



## **Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination CP1219 Mullingar 110kV Station Works [Exempted Development] County Westmeath**

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 have undertaken Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge and the Conservation Objectives of relevant European sites, whether CP1219 Mullingar 110kV Station Works (Lickny) [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 comprises an air insulated switchgear (AIS) cable bay within Mullingar 110kV Station. All works are to be carried out entirely within the boundary of the existing energised substation.

### **Analysis of Pathways to European sites**

The closest European sites to the Development are Lough Owel Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (site code 000688<sup>1</sup>) and Lough Owel Special Protection Area (SPA) (site code 004047<sup>2</sup>), which are approximately 1.3km away ('as the crow flies'). There is no hydrological connectivity between the Development and the SAC/SPA.

The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of the SAC comprise a range of Annex I habitats and white-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*. Due to the absence of a hydrological connection, likely significant effects from the Development on Lough Owel SAC regarding water quality are excluded. The Special Conservation Interest (SCI) species of Lough Owel SPA are shoveler *Anas clypeata* and coot *Fulica atra*, which are waterbirds that use habitats that are not present near the Development. Therefore, there is no potential for likely significant effects on mobile SCI associated with Lough Owel SPA.

All works will be carried out within the existing station boundaries containing hardstanding and electrical installations, an area containing no habitats that are suitable for foraging SCI species. Moreover, there is an extensive resource of suitable agricultural fields much closer to SPAs in the outer potential zone of influence. This, combined with the relatively minor nature of the works, means that any noise disturbance of SCI birds occurring outside of SPA boundaries but in the vicinity of the Development will be immaterial. Therefore, there is no potential for likely significant effects on mobile SCI associated with these European sites as a result of the Development.

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 applicable site 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.

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<sup>1</sup> NPWS (2018) Conservation Objectives: Lough Owel SAC 000688. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

<sup>2</sup> NPWS (2025) Conservation Objectives: Lough Owel SPA 004047. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

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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Robert Fennelly CEcol MCIEEM Lead Senior Ecologist

24 February 2025