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**Development (Emergency Electricity Generation) Act 2022**

**Development (Emergency Electricity Generation) Regulations 2022**

**Planning Authority: Offaly County Council**

**Application by** Electricity Supply Board submitted to An Bord Pleanála by the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communication on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2023 for determination in accordance with article 9 of the Development (Emergency Electricity Generation) Regulations 2022 as to whether the proposed development comprising installation and operation of temporary emergency electricity generating plant, operating up to 500 hours per annum and running on diesel oil, at the existing West Offaly Power Station, Shannonbridge, in the townland of Cloniffeen, in County Offaly would be likely to have a significant effect on a European site.

**The proposed development is described as follows:**

- 8 number 35MW gas turbine generators including 8 number 30 metre tall exhaust stacks.
- 2 number 110kV Generator Step-Up Transformers (GSUT).
- 2 number Hypact compact switchgear units and associated surge arrestors.
- 2 number GSUT protection relay panels.
- 2 number Power Control Modules, each including:
  - 11.5kV Medium Voltage Switchgear/Fuse Disconnecter.
  - Low Voltage Auxiliary transformer.

- 400 V Low Voltage Switchgear.
- 125 DC System, and
- Fire detection and extinguishers.
- Fire protection system including fire water pumps.
- 1 number Plant Common Controller Module.
- 2 number Control Modules.
- 2 number instrument compressors.
- 2 number fin fan coolers.
- Electrical bulk material (cable, cable trays, earthing and lightning protection material, conduit, lighting, and small power).
- 2 number Fuel Oil Unloading Modules.
- Fuel Oil Forwarding and filtration system (with fuel oil forwarding pump and fuel filters).
- Fuel oil heating system.
- 3 number circular steel distillate oil storage tanks, each with capacity of 1,690 tonnes.
- 10 number rectangular steel distillate oil storage tanks, each with capacity of 70 tonnes.
- A water storage tank with capacity of 1,600 cubic metres.
- An administration building.
- Security fencing, security gates and external lighting columns.
- Internal roads.
- Connection to utilities and drainage connection to existing drainage systems.
- Connection by overground cable to the existing on-site 110kV electrical substation, and
- Acoustic barriers.

The construction phase of the Designated Development at the West Offaly Power Station will include necessary preliminary works, dismantling/demolition, civil and ancillary works and temporary contractor's compounds and equipment laydown areas. Temporary facilities to be provided during the construction phase will comprise:

- Temporary facilities and stores.

- Materials and plant storage.
- Contractor compound and construction staff office and welfare facilities.
- Temporary vehicle parking facilities, and
- Signage.

In connection with and in addition to the above, the following infrastructure will be included:

- Internal roads.
- External lighting, including lighting columns.
- Security fencing and gates, and
- Utilities, pipes, cables and connection to existing surface water drainage systems, oil-water separators, including channelling, culverting, crossings and works to existing drainage ditches and systems.

The overall application site area is approximately 9.22 hectares.

## **Decision**

**The Board determines that appropriate assessment is required based on the reasons and considerations as set out below.**

## **Reasons and Considerations**

The Board noted that the proposed development is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site.

In completing the screening for Appropriate Assessment, the Board accepted and adopted the screening assessment and conclusion in the Inspector's report in respect of the identification of the European sites which could potentially be affected, and the identification and assessment of potential significant effects of the proposed development, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, on these European sites in view of the site's Conservation Objectives.

In accordance with Article 42(6) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, on the basis of the information on file, including the

Appropriate Assessment Screening Report, submitted as part of the Natura Impact Statement and supporting information, the Inspector's report, and having regard to:

- the nature and scale of the designated development,
- the close proximity between the proposed works to a number of European sites in the vicinity and their conservation objectives.

The Board concluded that the designated development comprising the construction of Emergency Electricity Generation development at the West of Offaly Power Station at Shannonbridge County Offaly, individually or in-combination with other plans or projects, could potentially have a significant effect on the following European sites in view of these sites' conservation objectives.

- Middle Shannon Callows Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004096).
- River Suck Callows Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004097).
- River Shannon Callows Special Area of Conservation (Site Code 000216).

An appropriate assessment is therefore required, to determine if adverse effects on the integrity of the above European sites can be excluded in view of the conservation objectives of the sites.

The Board is satisfied that the potential for significant effects on the conservation objectives of other European sites within and outside of the zone of influence can be screened out because of the separation distances and the lack of substantive ecological linkages or pathways between the proposed works and other European sites. In reaching the conclusion of the screening assessment, no account was taken of measures intended to avoid or reduce the potentially harmful effects of the project on any European site.

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**Chris McGarry**  
**Member of An Bord Pleanála**  
**duly authorised to authenticate**  
**the seal of the Board.**

**Dated this          day of                                  2023**