



Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

CP1125 Physical Security of Transmission Stations (11 no.) - Central Region [Exempted Development]

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 CP1125 Physical Security of Transmission Stations [Exempted Development] ('the Development') individually or in-combination with other plans or projects will result in likely significant effects on a European site(s).

The project relates to the following stations (all works are to be contained within each station and no works will occur outside of the stations):

1. Athy 110kV
2. Blake 110kV
3. Carlow 110kV
4. Charleville 110kV
5. Kellis 220kV
6. Kilkenny 110kV
7. Killonan 220kV
8. Monread 110kV
9. Newbridge 110kV
10. Stratford 110kV
11. Rathkeale 110Kv

The Development comprises the following works:

- Design and installation of Perimeter Intruder Detection (PID) and security lighting systems for all stations.
- Design and installation of video surveillance at entrance gates for all stations.
- Design and installation of video surveillance in the compounds for Kellis and Killonan stations.
- Design and installation of security lighting at the entrance for Kellis and Killonan stations.
- Replacement of existing wooden doors with steel doors for Charleville, Kellis, Killonan, Newbridge and Rathkeale stations.
- Installation of window protection guards and ground locks for roller doors for all stations.

Analysis of Pathways to European Sites

None of the stations (including works to install security lighting, which could impact QI foraging lesser horseshoe bats, if present) are within the core foraging range (2.5km¹) for QI populations.

Athy 110kV Station

¹ As per the NPWS Conservation Objectives for all lesser horseshoe bat SACs in Ireland.

The nearest European site to Athy 110kV Station is River Barrow and River Nore Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (site code 002162)² which is approximately 665m from the substation boundary. There are no Special Protection Areas (SPAs) within 20km of the station. There are no possible negative impacts on the water environment in this SAC from the Development due to the nature and small scale of the works (fitting of security lighting and equipment in an existing station), as well as the long distances to the European sites. Furthermore, there are no watercourses or drainage ditches directly adjoining Athy Station. Considering the scope of the works and the distance to the SAC through housing estates and the Grand Canal, it is considered that there will be no negative impacts on Qualifying Interest (QI) species using or depending upon functionally linked habitats, including freshwater pearl mussel *Margaritifera margaritifera*, white-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*, lamprey species, twaite shad *Alosa fallax*, Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar* and otter *Lutra lutra*. Potential noise and visual disturbance impacts to QI species foraging, resting or ranging beyond the European site boundary are also excluded, following consideration of the location and nature of the works involved. For example, the Development does not comprise in-water works or noisy construction activities. Therefore, there is no potential for disturbance impacts to mobile QI species utilising functionally-linked habitats. There are no other European sites nearby, or potentially connected to the Development via a source-pathway-receptor link.

Blake 110kV Station

There are no waterbodies in or around the station. Ballynafagh Lake SAC (site code 001387)³ is 4.7km from the station. However, the station lies far beyond a precautionary dispersal distance of 1.5km for male marsh fritillary *Euphydryas aurinia*. There are no SPAs within 20km of the Site. There are no other European sites nearby, or potentially connected to the Development via a source-pathway-receptor link.

Carlow 110kV Station

There are no waterbodies in or around the station. Slaney River Valley SAC (site code 000781)⁴ is 4.6km from the station. There is no impact source pathway to the QI species of the SAC given the distance and lack of a hydrological link. There are no SPAs within 20km of the Site.

There are no other European sites nearby, or potentially connected to the Development via a source-pathway-receptor link.

Charleville 110kV Station

There are no waterbodies in or around the station. Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC (site code 002170)⁵ is 1.8km from the station. There is no impact source pathway to the QI species of the SAC given the lack of a hydrological link or ecological pathway. Kilcolman Bog SPA (site code 004095)⁶ is 10.1km from the Development. All works will be carried out within the existing station boundary containing hardstanding and electrical installations, an area containing no habitats that are suitable for foraging / loafing Special Conservation Interest (SCI) bird species. At 1.8km distance, the SPA lies beyond the impact zone for visual and noise disturbance, and there is no direct disturbance potential for SCIs within the designated site boundary. Moreover, the minor nature of the works means that it is highly unlikely that disturbance of SCI birds occurring outside of the SPA but in the vicinity of the Development would occur. Other than Kilcolman Bog SPA, there are no other European sites nearby, or potentially connected to the substation via a source-pathway-receptor link.

