

## Environmental and Social Data Sheet

### Disclaimer:

***This draft ESDS is published for information purposes and cannot be considered to represent the final position of the EIB regarding the environmental and social aspects of the project. Until a decision to finance the project is taken by the EIB's Board of Directors, this document may be subject to changes. Once a decision is taken, the final document will be published in the Public Register on the EIB website. Questions and comments regarding this draft ESDS can be addressed to [InfoDesk@eib.org](mailto:InfoDesk@eib.org).***

### Overview

Project Name:	SUSTAINABLE WATER SUPPLY GREATER BANJUL GAMBIA
Project Number:	2024-0649
Country:	Gambia
Project Description:	The Water Supply Project in the Greater Banjul Area (WASIB) will finance critical infrastructure to provide safely managed drinking water services in the Greater Banjul Area, The Gambia. WASIB addresses several challenges in the area, including ageing water supply facilities, high levels of non-revenue water, intermittent water supply, and depleting groundwater resources. The project covers both drilling and emergency works necessary to maintain and improve service continuity for about 560,000 people (approximately 25% of the country's population). It also includes water production and treatment, as well as water transmission, storage, and distribution for approximately 300,000 additional new beneficiaries.
E&S Risk Categorisation:	High risk as per paragraph 4.18 of <a href="#">E&amp;S Policy</a>
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise <sup>1</sup> :	No

<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.

## Environmental and Social Assessment

The Water and Sanitation Improvement Project in Greater Banjul (WASIB or the "Project") is a comprehensive initiative designed to enhance access to safely managed drinking water services for approximately 860,000 residents in the Greater Banjul Area (GBA), The Gambia. The GBA is the country's main urban and peri-urban region and accounts for over 60% of the national population. The Project aims to address critical challenges in this area, such as ageing water supply infrastructure, high levels of non-revenue water, intermittent water supply, and the degradation of groundwater resources due to increased demand, urban expansion, and environmental pressures.

The Project encompasses short-term works, which specifically include emergency works that will improve the service continuity for the 560,000 individuals connected to the network (replacement and reinforcement of critical infrastructure including water tanks, pumps, meters, and valves).

Medium-term investments include (i) drilling works for 10 new sub-shallow aquifer boreholes and 4 new deep aquifer boreholes, (ii) the construction of a water quality laboratory, (iii) the construction of a new water treatment plant and the improvement of existing water treatment facilities, (iv) the construction of transmission lines and associated transfer pumps, (v) the construction of 8 elevated tanks, (vi) the rehabilitation of the distribution networks, (vii) the provision of new distribution networks to provide water services to new populated areas, (viii) the provision of services connections for the most vulnerable members of the community and (ix) the implementation of IT infrastructure for remote control of water assets.

Long-term planning is supported through the development of a Water Supply and Sanitation Master Plan, alongside technical assistance, hydrogeological studies, and capacity-building activities for the National Water and Electricity Company (NAWEC) who is responsible for the provision of water supply services in the GBA.

The Promoter of the Project is the NAWEC. NAWEC is the state-owned utility responsible for the production and distribution of water, electricity, and sewerage services in urban and peri-urban areas of The Gambia. As the Promoter of the WASIB project, NAWEC's roles and responsibilities include overall project ownership, day-to-day management, and coordination of all project activities. NAWEC is responsible for the establishment and operation of the Project Management Unit (PMU), which oversees procurement, contract management, financial administration, and reporting to donors and national authorities. The Promoter has experience in managing large-scale infrastructure projects with international financing institutions and is supported by technical assistance to ensure effective delivery and sustainability of the Project.

The Project will be co-financed with the Agence Française de Développement (AFD). AFD has been working on the Project since 2020, and the Project will be implemented under an Mutual Reliance Initiative (MRI) agreement with the AFD, with the AFD acting as the Lead Financier. AFD will exclusively finance the short-term works as well as the drilling works for all boreholes and the water quality laboratory. These contracts are already under implementation. The AFD and the EIB will co-finance the remaining medium-term works as described above. Environmental and social aspects will be monitored by the AFD, as defined in the relevant clauses of the MRI between the AFD and the Bank.

