



Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

CP1354 Drumline 110kV Station Works and Ennis 110kV Station Works

[Exempted Development] County Clare

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 CP1354 Drumline 110kV Station Works and Ennis 110kV 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 comprises:

- Remote End Works at Drumline Station: a protection upgrade on the Coolshamroge (current Drumline) 110kV bay will be carried out, including new distance protection, line differential protection, TEBIT teleprotection cards and possible replacement of current transformers (CTs) and voltage transformers (VTs), as well as possible replacement of high voltage (HV) equipment;
- Bay equipment replacement and associated work in Ennis 110 kV Station;
- HV Cable replacement and associated work within Ennis 110 kV Station including removal and construction of new equipment including but not limited to a new line cable interface mast (LCIM); and,
- Remote End Works at Ennis Station: a protection upgrade on the Coolshamroge (current Ennis) 110kV bay will be carried out, including new distance protection, line differential protection, TEBIT teleprotection cards and possible replacement of CTs and VTs, as well as possible replacement of HV equipment.

Analysis of Pathways to European sites

The Development will occur entirely within the boundaries of the existing stations. There will consequently be no loss of habitat, with all works taking place on constructed hard-standing.

Drumline 110kV Station

The closest European sites to Drumline Station are Lower River Shannon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (site code 002165¹) and River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries Special Protection Area (SPA) (site code 004077²). These sites are almost coincident at the point where they lie closest to the Development, approximately 2.6km to the south.

The QI of Lower River Shannon SAC comprise a range of Annex I habitats and Annex II species. There are no waterbodies within the station boundary, therefore there is no hydrological-link to the SAC. Furthermore, the Station is separated from the SAC by the N18 road and the town of Shannon, where any run-off to waterbodies outside the station boundary would be intercepted and enter the drainage network. There is no possibility of waterborne pollution impacts on Lower River Shannon SAC and likely significant effects are therefore excluded.

The nearest watercourse with a direct connection to the Lower River Shannon SAC (other watercourses nearby do not appear to flow directly to the SAC³ and are interrupted by the

¹ NPWS (2012). Conservation Objectives: Lower River Shannon SAC 002165. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

² NPWS (2012). Conservation Objectives: River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA 004077. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

³ According to OSi PRIME2 Watercourses data.

urban environment of the town of Shannon) is approximately 500m away, and well beyond the distance at which disturbance of QI species such as otter *Lutra lutra* could occur⁴.

According to published research⁵, the maximum distance to which non-breeding bird species for which SPAs are designated will typically travel to forage is 20km from the boundary of such a site. There are two SPAs designated for non-breeding Special Conservation Interest (SCI) bird species located within 20km of the Development:

- River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA, located approximately 2.6km south; and,
- Ballyallia Lough SPA (site code 004041⁶), located approximately 17.9km north-west.

Drumline Station is bounded to the south and south-east by the N18 and residential housing. These will act as existing sources of disturbance to any SCI birds which could potentially forage in the agricultural fields to the north and west. These fields are screened from the Development by existing vegetation which would minimise the potential for visual and/or noise disturbance. Further, the works will be minor in nature and take place over a relatively short period of time. For these reasons, likely significant effects from disturbance of SCI birds are excluded.

Ennis 110kV Station

The closest European site to Ennis Station is Lower River Shannon SAC, approximately 1.2km south-west ('as the crow flies'). Although the SAC lies downstream of the Development, the nearest watercourse to Drumline Station is located approximately 240m away, on the other side of the R352 road and separated by areas of vegetation, including scrub/woodland. Given the distance involved, that all works will take place on the existing station hard-standing, and the buffering capacity of the intervening land, there is no possibility of waterborne pollution impacts on Lower River Shannon SAC and likely significant effects are therefore excluded.

The watercourses in the area around the Development are sufficiently distant (more than 200m at closest) such that any mobile QI species which may occur within them (e.g. otter) will not be subject to disturbance from works.

There are three SPAs designated for non-breeding SCI bird species located within 20km of the Development:

- Ballyallia Lough SPA, located approximately 2.7km north-west;
- River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA, located approximately 5.0km south-south-west; and,
- Corofin Wetlands SPA (site code 004220⁷), located approximately 11.0km north-west.

The habitat in the area surrounding Ennis Station is of limited suitability for non-breeding SCI species, with no large, open areas of grassland (much of that in the surrounding area is enclosed by trees/hedgerows, which reduce suitability). Furthermore, the station is entirely surrounded by roads, including the M18 and R352. It is also screened behind an embankment which is well vegetated and contains scrub/trees. There is consequently significant existing visual and noise screening. For these reasons, there will be no impact from the disturbance of the SCI species of SPAs, and likely significant effects are excluded.

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.

There is no potential for likely significant effects as a result of the Development, therefore there is no possibility of the impacts of other projects or plans acting in-combination to give rise to likely significant effects on any European sites.

⁴ NRA (2008). Guidelines for the Treatment of Otters Prior to the Construction of National Roads Schemes. National Roads Authority, Dublin.

⁵ SNH (2016). Assessing Connectivity with Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Version 3 – June 2016.

⁶ NPWS (2025). Conservation Objectives: Ballyallia Lough SPA 004041. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

⁷ NPWS (2025). Conservation Objectives: Corofin Wetlands SPA 004220. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

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:



Susanne Dunne ACIEEM Senior Ecologist

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