



Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

CP1422 Cashla 220kV Station Works and Prospect 220kV Station Works [Exempted Development] County Galway and County Clare

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 Cashla 220kV Station Works and Prospect 220kV 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:

- Works within Cashla 200kV Station:
 - Replacement of Busbar Disconnects.
 - Replacement of Line Disconnects.
- Works within Prospect 220kV Station:
 - Replacement of Busbar Disconnects.
 - Replacement of Line Disconnects.

All works are to be carried out entirely within the boundary of the existing substations. All works for the Development will be carried out above ground on existing structures. No vegetation clearance or intrusive works will be required for the Development.

Analysis of Pathways to European sites

Based on the works involved, the following possible impacts are considered potentially relevant to the Development:

Disturbance of qualifying species (e.g. due to visual, noise, vibration or artificial light). According to published research¹, the maximum distance to which non-breeding bird species for which Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are designated may theoretically travel to forage is 20km from the boundary of such a site (though in reality, most species foraging distances are significantly lower than this). Cutts *et al.* (2013)² provides species-specific information on the sensitivity of several bird species which are qualifying features of SPAs to disturbance impacts from construction works.

Consequently, the following European sites are considered to be within the potential zone of influence (Zol) of the Development at Cashla 200kv Station:

- Inner Galway Bay SPA (site code 004031³) is located c. 6.5km from the Development. Designated for the Special Conservation Interests (SCIs), black-throated diver *Gavia arctica*, great northern diver *Gavia immer*, cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*, grey heron *Ardea cinerea*, light-bellied brent goose *Branta bernicla hrota*, wigeon *Anas penelope*, teal *Anas crecca*, red-breasted merganser *Mergus serrator*, ringed plover *Charadrius hiaticula*, golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria*, lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, dunlin *Calidris alpina*, bar-tailed godwit *Limosa lapponica*, curlew *Numenius arquata*, redshank *Tringa totanus*,

¹ Scottish Natural Heritage (2016). Assessing Connectivity with Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Version 3 - June 2016 (online). Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/doc/assessing-connectivity-special-protection-areas> (Accessed 19 May 2026).

² Cutts, N., Hemingway, K and Spencer, J. (2013). Waterbird Disturbance Mitigation Toolkit: Informing Estuarine Planning & Construction Projects. Produced by the Institute of Estuarine & Coastal Studies (IECS) University of Hull. (online). Available at: https://www.tide-toolbox.eu/tidetools/waterbird_disturbance_mitigation_toolkit (Accessed 27 May 2026).

³ NPWS (2013). Conservation Objectives: Inner Galway Bay SPA 004031. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

turnstone *Arenaria interpres*, black-headed gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*, common gull *Larus canus*, Sandwich tern *Sterna sandvicensis* and common tern *Sterna hirundo*, and for wetlands habitat. There is no hydrological connection between the SPA and the Development.

- Cregganna Marsh SPA (site code 004142⁴) is located c. 7km from the Development and is only designated for wintering Greenland white-fronted goose *Anser albifrons flavirostris*. There is no hydrological connection between the SPA and the Development.
- Rahasane Turlough SPA (site code 004089⁵) is located c. 9.8km from the Development. It is designated for the Special Conservation Interests of whooper swan *Cygnus cygnus*, wigeon *Anas penelope*, golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria*, black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa* and Greenland white-fronted goose, and for wetlands habitat. There is no hydrological connection between the SPA and the Development.
- Lough Corrib SPA (site code 004042⁶) is located c. 11.7km from the Development. It is designated for the Special Conservation Interests of gadwall *Anas strepera*, shoveler *Anas clypeata*, pochard *Aythya ferina*, tufted duck *Aythya fuligula*, common scoter *Melanitta nigra*, hen harrier *Circus cyaneus*, coot *Fulica atra*, golden plover, black-headed gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*, common gull *Larus canus*, common tern *Sterna hirundo*, Arctic tern *Sterna paradisaea* and Greenland white-fronted goose, and for wetlands habitat. There is no hydrological connection between the SPA and the Development.

