

Luxembourg, 15 November 2023

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name: Cameroon rural electrification
 Project Number: 2017-0981
 Country: Cameroon
 Project Description: Investment programme aimed at increasing access to electricity of rural communities throughout the Adamaoua, North and Far North regions of Cameroon. The programme comprises the electrification of 417 rural localities by grid extension that will provide access to electricity to more than 115,000 households and a population of 750,000 people. Overall, this will require the construction of approximately 2,057 km of MV network, 2,382 km of LV network and 768 MV/LV substations over the period 2024-2027.

EIA required: yes

Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise¹: no

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

Environmental and Social Assessment

The Project comprises multiple schemes that will be co-financed by the EIB and the WB on a parallel basis. More specifically EIB will finance the electrification of 239 localities in the North and Adamaoua regions and the WB will finance the electrification of 178 localities in the Far-North region. Although coordination will be ensured among co-financiers, EIB and WB will retain the responsibility to monitor the environmental and social impacts of their respective investments under the Project.

Environmental Assessment

The Project will implement a part of the Rural Electrification Master Plan (REMP) 2016–2035 adopted by the Republic of Cameroon in 2017 with the aim of scaling up access to electricity in rural areas and balancing electricity access between the various regions.

Accordingly, in 2017 the World Bank started the Project preparation activities with the elaboration of the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) and Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF) given that that exact locations and routes of the Project facilities, pending the technical studies, were unknown at that stage. The Framework documents were finalized and disclosed in July 2018. The two framework documents cover also rural electrification investments other than those included under this operation.

The ESMF outlines the main expected environmental impacts of the Project and the associated mitigating measures. The Project has the potential for some low/moderate environmental impacts among which the most significant are destruction of vegetation cover, disturbance and pollution during construction works and the electrocution and collision of birds during operation. Possible mitigants include compensating for the destruction of vegetation cover, restoring sites

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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at the end of construction works, applying proper construction methods and installation of devices for the protection of birds.

The ESMF also provides the framework for the environmental classification of the schemes and the assessment/mitigation of the resulting impacts. For schemes with low impact, the ESMF anticipates the preparation of an Environmental and Social Impact Notice indicating appropriate measures among those indicated in the ESMF. For schemes with moderate impact, it is instead envisaged the preparation of an ESIA and associated ESMP. The competent authority MINEPDED (Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable development) shall validate the environmental and social classifications of the schemes and provide the environmental and social certificate when an ESIA is deemed necessary.

Upon completion of the technical studies, the promoter and MINEPDED agreed to carry-out three overarching/regionalESIAs covering all the schemes. The ESIA/ESMP for the Far-North was completed in January 2022. The draft ESIA/ESMP for the North Region has been transmitted to the Bank in September 2023 and is currently being reviewed. The ESIA for the Adamaoua is expected to be ready in March 2024.

Climate risks affecting the Project area are flooding, high temperature and wildfires. These risks are mitigated via appropriate planning, design, and operation of the Project facilities.

The source of CO₂ equivalent (CO₂e) emissions for the Project is the ohmic losses of the network resulting from the increase in demand enabled by the Project. At Project completion the corresponding both absolute and relative emissions are estimated at 11 kt CO₂e per year.

The Project has been assessed for Paris alignment and is considered to be aligned.

Social Assessment

By enabling access to electricity supply, the Project is expected to improve the living conditions for the beneficiary communities in many ways. These include the development of economic activities, the reduction of expenditure for energy in households and economic activities that are currently relying on small diesel generator and oil lamps, creation of jobs, improvement of working conditions of students and teachers, improvement of working conditions in health centers, better security conditions with reduction in theft and criminality, improvement in productivity/competition in household enterprises where women are most represented and reduction of rural exodus.

The Project has however also the potential for some adverse social impacts among which the most significant are the loss of land and assets, disruption of commercial activities, damage to crops, increased prevalence of sexually transmitted infections and gender-based violence due to foreign workers at construction sites.

The Project has received a Declaration of Public Utility. The RAPs for the schemes in the Far North are completed. Here the Project is affecting 3,846 people, none of which is physically displaced. The draft RAPs for the schemes in the 3 departments of the North (Mayo-Louti, Bénoué and Mayo-Rey) have been transmitted to the Bank in July 2023 and are currently being reviewed. Based on the RAP the Project in the North will affect 1,565 people, of which 197 will be physically displaced. The RAP for the Adamoua region shall be ready in March 2024.

