

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name: AVE Y VASCA
 Project Number: 2011-0454
 Country: Spain
 Project Description: New high-speed priority TEN-T rail line in the Basque Country connecting Spain's network towards France. The line will be split into two tranches: Vitoria-Bilbao and Bergara-San Sebastian

EIA required: YES

Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise¹: YES

(Details are provided in section: "Carbon Footprint")

Summary of Environmental and Social Assessment, including key issues and overall conclusion and recommendation

The Project forms part of the priority TEN-T corridor 3 connecting the South West Europe. It involves the construction of a new railway line between Vitoria, Bilbao and San Sebastian, which will link one of the most densely populated areas in Spain. Most of the project sections (some 70% of the alignment) are tunnels or viaducts. All the line is greenfield construction except the provisional connections in the cities that will be solved upgrading the current conventional line. The new stations to be developed in the future are not included in the Project - they have been treated separately and for them the screening process is ongoing.

The project has been included in all the Infrastructure Plans since 1993. A SEA was carried out in the context of the ongoing 2005-2020 Plan. The works related to the railway line itself are subject to the requirements of Annex I of EU EIA Directive 85/337/EC as amended, i.e. a full environmental impact assessment with public consultation needs to be performed. After the validation of the feasibility study in 1998 a full environmental impact assessment with public consultation was carried out and approved in 2000 for the whole line. A supplementary EIA approved in 2009 has been accomplished for the stretch between Zizurkil and Urnieta because of the affection of a mining area.

The line does not cross any Natura 2000 sites. Notwithstanding, for each section of the line the Promoter has requested from the Environmental Competent Authority confirmation of the avoidance of disruption on Natura 2000 sites. Form A has been received for 85% of the project. Reception of a certificate confirming the absence of impacts on any Natura 2000 site (Form A or equivalent) is a precondition before the disbursement of the last 15% of the loan.

Certificates has been obtained for the new HSL in construction by the Regional Water Agency (URA) to comply with the 2000/60/EC Directive, except to the Access to Vitoria and Bilbao.

During construction, the impacts are largely temporary and localised and are to be addressed through an environmental monitoring plan: these are mainly identified as the significant amount of land take and its treatment in controlled dumps or assignment to other deficit land infrastructures; impacts derived of the blasting in the tunnels; severance effects because of the safety barrier effect and visual intrusion specially concerning the viaducts. Due to the highly percentage of tunnels, the control of the phreatic level and drainages and spillways are necessary. There will also be significant temporary disruption during construction because of noise, vibration, dust, etc. On the other side, land considered as potentially contaminated is being removed and treated and restarted; some archaeological discoveries have been shown, and landscape reparation is being realised during the execution of the works.

¹ Only projects that meet the scope of the Pilot Exercise, as defined in the EIB draft Carbon Footprint Methodologies, are included, provided estimated emissions exceed the methodology thresholds: above 100,000 tons CO2e/year absolute (gross) or 20,000 tons CO2e/year relative (net) – both increases and savings.

The main adverse residual effects of the project are the ones expected in a greenfield project of a major linear infrastructure as the change in land use, noise or vibration. In all cases, EIAs considered variant analysis, identified impacts and corrective and mitigating measures and were subject to public consultation. Overall, the project will have some positive environmental effects in comparison with the current situation, as it will have a significant contribution to increasing the capture rate of rail versus road and air transport in the corridor, with environmentally favourable consequences related to energy consumption and air emissions.

The Project is acceptable for Bank financing.

Environmental and Social Assessment

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The project is part of the “Strategic Plan for Transport Infrastructure 2005-2020”, but was already included in the previous strategic “Plan for Transport Infrastructures” 2000-2007 and Plan Director de Infraestructuras 1993-2007. A SEA was carried out for the current plan with its correspondent Environmental Sustainability Report, following the SEA Directive 2001/42/EC.

The environmental legislation is reflected in the state Law 6/2001 amending the legislative decree 1302/86 (transposing Directive 85/337/EEC as amended by 97/11/EC). The 2001/42/EC SEA Directive has been transposed into national Law 9/2006.

Public consultation was realised during the early stage of the definition of the project. Land acquisition process follows the applicable legislation and is not finished in the parts still under design.

EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise

The project was already assessed within the EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise. From the calculations made with standard methodology, it has been estimated that the net overall reduction permitted by the project, considering its emissions is in the range of 350 000 tonnes per year and benefits of 370 000 CO2 tonnes per year.

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

ADIF operates in accordance with a published Sustainability Policy and a published Environmental Policy. The Environmental Management System and associated standards of ADIF are based on the principles of the international standard, ISO 14001. Since 2005, ADIF is issuing integrated yearly reports covering Overall Strategy, Areas of Activity and Financial results, Environmental Management and Social Management.

Among ADIF's particular commitments on E&S issues are specific objectives including the reduction of emissions (including carbon), minimization of waste, archaeological monitoring plans, internal E&S audit requirements and explicit collaboration objectives with civil society and NGOs. ADIF's Procedures on E&S management are designed to instil best practice in construction management.