The following European sites are considered to be within the potential zone of influence (Zol) of the Development at Prospect 220kV Station:

- River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA (site code 004077⁷), located c. 0.7km from the Development. Designated for cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*, whooper swan *Cygnus cygnus*, light-bellied brent goose *Branta bernicla hrota*, shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*, wigeon *Anas penelope*, teal *Anas crecca*, pintail *Anas acuta*, shoveler *Anas clypeata*, scaup *Aythya marila*, ringed plover *Charadrius hiaticula*, golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria*, grey plover *Pluvialis squatarola*, lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, knot *Calidris canutus*, dunlin *Calidris alpina*, black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa*, bar-tailed godwit *Limosa lapponica*, curlew *Numenius arquata*, redshank *Tringa totanus*, greenshank *Tringa nebularia* and black-headed gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*, and for wetlands habitat. There is no hydrological connection between the SPA and the Development.

There is no hydrological connectivity between the Cashla and Prospect Substations and any European site. The Developments are not located within, nor hydrologically connected to, a known freshwater pearl mussel *Margaritifera margaritifera* catchment. There is therefore no potential for likely significant effects on freshwater pearl mussel associated with any European site.

All works associated with the Development will take place within the existing station boundaries at Cashla and Prospect 220kV Substations, which both comprise hardstanding and electrical infrastructure and do not provide suitable habitat for foraging SCI species of any SPA. The works are limited in scale and duration, and will occur entirely within established development

SCI may occur outside their European site boundaries, and disturbance may occur at a distance up to 500m² from construction works although the extent of disturbance is species-specific and depends on factors such as the sensitivity of the species, the nature of the disturbance source, existing screening and local habitat conditions.

At Prospect Station, the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA is located c. 0.7km from the Development and includes light-bellied brent goose as an SCI species. While this species may forage over distances of up to approximately 15km¹ and therefore could potentially be subject to visual or noise disturbance if using lands surrounding the Development, suitable foraging habitat is absent within the station boundary. The agricultural fields surrounding the

4 NPWS (2023). Conservation Objectives: Cregganna Marsh SPA 004142. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

5 NPWS (2023) Conservation Objectives: Rahasane Turlough SPA 004089. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

6 NPWS (2023) Conservation Objectives: Lough Corrib SPA 004042. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

7 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.

Development are generally enclosed by mature hedgerows and field boundaries and are therefore unlikely to support regular use by SCI goose species, which typically favour open habitats. In addition, there is an extensive availability of suitable coastal, estuarine and agricultural habitat within the wider area associated with the SPA. The remaining SCI species associated with the SPA are predominantly intertidal and wetland-dependent waterbirds, which rely on coastal and estuarine habitats that are absent from the Development and its immediate surroundings; consequently, there is no potential for their occurrence in the vicinity of the works and no pathway for disturbance effects.

The SPAs associated with Cashla Station (Inner Galway Bay SPA, Cregganna Marsh SPA, Rahasane Turlough SPA and Lough Corrib SPA) are located approximately 6.5km to 11.7km from the Development. While certain SCI species associated with these SPAs may use areas outside the SPA boundaries, including Greenland white-fronted goose, which typically has a core foraging range of approximately 5-8km¹, and light-bellied brent goose, which may utilise areas outside site boundaries, however the intervening separation distances and the absence of suitable foraging habitat within the Development footprint mean that there is no functional connectivity between the Development and European sites within the potential Zol. The agricultural lands surrounding the Development are generally enclosed by mature hedgerows and field boundaries and are unlikely to support regular use by SCI goose species, which favour open, unobstructed habitats. Furthermore, the remaining SCI species associated with these SPAs are predominantly wetland, coastal or open water-dependent species, for which suitable habitat is absent within and immediately surrounding the Development. Therefore, there is no potential for these species to occur in the vicinity of the works and no pathway for disturbance effects arises.

Therefore, considering the nature, scale and location of the Development, the absence of suitable habitat, and the distances involved relative to known foraging ranges of SCI species, there are no viable pathways for disturbance effects that could result in significant impacts. While minor and temporary disturbance cannot be entirely excluded in relation to mobile species such as light-bellied brent goose, any such effects would be negligible in magnitude and duration. It is concluded that there is no potential for likely significant effects (LSE) on any European site arising from noise, visual disturbance or other construction-related activities.

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 relevant European site's Conservation Objectives. Due to the nature of the Development, there is no potential for in-combination effects.

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:



Susanne Dunne ACIEEM Senior Ecologist

18 June 2026