



Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination CP1520 Great Island-Waterford 110kV Circuit (no. 1) Dynamic Line Rating [Exempted Development] Counties Wexford, Kilkenny and Waterford

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 CP1520 Great Island-Waterford 110kV Circuit (no. 1) Dynamic Line Rating (DLR) [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 involves the installation of DLR measurement devices on the Great Island-Waterford 110kV Overhead Line (OHL). DLR will be avoided between polesets 50 and 51 as the OHL between these polesets oversails River Barrow and River Nore Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

All works for the Development will be carried out above ground on existing structures. The Development will require no vegetation clearance or intrusive works.

Analysis of Pathways to European sites

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

- Disturbance of qualifying species (e.g. visual, noise, vibration or artificial light). According to published research¹, the maximum distance to which non-breeding bird species for which 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.
- Waterborne pollution of qualifying, supporting or functionally linked habitat(s), or of qualifying or supporting species using such habitats.

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

- River Barrow and River Nore SAC (site code 002162³). Oversailed by existing OHL between polesets 50 and 51. Designated for a range of Annex I habitats, and the Annex II species Desmoulin's whorl snail *Vertigo moulinsiana*, white-clawed crayfish *Margaritifera margaritifera*, freshwater pearl mussel *Margaritifera margaritifera*, otter *Lutra lutra*, salmon *Salmo salar*, brook lamprey *Lampetra planeri*, river lamprey *Lampetra fluviatilis*, sea lamprey *Petromyzon marinus*, twaite shad *Alosa fallax fallax*, and Killarney fern *Vandenboschia speciosa*.

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 January 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 January 2026).

³ NPWS (2025). Conservation Objectives: River Barrow and River Nore SAC 002162. Version 2. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

- Lower River Suir SAC (site code 002137⁴). Located approximately 0.47km from Development at closest (at poleset 65). Designated for a range of Annex I habitats and the Annex II species freshwater pearl mussel, white-clawed crayfish, sea lamprey, brook lamprey, river lamprey, twaite shad, salmon and otter.
- Tramore Back Strand SPA (site code 004027⁵). Located approximately 10.8km south of the Development. Designated for a number of wintering and wetland birds, including the long-ranging species light-bellied brent goose *Branta bernicla hrota*, and wetlands.
- Bannow Bay SPA (site code 004033⁶). Located approximately 11.9 km south-east of the Development. Designated for a number of wintering and wetland birds, including the long-ranging species light-bellied brent goose, and wetlands.

The Development partially extends through a catchment (Suir) with previous records of freshwater pearl mussel, but with current status unknown, but this catchment does not have SAC populations. No DLR devices will be installed between polesets 50 and 51 which are adjacent to the River Barrow and River Nore SAC. The Development oversails numerous watercourses, of which Luffaney_010 and Blackwater (Kilmacow)_050⁷ are hydrologically linked to the SAC at distances of more than 4km and 10km downstream respectively. Due to the nature and scale of the Development, which will only comprise the installation of small DLR measurement devices on the OHL, its potential for negative water quality impact pathway is negligible. Therefore, there is no pathway for any likely significant effects to River Barrow and River Nore SAC regarding water quality. Due to the minor scale of the Development and temporary nature of the works, there will be no likely significant effects associated with noise and visual disturbance of QI species of River Barrow and River Nore SAC using functionally linked watercourses along the OHL.

For the same reasons as outlined above in respect of River Barrow and River Nore SAC, there is no likelihood of significant effects to Lower River Suir SAC regarding water quality and disturbance of QI species using functionally linked watercourses.

Light-bellied brent goose have a core foraging range of 15km⁸. Special Conservation Interest (SCI) birds associated with Tramore Back Strand SPA may therefore occur outside their European site boundary in proximity to the Development. Disturbance to SCI species may occur at distances up to 500m². However, due to the minor scale of the Development, which will not involve any significant noise-generating activities, and temporary nature of the works, there will be no likely significant effects associated with noise and visual disturbance of SCI species of Tramore Back Strand SPA. For the same reasons, there is no likelihood of significant effects to Bannow Bay SPA regarding noise and visual disturbance of SCI species.

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.

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.

⁴ NPWS (2017). Conservation Objectives: Lower River Suir SAC 002137. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

⁵ NPWS (2013). Conservation Objectives: Tramore Back Strand SPA 004027. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

⁶ NPWS (2012). Conservation Objectives: Bannow Bay SPA 004033. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

⁷ Environment Protection Agency (EPA) maps website [Online] Available at <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/> (Accessed 20 January 2026).

⁸ Light-bellied brent goose is not specifically included as a selected species in the NatureScot guidance. However, research on brent geese is used as a proxy for barnacle geese *Branta leucopsis*, thus the buffer zone for the latter species (core range 15km) is taken to be appropriate for light-bellied brent geese.

Signed:



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