



Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

Ground Investigation Works for CP1605 Killonan-Limerick 110kV Circuit 2 Overhead Line [Exempted Development] County Limerick

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 Ground Investigation (GI) Works CP1605 Killonan-Limerick 110kV Circuit 2 Overhead Line to inform the thermal capacity ('the Development') individually or in combination with other plans or projects would be likely to have a significant effect (s) on a European site(s).

The works to inform the Development comprise of Intrusive Foundation Investigations (IFI) at structures 5, 7, 34, 39, 42, 45, 46, and 57 only. The works require digging at the structure foundations with a tracked machine and taking concrete samples for testing.

Analysis of Pathways to European sites

The following European sites are considered to be within the potential zone of influence (Zoi) of the works:

- Lower River Shannon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (site code 002165)¹. The SAC is designed for a range of Annex I habitats, and the Annex II species. The closest structure associated with the works to the SAC is structure 57 (1.9km away), and structure 45 is 20m from a drainage ditch which is hydrologically-linked 10.5km to the SAC.
- River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries Special Protection Area (SPA) (site code 004077)². The closest structure associated with the works to the SPA is structure 57 (2.6km away), and structure 45 is 20m from a drainage ditch which is hydrologically-linked 11km to the SPA.

The works are of a nature which means that significant waterborne pollution events cannot occur, for example, no large excavations are required which could result in substantial volumes of sediment being generated. The Development is not located within a freshwater pearl mussel *Margaritifera margaritifera* catchment. There is no potential for likely significant effects related to water quality on any European site given the minor works involved, and the distance between the structures requiring GI works, their surrounding drainage ditches and the distance from the drainage ditches to the European sites themselves.

Potential noise and visual disturbance impacts on QI otter *Lutra lutra* of the Lower River Shannon SAC were also considered. Due to their extensive home ranges, otter are expected to frequently utilise resting places and holts along waterbodies beyond the European site boundary. Otter are nocturnal mammals, and no night-time works will be undertaken. The works will be set back more than 20m from hydrologically-linked waterbodies, will be temporary and short-term, and minor in nature. Thus, there is no potential for likely significant effects.

¹NPWS (2012) Conservation Objectives: Lower River Shannon SAC 002165. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

²NPWS (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.

River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA is designated for a range of mobile Special Conservation Interest (SCI) species that routinely forage in functionally-linked habitats beyond their European site boundary. SCI species that are most strongly linked to off-site foraging in grassland and arable fields include whooper swan *Cygnus cygnus*, light bellied Brent goose *Branta bernicla hrota*, golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria* and lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*. While the works lie within the core foraging range of these species, likely significant effects regarding noise and visual disturbance in functionally-linked habitats can be excluded. This is due to other suitable grassland / arable fields being available closer to the SPA, as well as the minor scale and temporary nature of the works.

There are no other European sites nearby or potentially connected to the Development works via a source-pathway-receptor link that may result in likely significant effects in view of the relevant European sites' 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 works, including temporary works, and has not taken account of measures intended to avoid or reduce significant effects on European sites.

Signed:



Susanne Dunne ACIEEM Senior Ecologist

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