K and Spencer, J. (2013). Waterbird Disturbance Mitigation Toolkit: Informing Estuarine Planning & Construction Projects. Produced by the Institute of Estuarine & Coastal Studies (IECS) University of Hull. (online). Available at: https://www.tide-toolbox.eu/tidetools/waterbird_disturbance_mitigation_toolkit/ (Accessed 23 April 2026).

[3] NPWS (2022). Conservation Objectives: Stabannan-Braganstown SPA 004091. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

[4] NPWS (2011). Conservation Objectives: Dundalk Bay SAC 000455 and Dundalk Bay SPA 004026. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

of the Development, which will occur for a short period of time only, and distance of the SPAs, there will be no likely significant effects associated with noise and visual disturbance of SCI species of any SPA.

There are no other European sites nearby or potentially connected to the Development via a source-pathway-receptor link that may result in likely significant effects in view of the relevant European site's Conservation Objectives.

AA Screening Statement

In accordance with Regulation 42(7) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 SI 477 as amended, EirGrid has made a Determination following Screening that an Appropriate Assessment is not required as the project individually or in-combination with other plans or projects is not likely to have a significant effect on any European sites. The risk of likely significant effects on European sites can be excluded on the basis of objective evidence.

This Determination is based on the location, scale, extent and duration of the Development, including temporary works, and has not taken account of measures intended to avoid or reduce significant effects on European sites.

Signed:

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Susanne Dunne ACIEEM Senior Ecologist

23 July 2026