



Luxembourg, 17 November 2022

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	<i>Canal Seine Nord</i>
Project Number:	<i>20200759</i>
Country:	<i>France</i>
Project Description:	<i>The project consists of the construction of a new 107 km long class Vb inland waterway connection between Compiègne and Aubencheul-au-Bac. The project is the central link in the larger Seine-Scheldt cross-border project connecting the TEN-T core waterways in the Seine and Scheldt basins and several core and comprehensive inland ports in the region.</i>

EIA required: yes

Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise¹: yes

(details for projects included are provided in section: “EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise”)

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

The Promoter is SCSNE (*Societe Canal Seine Nord Europe*), a public entity set up specifically for the development and implementation of the project. It shares resources and experience with VNF (*Voies Navigables de France*), which is the public institution responsible for the operation and management of the existing inland waterways network. VNF has also developed similar projects in the inland waterways sector.

The Canal Seine Nord Europe was listed as a project of overriding public interest in the 2022 - 2027 SDAGE (*Schéma Directeur d'Aménagement et Gestion des Eaux – River Basin Management Plan*) Seine - Normandy, which included an Environmental Report and was subject to an SEA procedure. The competent authority issued an “Avis délibéré” on this document the 20th January 2021.

The project falls into Annex I of the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU. The project will be implemented in different phases: Sector 1 (Compiègne to Passel) and Sector 2 to 4 (Passel to Aubencheul-au-Bac). An EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) Report was drafted for Sector 1 and a separate EIA Report is expected to be completed for the remaining Sectors (2 to 4):

- The responsible authority for granting the final permit to the Sector 1 project is the *Préfecture de L'Oise*. For Sector 1, the EIA Report, was subject to public consultation,

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.



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which was concluded with an “*Avis favorable*” (a favourable opinion) awarded on 16 December 2020. Subsequently, an “*Arrêté Préfectoral*” (Prefectural Decree) was issued by the *Préfecture de L’Oise*, on 8 April 2021, authorizing the project;

- For the remaining sectors (2 to 4), the EIA procedure is currently ongoing. According to the Promoter, the final environmental permit (*Arrêté Préfectoral*), to be issued after the required public consultation, is expected by March 2024.

The main impacts identified in the EIA report for Sector 1 include impacts on the water ecosystems, impacts from the earthworks and from the clearance and disturbance of forest and other related land ecosystems, and noise, vibrations, air quality and lighting impacts, both during the construction works and after its completion. Therefore, the EIA Report defines (and the related environmental permit subsequently includes) several mitigation measures, including prescriptions to be undertaken before, during and after the completion of the construction works. These include measures on the planning of the works, several measures to protect the water habitats and bodies, measures to reduce nuisance from noise, vibrations, air quality and lighting during construction, characterisation and adequate management of the earth spoils, monitoring systems and restoration of habitats after construction works, amongst others.

Due to, a) the impacts on Natura 2000 sites, b) on protected species and, c) impacts on the water bodies, a number of mitigation measures and compensation works have been identified and included in the project. These include the restoration of the following habitats and areas: approximately 300 ha of wetlands, 300 ha of new or renewed forestry and 100ha of other ecosystems.

The EIA Report for Sector 1 includes a chapter in which the cumulative impacts with other known projects are evaluated already for the entire project (including sectors 2 to 4). Additionally, the “*Arrêté Préfectoral*” acknowledges that the project includes other sectors besides Sector 1.

In line with the French environmental law (*Code de l’Environnement*), the EIA Report for Sector 1 includes a single evaluation of the impacts and approval of the project, including its incidence under and compliance with the EIA Directive, the Habitats Directive and the Water Framework Directive.

Some Natura 2000 sites are intersected or are located in the immediate vicinity of the project (sectors 1 to 4). These include the following: “*Forêts Picardes: Compiègne, Laigue, Ourscamps*”; “*Moyenne vallée de l’Oise*”; “*Etangs et marais de la Somme*”; “*Massif forestier de Compiègne*”; “*Prairies alluviales de l’Oise de la Fère a Sempigny*”; “*Moyenne vallée de la Somme*”.

