Luxembourg, 21 June 2022

Public

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	CERTH AND FORTH GREECE R&D INFRASTRUCTURE
Project Number:	2021-0527
Country:	GREECE
Project Description:	The project supports the improvement and expansion of research and development (R&D) infrastructure at the Centre for Research & Technology Hellas (CERTH) and the Foundation for Research and Technology Hellas (FORTH), two of the most prominent Greek research centres. It will co-finance the construction of multiple new research buildings and the renovation of existing ones, as well as the purchase of R&D and information and communications technology (ICT) equipment.
EIA required:	to be determined
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise[1]:	no

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

The project comprises the construction of multiple new buildings and renovation of existing facilities to be implemented by end of 2026 from the two Research Centres. The developments are located in six Regions of Greece, namely Central Makedonia, Western Makedonia, Epirus, Thessaly, Western Greece and Crete. The buildings will house research, development and innovation activities over a range of scientific and technological fields.

Research and development facilities are not covered by the EIA Directive 2014/52/EU amending Directive 2011/92/EU, though the project is covered by Annex II of the Directive in relation to urban development.

The components included in this operation widely vary in size and their environmental permitting status. The EIA procedures do not apply for the majority of the components since the plot and building areas as well as the number of parking spaces are below the screening thresholds defined by the local Law 2471B/10-8-2016 as subsequently amended. Certain components will be developed within approved development plans with valid environmental permitting approvals that will be updated to indicate the proposed facilities, where required. Several CERTH components will be located in a new technological park development (Thess INTEC), for which a Strategic Environmental Assessment is currently under approval. Both Beneficiaries will comply with the impact mitigation measures specified in the respective existing and future environmental approvals.

[1] Only projects that meet the scope of the Carbon Footprint Exercise, as defined in the EIB Carbon Footprint Methodologies, are included, provided estimated emissions exceed the methodology thresholds: 20,000 tonnes CO2e/year absolute (gross) or 20,000 tonnes CO2e/year relative (net) – both increases and savings.

Furthermore, two components located in Chania and Larissa are expected to be subject to Standard Environmental Commitments under the responsibility of the regional authority's Environmental Agency defined by the local Law 4014/2011 as subsequently amended.

Two FORTH components are located in Natura 2000 sites. The first component is located within the existing university campus of Ioannina, Epirus, it has building area that is below the screening thresholds as defined by the local law and has received a no-objection opinion by the Pamvotis Lake Management Body. The second component is located by the existing observatory of Skinakas, Crete and has a building permit for a small scale facility.

The Beneficiaries shall be required to send to the EIB a full copy of the SEA, EIA or other environmental assessments and the competent authorities' approvals for each location or the screening decisions, where applicable, as well as the Oros Idi Management Body assessment regarding the impact of the proposed Skinakas facility in the Natura 2000 site.

The new buildings will be designed to be nearly zero energy buildings (NZEB) and in certain cases aim to supersede the current Greek building design codes achieving better energy performance levels. Passive design measures and active energy production measures through the installation of renewable energy apparatus are expected to reduce the buildings' primary energy consumption leading to an estimated annual net savings of 1173 tons of CO_2 during operation. The emissions savings calculations are based on the expected annual primary energy savings of the new constructions compared to the NZEB baseline and the renovated buildings compared to the existing facilities. A copy of the energy audit of the existing facilities, the energy studies as well as the energy performance certificates (EPC), on construction completion, will be requested by the EIB.

The Regional Adaptation Plans identify physical climate change risks and potential impacts on the buildings. The Beneficiaries shall be required to demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Bank, that measures will be included in the design to address the current and future physical climate change risks of extreme heatwaves, intense rainfall events/flooding or other risks identified in the above mentioned plans.

Under these conditions, the project is assessed as Paris Agreement aligned and meets the criteria set out in the Climate Bank Roadmap 2021-2025 (EIB CBR - Annex 2 Table D).

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

The project is located in less developed regions as defined by the EU cohesion policy and will provide additional facilities to strengthen and enhance the research, development and innovation capacity. The project concerns investments in the accessibility and quality of research infrastructure located outside Greece's main economic, population and educational hub of Attica, thereby contributing to better-balanced territorial development, counteracting excessive concentration, strengthening secondary growth poles and reducing inequalities between people and between places. The outcomes from the research of the two Research Centres and participation of their various scientific institutes in wider research groups may provide significant improvements to a variety of scientific and technological fields in Greece, Europe and beyond through their cooperation networks improving the body of scientific knowledge and application in technological developments. Therefore, it is expected to support the strengthening of the EU's economic, social and territorial cohesion.

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Conclusions and Recommendations

The project is enabling the two Greek Research Centres to create additional state-of-the-art research, development and innovation facilities and expand their field of research. It is expected that the project will increase the quality of the building estate as well as improve their climate resilience and energy performance.

The capacity of the Beneficiaries to manage the environmental and social issues and their awareness concerning the protection of natural areas are deemed satisfactory. In case an EIA or other environmental related study is requested by the Competent Authority, the Beneficiaries shall make the relevant documentation available to the EIB.

Related to Climate Action, a copy of the energy audit of the existing facilities, the energy studies as well as the energy performance certificates (EPC), on construction completion, will be requested by the EIB. In addition, the Beneficiaries shall be required to demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Bank, that measures will be included in the design to address the current and future physical climate change risks identified in the regional adaptation plans.

No unusual environmental impacts have been identified. However, construction impacts of noise, dust and disruption will be managed during the implementation period by the contractors employed for the construction activities.

Given the nature of the operation, the Beneficiaries' capacity as well as the conditions mentioned above, the project is acceptable for EIB financing in environmental, climate and social terms.