European Investment Bank

Luxembourg, 18/12/2025

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	BLUERAMAN SUBMARINE CABLE
Project Number:	2024-0867
Country:	Regional – Africa Regional – Asia

Project Description: The project concerns the completion of the implementation of the BlueRaman submarine cable system, which is a 12 700 km fibre optic cable that will connect Europe to India, crossing through the Middle-East, and landing in the east coast of Africa along the way. The project scope will specifically include the promoter's share of the following parts of the BlueRaman system: 1) the part of the main trunk from Palermo (Italy) to Tel-Aviv (Israel), the branches serving Algiers (Algeria), Bizerte (Tunisia), Chania (Greece) and Yeroskipou (Cyprus); 2) the part of the terrestrial crossing between Aqaba and Duba (Saudi Arabia); and 3) the main trunk from Duba to Mumbai (India), and the branch serving Djibouti. In total, these elements represent around 9 250 km of fibre optic cable. The project will include also a sub-system dedicated to the interconnection of the research and education institutions in the targeted regions, enhancing global research collaboration and innovation.

E&S Risk categorisation Medium

Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise[1]: no

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

Environmental and Social Assessment

The project is assessed as presenting Medium E&S risk because it is likely to have limited adverse environmental and social impacts that will be addressed through the application of mitigation measures. In some of the countries included in the scope of the project, the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) / Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) report could be required by the authorities, notably when the project crosses an environmentally sensitive area.

[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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Environmental Assessment

Submarine cables are infrastructures with relatively high deployment speed and limited local footprint. The cable diameter ranges from 17 mm to 37.5 mm; changes in diameter have to do with armouring which is enhanced at nearshore areas. For the buried sections which typically correspond to water depths from 0 to 1 000 meters, the trench is typically 1 meter deep and 0.2 meters wide. In general, submarine cable projects have minor residual environmental impacts thanks to their small footprint, shielded electrical field, minor magnetic field, and short time of the construction activities in each given point of the cable route. Moreover, submarine cables are built from non-toxic materials that are stable in the sea water.

At the design phase, the system desktop study and the marine survey are conducted to define the cable route avoiding sensitive areas to the extent possible as well as the appropriate mitigation measures based on industry standard solutions. These include general measures such as strict compliance with MARPOL (International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships) requirements as well as more specific ones such as avoiding beach burial during nesting periods or touristic seasons and implementation of an agreed waste management plan.

The submarine cable vendor in charge of the implementation of the project is a well-established company with a long experience in the deployment of large-scale submarine systems and a high-quality implementation track record.

In particular, the present EIB project will include the following specific segments of the overall BlueRaman cable system:

1. The part of the BlueRaman trunk from Palermo (Italy) to Tel-Aviv (Israel).
2. The landings in Chania (Greece), Yeroskipou (Cyprus) and Tel-Aviv.
3. The terrestrial connection between Aqaba (Jordan) and Duba (Saudi Arabia).
4. The part of the BlueRaman trunk between Duba and Mumbai (India)
5. The landings in Duba, Mumbai and Djibouti.
6. The optional landings in Bizerte (Tunisia) and Algiers (Algeria)

Neither submarine nor terrestrial fibre optic network projects are explicitly mentioned in Annex I and II of the European EIA Directive 2011/92/EU amended by Directive 2014/52/EU. However, the promoter has conducted specific environmental surveys and studies, depending on the sensitivity of the area and the specific local legal requirements, as part of the permitting process for cable landings and certain trunk segments.

Certain sections of the cable in Italy, Greece, and Cyprus either cross or are located in the vicinity of the following Natura 2000 sites:

- ITA030042 - Monti Peloritani, Dorsale Curcuraci, Antennamare
- ITA020047 - Fondali di Isola delle Femmine - Capo Gallo
- GR4340003 - Rodopou Peninsula – Maleme Beach – Chania Bay
- GR4340024 - Marine Area of Western and Southwestern Crete
- CY4000006 - Oceanid
- CY4000024 - Moulia

The promoter has complied with the Appropriate Assessment (AA) screening requirements under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), as transposed into national legislation. In all cases, the project was screened out, as it was considered not likely to have a significant effect on the relevant Natura 2000 sites, including those designated under the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC).

