

Luxembourg, 13.12.2023

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	MOLDOVA SOLIDARITY LANES
Project Number:	2022-0846
Country:	Republic of Moldova
Project Description:	The project consists of the rehabilitation of selected elements of the existing railway infrastructure in the corridor Valcinet - Balti - Ungheni - Chisinau - Cainari.
EIA required:	No
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise ¹ :	No

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

Project description

The project consists of the rehabilitation of selected elements of the existing railway infrastructure on the corridor Valcinet – Balti - Ungheni – Chisinau – Cainari in the Republic of Moldova. The total length of the corridor is 370 km, out of which approx. 128 km will be rehabilitated as part of the project. The project also includes rehabilitation of turnouts at stations along the corridor. The renewal will be made on existing alignment of the line, and works will be primarily carried out within the existing right of way.

The Promoter of the project is the national railway company, Caleă Ferată din Moldova.

Compliance with applicable Environmental Legislation

The project will be located in Moldova, currently in the process of approximation of its legislation to the EU acts and international instruments in accordance with the EU-Moldova Association Agreement.

Appropriate legislation for the protection of the environment is in force in the Republic of Moldova, in particular the EIA Law (Law No 86 of 29.05.2014 as last amended by Law No 225 of 13.10.2022) transposes Directive 2011/92/EU (including the amendments introduced by Directive 2014/52/EU) (the EIA Directive) and the provisions of paragraphs 3 and 4 of Article 6 of Directive 92/43/EEC (the Habitats Directive) into the legislation of the Republic of Moldova.

If implemented in the EU, the project may be deemed to fall with the scope of Annex II of the EIA Directive and be subject to screening by the Competent Authority. The same principle applies as per the EIA Law of the Republic of Moldova and the project has been subject to screening by the Environmental Agency of the Republic of Moldova.

In August 2023 the Promoter submitted to the Competent Authority an application for screening, which included a preliminary assessment of impacts and proposed the corresponding mitigation measures. Taking into account the nature and the location of the works, as well as the likely impacts, in October 2023, the Competent Authority decided that no EIA is necessary for the project. The decision has been made public by the Promoter and local authorities.

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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Concerning protected sites, the corridor runs on existing alignment across, adjacent or in the vicinity of several Emerald network sites:

- Unguri-Holoșnița (MD0000005), the line runs inside the site over approx. 10 km;
- La 33 de vaduri (MD0000031), the line crosses the site over approx. 150 m, and runs in its vicinity over approx. 2 km;
- Prutul de Mijloc (MD0000011), the line crosses the site in three locations over approx. 150 m, and runs adjacent to it or in its vicinity over approx. 8.5 km;
- Bahmut-Hârjauca (MD0000008), the line crosses the site over approx. 1.7 km, and runs in its vicinity over further approx. 12 km;
- Plaiul Fagului (MD0000003), the line runs in its vicinity over approx. 13 km;
- Codrii Strășenilor (MD0000010), the line runs at a minimum distance of approx. 450 m from the site.

As part of the EIA screening, the Competent Authority decided that due to the nature and location of the works, significant impacts on the sites are unlikely and no appropriate assessment is required.

Impacts during construction

Taking into account the scope and nature of the works the main impacts during the construction phase are generation of noise, vibration, dust and significant amount of waste, including hazardous waste, such as contaminated ballast and sleepers.

An Environmental and Social Action Plan (ESAP) has been prepared for the project. The ESAP outlines the mitigation measures that need to be implemented during the construction phase, such as appropriate solid waste disposal (e.g. impregnated sleepers should be incinerated at temperature above 1000°C), water protection, noise abatement. These measures are to be further defined in more detail, in particular, in an Environmental and Social Management and Monitoring Plan (ESMMP) and Waste Management Plan (WMP).

Impacts during operation

In the operation phase, the speed of trains on some sections and potentially the number of trains is expected to increase with the associated increase in the risk of collisions on level crossings, with trespassers, domestic or wild animals. The Promoter will identify areas where the risk will require mitigation measures. These areas will be marked with warning signs and fenced off where possible.

No other substantial additional impacts comparing to the current situation are expected.

Overall, the project will contribute to improvement of the quality and reliability of railway services for both passengers and goods, and thus to preventing modal shift from rail to road with the consequent reduction of energy consumption, noise, and emissions of pollutants and CO₂. All this should result in an improvement of the environmental situation in comparison to the “without project case”.

Vulnerability to the climate change

The project is sensitive to the climate change, in particular to the risk of increase of precipitations and floods. The Promoter will carry out an analysis of vulnerability to the climate change and, where relevant, the corresponding adaptation measures will be included in the project or implemented in further stages.

Paris alignment

The project has been assessed by the Bank's services for Paris alignment in accordance with the policies set out in the Climate Bank Roadmap. The project consists of rehabilitation of low carbon transport infrastructure, therefore it is considered to be aligned with the low carbon goal. The climate risk of the project is assessed as medium, therefore it is considered to be aligned with the resilience goal.



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Land acquisition and resettlement

The project will be implemented on the existing alignment of the lines and will not require any additional land take, resettlement or expropriations.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

The Promoter established a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP), which will be followed throughout the project. The Promoter will establish a grievance mechanism in accordance with the provisions of SEP.

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

A dedicated Project Implementation Unit (PIU) will be established in the Promoter's organisation. The PIU will receive assistance by consultants with international experience, including, among other, support in relation with the environmental and social aspects of the project implementation.

The works supervision will be carried out by consultants with international experience, including, among other, a specialist with experience in the environmental aspects of the project implementation.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The project has been subject of a screening in accordance with the national EIA legislation and in line with the requirements of the EIA Directive. The Competent Authority has determined that no EIA is necessary.

The decision of the Competent Authority sets out some impact mitigations measures. Further measures for mitigating negative impacts have been outlined in an ESAP.

Prior to the first disbursement of the loan for financing works, the Promoter shall provide to the Bank a statement issued by the Competent Authority confirming that the project is not likely to have a significant negative effect on the above indicated protected sites.

Prior to the each disbursement of the loan, the Promoter shall provide to the Bank evidence that

- a PIU is in place with terms of reference and resources to the Bank satisfaction. In particular, the PIU shall include environmental and social specialists;
- the ESAP is being implemented in accordance with its timetable and to the Bank satisfaction, in particular that an ESMP, WMP and climate change adaptation measures have been established and are being properly implemented;
- the SEP is being implemented in accordance with its timetable and to the Bank satisfaction;
- the grievance mechanism is in place and its contact details are published on the Promoter's website, as well as on the billboards at the construction sites.

The Promoter shall keep the abovementioned PIU, ESAP, ESMP, WMP, SEP and grievance mechanism throughout the duration of the Project and regularly report on their implementation.

Overall, the project will contribute to an improvement of the quality and reliability of railway services for both passengers and goods, and thus to modal shift from road to rail with the consequent reduction of energy consumption, noise, and emissions of pollutants and CO₂. All this should result in an improvement to the environmental situation in comparison to the "without project case".



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The main negative impacts are related to the construction phase, such as waste generation, some localised noise/vibration, occasionally dust and mud on the access roads during the construction, all these for a limited number of receptors.

With the conditions above in place, the project is acceptable for EIB financing in environmental and social terms.