

[REDACTED]
Foreshore Unit,
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage,
Newtown Road, Co. Wexford
11th March 2022

Marine Adviser Environment Screening Stage Report

Re: FS006916 Construction and operation of a subsea electrical interconnector cable from the Irish EEZ to landfall at Claycastle, Co. Cork

Applicant: Eirgrid

I have reviewed the Foreshore Application FS006916 and the environmental documents associated with it. My comments on and recommendations for this application are as follows:

Independent Environmental Consultant (IEC): The Department engaged Arup as an IEC to provide assistance with regard to the statutory and non-statutory environmental assessments of this Foreshore Application. The IEC has conducted independent assessments of the information provided by the Applicant, having regard to the Habitats Directive and the public and prescribed bodies' consultations.

Article 6(3) of Directive (92/43/EEC) (as amended) (Habitats Directive): Following a review of the proposed project, the IEC completed a **Screening for Appropriate Assessment** which concluded that a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment was required as the project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have a significant effect on European sites.

Having considered the application by Eirgrid and the IEC's Appropriate Assessment Screening Report I agree with and accept the Screening for Appropriate Assessment that a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is required. Therefore a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) is now required. In line with case law this NIS must the latest scientific information to the effects of EMF on migratory fish and mammals. It must also include the latest data on marine mammals and seabird distribution and in particular data from the OBSERVE programme. A comprehensive analysis of projects or plans which may have in-combination effects with this project should also be included in this NIS.

My signed Recommending Officer's **Screening for Appropriate Assessment Determination** which requires the signature of the Minister as part of the decision-makers obligations under the Habitats Directive is contained in the attached.

If the Minister adopts and approves these reports and a determination is made that a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is required a public consultation will be held on the Appropriate Assessment. On completion of this second consultation and the work of the IEC, I will furnish my final assessment report which will have regard to the information obtained during public participation and will include, if necessary, any case specific conditions.

Signature of Marine Advisor: 11th

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