



## Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

### CP0823(b) Turlough Hill 220kV Station Works Project [Exempted Development] (County Wicklow)

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, of the proposed substation works within Turlough Hill 220 kV Substation ('the development') individually or in combination with other plans or projects would be likely to have a significant effect (s) on a European site(s). All development works will be undertaken inside the existing substation boundary. The development comprises:

- Decommission the existing bay conductor, line disconnects, busbar disconnects and voltage transformers
- Install the replacement 220 kV (air insulated switchgear) AIS primary plant
- Uprate the bay conductor to meet the required bay short-circuit rating
- Commission bay F3 protection and control system as per Protection Specification requirements
- Provide, install, and commission the associated Telecoms equipment, as required
- Final commissioning and energisation of Dunstown bay F3
- Decommission and retire the existing Maynooth bay F2
- Install and commission the new 220 kV cable feeder bay, F6
- Incorporate the new bay F6 in the substation-wide control and protection schemes (substation control system (SCS), interlocking, bus zone protection (BZP)/circuit breaker failure (CBF) etc.)
- Commission bay F6 protection and control system as per Protection Specification requirements
- Provide, install, and commission the associated Telecoms equipment
- Final commissioning and energisation of Maynooth bay F6

The development adjoins two European sites; Wicklow Mountains Special Protection Area (SPA; site code 004040)<sup>1</sup> and Wicklow Mountains Special Area of Conservation (SAC; site code 002122)<sup>2</sup>. This determination has had regard for these and any other relevant European sites.

There is no hydrological link between the substation and Wicklow Mountains SPA / SAC. Otter *Lutra lutra* is the only Qualifying Interest (QI) faunal species of the SAC. The substation habitat comprises hardstanding which is unsuitable for otter so there is no potential for likely significant effects. There are no QI habitats within the substation boundary, so no potential for likely significant effects. There are no known nesting sites of Wicklow Mountains SPA Special Conservation Interest (SCI) species within the zone of influence of the works. Any development works disturbance will be confined to the existing regime of the substation, to which SCI species are habituated. As previously discussed, the substation consists of hardstanding habitat, which is unsuitable for SCI species. There is no potential for likely significant effects.

The development is not located within the catchment of any freshwater pearl mussels *Margaritifera*, or other sensitive aquatic species which are the QIs of European sites. Impact pathways to other far-flying mobile QI/SCI species from distant European sites do not arise, due to the absence of supporting habitats for such species within the substation, or because the development is outside the range of QI populations of a given species (e.g. which is the case lesser horseshoe bat, *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, and marsh fritillary *Euphydryas aurinia*).

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<sup>1</sup> NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Wicklow Mountains SPA 004040. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

<sup>2</sup> NPWS (2017) Conservation Objectives: Wicklow Mountains SAC 002122. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

The risk of ex-situ impacts to the QI and SCI roosting, foraging, or nesting away from European sites, within the substation has also been excluded, following analysis of known and potential habitats for mobile bird and other animal populations.

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 proposed 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 Senior Ecologist

19 February 2025