



Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

CP1146 – Carrickmines to Blackrock 220 kV Circuit: Onshore Cable Project [Exempted Development] (County Dublin)

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, if the laying underground of 220 kV cables from the existing Carrickmines 220 kV station to a location within Blackrock Park, and all associated temporary works (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).

The development is not located within any European site. The closest European sites are the South Dublin Bay Special Area of Conservation (SAC; site code 000210)¹ and the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA; site code 004024)², both located 0.12 km east of the Development. This determination has had regard for these and any other relevant European sites, including other European sites in Dublin Bay, as relevant.

The majority of the development is within existing public roadways and hard standing. In some cases in order to facilitate offroad works such as trenches, works will be undertaken in greenfield areas, all of which are outside European sites.

As the Development does not intersect any SACs or SPAs, there is no potential for habitat loss, destruction, fragmentation or deterioration impacts on any European site(s). In relation to potential ex-situ effects on SCI birds, Blackrock Park is a known site of importance for light-bellied Brent geese *Branta bernicla hrota*, which is an SCI of several SPAs in Dublin Bay. However, the specific locations of Brent feeding sites (on grassland southeast of the development, and screened from it by topography and vegetation) and roosting sites at Blackrock Park (in the ornamental pond, also screened from the development by topography) are outside the zone of influence of likely significant disturbance effects from the development.

The development intersects two watercourses at three separate locations; the Carrickmines Stream_010 (IE_EA_10C040350) and the Brewery Stream_010 (IE_EA_09B130400). The Carrickmines Stream_010 is culverted, and due to the proximity of the culverted stream to the M50, the proposed micro-tunnelling path will travel underneath both, at a depth of c. 20m. The potential for likely significant effects via a pathway between the proposed cable route and the Carrickmines Stream_010 can be excluded. In relation to the Brewery Stream_010 which is partially culverted, the development will travel over or under the culverted streams with the clearance achieved. Due to the streams existing within the confined structure of a culvert, and with no interruption to the streams direction or flow proposed, the potential pathway between the Brewery Stream_010 network can be ruled out and 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 Zone of Influence (ZoI) of the development, 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*).

As such, as discussed above, the risk of ex-situ impacts to Qualifying Interests (QI) and Special Conservation Interests (SCI) roosting, foraging, or nesting away from European sites can be excluded, following analysis of known and potential habitats for mobile bird and other animal populations.

¹ NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: South Dublin Bay SAC 000210. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

² NPWS (2015) Conservation Objectives: South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

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 Development 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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