



Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

CP1321 Cashla-Dalton 110kv OHL Dynamic Line Rating [Exempted Development] Counties Mayo and Galway

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 Cashla-Dalton 110kV OHL Dynamic Line Rating [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 small-sized dynamic line rating devices (DLRs) on existing overhead line (OHL) spans:

- From Tower 1 to Tower 39; and
- From Tower 44 to Tower 258.

The development excludes installation of devices between towers 40 - 43.

Analysis of Pathways to European Sites

The development excludes installation of devices within European sites (i.e. between towers 40 - 43).

There are no waterbodies within the Dalton 110kV station, although the OHL passes over the Black River which is hydrologically linked to Lough Corrib Special Area of Conservation (SAC), (site code 000297)¹, approximately 1.1km away from the OHL. It also traverses the Lough Corrib SAC at the River Clare. None of the works require in-stream activities or works within or adjacent to wetlands, including sites monitored by Birdwatch Ireland, bogs, or woodlands. None of the works are within the catchment of any Qualifying Interest (QI) freshwater pearl mussel *Margaritifera margaritifera*, white-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes* or lamprey species. None of the works are within 2.5km of known QI lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros* roosts or foraging grounds.

Potential noise and visual disturbance impacts of the Development on QI otter *Lutra lutra* from the SAC were also considered. Due to their extensive home ranges, otter frequently utilise resting places and holts along watercourses beyond the designated site boundary, including those traversed by the Development. However, otter are very tolerant of anthropogenic disturbance and construction works for the Development will not involve any piling activities (works with greatest at-source sound pressure levels). Furthermore, otter are nocturnal mammals, and no night-time works will be undertaken for the Development.

The scope of the works is the installation of small-sized devices on the OHL with the use of a Mobile Elevated Working Platform. There will be no loss of functionally-linked habitat for any Special Conservation Interest (SCI) species of the Lough Corrib SPA (site code 004042)². At a distance of more than 2.5km, the SPA lies beyond the impact zone for visual and noise disturbance, and there is no direct disturbance potential for SCIs within the designated site boundary. Moreover, the minor nature of the works means that any noise disturbance of SCI birds using functionally-linked habitats in the vicinity of the Development will be immaterial.

¹ NPWS (2017) Conservation Objectives Series: Lough Corrib SAC 000297. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

² NPWS (2023) Conservation Objectives Series: Lough Corrib SPA 004042. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Furthermore, the Inner Galway Bay SPA (site code 004031)³, Cregganna Marsh SPA (site code 004142)⁴, Rahasane Turlough SPA (site code 004089)⁵, Lough Mask SPA (site code 004062)⁶, Lough Carra SPA (site code 004051)⁷ and Lough Carra/Mask Complex SAC (site code 001774)⁸ all lie within 20km of the Development. However, in line with the pathways assessed in relation to the Lough Corrib SAC / SPA above, there is no potential for likely significant effects on the SCIs of these SPAs.

There are no other European sites nearby, or potentially connected to the Development via a source-pathway-receptor link.

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 the temporary nature of works, and has not taken account of mitigation measures intended to avoid or reduce significant effects on European sites.

Signed:



Robert Fennelly CEcol MCIEEM Lead Senior Ecologist

22 September 2023

³ NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Inner Galway Bay SPA 004031. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

⁴ NPWS (2023) Conservation Objectives: Cregganna Marsh SPA 004142. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

⁵ NPWS (2023) Conservation Objectives: Rahasane Turlough SPA 004089. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

⁶ NPWS (2022) Conservation Objectives: Lough Mask SPA 004062. First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives Version 1.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

⁷ NPWS (2022) Conservation Objectives: Lough Carra SPA 004051. First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives Version 1.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

⁸ NPWS (2021) Conservation Objectives: Lough Carra/Mask Complex SAC 001774. Version 1. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.