



Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

CP1449 Midleton 110kV Station Works Project [Exempted Development] County Cork

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 CP1449 Midleton 110kV Station Works 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 following works within the substation compound:

- Removal of the existing transformer to be replaced with a new 63 MVA 110/38kV transformer;
- Addition of a new 63 MVA 110/38kV transformer;
- Addition of a new 110kV sectionaliser bay;
- Removal of existing busbar to be replaced with a new 38kV 14 bay GIS module;
- Uprate of the 110kV busbar conductor to 600mm² ACSR;
- Uprate of 110kV dropper lines to 430mm² ACSR;
- New right angle single bay busbar extension to the west side of the Station;
- Removal of the existing Whitegate tower gantry and addition of a new gantry to the new western bay in the Station grounds; and
- Repurposing of the current Whitegate feed bay for use as a spare line bay for TSO customer use.

Furthermore, the Development will also entail the reconfiguration of an existing angle mast immediately south of the Midleton 110kV Station boundary.

Analysis of Pathways to European Sites

The European sites that lie closest to the Development are the Great Island Channel Special Area of Conservation (SAC, site code 001058¹) and Cork Harbour Special Protection Area (SPA, site code 004030²), both approximately 3.1km distant. The SAC is designated for Qualifying Interest (QI) intertidal mud- and sandflats, and Atlantic salt meadows. The SPA is designated for a range of Special Conservation Interest (SCI) bird species, including waders, waterfowl and seabird species. The Development is situated approximately 400m from the closest waterbody that is hydrologically connected with the SAC/SPA (the Owennacurra River). However, a review of the Osi PRIME2 Watercourses layer indicates that there are no ditches, drains or engineered channels that connect the Development to the Owennacurra River. Due to the absence of a hydrological connection, likely significant effects of the Development on the Great Island Channel SAC and Cork Harbour SPA regarding water quality are, therefore, excluded.

At a distance of approximately 3.1km from the Cork Harbour SPA, the Development lies within the core foraging range of some of the designated SCI species. Golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria*, lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* and, to a lesser extent, redshank *Tringa totanus* are all mobile species that are associated with foraging habitats beyond the designated site boundary (also known as 'functionally-linked' habitats). Furthermore, the Development lies within the core foraging range

¹ NPWS (2014) Conservation Objectives: Great Island Channel SAC 001058. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

² NPWS (2014) Conservation Objectives: Cork Harbour SPA 004030. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

of SCI species of other European sites, including the Ballycotton Bay SPA (site code 004022³, approximately 14.7km distant) and Ballymacoda Bay SPA (site code 004023⁴, approximately 17.7km distant). Therefore, there is potential for visual and noise disturbance of SCI species foraging in arable fields surrounding the Development.

However, likely significant effects on the Cork Harbour SPA, and any other SPA, in relation to visual/noise disturbance will not occur, due to the limited scale and temporary nature of construction works. Furthermore, there is an extensive resource of similarly suitable agricultural fields much closer to the Cork Harbour SPA and other SPAs. Since all construction works (except for the reconfiguration of the angled mast) will be undertaken within the Station boundary, there is no potential for a direct temporary or permanent loss of functionally-linked habitat.

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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15 August 2024

³ NPWS (2014) Conservation Objectives: Ballycotton Bay SPA 004022. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

⁴ NPWS (2015) Conservation Objectives: Ballymacoda Bay SPA 004023. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.