



## Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

### CP1423 Cashla-Tynagh 220kV Refurbishment Project [Exempted Development] County 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 CP1423 Cashla-Tynagh 220kV Refurbishment 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 will comprise a range of works, including:

- Replacement ('restringing') of existing overhead line circuit conductor wires with new conductor wires (including a telecommunications cable);
- Replacement of existing polesets, angle masts, associated hardware and development works (e.g. foundation and shear block upgrades), with any new structures being located at or immediately adjacent to existing structures that will be replaced, as well as being of similar height and appearance;
- Associated works within existing associated energised substations to facilitate the updated circuit, including the repair, renewal, alteration and removal of existing equipment; and
- Associated temporary site development works to gain access and work at the relevant existing structures, including vegetation clearance, disassembly/reassembly of gate posts/piers and removal/reinstatement of existing fencing.

#### Analysis of Pathways to European Sites

The development does not overlap or adjoin any European sites. There are several Special Protection Areas (SPAs) within relatively close proximity to the Development, including the Lough Rea SPA (site code 004134<sup>1</sup>, approximately 2.6km distant), Inner Galway Bay SPA (site code 004031<sup>2</sup>, approximately 6.7km distant), Rahasane Turlough SPA (site code 004089<sup>3</sup>, approximately 4.5km distant), Cregganna Marsh SPA (site code 004142<sup>4</sup>, approximately 7.1km distant), Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA (site code 004168<sup>5</sup>, approximately 4.3km distant), Middle Shannon Callows SPA (site code 004096<sup>6</sup>, approximately 14.4km distant), Lough Derg (Shannon) SPA (site code 004058<sup>7</sup>, approximately 11km distant), and Lough Corrib SPA (site code 004042<sup>8</sup>, approximately 11.7km distant). All these SPAs are designated for mobile Special Conservation Interest (SCI) waders and/or waterfowl that routinely use foraging habitats beyond the

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<sup>1</sup> NPWS (2022) Conservation objectives for Lough Rea SPA [004134]. First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives Version 1.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

<sup>2</sup> NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Inner Galway Bay SPA 004031. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

<sup>3</sup> NPWS (2023) Conservation Objectives: Rahasane Turlough SPA 004089. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

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

<sup>5</sup> NPWS (2022) Conservation Objectives: Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA 004168. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

<sup>6</sup> NPWS (2022) Conservation Objectives: Middle Shannon Callows SPA 004096. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

<sup>7</sup> NPWS (2022) Conservation objectives for Lough Derg (Shannon) SPA [004058]. First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives Version 1.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

<sup>8</sup> NPWS (2023) Conservation Objectives: Lough Corrib SPA 004042. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

designated site boundary, potentially including grassland or arable fields in the vicinity of the Development. While there may be functionally-linked habitats along the Development, any direct noise and visual disturbance impacts to SCI birds will not result in likely significant effects based on the limited scale, sequential nature and temporary duration of the works. The Development will not involve the physical modification of habitats and, in any event, fields would be restored to their former state following completion of the works, such that there is no potential for a direct loss of functionally-linked habitats.

All the aforementioned SPAs are also sensitive to water pollution potentially arising from any construction works required for the Development. This also applies to several Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), which are designated for Qualifying Interest (QI) habitats and/or species, including the Galway Bay Complex SAC (site code 000268<sup>9</sup>), Lough Corrib SAC (site code 000297<sup>10</sup>), Monivea Bog SAC (site code 002352<sup>11</sup>), and Ardgraique Bog SAC (site code 002356<sup>12</sup>). Any water quality impacts are primarily determined by the scale of works, presence or absence of hydrological pathways and flowpath distance to European sites. For example, there is no hydrological connectivity to the Lough Rea SPA, Middle Shannon Callows SPA, Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA, Lough Corrib SPA / SAC, Monivea Bog SAC and Ardgraique Bog SAC, which either are located in different catchments or are upstream from the Development. For other European sites (e.g. Rahasane Turlough SPA, Inner Galway Bay SPA and Galway Bay Complex SAC [via Kilcolgan River], Lough Derg (Shannon) SPA [via Kilcrow River]), while a hydrological pathway to the Development is present via linking waterbodies, the minor scale of the Development and long flowpath distances allowing for natural attenuation and dilution processes mean that there is no potential for a likely significant effect regarding water quality.

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

Signed:



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14 June 2024

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<sup>9</sup> NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Galway Bay Complex SAC 000268. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

<sup>10</sup> NPWS (2017) Conservation Objectives; Lough Corrib SAC 000297. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

<sup>11</sup> NPWS (2015) Conservation Objectives: Monivea Bog SAC 002352. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

<sup>12</sup> NPWS (2015) Conservation Objectives: Ardgraique Bog SAC 002356. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.