



Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination CP1357 Philipstown 110kV Station Works [Exempted Development] County Offaly

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 CP1357 Philipstown 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:

- Metering Box works.
- Current Transformer (CT)/Voltage Transformer (VT) works.
- Transformer works.

Analysis of Pathways to European sites

The closest European site to the Development is The Long Derries, Edenderry Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (site code 000925¹), located approximately 5.1km away ('as the crow flies'). The SAC is designated for the Qualifying Interest (QI) semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*), including the priority feature 'important orchid sites'. Several unnamed drains are present adjacent to the Development, identified on the Tailte Éireann PRIME2 Watercourses layer, and are hydrologically connected to Figile_040², which is approximately 30m downstream from the substation's eastern boundary. The Long Derries, Edenderry SAC is located upstream of the Development, and there is therefore no potential for likely significant effects on The Long relating to water quality.

The Figile_040 river drains into River Barrow and River Nore SAC (site code 002162³) more than 20km downstream. The QIs of the SAC comprise a range of Annex I habitats, killarney fern *Trichomanes speciosum*, a range of fish species, otter *Lutra lutra*, freshwater pearl mussel *Margaritifera margaritifera*, Desmoulin's whorl snail *Vertigo moulinsiana* and white-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*. Given the distance, and that the works will occur within the existing substation boundary (and any pollutants would therefore be contained within hardstanding areas of the substation), there is no potential for likely significant effects on River Barrow and River Nore SAC related to water quality.

Given the minor and temporary works involved, there is no potential for likely significant effects on mobile QIs of River Barrow and River Nore SAC relating to visual and noise disturbance, should they be present along Figile_040. Furthermore, the unnamed drains adjacent to the Development are unlikely to be used by mobile QIs due to their small size and lack of suitable foraging opportunities.

There are no Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or any 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

¹ NPWS (2011) Conservation Objectives: The Long Derries, Edenderry SAC 000925. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

² Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) maps website <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/> (accessed 27 February 2025)

³ NPWS (2011) Conservation Objectives: River Barrow and River Nore SAC 002162. Version 1.0. 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 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:



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10 March 2025