



Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

CP1436 Ardnacrusha-Ennis 110kV OHL Dynamic Line Rating Device and Station Works [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 Ardnacrusha-Ennis 110kV OHL Dynamic Line Rating Device and 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 involves the installation of small sized dynamic line rating devices (DLRs) on the existing overhead line (OHL) spans, and the following works within Ardnacrusha and Ennis Station boundaries:

- Bay equipment replacement and associated work in Ardnacrusha 110 kV Station
- Bay equipment replacement and associated work in Ennis 110 kV Station

Analysis of Pathways to European Sites

There are no waterbodies within the Ardnacrusha 110kV or Ennis 110kV Stations, although the OHL passes over many waterbodies that are hydrologically linked with the 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. Ardnacrusha Station is more than 1.5km ('as the crow flies') to Lower River Shannon SAC and more than 4.8km to River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA. Ennis Station is more than 1.2km ('as the crow flies') to Lower River Shannon SAC and more than 5km to River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA. The Development does not 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 mussel *Margaritifera margaritifera*, Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar*, or lamprey species.

Potential noise and visual disturbance impacts on QI otter *Lutra lutra* from the SAC were also considered. Due to their extensive home ranges, otter frequently utilise resting places and holts along watercourses beyond the designated site boundary, including 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 activities (works with greatest at-source sound pressure levels). Furthermore, otter are primarily nocturnal mammals, and no night-time works will be undertaken for the Development.

The scope of the works includes the installation of small-sized devices on the OHL, using a Mobile Elevated Working Platform, and works within the existing station boundaries which comprise of existing hard-standing habitat rather than converting any greenfield site to development. Therefore, there will be no loss of functionally-linked habitat for any Special Conservation Interest (SCI) species of the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA. At a distance of more than 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, within the existing station boundaries, means that any noise disturbance of SCI birds occurring outside of the SPA but in the vicinity of the Development will be immaterial.

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.

The Ballyallia Lake SAC (site code 000014)³ and Ballyallia Lough SPA (site code 004142)⁴ both lie within 5km of the Development. However, in line with the pathways assessed in relation to the Lower River Shannon SAC and River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA above, there is no potential for likely significant effects on the SCIs of these SPAs.

There are no other European sites nearby that are 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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³ NPWS (2017) Conservation Objectives: Ballyallia Lake SAC 000014. Version 1. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

⁴ NPWS (2022) Conservation Objectives for Ballyallia Lough SPA [004041]. First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives Version 1. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.