### Environmental Assessment

The environmental assessment in The Gambia is governed by the National Environment Management Act 1994 (NEMA), which establishes the legal requirement for Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) for any project likely to have significant environmental or social effects. The National

Environment Agency (NEA) is the competent authority responsible for reviewing ESIs, issuing environmental compliance certificates, and monitoring implementation. The ESI process is further detailed in the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2014, which set out the procedures for screening, scoping, baseline studies, impact analysis, stakeholder consultation, and the development of Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs). Sectoral legislation, such as the Forest Act, Water Act, and Public Health Act, also applies, ensuring that issues like land use, water quality, and waste management are addressed in a cross-cutting manner. The regulatory framework is complemented by the requirements of international financing institutions which impose additional standards on involuntary resettlement, gender, vulnerable groups, and occupational health and safety.

For the WASIB Project, the environmental assessment will follow this national and international framework and in particular the AFD Environmental and Social Standards. The AFD has prepared an ESI for the drilling works with baseline studies of the physical, biological, and socio-economic environment, and a analysis of potential impacts during both construction and operation phases. The preparation of the ESI has resulted in the development of an ESMP, which sets out specific mitigation measures, monitoring indicators, institutional responsibilities, and budget allocations. The ESMP is contractually binding for contractors and operators, and its implementation is monitored by NAWEC, the NEA, and the Project's technical consultants. The ESMP also provides recommendations for adaptive management, allowing for the adjustment of mitigation measures in response to unforeseen impacts or changes in project design. A grievance redress mechanism is established to ensure that complaints from affected parties are addressed transparently and efficiently.

For the medium-term works, other than for the boreholes, an ESI is not required by Gambian authorities but in line with the national legislation, following of the screening of the project, an environment compliance certificate must be issued by the National Environmental Agency (NEA). In line with AFD requirements, an ESI will be prepared also for the remaining medium-term works and the implementation of these components will not start before receiving first all the necessary approvals from the competent authorities. The Bank will require from the Promoter to provide a full copy of the approved ESI.

## **Climate Assessment**

The WASIB Project's approach to climate change is structured around mitigation, adaptation, and risk assessment.

### ***Climate change mitigation:***

For climate mitigation, the Project aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions primarily by improving the efficiency of water production and distribution systems. This includes the replacement of ageing pumps and optimisation of pumping operations, which will lower energy consumption per cubic metre of water supplied. The Project also targets a reduction in non-revenue water through network rehabilitation and asset management, further decreasing the energy required for water delivery.

### ***Climate change adaptation:***

In terms of climate adaptation, WASIB is designed to address the vulnerability of the Greater Banjul Area's water supply to climate-induced risks such as saline intrusion, reduced aquifer recharge, and increased rainfall variability. The Project diversifies water sources by developing new boreholes in both the shallow sand aquifer and the deeper Maastrichtian aquifer, enhancing resilience to drought and contamination. Hydraulic modelling and master planning are used to anticipate future demand and climate scenarios, ensuring that infrastructure investments are robust to projected changes in temperature, precipitation, and sea level. The Project also emphasises the protection of groundwater recharge areas, sustainable abstraction rates, and continuous water quality monitoring.

The adaptation measures financed under this operation are in line with key national strategies including the Gambia 2050 Climate Vision, the Long-Term Climate-Neutral Development Strategy, the National Adaptation Plan, and the Nationally Determined Contributions. The operation is considered aligned with the resilient development goal of the Paris Agreement.

### ***Climate Risk assessment***

The National Climate Change Policy of The Gambia (2016) identifies key climate risks, including the increased frequency of extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and reduced groundwater recharge due to changes in rainfall patterns and urbanisation. The Project quantifies potential impacts on water availability and quality and proposes adaptive management strategies, such as integrating climate projections into infrastructure design and establishing monitoring systems. This ensures that both current and future climate risks are systematically addressed in the planning, design, and operation of the water supply system.

### ***Paris Alignment of projects:***

According to Annex 2, Table F (Water and waste) of the EIB Climate Bank Roadmap 2021-2025 (Nov 2020) water supply activities are supported by the EIB Group, and therefore are considered Paris aligned.

### **Carbon Footprint Calculation**

N/A

### **Social Assessment**

The anticipated social benefits of the Project include improved access to safely managed drinking water, reduced time and effort spent on water collection, better health outcomes, livelihoods, and enhanced economic opportunities. The Project is expected to contribute to poverty reduction, social inclusion, and community resilience in one of the most densely populated areas in the country. The ESIA for the drilling works includes an assessment of the socioeconomic environment. According to the analysis, the impact of the the investments on the surrounding communities will be minor. This is because (i) interventions are either located in forested areas (Sifoe) and the buffer zone of the airport, or (ii) are within the premises of NAWEC sites and facilities, all which are owned by NAWEC. The project components of the medium-term works may foresee some physical and economic displacements. A Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) is being prepared by the Promoter.

