



## **Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination CP1403 Kinnegad 110kV Station Works [Exempted Development] County Meath**

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, whether CP1403 Kinnegad 110kV Station Works [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 Development comprises the following elements:

- Replacement of three current transformers;
- Replacement of three voltage transformers;
- Replacement of three MERLIN GERIN/DR DA Disconnects;
- Replacement of three MERLIN GERIN/DR DL/DE Disconnects; and,
- Lead-in conductor and substation droppers.

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

The Development will occur entirely within the boundary of the existing Kinnegad 110kV Station. There will consequently be no loss of habitat, with all works taking place on constructed hard-standing.

The Development is located immediately adjacent to a cement works/quarry, and is surrounded to the north and east by this facility.

The closest European site to the Development is Mount Hevey Bog Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (site code 002342<sup>1</sup>), approximately 6.8km north-east. The Qualifying Interests (QI) of this site are bogs and peat habitats. There is no hydrological connection between the Development and Mount Hevey Bog SAC and therefore no possibility of waterborne pollution.

River Boyne and River Blackwater Special Protection Area (SPA) (site code 004232<sup>2</sup>) is located approximately 12.5km east-north-east of the Development ('as the crow flies'). The sole Special Conservation Interest (SCI) feature of this site is kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*. There is a watercourse approximately 20m west of the Development which appears to have a very weak hydrological connection to River Boyne and Blackwater SPA, approximately 18.5km following watercourses (this watercourse is in an area of bog and is very likely to be very slow flowing and potentially standing; it is unclear whether it eventually drains northwards or southwards (in which case it would not flow towards River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA)). Regardless, all works will take place on the existing hard-standing and any spills would be contained within the Development boundary and treated *in situ*. Likely significant effects from waterborne pollution are therefore excluded.

The watercourse closest to the Development is very unlikely to be suitable for kingfisher, being in an area of bog and therefore being unlikely to support a substantial resource of fish prey, or to have banksides suitable for nest building. Likely significant effects from

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<sup>1</sup> NPWS (2016). Conservation Objectives: Mount Hevey Bog SAC 002342. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

<sup>2</sup> NPWS (2024). Conservation Objectives: River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA 004232. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

disturbance/displacement of kingfisher are therefore excluded on the basis that it is very unlikely that SCI birds will occur in the vicinity of the Development.

According to the same published research<sup>3</sup>, the maximum distance to which non-breeding waterbird species for which SPAs are designated will typically travel to forage is 20km from the boundary of such a site. There are two SPAs designated for non-breeding SCI bird species located within 20km of the Development:

- Lough Ennell SPA (site code 004044<sup>4</sup>), approximately 15.0km west-north-west
- Lough Owel SPA (site code 004047<sup>5</sup>), approximately 20.2km north-west.

However, the habitat surrounding the Development is unsuitable for wintering waterbirds, comprising the highly disturbed cement works/quarry and areas of dense scrub. There is consequently no potential for SCI species to occur in the vicinity of the Development, and likely significant effects from disturbance/displacement are excluded.

There are no other European sites nearby, or potentially connected to the Development via a source-pathway-receptor link, that may result in likely significant effects in view of the applicable site Conservation Objectives.

The impacts of the Development itself are so small and will occur over a short period of time such that there is no possibility of the impacts of other projects or plans acting in-combination to give rise to likely significant effects on any European sites.

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

Signed:



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Susanne Dunne ACIEEM Senior Ecologist

24 September 2025

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<sup>3</sup> SNH (2016). Assessing Connectivity with Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Version 3 – June 2016. Available from: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2022-12/Assessing%20connectivity%20with%20special%20protection%20areas.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> NPWS (2024). Conservation Objectives: Lough Ennell SPA 004044. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

<sup>5</sup> NPWS (2025). Conservation Objectives: Lough Owel SPA 004047. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.