

Luxembourg, 3 May 2023

## Environmental and Social Data Sheet

### Overview

Project Name:	ROMANIA A7 MOTORWAY RRF CO-FINANCING
Project Number:	20220839
Country:	Romania
Project Description:	The project concerns the construction of 319 km of a new greenfield section of the A7 motorway between the towns of Ploiesti and Pascani in Eastern Romania, being part of the Core TEN-T network.

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 construction of 319 km of a new greenfield section of the A7 motorway between the towns of Ploiesti and Pascani in Eastern Romania.

For implementation purposes, the project is divided into four sections which are in turn divided into three or four lots or sub-sections:

##### A7: Ploiești – Buzău

- L1: Dumbrava - Mizil
- L2: Mizil - Pietroasele
- L3: Pietroasele - Buzău

##### A7: Buzău - Focșani

- Section 1: Buzău – Vadu Pașii
- Section 2: Vadu Pașii – Râmnicu Sărat
- Section 3: Râmnicu Sărat – Mândrești Munteni
- Section 4: Mândrești Munteni – Focșani Nord

##### A7: Focșani - Bacău

- L1: Focșani – Domnești Târg
- L2: Domnești Târg - Răcăciuni
- L3: Răcăciuni - Bacău

##### A7: Bacău - Pașcani

- L1: Bacău (Săucești) - Trifești
- L2: Trifești - Gherăești
- L3: Mircești - Pașcani

<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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The construction works started in August 2022 and are expected to be completed in Q4 2025.

The Project is included in the General Transport Master Plan approved through Governmental Decision 666/2015 which was subject to a SEA. The SEA Decision was issued by the Ministry of Environment on 11th December 2015 and is published on the Ministry's website.

All sections fall under the Annex I of the EIA Directive, point 7, b) Construction of motorways and express roads, and are therefore subject to mandatory EIA.

The competent authority for this project is the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA).

#### ***A7: Ploiești – Buzău section***

The EIA procedure for this section (Lots 1, 2 and 3) was carried out between 2020 and 2021. NEPA issued the decision in March 2021. The EIA Decision concluded that the project, as proposed for implementation, including all mitigation measures, is not expected to have significant adverse impacts on the environment.

Mitigation measures for temporary and local impacts on water, air and soil quality are included in the design. Noise barriers/panels have been proposed in several areas where the motorway passes close to inhabited areas or in the vicinity of natural areas. In order to ensure the protection of the archaeological sites, archaeological clearance of the sites must be obtained prior to the start of the works and, if necessary, works have to be interrupted until the archaeological clearance is obtained. The implementation of all required mitigation measures is part of the environmental management plan, as required in the EIA decision.

The project section is in the immediate vicinity of four Natura 2000 sites and nearby other three Natura 2000 sites. The assessment of the project's impact on Natura 2000 sites was part of the EIA procedure. The appropriate assessment (AA) study largely took into account the site-specific conservation objectives defined by the competent authority in 2020 and provides specific mitigation measures.

The AA study and the EIA Decision concluded that the project, as proposed for implementation (including all mitigation measures), is not expected to have significant adverse impacts on Natura 2000 sites.

Due to some changes in the project section design (mainly regarding to increasing the number of culverts, hydrocarbon separators and retention basins, accurate presentation of the kilometre position of the structures and the modification of the kilometre position of the road junctions), the Promoter has notified the environmental authority (NEPA) in September 2021. All changes will be carried out within the areas that were initially evaluated in the procedure for issuing the environmental agreement, outside natural protected areas. NEPA determined that there is no need to update the EIA Report or AA study and issued the screened-out decision in April 2022.

#### ***A7: Buzău – Focșani section***

The EIA procedure was carried out between 2020 and 2022 for the entire alignment (Sections 1, 2, 3 and 4). The competent authority, the NEPA, issued the EIA Decision in January 2022.

NEPA required in addition to the EIA report, an assessment of the project's effects on water bodies (SEICA study) and an appropriate assessment (AA) study. All these reports were made available for public consultation on the NEPA website.

Regarding the cumulative impact of the project with other projects (railway projects, urban mobility projects), the analysis in the EIA Report concluded that this impact is not significant.



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The main mitigation measures proposed relate to:

- Noise: noise panels have been proposed in several areas where the motorway passes close to inhabited areas or in the vicinity of protected areas.
- Archaeological protection: during the execution of the works, preventive investigations will be carried out to obtain the archaeological clearance and the archaeological surveillance; if new archaeological sites are identified during the construction phase, the works will be stopped, and the competent authorities will be contacted to obtain expert guidance and establish the necessary solutions.
- Waste: selective collection of waste generated during the works; ensure appropriate taking over by specialised entities for treatment and disposal of all generated and collected waste; contractors are obliged to have clear evidence of all type of waste generated during the construction phase; temporary storage of waste resulting from demolition will be carried out on the surface occupied by the motorway and within the construction sites, without occupying additional land.