Kellis 220kV Station

² NPWS (2011) Conservation Objectives: River Barrow and River Nore SAC 002162. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

³ NPWS (2021) Conservation Objectives: Ballynafagh Lake SAC 001387. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

⁴ NPWS (2011) Conservation Objectives: Slaney River Valley SAC 000781. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

⁵ NPWS (2012) Conservation Objectives: Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC 002170. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

⁶ NPWS (2022) Conservation objectives for Kilcolman Bog SPA [004095]. First Order Sitespecific Conservation Objectives Version 1.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

The nearest European sites to the Kellis 220kV Station are the Slaney River Valley SAC (approximately 4.6km distant) and River Barrow and River Nore SAC (approximately 9.1km distant). Both European sites are especially sensitive to negative changes in water quality and reductions in hydrological flows. However, there are no possible negative impacts on the water environment in this SAC from the Development due to the nature and small scale of the works (fitting of security lighting and equipment in an existing station is very unlikely to result in water pollution and/or changes to flow volumes), as well as the long distances to the European sites. There is a drainage ditch surrounding the station, however given the scope of works, there is no potential for this drainage ditch to be affected. The closest river to the station is the River Burren which is approximately 408m away. Considering the scope of the works and the distance to the River Burren (which is a tributary of the River Barrow), it is considered that there will be no negative impacts on QI species using or depending upon functionally linked habitats. There is no hydrological connectivity to the Slaney River SAC.

Potential noise and visual disturbance impacts to QI species foraging, resting or ranging beyond the designated site boundary are also excluded with cognisance of the location and nature of the works involved. For example, the Development does not comprise in-water works or noisy construction activities. Therefore, there is no potential for disturbance impacts to mobile QI species utilising functionally linked habitats.

There are no other European sites nearby, or potentially connected to the Development via a source-pathway-receptor link.

Kilkenny 110kV Station

The station is 45m from the Lyrath River which is hydrologically linked to River Barrow and River Nore SAC and River Nore SPA. The SAC and SPA are 1.8km from the station 'as the crow flies'. The station is within a freshwater pearl mussel catchment area. However, there are no possible negative impacts on the water environment from the Development due to the nature and small scale of the works (fitting of security lighting and equipment in an existing station is very unlikely to result in water pollution and/or changes to flow volumes). All works will be carried out within the existing station boundary containing hardstanding and electrical installations, an area containing no habitats that are suitable for foraging / loafing SCI species. At 1.8km distance, the SPA lies beyond the impact buffer zone for visual and noise disturbance, and there is no direct disturbance potential for SCIs within the designated site boundary. Moreover, the minor nature of the works means that it is highly unlikely that disturbance of SCI birds occurring outside of the SPA but in the vicinity of the Development would occur. There are no other European sites nearby, or potentially connected to the Development via a source-pathway-receptor link.

Killonan 220kV Station

There are no waterbodies in or around the station. The closest European site to the station is Lower River Shannon SAC (site code 002165)⁷ which is 3.9km away. Potential noise and visual disturbance impacts to QI species foraging, resting or ranging beyond the designated site boundary are excluded with cognisance of the location and nature of the works involved. For example, the Development does not comprise noisy construction activities. Therefore, there is no potential for disturbance impacts to mobile QI species utilising functionally linked habitats. There is no hydrological link between the Development and the SAC, thus no potential for waterborne pollution.

The Development is 6.2km from River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA (site code 004077)⁸ and 10km from Slievefelim to Silvermines Mountains SPA (site code 004165)⁹. There are no other SPAs within 20km of the Development. At these distances, the SPAs lie beyond the impact zone for visual and noise disturbance, and there is no direct disturbance potential for SCIs within the designated site boundary. Moreover, the minor nature of the works means that it is highly unlikely that disturbance of SCI birds occurring outside of the SPA but in the vicinity of the Development would occur. There are no other European sites nearby, or potentially connected to the Development via a source-pathway-receptor link.

⁷ NPWS (2012) Conservation Objectives: Lower River Shannon SAC 002165. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

⁸ NPWS (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.

⁹ NPWS (2022) Conservation Objectives: Slievefelim to Silvermines Mountains SPA 004165. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Monread 110kV Station

There are drainage ditches surrounding the station, however there are none within the station where the works will be undertaken. There is no hydrological link from the Development to any European site. Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA (site code 004063)¹⁰ is 11.8km from the Development and Wicklow Mountains SPA (site code 004040)¹¹ is 19.9km from the Development. There are no other SPAs within 20km of the Development. At these distances, the SPAs lie beyond the impact zone for visual and noise disturbance, and there is no direct disturbance potential for SCIs within the designated site boundary. Moreover, the minor nature of the works means that it is highly unlikely that disturbance of SCI birds occurring outside of the SPA but in the vicinity of the Development would occur. There are no other European sites nearby, or potentially connected to the Development via a source-pathway-receptor link.

