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Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	IRRIGATION CANAL NAVARRA PHASE II
Project Number:	2024-0774
Country:	Spain
Project Description:	The Project consists of the extension of the existing irrigation infrastructure Canal de Navarra in the Spanish region of Navarra. The investments will improve the efficiency of irrigation to 14 300 ha and enable energy efficiencies to other 6 100 ha. The system will contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation by enabling water and energy savings, while sustaining the agro-industrial activity, provide drinking water and support rural populations in the region.
EIA required:	yes
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise ¹ :	no

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

The Project is the second phase of a larger operation "Canal de Navarra", which has already completed its Phase 1 (22 500 ha) and the extension of Phase 1 (12 500 ha) through more than 1 200 km of pipes (98 km of main canal) and rural roads. In this second phase, the main existing canal will be extended to additional 71 km and benefit 20 400 ha of existing irrigation schemes.

The Project aligns with the relevant EU Directives: Habitats, Birds, Water Framework, EIA, Nitrates, Flood, Drinking Water.

The project falls within Annex I of the Spanish Law 21/2013 on Environmental Assessment, transposing the EU directive.

In October 2024, the second phase of the Canal de Navarra received the positive Declaration of Environmental Impact (Declaracion de Impacto Ambiental - DIA) by the Spanish Ministry of Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge. The Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment (SEIA) for the Irrigation Regional Plan of Navarra and for the River Basin Management Plan including the Project (Ebro River), have also been published. The regional direction for Rural Development and Environment of Navarra has also informed positively about the project, subject to the conditions set in the communication.

Linked to the project subject to the EIB financing operation, but not in its scope there will be eleven irrigation schemes that will need to be modernized (14 000 ha). Each one of these projects that are downstream of the investment to be financed by the EIB will require an individual EIA.

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.



Luxembourg 08.01.25

The Project has positive environmental externalities, mainly through a significant improvement in water efficiency and less needs for energy in pumping stations (gravitation feed), but also through the swap of current extraction of water from less than good water bodies (rivers Queiles and Alhama) by water coming from more sustainable, resilient and good quality status bodies. Nevertheless, the remarkable size of the works (70 km of main pipes and 8 million m³ of new reservoirs) and its crossing under Natura 2000 areas will bring about temporary negative impacts during the construction phase. The Project crosses the following nature protection areas: natural enclaves of Sotos Lopez-Val, Pinar de Santa Águeda and Sotos de Murillos de las Limas, natural park of Bardenas Reales and the following Natura 2000 areas: ZEC Tramos Bajos de Aragón y del Arga, ZEC Bardenas Reales, ZEC Río Ebro.

This will be mitigated through adopting a double pipe buried system, instead of an open canal, used in the previous two phases. In addition of the usual mitigants for this type of works.

With regards the environmental risks potentially affecting the Project, the EIA estimates low those derived from seismic, landslides, erosion, industrial accidents and pollution risks. The following risks have been deemed tolerable: floods and wildfires.

The Environmental monitoring program will focus on: monitoring of the areas of works, especially with regard to vegetation and the temporary or permanent use of the Public Hydraulic Domain associated with major waterways such as the Aragón, Ebro, and Queiles rivers, Monitoring of suspended particle emissions during construction; monitoring of potential contamination of soil, subsoil, and surface and groundwater; and monitoring the management of waste generated, both during construction and during operation.

Social Assessment

The Social buy-in of the Project is high and proven through the success of the previous two phases and the request from the irrigation associations to register to this second phase of Project.

The Promoter, CANASA, RIEGOS DE NAVARRA (the Regional Government company for Irrigation), the Irrigation Associations, the 12 000 beneficiaries (farmers, especially young farmers interested) and the agro-industry (fresh, frozen, processed and canned products) are aligned to move the Project forward.

The beneficiaries of the previous phase have expressed some concerns in the press, related to the water availability for the past and new beneficiaries. The ESIA assessment confirms that the project remains sound environmentally and economically considering the water rights conceded and the real water consumption (lower), under climate change scenarios until 2070 (RCP 4.5 and 8.5).

In terms of cultural heritage, control and supervision of all ground movements generated by the project will be carried out in line with the competent authorities' requirements.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

The SEIA for the Irrigation Regional Plan of Navarra and for the current River Basin Management Plan of the Ebro River, have been published and publicly consulted in February 2025 and April 2025 respectively. For the EIA, more than 30 organisations, institutions and public authorities have been consulted during January 2023 and March 2024 and 25 allegations were received during the public consultation. The outcomes of the public consultation have been incorporated in the Declaration for Environmental Impact (DIA) issued by the competent authorities.



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Other Environmental and Social Aspects

N/A

Conclusions and Recommendations

With the conditions set in the environmental permit, the Project presents mitigated, temporal and non-cumulative risks and it is acceptable for EIB financing under the usual Environmental, Climate and Social finance contract conditions.

An inclusion of an undertaking condition to the finance contract will be proposed to the EIB governing bodies by which the detailed designs of the Project (pipes, ponds and roads) shall be adapted to potential increase in floods due to Climate Change.