The project section intersects two Natura 2000 sites (ROSCI0103 Lunca Buzăului and ROSPA0160 Lunca Buzăului, which partially overlaps) and it is in the vicinity of five other Natura 2000 sites. The AA study analysed the impact of the project on the conservation objectives of those sites and concluded that by implementing the mitigation measures, the residual impact will be non-significant.

The works will influence the hydromorphology of the watercourses, but these impacts will be minimal at the level of the water bodies, localized and will not lead to the deterioration of the water bodies. The impact of the works will be temporary and reversible during the construction period.

#### **A7: Focșani – Bacău section**

The EIA procedure for this section was carried out between 2020 and 2022. The competent authority, the NEPA required, in addition to the EIA report, an assessment of the project's effects on water bodies (SEICA study) and an appropriate assessment (AA) study. All these reports were made available for public consultation on the NEPA website.

The cumulative impact was assessed within the EIA Report and the Appropriate Assessment (AA) study carried out in 2021 and 2022, considering other relevant investment proposals in the project area.

NEPA issued the EIA Decision in June 2022.

The EIA Decision concluded that the project, as proposed for implementation, including all prevention and mitigation measures, is not expected to have significant adverse impacts on environment. The EIA Decision includes a series of measures to prevent and mitigate the impact of the project, separately for the construction and operation phases.

Several mitigation measures to protect water, air, soil, and archaeological sites are included in the EIA Decision. Noise panels will be installed in the specific areas and measures will apply to the management of waste, especially on construction and demolishing waste.

The project section intersects two overlapping Natura 2000 sites (ROSCI0162 and ROSPA0071 Lower Siret Lunca) and is in the vicinity of other six Natura 2000 sites. The assessment of the impact on species and habitats was done in relation to their specific conservation objectives. In the area where the project section intersects the two Natura 2000 sites concerning a river ecosystem, the motorway crosses the sites by means of a bridge, therefore there will be no barrier effect, nor will there be any fragmentation of habitats. The impact of deforestation on the forest habitats of the species is insignificant, losing 0.13% of its surface area because of the implementation of the project. Considering the ecology of the species, which show high mobility, as well as the areas occupied by forest on the protected natural area, it is considered that the deforestation works carried out within the site ROSPA0071 Lunca Siretului Inferior are not likely to affect the state of conservation of the species or their



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viability in the short, medium and long term. The deforestation that will be carried out outside the protected natural areas covers an area of 3387 m<sup>2</sup>.

The study on the impact of the project section on the water bodies analysed the impact on water bodies and groundwater bodies and concluded that the impact of the project section is temporary and local during the construction period.

#### ***A7: Bacău – Pașcani section***

The EIA procedure for this project section was carried out between 2020 and 2022. The competent authority, the NEPA required, in addition to the EIA report, an assessment of the project's effects on water bodies (SEICA study) and an appropriate assessment (AA) study. All these reports were made available for public consultation on the NEPA website.

NEPA issued the EIA Decision in April 2022.

The EIA decision stipulates conditions and mandatory mitigation measures to be implemented during the demolition, construction, and operation, as well as monitoring requirements. By implementing the required mitigation measures, the residual impact is estimated as being non-significant. All the mitigation measures proposed to reduce the impact on water, air, biodiversity, and human health are to be included in the Environmental Management Plan.

The route of the project section intersects the Natura 2000 site ROSCI0364 Moldova River and is in the vicinity of 13 other Natura 2000 sites. The assessment of the impact of the project section on the Natura 2000 sites was carried out based on the specific conservation objectives established in the period 2020-2021 for all fourteen sites considered in the assessment.

In terms of the outcome of the assessment, potential significant impacts were identified for species within the Site of Community Importance crossed by the project and some species within the Special Avifaunistic Protection Areas located near the project, as the implementation of the project section will result in a loss of small areas of habitats. In addition, the project section crosses the ecological corridor for *Canis Lupus*, but the impact is considered non-significant as the permeability was ensured by the bridge-type structures already included in the project design. Wildlife overpasses were proposed to ensure the general permeability of the motorway for all species, not just *Canis Lupus*. In addition to the measures proposed in the AA Study, measures targeting other biodiversity components than those of community interest were proposed.