Newbridge 110kV Station

There are no waterbodies in or around the station. The closest European site to the Development is Pollardstown Fen SAC (site code 000396)¹² which is 405m from the Development. Potential noise and visual disturbance impacts to QI species foraging, resting or ranging beyond the designated site boundary are excluded with cognisance of the location and nature of the works involved. For example, the Development does not comprise noisy construction activities. Therefore, there is no potential for disturbance impacts to mobile QI species utilising functionally linked habitats. There is no hydrological link between the Development and the SAC, thus no potential for waterborne pollution.

The easternmost section of the Development is situated approximately 18.8km from the Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA, which is designated for mobile greylag goose *Anser anser*. According to guidance published by Scottish Natural Heritage (now NatureScot), the core foraging range of greylag goose is 15-20km¹³, placing the Development within the wider area potentially used by this SCI species. However, the scope of the works does not involve conversion of greenfield land to development. Therefore, there is no potential for the loss of functionally linked foraging habitat of greylag goose. Given the minor nature of the works the minor nature of the works, it is highly unlikely that disturbance of SCI birds occurring outside of the SPA but in the vicinity of the Development would occur. There are no other European sites nearby, or potentially connected to the Development via a source-pathway-receptor link.

Stratford 110kV Station

There are no waterbodies in or around the station. The closest European site to the station is Slaney River Valley SAC which is 166m away. The station is within a freshwater pearl mussel catchment area. However, there are no possible negative impacts on the water environment from the Development due to the nature and small scale of the works (fitting of security lighting and equipment in an existing station is very unlikely to result in water pollution and/or changes to flow volumes).

The station is 8.6km to Wicklow Mountains SPA and 12.4km to Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA. All works will be carried out within the existing substation boundary containing hardstanding and electrical installations, an area containing no habitats that are suitable for foraging / loafing SCI species. At the distances detailed above, the SPAs lie beyond the impact zone for visual and noise disturbance, and there is no direct disturbance potential for SCIs within the designated site boundaries. Moreover, the minor nature of the works mean it is highly unlikely that disturbance of SCI birds occurring outside of the SPA but in the vicinity of the Development would occur. There are no other European sites nearby, or potentially connected to the Development via a source-pathway-receptor link.

¹⁰ NPWS (2022) Conservation objectives for Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA [004063]. First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives Version 1.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

¹¹ NPWS (2022) Conservation objectives for Wicklow Mountains SPA [004040]. First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives Version 1.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

¹² NPWS (2022) Conservation Objectives: Pollardstown Fen SAC 000396. Version

1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

¹³ Scottish Natural Heritage. (2016). Assessing Connectivity with Special Protection Areas (SPAs). 4pp.

Rathkeale 110kV Station

There are no waterbodies in or around the station. The closest European site to the station is Askeaton Fen Complex SAC (site code 002279)¹⁴ which is 2.1km away. The SAC is designated for QI habitats, thus there is no potential for impact to these habitats as there is no ecological pathway / hydrological link between the Development and the SAC.

The station is 6.7 km to River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA and 8.1km to Stack's to Mullaghareirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle SPA (site code 004161)¹⁵. All works will be carried out within the existing substation boundary containing hardstanding and electrical installations, an area containing no habitats that are suitable for foraging / loafing SCI species. At the distances detailed above, the SPAs lie beyond the impact zone for visual and noise disturbance, and there is no direct disturbance potential for SCIs within the designated site boundary. Moreover, the minor nature of the works mean it is highly unlikely that disturbance of SCI birds occurring outside of the SPA but in the vicinity of the Development would occur. There are no other European sites nearby, or potentially connected to the Development via a source-pathway-receptor link.

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, including the temporary nature of works, and has not taken account of mitigation measures intended to avoid or reduce significant effects on European sites.

Signed:



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¹⁴ NPWS (2018) Conservation Objectives: Askeaton Fen Complex SAC 002279.

Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

¹⁵ NPWS (2022) Conservation Objectives: Stack's to Mullaghareirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle SPA 004161. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.