



## Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

### **CP1079 Site Investigations: Binbane to Cathaleen's Falls 110 kV Overhead Line [Exempted Development] (County Donegal)**

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 Site Investigations: Binbane to Cathaleen's Falls 110 kV Overhead Line [Exempted Development] (the works) individually or in combination with other plans or projects would be likely to have a significant effect (s) on a European site(s).

#### **Works Description**

The site investigations comprise Dynamic Probing (i.e. coring) of concrete foundations for existing steel 110 kV masts (15 no.). A tracked Dando Terrier type rig will be used. The access routes to the works locations are indicated in the planning application for the Binbane to Cathaleen's Falls 110 kV Overhead Line<sup>3</sup>.

#### **Analysis of Pathways to European sites**

The nearest European site to the works is the Lough Eske and Ardnamona Wood SAC 000163<sup>1</sup>. There are no works within this or any other European site. The nearest works to the Lough Eske and Ardnamona Wood SAC are 0.16 km from the boundary. Whilst outside the SAC, there are three works locations within the Eske sub-catchment (or 'Margaritifera Sensitive Area'<sup>2</sup>) of Qualifying Interest Freshwater Pearl Mussel *Margaritifera margaritifera*.

The watercourse mapping in the Natura Impact Statement for the Binbane-Cathleen Falls Uprate Project<sup>3</sup> was reviewed. This mapping was informed by field surveys on various dates in 2021 and 2022, and includes Ordnance Survey Ireland Prime2 mapping of ditches<sup>4</sup>. There are no watercourses with connectivity to the River Eske, within 120 m of the works. The nearest watercourse to the access for the works is 20m distant.

Field and desktop surveys have confirmed there no other QIs of the SACs within the zone of influence of the works. The AA Screening assessment has reviewed the nature and scale of the works against hydrological connectivity and excluded the risk of downstream surface water impacts to the Lough Eske and Ardnamona SAC, or other relevant populations.

#### **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.

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<sup>1</sup> NPWS (2019) Conservation Objectives: Lough Eske and Ardnamona Wood SAC 000163. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

<sup>2</sup> Version 08. May 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Planning Reference 501/38.

<sup>4</sup> Release Date April 2022.

This determination is based on the location, scale, extent and duration of the works, including temporary works, and has not taken account of measures intended to avoid or reduce significant effects on European sites.

Signed:



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**Robert Fennelly CEcol MCIEEM Lead Senior Ecologist**

**12 September 2022**