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In summary, the EIA and AA requirements for the project, and status of the processes are the following:

Location	EIA/AA required	EIA/AA report status	Authority approval
Palermo and Messina Strait (Italy)	AA screened out	AA screening reports received	Received
Chania (Greece)	AA screened out	AA screening reports received	Received
Yeroskipou (Cyprus)	EIA required + AA screened out	EIA and AA screening reports received	Received
Tel Aviv (Israel)	Exempt	Completed	Received
Duba (Saudi Arabia)	EIA	In progress	Pending
Djibouti	EIA	Completed	Received
Mumbai (India)	EIA	Completed	Received
Bizerte (Tunisia)	EIA (future)	On hold	On hold
Algiers (Algeria)	EIA (future)	On hold	On hold
Somalian waters	EIA	Pending	Received
Somaliland Waters	EIA	Completed	Received
Yemeni Waters	EIA	Completed	Received
Aqaba–Duba Crossing	No	Not required	Not applicable

Before any disbursement of the EIB financing related to the project components for which any documentation is pending (Duba, Bizerte and Algiers landings), the promoter will submit the final EIA report and the approval of the competent authorities, to the satisfaction of the Bank.

The Bank has reviewed the environmental documentation provided by the promoter and does not note any significant environmental challenge beyond the usual identified potential impacts and corresponding mitigation measures, resulting in minor residual impacts. Apart from the standard conditions for this kind of projects, the approvals from authorities include project-specific requirements for the cases where the project will be deployed in the vicinity or crossing sensitive or protected areas, such as:

- Avoidance of cable routing through or near protected habitats. Where avoidance is not possible, surface laying rather than burial may be required.
- Pre-installation surveys (often with ROVs or divers) to confirm absence of sensitive habitats or archaeological remains, and real-time monitoring during works.
- Minimum separation distances from archaeological sites and protected areas, with immediate reporting and cessation of works if new findings are discovered.
- Restrictions on timing of installation to avoid periods of reproduction or migration for marine fauna.
- Use of low-impact installation techniques and minimization of sediment disturbance.
- Appointment of environmental observers and submission of detailed documentation.
- Coordination with heritage and environmental agencies for any changes in routing or methodology.
- Emergency response plans for accidental pollution or other incidents.

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Digitalisation and ICT infrastructure play an important role in the transition of several sectors to a low carbon and climate resilient economy. The project is fully aligned with the Paris Agreement on climate change according to the Bank's definition (Annex 2 Table H of EIB's climate bank roadmap.

The counterparty is in scope and screened out of the PATH framework, because it is not considered high emitting or highly vulnerable.

Climate Assessment

The project is not considered sensitive to climate change risks after applying industry-standard mitigation measures. These measures include protecting the cable in the landing area and carefully selecting the locations of the beach manhole and cable landing station to address risks such as sea level rise and storm surges.

Social Assessment

Based on the documentation submitted by the promoter, the project is not expected to produce any relevant social impact. On the other hand, it is expected to deliver wide-ranging socio-economic benefits in the targeted regions thanks to improved digital connectivity, and facilitation of innovation through international scientific collaboration among the research and education institutions in Europe, south and east Africa, and India.

Public consultation

Maritime and coastal activities in the project area could be temporarily affected by the project during implementation. The promoter and the competent authorities typically publish the project's information including the non-confidential parts of the EIAs, where relevant, including in local media to inform the public and potential affected parties. In some cases (e.g. Cyprus) the public consultation process was more comprehensive, but the Bank notes that the documentation and supplementary information provided by the promoter indicate that no relevant concern has been raised by any third party.

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

The promoter operates under management systems certified according to ISO 9001 (quality), ISO 14001 (environment), ISO 45001 (health and safety), ISO 27001 (information security), and ISO 37001 (anticorruption).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Submarine cable projects generally result in minor environmental impacts during implementation that can be appropriately addressed by applying well-established mitigation and compensatory measures. The project is not expected to have significant negative social impacts either. On the other hand, it is expected to generate substantial positive social impacts by contributing to accelerating the transition to a digital economy in the targeted areas. In addition, the project will provide best in class digital connectivity to educational and research institutions and will stimulate innovation by increasing collaboration opportunities among research centres at the targeted areas.

The promoter shall provide, to the Bank's satisfaction, the required environmental reports and the competent authority's approval for the Duba, Bizerte, and Algiers cable landings where these procedures are not completed at the time of appraisal, prior to the first disbursement related to the respective segment..

Therefore, the project is acceptable for EIB financing in E&S terms.