An appropriate assessment was undertaken within the scope of the EIA of Sector 1 and project impacts in some of these areas and on protected species were identified. The areas affected by Sector 1 are: ZPS (Zone de protection Spéciale) “*Moyenne vallée de l’Oise*”; ZSC (Zone Spéciale de Conservation) “*Prairies alluviales de l’Oise de la Fère a Sempigny*”; ZPS “*Forêts Picardes: Compiègne, Laigue, Ourscamps*” et; ZSC “*Massif forestier de Compiègne*”. Some identified impacts might permanently affect the habitats of protected species. Therefore mitigation and compensation measures and actions have been defined including the adaptation of the planning of the deforestation works taking into account sensitive periods for the species, development of new lagoon banks and other hydraulic annexes and development of artificial burrowing systems to foster nesting, amongst others. As per the EIA Report, the implementation of these measures will avoid that the conservation status of these species is jeopardized at the scale of the related sites. The appropriate assessment also concluded that



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the conservation objectives of these areas would not be affected by the operation of the Canal Seine Nord Europe.

Regarding the impacts in Natura 2000 areas during construction, compensatory measures have been defined and will be implemented before and during construction works. These measures include the restoration and rehabilitation of some areas included in the protected sites and favourable to the protected species, including wetlands, prairies and forests. Consequently, as per art 6.4 of the Habitats Directive, the French National Authorities have informed the EC of these measures and context in August 2021.

For the impacts to protected species outside the Natura 2000 sites, a derogation from the strict protection regime, in line with art. 16 of the Habitats Directive, has been issued by the competent authority. Within this derogation, compensation measures were defined and are expected to be implemented before, during and after the construction phase. This derogation could only be obtained due to assessed compliance with three conditions: a) there is no other possible technical solution; b) there is a justified public interest of social and economic nature and c) the project does not harm the maintenance of the populations of the protected species. These conditions have been evaluated and justified in the EIA Report.

The EIA Report also included a section which evaluated the alignment of the project with the Water Framework Directive, as transposed to French Law. The project is considered to be compatible with the SDAGE of the Seine-Normandie, Oise-Arondé and Artois – Picardie basins.

The first two sectors are located in the Seine Normandy River Basin. The rest of the project is located in the Artois Picardie River Basin. The first sector of the project can be considered as modification of an existing water course whereas the remaining sectors are new artificial water bodies. In the River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) of the Seine-Normandie the water bodies impacted by the construction and operation of the CSNE are identified. Some of the water bodies have already been identified as heavily modified water bodies for which a Good Ecological Potential is the set as Objective. As a result of the above the Directive qualitative objectives will not be achieved for all water bodies. The CSNE project was identified as a project of major general interest already from the first management cycle 2010-2015, namely as a project likely to require a derogation from the objectives of the WFD as provided by its article 4.7. In the 2022-2027 RBMP for the Seine – Normandy, the CSNE was recognized as a project meeting complementary multifunctional objectives that meets the conditions of article 4.7 of the Water Framework Directive:

- it is considered a project of overriding public interest;
- practicable steps were taken to avoid and mitigate the adverse impacts on its qualitative objectives;
- the beneficial objectives served by the modifications or alterations of the water body cannot be achieved by other means: any significantly better environmental options would not be technical feasible or come at disproportionate cost.

Due to the nature of the infrastructure (inland waterway), the highest climate risks identified are related with the water level in the canal: flooding and draught events and rainfall levels. In order to guarantee safe manoeuvring, minimum water levels and avoid flooding events, the infrastructure will need to be prepared to mitigate these risks.

According to the Promoter and the project design documents, risk assessments and statistical considerations on the water level have been incorporated in the final project design as required to guarantee an adequate level for navigation and mitigate flooding risks.



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The following measures have been included in the project to adequately manage the water level and climate risks in the canal:

- Reinforcement of the waterproofing component of the canal structure to reduce water losses;
- Implementation of a system of water saving chambers at the locks to reduce water use and loss in the locks operations;
- Construction of a water reservoir basin to facilitate the management of the water levels (adequate for a 60 year return period);
- Design of certain hydraulic structures of the project under the French dam regulations (“*Sécurité des Ouvrages Hydrauliques*”), including prescriptions for monitoring and operation;
- Increase of the hydraulic sections of the new *Pont-canal de la Somme* in comparison with the existing structure which allowed the crossing of Somme by the old North Canal;
- Significant safety margins were incorporated when it comes to calculated losses from Potential Evaporation;
- For exceptional droughts, water savings can also be achieved through navigation restrictions;
- The chosen hydrological scenario incorporates all of the existing constraints set by the 2015 drought framework decree for the Seine Normandy basin and by the prefectural decree of August 27, 2018 .