It is stated in the ESIA that women are often marginalized in the decision-making process, hence, they are considered as disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. In addition, women still make up the majority of the poor and extremely poor and are faced with many disparities including in access to education, healthcare, and salaried employment. Other groups regarded as vulnerable, and disadvantaged include the elderly and minors, sexual and gender minorities, and persons with disabilities. Special efforts will be made during Project implementation to ensure that these groups are not left out and that the specific needs of those impacted, including women and children, those below the poverty line, the elderly, etc. are considered accordingly.

As part of the ESIA an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) has been prepared which aims to ensure environmental and social sustainability of the Project, identifies responsibilities for the various environmental and social actions, and provides direction and guidance to the contractors. It outlines monitoring activities to ensure effectiveness in maintaining environmental and social sustainability. This includes particular measures for the protection of gender-based violence and sexual

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exploitation and abuse, the protection from violence against children and public and worker health and safety. In addition, a Gender Action Plan has been prepared.

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

As part of the ESIA, the main Project stakeholders were identified and their specific needs were assessed. Based on this assessment, a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) was developed and a strategy for consultation of the various stakeholders was proposed. The Project will carry out targeted stakeholder engagement with vulnerable groups to understand their concerns and needs in terms of accessing information on the Project. The stakeholder engagement strategy will help increase awareness raising among the stakeholders, particularly amongst the most vulnerable about the Project and its activities and their roles in its implementation. To ensure an effective delivery system, NAWEC will develop a communication plan that takes account of the stakeholders' needs and preferences in terms of information during the implementation.

In addition, a Grievance Mechanism has been established with the objective of solving disputes at the earliest possible time. The mechanism will be effective in addressing concerns at project-level so that future incidents are reduced, and grievances are not referred through the court system for resolution, especially since the court system may not be financially accessible to all and may add cost and time burdens. However, all affected persons will have access to use the court system if they prefer.

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

The Promoter, has experience in implementing large-scale infrastructure projects with international financing institutions such as the World Bank, the AFD, and other bilateral and multilateral donors. The Promoter has previously managed projects involving water supply, electricity, and sanitation, and has established internal procedures for procurement, contract management, and compliance with donor requirements.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The Project contributes towards the fulfilment of UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 6 "Clean water and sanitation", SDG 11 "Sustainable Cities and Communities" and SDG 13 "Climate Action".

Overall, the Project has positive net social and environmental benefits. The negative impacts on environment expected from the Project are mainly construction related, that means minor and temporary ones and thus they can be addressed through adoption of good engineering practices and appropriate mitigation measures during project implementation.

### **Environmental and Social Conditions**

With the following conditions in place, the Project is acceptable for financing in environmental and social terms:

- The Promoter will be required to establish a staffed a dedicated Project Management Unit (PMU), with personnel of adequate qualifications and experience, an environmental and social management team or unit responsible for the implementation, monitoring, and reporting of all

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environmental and social related matters and the implementation of the Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP).

- The Promoter will be required to confirm that the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA), the Resettlement Action Plans (RAPs), the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) and the associated Grievance Redress Mechanism of the components in relation to the disbursement in question are satisfactory to the Project cofinanciers and sent to be published on the Bank's website, together with the favourable opinion of the competent authority.
- The Promoter will be required to confirm that compensations to those people affected by the Project, in relation to the disbursement in question, has taken place.

### **Environmental and Social Undertakings**

- The Promoter shall provide and update on the implementation of the Gender Action Plan to mitigate and respond to gender gaps, including a Grievance Redress Mechanism that is sensitive and confidential.
- The Promoter commits to implement the Environmental and Social Management Plans including the Resettlement Action Plans, the Stakeholder Engagement Plan and the associated Grievance Redress Mechanism.

Based on the information available and with appropriate conditions and monitoring as defined in the project letter under the Mutual Reliance Initiative (MRI) agreement between the EIB and the AFD, with the AFD acting as the Lead Financier, the project is acceptable for EIB financing in environmental and social terms.