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Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name: *IRISH WATER INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT*

Project Number: *2024-0052*

Country: *Ireland*

Project Description: Multi-annual investment programme to improve the water and wastewater treatment infrastructure in Ireland.

EIA required: No. This is an investment programme made up of multiple schemes, however it is not expected that they will require an EIA as per the EIA Directive 2014/52/EC amending Directive 2011/92/EC. Relevant conditions are included in the last section.

Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise¹: no

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

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

The project consists of the rehabilitation and extension of the wastewater and water supply infrastructure in Ireland. The Borrower of the project is the National Treasury Management Agency ("NTMA") and the Promoter is Uisce Éireann or "UE" (previously named Irish Water). UE is Ireland's national water utility company and it is responsible for providing and developing water supply (WS) and wastewater (WW) services throughout Ireland.

The components to be financed by the project are included in UE's 2025-2030 investment period. These components include: (i) New Wastewater Treatment Plants; (ii) extension and rehabilitation of existing wastewater treatment plants and sewer networks; (iii) extension and rehabilitation of water treatment plants and water supply networks.

The project supports the Promoter in complying with the requirements of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (91/271/EC) and its recast (Directive 2024/3019) if applicable, the Drinking Water Directive (EU) 2020/2184 which was transposed into Irish law on the 7th of March 2023 as Statutory Instrument No 99 of 2023 and the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC). The Promoter is also required to follow the requirements from the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive (2011/92/EU) as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU, the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC), the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) and the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).

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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Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) procedure

The proposed projects/components are all aligned with the Water Services Strategy Plan 2050, the National Water Resources Plan and the National Bioresources Plan, which have all been developed in compliance with the Strategic Environmental Directive (SEA 2001/42/EC).

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedure

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the competent authority in the fields of licensing various environmental activities including water quality, monitoring and enforcing environmental legislation and providing environmental data. According to the Promoter, none of the components under the project will require a full EIA study. However, in case a full EIA study is required for any of the components, the Promoter will be required not to allocate Bank funds to these components until the EIA study and/or the necessary appropriate assessments have been finalised and approved by the relevant competent authority.

Appropriate Assessment (AA)

The project components do not affect any Natura 2000 areas, nor any national or local other protected areas.

Environmental impacts

The project will have significant long-term positive environmental impact on ground and surface water, by reducing pollution from untreated wastewater or stormwater discharge. In addition, the project contributes significantly to continued compliance with the Drinking Water Directive EU 2020/2184 by rehabilitating and extending the existing water supply system and ensuring safe provision of safe drinking water to the population.

Negative impacts to the environment are assessed only as temporary. During construction, temporary impacts to the environment such as noise and dust may occur. In view of preventing and mitigating any impacts associated with the construction phase, an undertaking is included that requires the Promoter to include mitigation measures in the Environmental Management Plans of the work contracts to be implemented by the Contractors during construction.

Climate Mitigation and Adaptation

The Project is expected to positively contribute towards climate change mitigation and adaptation. Investments in the combined sewer network will support the Promoter to adapt to the identified climate change risks of the increased frequency and magnitude of extreme rainfall events. The investments in the water supply network to reduce water losses and to rehabilitate and extend the water sources will help the Promoter to adapt to the identified climate change risks of the increased frequency and magnitude of drought. Climate change mitigation will be achieved by a number of performance improvement measures, including but not limited to, reduction of water losses and sewer infiltration and the connection of currently un-served customers to centralised wastewater collection and treatment. These will contribute towards the overall reduction of energy requirements and methane emissions, thus will result in a reduction of GHG emissions.

The Project has been assessed for Paris Alignment and is considered to be aligned both against low carbon and resilience goals against the policies set out in the Climate Bank Roadmap (CBR).

Social Assessment

The proposed investments will improve access to safe drinking water and sanitation, as well as will result in more resilient and reliable water services at affordable tariffs. This will yield lasting positive social benefits, including improving the living conditions of the inhabitants of Ireland, which will be beneficial for the public health. The works will also contribute to employment creation during construction.

Temporary negative social impacts of the Project may occur such as the possible disruption of water services and traffic, noise and temporary occupation of public and private space during



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the construction period. They are common for this type of projects and will be addressed during construction site management.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

Where relevant, the promoter will be required to ensure compliance with national and European environmental legislation, notably to facilitate public access to environmental information and guarantee public consultation during the environmental decision process.

Conclusions and Recommendations

By rehabilitating and upgrading the water supply and sewage facilities, the project is expected to generate a positive impact on the environment and will contribute to the improvement of living conditions of the inhabitants of Ireland.

All components covered by the project will be subject to the Promoter complying with the following requirements:

- The Promoter will be required to act according to the provisions of the relevant EU Directives, EIA Directive (2011/92/EC) amended by the EIA Directive (2014/52/EC), Habitats (92/43/EEC) and Birds (2009/147/EC) Directives.
- The Promoter will be required not to allocate Bank funds to project components that require a full EIA study until the EIA study and/or the necessary appropriate assessments have been finalised and approved by the relevant competent authority. Once any EIA study is available, the Promoter will provide the Bank with an electronic copy of the EIA study, for publication on the EIB website.
- The Promoter will be required to provide to the Bank, any decisions issued by the competent authority that screen out project components and the main reasons for not requiring an EIA study with the reference to the relevant criteria listed in Annex III of the EIA Directive (if relevant).
- The Promoter will be required to include measures to mitigate impacts, associated with the construction phase, in the Environmental Management Plans of the work contracts to be implemented by the Contractors during construction.

Based on the information available and with appropriate conditions and monitoring, the project is acceptable for EIB financing in environmental and social terms.