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## Environmental and Social Data Sheet

### Overview

Project Name: CATAMARCA (ARG -TRANSMISSION NETWORK FL)

Project Number: 2023-042

Country: ARGENTINA

Project Description: Expansion of the 220kV and 132kV High Voltage Line between Alumbreira and Belén and construction of El Eje and Belén Transformer Stations

EIA required: yes

Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise<sup>1</sup>: no

### Environmental and Social Assessment

#### Environmental Assessment

This operation consists of the allocation for the Catamarca province under the Framework Loan facility ARGENTINA - TRANSMISSION NETWORK INVESTMENTS FL (2022-0186).

The project includes the construction of a new 35 km and 220 kV transmission line from Minera Alumbreira to El Eje, the construction of a new substation 220/132 kV (El Eje), the construction of a new 65 km and 132 kV transmission line from El Eje to Belén and the extension of Belén and Alumbreira substations.

According to Argentina's federal system, the EIA process is a matter of subnational jurisdiction. The Federal Government defines the EIA requirements through the General Environmental Law No. 25675 (O.G. 28/11/2002) (art. 8) as a national environmental law of minimum standards that provides the legal basis, principles and requirements and these are further on complemented at the provincial level. The legal framework is complemented with Secretaria de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sustentable Resolution No. 337/19, the "Guide for the preparation of environmental impact studies" that aims to provide guidelines on general methodological concepts for the preparation of environmental impact studies including Annex 1: Guideline to elaboration of EIA studies and Annex 2: Guideline to the elaboration of Strategic Environmental Assessment studies.

The ESIA for the project including all project components has been completed in July 2020 and the corresponding consent has been granted by the relevant provincial authority on 11/09/2020. An additional ESIA study has been completed in April 2022 as an integration of the previous one to comply with lenders Environmental and Social standards, in particular with Inter American Development Bank ones.

As usual in infrastructure works of these characteristics, there are potential impacts and risks, mainly in the construction phase, such as negative impacts due to the risk of accidents during the works, impacts on flora and fauna, changes in land use along the route, risk of contamination of soils due to accidental spills, risk of pollution due to poor management of solid

<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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waste generated, air pollution due to emissions from vehicles and machinery affected by the work, noise and vibrations.

Appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented to minimise impacts according to the findings of the ESIA reports and the conditions expressed in the ESIA consents. These typically include construction procedures to minimize damages and disturbance, soil restoration and appropriate waste collection procedures. Furthermore, the selection of line routes has been made in order to avoid natural protected areas and minimize the impact on the surrounding environment and biodiversity. The ESIA report concluded that the project does not have a significant adverse impact on any site of nature conservation importance, nor on critical habitats,

A climate risk assessment has been included in ESIA to address physical climate change risks relevant to the area of installation of the Project, i.e. mainly extreme temperature events, landslides, floods and seismic events are mitigated in the design stage such as the use of self-supported metal towers instead of concrete ones in mountainous areas.

The operation intends to generate environmental benefits by supporting sustainable energy infrastructure: i.e., by increasing the transportation of renewable electricity, by decommissioning the fossil fuel-based generation and by reducing losses in the electrical network.

Estimated gross emissions associated to the project are 1,400 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent per year (on the basis of network losses). The operation will provide environmental benefits through the reduction of network losses. The total avoided CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are estimated at 3,600 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e/yr.

The operation has been assessed for its Paris alignment and it is considered in line against low carbon and resilience goals set out in the Climate Bank Roadmap and with the EIB's Energy Lending Policy.

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

Physical and economic resettlements are not foreseen in this project. The use of the land for overhead lines is covered in the Administrative Easement of Overhead Line Electroduct as defined from National Law No. 19.552 and its amending Law No. 24.065. Occupations of land area will be about 55.5 ha for the lines and 1 ha for the new El Eje substation.

With regard to indigenous and vulnerable communities, during the preparation of ESIA, due diligence was carried out to exclude the presence of indigenous communities in the projected trace.

Regarding the work, a Labour Management Procedure (Procedimiento de Gestión Laboral) was developed at framework programme level, which aims to define actions and responsibilities of the different employers in relation to the projects (executing body, contractors, suppliers, etc.).

The Environmental and Social Works Management Plan (Plan de Gestión Ambiental y Social de Obras, PGAS) incorporates a Socio-environmental Training Program that includes training on gender issues and the implementation of a code of conduct that includes, among other issues, the explicit prohibition of harassment or violence against women, children and girls in the community, and employees of the contractor company. It also includes a Workflow Management Program in order to minimise the risk of conflicts between hired workers and the local population, in order to ensure the creation of a positive and free work environment.

The Stakeholder Participation Plan (SPP) in force throughout the Programme cycle (dissemination of information, meaningful consultation, mechanisms for handling complaints and conflict resolution and monitoring and monitoring) was developed providing for the



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equitable and inclusive participation of stakeholders with the aim of “ensure that people of all genders and groups at risk of marginalisation (ethnicity, race, age and migration status, persons with disabilities) have effective interaction and participation throughout the project implementation cycle.

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

Consultations were organized after the additional EIAS study on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May 2022 at 2 pm at the Hotel Casino in the City of Catamarca.

Promoter will ensure that comprehensive grievance mechanisms, both for communities and for the workforce (including EPC contractor and sub-contractors), are in place during both implementation and the entire operation period of the schemes. Stakeholder engagement activities will be conducted in compliance with national legislation and with the Bank’s relevant E&S standards.

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

The Promoter is in the process of designing an internal Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS), as part of the requirements to be met for the financing of its sub-projects. This system will be based on existing procedures, used by the promoter in the implementation of previous similar programmes financed by other MDBs (i.a. IDB). The promoter has experience in applying international E&S standards, in addition to the required national ones.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The Promoter is fully aware of the Bank’s E&S requirements and is willing/capable to implement them. The legal, environmental and social obligations under the national laws of the country and the Promoter’s current preparation of its ESMS provide comfort and support the fulfilment of the EIB’s E&S standards under this operation.

Based on the information available, the Project is acceptable in environmental and social terms for the Bank’s financing with appropriate conditions (see below):

- Prior to the first disbursement, the Promoter shall present its ESMS for the Bank’s approval. It should also provide evidence on its reinforced team (a full-time dedicated social specialist and an environmental specialist) as part of its Environmental and Social Department, with responsibilities in the management of the Programme.
- The Promoter will undertake to monitor and report to the Bank on the compliance with EIB E&S Standards, with a periodicity and scope yet to be defined.
- The Promoter shall ensure that the sub-projects (including all works performed by the contractors) are carried out in accordance with the provisions contained in the respective ESIA documents and associated management and action plans, including livelihood restoration plans, biodiversity action plans, etc.