



Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

CP1376 Pollagh 110kV Station Works [Exempted Development] County Kerry

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 CP1376 Pollagh 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 the following:

1. Remote End Works (works to be performed within the substation boundary)

- Bay name changes
- Site preparation works, including any drainage.
- Vegetation removal requirements
- Decommissioning of equipment / apparatus / structures within the substation

2. Fibre on Tralee-Kilpadogge 110 kV circuit-1 will be tapped into and fibre connection will be brought to Pollagh station through the trenches for the underground electrical cables.

Analysis of Pathways to European sites

The closest European site to the Development is Lower River Shannon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (site code 002165¹) which is approximately 0.5 km away ('as the crow flies'). The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of the SAC comprise a range of Annex I habitats, a range of fish, freshwater pearl mussel *Margaritifera margaritifera*, common bottlenose dolphin *Tursiops truncatus* and otter *Lutra lutra*. The Development is not within a known freshwater pearl mussel catchment.

The nearest waterbody to the Development is the Tarmon Stream_010², which is located approximately 43m from the Development at its closest point. At this point, Lower River Shannon SAC is located approximately 0.5km downstream. However, given the distance between the Development and the Tarmon Stream_010 and the minor and temporary works involved, there is no potential for likely significant effects relating to water quality on Lower River Shannon SAC.

Otter may use functionally-linked watercourses outside of SACs. The Development will occur within an area dominated by agricultural grassland, with no direct covered habitat connectivity (such as continuous woodland) to the water or along the banks. There is therefore unlikely to be any otter resting places in the surrounds of the Development. The works will be minor and temporary, and given the distance between the Tarmon Stream_010 and the Development, there is no potential for likely significant effects related to visual and noise disturbance of otter.

River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA (site code 004077³) is approximately 4.8km away. Light-bellied brent goose *Branta bernicla hrota* and whooper swan *Cygnus cygnus* are both mobile Special Conservation Interest (SCI) species that are associated with foraging habitats beyond the designated site boundary (also known as 'functionally-linked' habitat). Whooper swans have core foraging ranges of less than 5km⁴, whilst the core foraging range of light-

¹ NPWS (2012) Conservation Objectives: Lower River Shannon SAC 002165. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

² Environmental protection Agency (EPA) maps website <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/> (accessed 13 February 2025).

³ 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.

⁴ Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) (2016) Assessing Connectivity with Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

bellied brent geese is 15km⁵. There is no potential for loss of functionally-linked agricultural grassland and for visual and noise disturbance of SCI species foraging in the surrounds of the Development given that there is an extensive resource of suitable agricultural fields much closer to the SPA. This, combined with the relatively minor nature of the works, means that any noise disturbance or loss of functionally-linked habitat will be immaterial. There is consequently no potential for likely significant effects on mobile SCI associated with River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA or any other SPA.

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.

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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24 February 2025

⁵ Light-bellied brent goose is not specifically included as a selected species in the NatureScot guidance. However, research on brent geese is used as a surrogate for barnacle geese *Branta leucopsis*, thus the buffer zone for the latter species (core range 15km) is taken to be appropriate for light-bellied brent goose.