

Luxembourg, 7<sup>th</sup> September 2022

## Environmental and Social Data Sheet

### Overview

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|----------------------|--|
| Project Name:        | BUNIEL WIND FARM   |
| Project Number:      | 2021-0147  |
| Country:             | Spain  |
| Project Description: | Financing of the Buniel Wind farm (100 MW), located in the Spanish province of Burgos (Castile-León) |

EIA required: yes

Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise<sup>1</sup>: yes

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

### Environmental and Social Assessment

#### Environmental Assessment

The project concerns the development, construction and operation of a ca. 100 MW wind farm and the associated infrastructure, such as transmission lines, access roads, substation, grid connection and other ancillary facilities. It is located in the Spanish province of Burgos (Castile-León), part of EIB’s Cohesion Priority Regions, in the municipalities of Albillos, Arcos de La Llana, Buniel, Cavia, Cayuela, Estépar, San Mamés de Burgos, Villalbilla de Burgos and Villagonzalo Pedernales.

The project will use in total 20 Wind Turbine Generators (WTG) of 5 MW of capacity. The WTG will connect to a new 30/132kV substation (“ST PE Buniel”) through 30 kV underground lines. The electricity will be evacuated through a new underground transmission line of ca. 1.6 km in 132 kV, which will connect to a new 132 kV overhead transmission line of ca. 13 km connecting “La Muela” and “La Torca 132/400kV”, substations shared with other promoters. A new 400 kV transmission line of ca. 0.18 km will evacuate the electricity from “La Torca” Substation to “ST Buniel” Substation, owned by Red Eléctrica de España (REE), the Transmission System operator (TSO).

The wind farm and other grid interconnection infrastructure including the 400 kV line are included in the Annex II of the EIA Directive (2014/52/EU amending 2011/92/EU) and have been screened in by the Competent Authority (CA), requiring an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), including public consultation. The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was submitted for public consultation in March 2020 and, as a result, was updated to address some comments raised. These modifications included minor changes in the layout of the wind farm and a reduction in the number of WTG from 26 to 23 to minimise negative impacts on the

<sup>1</sup> 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 CO<sub>2</sub>e/year absolute (gross) or 20,000 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e/year relative (net) – both increases and savings.



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habitat of the Red Kite<sup>2</sup>. The CA finally requested two additional modifications to the project, which are already considered in its aforementioned description. One relates to the removal of three additional WTG located at less than 1 km from the towns of Buniel and Albillos to reduce impacts on landscape, population and fauna<sup>3</sup> decreasing the number of turbines to 20. The other relates to the burying of ca. 1.6 km of the new transmission line mentioned above. The EIA report included a cumulative impacts assessment taking into account the neighbouring planned infrastructures. The CA requested additional information on the cumulative impact assessment. The promoter stated that the cumulative impact of all wind farms in the area will have a moderate impact on avifauna and bats and the CA requested additional mitigation measures described below. The plants and associated infrastructure obtained their environmental permits (“Declaración de Impacto Ambiental” - DIA) in May 2022. The project will start construction in July 2022 and is expected to be operational by Q2 2023.

The closest Natura 2000 site to the project is SAC ES4120072 “Riberas del Río Arlanzón y afluentes”, located at 1 km from the 132 kV transmission line and at 1.5 km from the closest WTG. The Spanish EIA process incorporates the Habitats Directive requirement for an appropriate assessment (AA). Hence, for projects subject to an EIA, CAs can only issue the environmental permit once the step-by-step procedure for assessing projects that are likely to have impact on Natura 2000 sites has been satisfactorily performed (including screening and AA). The CA confirmed in the environmental permits the absence of significant impact on Natura 2000 sites produced either by the project alone or as a result of a cumulative impact with other projects.

The sensitive species observed in the area of the project are Cinereous Vulture (*Aegypius monachus* – Near Threatened as per the IUCN Red List), Merlin (*Falco columbarius* - Vulnerable), Spanish Imperial Eagle (*Aquila adalberti* - Vulnerable), Giant Noctule (*Nyctalus lasiopterus* - Vulnerable). Other sensitive species at national level are present in the area, which is considered rich in species at the level of the province.

The project is expected to generate limited impacts during both construction and operation phases, in particular, on the avifauna and bats, landscape, population, habitats, soil, runoff characteristics of the drainage basin, atmosphere and cultural heritage. During the construction phase, main impacts are associated with the presence of machinery, vehicles, construction workers, and the erection of the wind farm and associated infrastructure. The impacts relate to dust and noise generation due to construction related activities, increased wildfire risk, as well as increased traffic in the surrounding areas, soil erosion due to the loss of vegetal cover, visual impacts due to the construction operations and loss or fragmentation of habitats. During the operation phase, the main impacts are related to loss and fragmentation of habitats, barrier effect, visual impacts and collision risk.

The mitigation measures can be summarised as follows:

- Prevention and mitigation measures during construction, in particular for dust and noise emissions, protection of soil and groundwater and conservation of protected vegetation and in particular habitat 6220 “pseudo-steppe with grasses and annuals” ;
- In relation to the risk of collision with the transmission lines, the mitigation measures are based on the Royal Decree 1432/2008<sup>4</sup>;
- In relation to the risk of collision with the wind farm the mitigation measures are:

<sup>2</sup> *Milvus milvus*, Least Concern (IUCN Red List)

<sup>3</sup> The Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge (MITECO) recommends as a minimum, a 1 km distance between a WTG and urban settlements

<sup>4</sup> These include i.a. ensuring that the design of pylons and insulating elements minimize the electrocution risk, and that the lines include elements to enhance the visibility of conductors to reduce collision risk.



