

Finding of no significant effect report:

Name of project or plan:	Installation of a gas pipeline across the River Barrow using trenchless technology (MS51/6/332).
Name and location of Natura 2000 site It would be helpful for a map or plan to be provided:	The River Barrow and River Nore cSAC (Site Code 002162)
Description of the project or plan	<p>The proposed works involves the installation of a submarine gas pipeline across the River Barrow estuary using trenchless technology. The proposed works are required to connect the 430 MW Great Island Power Station in Co. Wexford to the national gas network. The crossing will be constructed using trenchless technology (horizontal directional drilling) and it is intended that the pipeline will be installed at a minimum depth of 10m below the bed of the estuary. The proposed pipeline will be approximately 1Km long and will have a nominal diameter of 406mm and a wall thickness of 14.2mm. The pipeline will cross the eastuary between Ballinlaw, County Kilkenny and Dollar Point, County Wexford. As part of the drilling process a temporary fluid return pipe is required to circulate the drilling fluid Bentonite. This fully welded 200mm diameter pipeline will be installed on the river bed in one day, remain in place for the duration of the works (approximately 3-4 months) and be removed in one day on completion of the works. The gas pipeline will be designed and constructed in accordance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2006 (SI 504 of 2006) and will also be designed, constructed and operated in accordance with the requirements of the Irish Standard IS 328 Code of Practice for Gas Transmission Pipelines and Pipeline Installations (2003).</p>
Is the project or plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site (provide details)?	No.
Are there other projects or plans that together with the project or plan being assessed could affect the site (provide details)?	Following consultation with other relevant state bodies and the public, the BGE plan to conduct Site Investigation works involving the drilling of 6 No boreholes at this location, was the only other project identified. However it was determined, due to their timing and nature, that the two projects when considered together will not affect the site.

Describe how the project or plan (alone or in combination) is likely to affect the Natura 2000 site.

The works could potentially;

- impact on macro-invertebrate communities in estuarine environments as a result of the installation and removal of the temporary fluid return pipeline
- disturb and displace bird species due to construction noise
- introduce pollutants into the water column during the works

Explain why these effects are not considered significant.

The proposed works will result in a very small area of interaction with the seabed of estuarine habitat and a smaller area of intertidal mudflat. The footprint of activities is within the scale of normal erosion or deposition capacities of the channel and any impacts will be minor, localised and temporary. Similarly any increase in water column turbidity will be temporary, localised and within the natural range of variability caused by current induced sediment resuspension. Disturbance to overwintering birds will be avoided as no works will be carried out during the period November – March inclusive. There will be no direct discharge of pollutants into the environment during the works. The drill sites and all associated activity will be located a minimum of 50m from boundary of the SAC and any excavated material will be stored separately and protected during storage to prevent loss or spread of materials by wind, rain etc. Fuels and other chemicals will be stored in secured bunded areas. Silt traps and settlement ponds will be employed, thus minimising the risk of siltation.

As the pipeline will be installed at a minimum depth of 10m below the bed of the estuary there will be no impacts on the SAC post installation.

On the basis of the above it is considered that there will be no significant adverse effects as a result of the installation of a gas pipeline across the River Barrow using trenchless technology on qualifying interests of the River Barrow and River Nore cSAC

Who carried out the assessment?

Marine Institute, 26th October 2011