



Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

CP1512 Cathleen's Fall 110kV Station Works [Exempted Development] County Donegal

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 CP1512 Cathleen's Fall 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 will take place entirely within the existing station boundary and comprises the following:

- Decommissioning of the existing 110kV/38kV transformer T141 and associated 110kV and 38kV bays (H11 and L3 respectively);
- Equipping spare bay H6 as a 110kV transformer bay; and,
- Installation of a 110/38 kV, 63 MVA transformer and a dedicated ASC.

Analysis of Pathways to European sites

The nearest European site to the Development is Donegal Bay Special Protection Area (SPA) [004151]¹, located approximately 1.2km to the west. The SPA includes light-bellied Brent goose *Branta bernicla hrota* as a Special Conservation Interest (SCI) species. According to published guidance², the core foraging range of light-bellied brent geese is 15km and therefore there is potential for visual and noise disturbance of this species if it were to forage in land surrounding the Development. However, there is an extensive resource of suitable agricultural fields in the surrounding area and this, combined with the relatively minor nature of the works, means that any noise disturbance will not significantly affect SCI light-bellied Brent goose.

Donegal Bay SPA is also designated for its assemblage of wetland habitats and waterbirds. However, there is an extensive resource of suitable wetland habitat in the surrounding area (including the Erne Estuary and Assaroe Lake). If disturbance of birds around the Development were to occur, the SCI species could readily make use of the extensive alternative suitable habitat available in the wider area. Moreover, and as stated, the works associated with the Development are relatively minor in nature, and any disturbance impact would occur over a short distance. Likely significant effects from disturbance of SCI species of Donegal Bay SPA using functionally-linked habitat are therefore excluded.

There are no waterbodies located within the station boundary, therefore likely significant effects from waterborne pollution are therefore excluded.

The minor and temporary nature of the Development is unlikely to be associated with significant disturbance impacts to any Qualifying Interest (QI) species of any Special Area of Conservation (SAC). For example, even if works were undertaken close to watercourses within the home ranges of QI otter, such activities would be very short-term. Works for the Development will also not involve any piling activities (works with greatest at-source sound pressure levels). Therefore, likely significant effects are excluded.

¹ NPWS (2025). Conservation Objectives: Donegal Bay SPA 004151. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

² SNH (2016). Assessing Connectivity with Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Version 3 – June 2016. Available from: <https://www.nature.scot/doc/assessing-connectivity-special-protection-areas>.

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.

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

04 June 2025