



Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

CP1470 Galway-Salthill 110 kV link box replacements [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 Galway-Salthill 110kV cable route, link box replacements [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 replacement of link boxes on the existing Galway to Salthill 110 kV underground cable. The link boxes in these locations are all housed in an existing Link Box Chamber, which is a standard precast concrete structure which can fit all link boxes. The bonding leads would be disconnected from the existing link box, that link box would then be removed from the chamber and replaced with a cross bonded link box, and the bonding leads would be connected onto the new link box.

Analysis of Pathways to European Sites

The Development is c.70 m from the Lough Corrib Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (site code 000297)¹ and the River Corrib; at its closest point. The Development is ac. 1.1 km to the Inner Galway Bay Special Protection Area (SPA) (site code 004031)² at its nearest point. The works require no in-stream activities, no breaking of ground, and no vegetation removal. 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, otters are expected to frequently utilise resting places and holts along watercourses beyond the designated site boundary, including potentially those close to the Development. However, the works involve no breaking of ground, no vegetation removal, and therefore have no potential to have likely significant disturbance effects on otter, or their habitats.

There will be no landuse change as a result of the Development, and no potential for loss in supporting foraging habitat for any Special Conservation Interest (SCI) species of the SPA. At c. 1.1 km from the Development, the SPA lies beyond the impact zone for visual and noise disturbance. 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.

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

¹ NPWS (2017) Conservation Objectives: Lough Corrib SAC 000297. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

² NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Inner Galway Bay SPA 004031. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

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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