



Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

CP1435 Drumline-Ennis OHL Dynamic Line Rating Device [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, if the Drumline-Ennis 110kV OHL Dynamic Line Rating Device [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 involves the installation of dynamic line rating device (DLR) on the overhead transmission line (OHL).

Analysis of Pathways to European Sites

There are no waterbodies within either Drumlin 110kV station or Ennis 110kV station, however the OHL passes over many waterbodies which are hydrologically linked more than 3km away to Lower River Shannon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (site code 002165)¹ and River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries Special Protection Area (SPA) (site code 004077)². The Ennis station is more than 2.5km ('as the crow flies') to Lower River Shannon SAC and River Shaon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA. None of the works require in-stream activities or works within or adjacent to 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.

Potential noise and visual disturbance impacts on Qualifying Interest (QI) otter *Lutra lutra* from the SAC were also considered. Due to their extensive home ranges, otter are expected to frequently utilise resting places and holts along watercourses beyond the designated site boundary, including potentially those traversed by the Development. However, otter are also very tolerant of anthropogenic disturbance and construction works for the Development will not involve any piling or blasting activities (works with greatest at-source sound pressure levels).

Through potential noise / vibration disturbance and water quality impacts, works within or adjacent watercourses have the potential to disrupt or prevent migratory movements of QI species, such as those present in and beyond the boundary of the SAC. However, the Development will not involve any works that are undertaken in-river. Furthermore, any severance of migratory pathways is only likely where the prevailing water quality and soundscape is heavily impacted. Such major impacts can be excluded due to the methodology, scale and duration of the works required for the Development. The scope of the works includes the installation of a small sized device on the overhead transmission line, rather than converting any greenfield sites to development.

There will be no loss in supporting foraging habitat for any Special Conservation Interest (SCI) species of the SPA. At the distance of more than 2.5km, the SPA lies beyond the impact zone for visual and noise disturbance, and there is no direct disturbance potential for SCIs within the designated site boundary. Moreover, the minor nature of the works means that any noise disturbance of SCI birds occurring outside of the SPA but in the vicinity of the Development will not have likely significant disturbance effects on SCI populations.

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 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.

Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA (site code 004168)³ and Corofin Wetlands SPA (site code 004220)⁴ are within 20km of the Development (6.7km and 11.5km, respectively). However, for the reasons stated above, there is no potential for likely significant effects on the SCI of these SPAs.

There are no other European sites nearby, or potentially connected to the Development via a source-pathway-receptor link.

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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³NPWS (2022) Conservation Objectives: Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA 004168. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

⁴ NPWS (2022) Conservation objectives for Corofin Wetlands SPA [004220]. First Order Sitespecific Conservation Objectives Version 1.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.