



Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination CP1390 Maynooth-Rinawade - 110 kV Uprate Project [Exempted Development] County Kildare

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 CP1390 Maynooth-Rinawade - 110 kV Uprate Project [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 uprating of the existing 110kV line comprising:

- replacement / restringing of the existing overhead line circuit conductor and wires with new higher capacity conductor wires;
- replacement of Intermediate Polesets (IMP; wooden polesets) and steel masts (with replacement structures being constructed at or adjacent the structures they will replace);
- replacement of hardware and fittings (e.g. suspension clamps, insulators and vibration dampeners) at all structures as required;
- re-capping and remedial works for shear blocks at identified steel masts;
- associated site development works, including foundation upgrades, strain assemblies, vegetation clearance, disassembly / reassembly of gate posts / piers and removal / reinstatement of existing fencing;

Analysis of Pathways to European sites

There are no watercourses or drainage ditches crossed by the Development line, thus no potential for hydrological connectivity to any European sites. None of the works require instream activities or works within or adjacent 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 mussels *Margaritifera margaritifera*, Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar*, or lamprey species.

The closest European site to the Development is Rye Water Valley/Carton Special Area of Conservation (SAC)¹ (site code 001398) which is 1.1km away ('as the crow flies'). However, there is no hydrological link or other ecological pathway between the Development and this SAC.

South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA)² (site code 004024) is 19.5km from the Development and is designated for a variety of wetland and waterbirds. Guidance published by NatureScot³ suggests that 20km is the maximum distance to which wintering waterbirds (in particular certain geese species) may travel outside of the boundary of an SPA for which they are a designated feature. The Development therefore lies near the very upper limit of this distance. Furthermore, the scope of the uprate works includes replacement of existing grid infrastructure, rather than converting any greenfield sites to development. Therefore, there will be no net loss in supporting foraging habitat for any SCI species. There are also ample other areas of suitable habitat in closer proximity to the SPA which could be used for foraging by SCI species.

¹ NPWS (2021) Conservation Objectives: Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC 001398. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

² NPWS (2014) Conservation Objectives: South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

³ Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) (2016) Assessing Connectivity with Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA⁴ (site code 004063) is designated for greylag goose *Anser anser* and lesser black-backed gull *Larus fuscus*. The Development is within the core foraging range of greylag goose as their core foraging range is 15-20km⁵ and the Development is 19.7km from the SPA. However, as per South Dublin Bay and River Estuary SPA, there is no potential for permanent loss of functionally-linked habitat and any disturbance of foraging birds using functionally-linked habitat would have insignificant effects due to the availability of abundant alternative habitat between the Development and the SPA.

Therefore, there is no potential for likely significant effects 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.

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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⁴ NPWS (2022) Conservation objectives for Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA [004063]. First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives Version 1.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

⁵ Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) (2016) Assessing Connectivity with Special Protection Areas (SPAs).