As part of the EIA procedure, an analysis was carried out of the potential impacts of the project section on the ecological and chemical status of surface water bodies, as well as on the quantitative and qualitative status of ground water bodies. The expropriation corridor (the areas occupied by construction works / the highway route) related to the project crosses 9 surface water bodies, of which 8 water bodies are directly affected. All 8 surface water bodies for which potential impacts were identified are crossed by the project with bridges, and the hydrotechnical works for their protection are minimally invasive, consisting only of the protection of the culverts with gabion walls (in most cases these are located outside the lower bed of the water bodies).

#### **Climate Change Adaptation**

According to the climate change and vulnerability risk assessments carried out as part of the project preparation, the most significant risks are related to flooding, very low temperatures (snowstorms, blizzards), changes in extreme rainfall and wildfires. Other relevant climate change related project risks, e.g. accelerated temperature increase, rising number of days with positive extreme temperatures, freezing-thaw phenomenon, changes in mean precipitation, changes in maximum wind speed, fog and landslides are rated "high risk".

The EIA report contains the results of the Climate Change and Vulnerability Risk Assessments.

The project is consistent with the Romanian National Climate Change Strategy and supportive of its objective to integrate local climate change concerns into transport policy. The project



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design meets the requirements of current design standards to accommodate increased physical climate risks.

After the application of proper mitigation measures, the climate risk of the project is rated as “low”.

### Paris Alignment

The project was assessed by the Bank’s services for Paris Alignment in accordance with the policies set out in the Climate Bank Roadmap (“CBR”). The project is considered being aligned with the low carbon goal as it consists of a capacity expansion of an existing road infrastructure meeting the EIB eligibility criteria for Transport, including passing the Adapted Economic Test introduced under the CBR and is consistent with national and EU level infrastructure planning.

Romania’s alternative fuel infrastructure national policy framework has been assessed to have shortcomings in the EU latest assessment (2022, but based on information from 2018), most notably the distance requirement of one recharging point at least every 60 km of the TEN-T would not be met, as an average distance of ~70km is foreseen. More recent data shows that the number of charging stations has increased rapidly after 2018 although from a low basis. To illustrate, the number of charging stations already exceeds by more than 400% the target for 2030. Romania’s latest National Implementation Report (2020), reports on several measures underway to further improve alternative fuel provision.

### **EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise**

The project is included in the Carbon Footprint exercise on the following basis:

- Estimated annual emissions of project in a standard year of operation:
  - Forecast absolute (gross) emissions are 607 300 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent per year.
  - Forecast emissions saved are 18 700 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent per year.
- The project boundaries are given by the new road and the existing roads DN1B, DN2 and DJ208 connecting the cities of Ploiesti, Buzau, Focsani, Bacau and Pascani, as well as other DN2 sections linking the cities of Bucharest and Buzau, and Bacau with Targu Frumos.

The baseline is the forecast third party emission, in the absence of the project, from the existing network, only within the boundary defined above. The forecasts reflect the Services’ assumptions on initial traffic, traffic growth, speed/flow, infrastructure capacity and fuel consumption.

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.

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

The land acquisition process is ongoing. For this purpose, 6 government expropriation decisions were issued, and the total expropriated area is some 517 ha. The number of buildings affected will be determined after the individual cadastral documentation is approved by OCPI (“Oficiul de Cadastru și Publicitate Imobiliară” – Cadastre and land registration office”). Road safety audits at various stages of design, pre-commissioning and operation have been or will be performed in accordance with Romanian legislation.



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## Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

The national legislation foresees public consultation to be carried out for all EIA procedures. In this context, all reports and studies prepared within the EIA procedure were made available to the public and for all project sections, public debates have been organised in different locations along the alignment of the motorway. No relevant comments have been raised during the EIA procedures.

## Other Environmental and Social Aspects

The EIA decisions stipulate obligations related to the monitoring of water, air, noise, and biodiversity, including the monitoring points and frequency. The results will be communicated to the competent authority (NEPA).

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The project was subject to EIA procedures for each of the sections and for all of the sections, the competent authority (NEPA) has required appropriate assessment studies as required by art. 6 (3) of the Habitats Directive and for some of the sections has required study on the impact on effects on water bodies as required by the Water Framework Directive. The conclusion of the procedures is that by implementing the required mitigation measures the residual impact of the project is largely non-significant or moderate.

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

- Implement all the envisaged mitigation measures as well as conditions and recommendations included in the EIA decisions issued by the competent authority for all the project sections.
- Ensure that the environmental management plans, required by the EIA Decisions, 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.
- Inform the Bank about any changes to the project and any additional mitigation measures, prescribed by the competent authority.

Subject to compliance with the above conditions, the project is considered acceptable for EIB financing in E&S terms.