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- specific rules to be applied and are included in the environmental permits, including under which circumstances a wind turbine shall be shut down (“protocolo de parada”);
  - Shut down of turbines during the first hours at dusk from July to October to protect bats in case of significant mortality rates;
  - Installing of avifauna and bat sound deterrence technologies;
  - Habitat enhancement for avifauna, specifically for the Red Kite and scavenger birds.
- Habitat conditioning (e.g. nesting aids) of certain bird and bat species;
  - Implementation of fauna monitoring programmes;
  - Reuse of soil layers for restoration activities;
  - Implementation of restoration and revegetation plans; and
  - Landscape integration plans.

In addition, the competent authority requested additional mitigation measures in the environmental permits:

- A revegetation and landscape integration plan shall be submitted to the CA;
- The project shall include a fire safety plan;
- A calendar limiting activities shall be established to reduce impacts on protected species;
- In case of mortalities of protected avifauna and bats are detected specific measures shall be applied (“Protocolo de actuación con aerogeneradores conflictivos”);
- In relation to the risk of collision with the WTGs, and due to the cumulative impact of existing and planned wind farms in the area, the additional mitigation measures includes the installation of automatic systems remotely controlled equipped with high-definition cameras with stereoscopic vision. The cameras shall cover the totality of the WTG to monitor avifauna, and the system shall use deterrence devices or shut down the WTG in case of high risk of collision with it. The wind farm will not be able to be in operation before this system is in service.
- If possible, the transmission line shall have the same height as an existing one (Soto Cerrato-Villalbilla, (REE)), for the portion of line in parallel to that existing one;
- In relation to the risk of collision with the transmission lines, the mitigation measures based on the Royal Decree 1432/2008 shall be reinforced in specific areas;
- If mortality rates due to the transmission line reach levels to be defined by the promoter and approved by the CA, specific sections of the line shall be buried;
- Habitat enhancement for avifauna especially for Red kite, Montagu's Harrier<sup>5</sup> and Spanish Imperial Eagle;
- Reinforced monitoring plans.

The EIA reports covers the entire lifecycle of the facilities, including the decommissioning. Waste produced during decommissioning is classified following the European List of Waste. Waste electrical and electronic equipment Directive ((Directive 2018/849 amending Directive 2012/19/EU) is transposed by national law (RD 110/2015 amended by RD 27/2021). The promoter will have to present a decommissioning plan to the competent authority in advance of the planned end of the activities.

The main physical climate change risks of the wind farm relate to floods and wind speed increase, and to a lesser extent, temperature increase, precipitation increase and solar radiation change. The related mitigation measures include enhanced drainage systems, design of WTG suitable for site locations and the use turbines certified for high temperatures.

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<sup>5</sup> *Circus pygargus*, Least Concern (IUCN Red List)



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The project is fully aligned to the goals and principles of the Paris Agreement as set out in the Bank's Climate Bank Roadmap and the Energy Lending Policy.

### **EIB Paris Alignment for Counterparties (PATH) Framework**

Iberdrola S.A. as the majority shareholder of the present SPV, which is a fully consolidated subsidiary of Iberdrola S.A., is in scope and screened in to the PATH framework, under the low carbon requirements. The counterparty is not involved in incompatible activities and it already meets the requirements of the EIB PATH framework with its existing alignment plan.

### **EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise**

In accordance with the Bank's current Carbon Footprint methodology it is calculated that based on the avoidance of electricity generation from a combination of existing and new power plants in Spain (combined margin for intermittent generation), the total relative effect of the project is a net reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions by ca. 90 kt CO<sub>2</sub>e/yr.

For the annual accounting purposes, if the project is included in 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.

### **Social Assessment, where applicable**

The wind farm and ancillary facilities are located on land for non-irrigated agricultural use and for raising cattle and sheep.

The promoter has engaged with land owners in order to secure voluntary agreements for the land required by all project infrastructures, mostly in the form of leases with annual payments. Some plots of land been secured through bilateral agreements. If voluntary agreements cannot be reached, the promoter intends to require expropriation, in line with Spanish legislation. In Spain, all projects required for the implementation of the different activities within the electricity sector, including generation, promoted by public or private companies, are considered public utility, and are subject to urgent forced expropriation to be carried out by the authority in the interest of the promoters.

### **Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement**

The public consultation process was carried out under the EIA process for all project components, as required by EU law and as transposed by national and regional law. The Promoter has channels of contact on social responsibility, sustainability and environmental matters (responsabilidad\_social@iberdrola.es, sostenibilidad@iberdrola.es, medioambiente@iberdrola.es).

### **Other Environmental and Social Aspects**

The promoter is known to the Bank from previous operations and has sufficient E&S capacity to implement the project. The promoter has a solid organisational structure and has certified its management systems (ISO 14001).



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## Conclusions and Recommendations

As project undertakings:

- The promoter will have to demonstrate that the measures foreseen in the EIA reports and the permits, including measures to avoid, reduce and mitigate the impact, as well as monitoring indicators, were put in place during the construction and operational phases.
- The promoter will have to send the Bank a copy of the environmental monitoring reports ("Informes del Programa de Vigilancia Ambiental") as sent to the CA.

Under these conditions, the operation is acceptable in E&S terms.