The RAPs are prepared in coordination with Commissions set up at departmental level (Commission de constat et d'évaluation des biens, CCE) whose role is to carry out investigations related to expropriations for reasons of public utility and to prepare the files to be transmitted to the authorities responsible for issuing the compensation decree that will enable the project affected people to be compensated. The CCE will use the Bank's standards when these are more beneficial than national standards (e.g. on replacement value and eligibility of illegal land occupants).

All affected people will be compensated for the loss of land, and the relocation of property in a new area as well as for damages to crops and disruption of economic activities resulting from the construction works.

The compensation scheme under the RAP includes special accompanying measures for vulnerable people. The types of vulnerabilities concern people over 60 years of age, widowed or divorced women, chronically ill people and the disabled.



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To prevent and address the social risks related to the labour influx, codes of conduct on child protection and Gender-based Violence (GBV) will be integrated in the bidding documents and in the contracts of all employees, contractors, and consultants contributing to the implementation of the Project. Further avoidance and mitigation measures include holding awareness meeting for workers and local populations on GBV and health risks of sexually transmitted infections, supporting local women's associations for the development of income generating activities and strengthening the provision of protections of local health structures.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

The ESMF and RPF have undergone stakeholder consultations from 5 to 18 May 2018 and from 15 March to 8 June 2018, respectively. Consultations have taken place in the form of collective meetings with institutional stakeholders and the population as well as individual interviews. Over 1,000 people were reached during the public consultations.

The Project is welcomed with great hopes and enthusiasm by the stakeholders consulted, according to which electricity constitutes the key element to boost the socio-economic development of the beneficiary localities and improve the standard of living of the local populations. On the other hand, the Project raises concerns in the population particularly as regards the labour influx and the associated social problems. The population also fear the risk of conflicts generated by shortcomings in the resettlement process, such as not identifying all the PAPs and/or the non-availability of compensations before the start of the works.

Further to that the ESIA and the RAP prepared/to be prepared for the Project have undergone/will undergo public consultation via collective meeting and individual interviews. The ESIA for the Far North has undergone consultation in August 2021 with 40 collective meetings and 170 individual interviews organised. The ESIA for the North has undergone consultation in May 2023 with 23 collective meetings and 238 individual interviews organised. The RAP for the Far North has undergone consultation in June-August 2021 with over 100 collective meetings organised. The RAPs for the North has undergone consultation in March-April 2023 with circa 90 collective meetings organised.

Project dedicated Communication Plans and Grievance Mechanisms have been/will be prepared and will be implemented by the promoter.

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

The promoter of the Project is the rural electrification agency AER, a public institution that promotes and develops rural electrification projects across Cameroon. A fully dedicated PIU (Unité Gestion Projet, UGP) within AER is responsible for managing all the aspects of the Project. An environmental and social manager and a social/gender specialist under the PIU are managing the E&S aspects with the assistance of external consultants for the preparation of the necessary studies/plans and for monitoring the implementation of such plans once the construction works will start. On this basis, the capacity of the PIU to implement the Project according to the EIB E&S standards is deemed adequate.

Experience has shown that setting the initial connection fee at a level that is affordable for all households is critical for the success of rural electrification projects. The Project therefore will pre-finance the connection costs for the households who cannot afford to pay upfront the full connection fee. The newly connected households will pay a small initial fee and reimburse the rest over a period of up to 8 years via the electricity bill.

The security situations of Cameroon is volatile and critical particularly in the Far North region. If and where required, contractors will be responsible of putting in place appropriate security arrangements at construction sites.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the information available, and with appropriate conditionalities (see below) and monitoring, the Project is expected to be acceptable in environmental and social terms for Bank financing.



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The following disbursement conditions and undertakings will apply to the part of the Project located in the Adamaoua and North regions.

Disbursement conditions

- Delivery to the Bank of a) the ESIA of the Project schemes satisfactory to the Bank and b) the approval of the ESIA by the competent authority;
- Delivery to the Bank of a) the RAPs for the Project satisfactory to the Bank and b) the associated compensation decrees.

Undertakings

- Works on the ground shall not start until compensations to project affected people are paid.