The investments are related to inland waterway infrastructure, which are identified as Paris Aligned investments in the EIB Climate Bank Roadmap. The infrastructure has been assessed in accordance with the appropriate climate proofing practice that includes carbon footprinting and a clearly defined shadow cost of carbon. Therefore, the project is considered to be aligned with the Climate Bank Roadmap.

EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise

Carbon footprint calculations have been executed in line with the published document “Methodologies for the Assessment of Project GHG Emissions and Emission Variations, version 11.2, February 2022”. This results in the following estimated average annual emissions related to the project:

- Absolute emissions are estimated at 26.2 ktonnes of CO₂ equivalent per year;
- Relative emissions are estimated at -83 ktonnes of CO₂ equivalent per year;

For the absolute emissions, the project boundaries are the scope 1 & 2 GHG emissions activities of the operation of the project (2.1 ktonnes) and the scope 3 GHG emissions from inland waterway vessels using the canal (24.1 ktonnes).

The relative emissions project boundaries are the scope 3 GHG emission changes on transport routes impacted by the project in France. These include avoided road traffic emissions and inland waterway vessel emission changes on the canal and connecting waterways as a result of the scale increase allowed by the project. Emissions are estimated as an annual average for a representative modelled future year, in this case 2035. The baseline for the forecast traffic and related emissions in the absence of the project, reflect the assumptions of the Bank’s Services on traffic levels, distances covered, infrastructure capacity and fuel efficiency of the fleet.

For the annual accounting purposes of the EIB Carbon Footprint, the project emissions will be prorated according to the EIB lending amount signed in that year, as a proportion of project cost.



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Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

The full EIA Report for Sector 1 was subject to the required public consultation (*Enquête public*) as prescribed in French environmental law. This consultation was undertaken between 5th October and 12th November 2020 and all the relevant documents were made available to the public both electronically and physically. The “*Commission d’Enquête*”, nominated by the competent authorities has issued a positive opinion (“*Avis Favourable*”) on the EIA Report and on the outcome of the public consultation by 14th December 2020.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In this context, the following conditions and undertakings have been defined and shall be applied:

Disbursement conditions:

- Prior to the first disbursement, the Promoter shall provide the final list of compensatory actions and measures for Section 1, as established by the competent authority under the procedures of art 6.4 of Habitats Directive;
- Prior to any disbursement related with Sections 2 to 4 (for which the EIA procedure has not yet been completed), the Promoter must submit to the Bank’s satisfaction the complete EIA Report, including all annexes, as well as the related environmental decision issued by the environmental competent authority;
- Prior to any disbursement related to Sections 2 to 4, the Promoter shall provide the final list of compensatory actions and measures for Section 1, as established by the competent authority under the procedures of art 6.4 of Habitats Directive;
- Prior to any disbursement related with Sections 2 to 4 the project promoter must provide a confirmation from the competent authority that, for the water bodies identified as not achieving the set qualitative objectives as a result of the project, the requirements of articles 4.7, 4.8 and 4.9 of the WFD are fulfilled;

Undertakings:

- The Promoter shall report to the Bank about any changes to the conclusions of the Appropriate Assessment, in view of the site specific conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 sites affected by the project, as defined by the competent authority;
- The Promoter shall report on the planning and implementation progress of all the actions and compensation measures (defined as a result of the implementation of articles 6.4 and 16 of the Habitats Directive) on a yearly basis and at completion of the project;
- The Promoter shall ensure that adequate environmental management plans, defined according to the related environmental documents, consultations and approvals, are implemented and monitored during the construction of the projects. The Promoter will immediately notify the Bank of any related unexpected accident or incident during the construction of the project.

Subject to compliance with the above conditions, the project is considered acceptable for EIB financing. Overall residual impacts are considered to be manageable and acceptable.