

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name: MARITSA MOTORWAY (FL20060411)
 Project Number: 20110478
 Country: BULGARIA
 Project Description: Construction of 65.62km new dual carriageway motorway between Plodovitova and Hermanli thus completing the motorway connection between Sofia and the Turkish border on TEN corridors IV and X.

EIA required: yes

Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise¹: no

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

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

The project is part of the SOP-T which was subject to a strategic environmental assessment following Bulgarian legislation in accordance with SEA Directive 2001/42/EC. The Environmental report was approved in February 21st, 2007.

The project falls under the incidence of Annex I of the EIA Directive 2011/92/EC as amended, and therefore subject to an EIA. The assessment process began prior to accession of Bulgaria to EU in the '90s with a first positive decision issued on 1994. The assessment was subsequently revised and new positive decisions issued in 2000 and 2007. In 2010 a further assessment was done and a new decision was issued in conformity with local legislation that enacts the relevant European Directives, including in relation with the Natura 2000 network.

The project passes in close vicinity of four and crosses three Natura 2000 sites. Following the adoption of specific mitigation measures, the residual impact is expected to be not significant, as confirmed also by the competent authority.

Following the application of the mitigation measures, the project will have major residual negative impacts specific to this type of infrastructure project, namely land take, severance and noise.

The positive impacts are increased safety, noise and emission reduction in inhabited areas and result mainly from the diversion of transit traffic from the existing road that is crossing many inhabited areas.

The project is therefore acceptable for Bank financing from an environmental point of view.

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

EIA

The project is classified under Annex I point 7 (b) "Construction of motorways and express roads" of the EIA Directive 2011/92/EC which is fully transposed in Bulgaria by the Environment Protection Act (EPA). Environmental Data Sheet is prepared.

EIA procedure

An EIA was prepared in 1994 for the section between km 2+930 and 73+600; the Minister of Environment and Water (MOEW) issued a favourable EIA decision No. 37/1994 on 25/04/1994.

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.

An updated EIA was prepared in 1999 - 2000 based on an updated technical design and parcel plans for the section between km 2+900 and 73+320. By Decision No 46-11/2000 the MOEW returned the EIA Report.

The Road Infrastructure Agency (RIA) commissioned an update (supplement) of the EIA report which followed in its preparation the instructions received from the MOEW. After the mandatory quality review of this report, the MOEW issued the favourable EIA decision 04-OC/2007 (on 06.12.2007) which supplements the previous EIA decision no. 37/1994 especially with respect to the assessment of effects on NATURA 2000 sites as long as the "Actualisation of the investment proposal is not changing the alignment and the nature/ type of the works".

Another updated EIA was prepared in 2010 for the same section between km 2+900 and 73+320 following advice from the Commission. It was based on the updated technical designs prepared in 2007-2008, the resolutions presented on the previous EIAs (No. 37/1994 and No 46-11/2000) and the requirements, terms, conditions and remarks included in the previous 2007 decision No. 04-00/2007. The assessment given in the 2010 EIA confirmed the remarks, expertise and recommendations made in the 2007 EIA. This 2010 EIA report was submitted to the MoEW and a favourable decision No. 37/2010 was issued by the MOEW.

Assessment of effects on Natura 2000 sites

The planned motorway route goes through three "Natura 2000" sites:

- SPA BG0002081 "Maritsa"-Parvomay crossed by the route of the motorway in sections km 9+000 - 12 +500 and km 22+000 - 25+200
- SCI BG0000578 river "Maritsa" crossed by the route at the villages of Velikan and Yabalkovo;
- SCI BG0000434 Banska River crossed by the route in a very small section of 0.3 km between the village of Preslavets and Harmanli.

The route is close to other NATURA 2000 sites, as follows below:

- SPA Harmanliyska River (code BG0002092) - the route of the motorway passes approximately 1.8 km north of its northern border, significant impact on the area is not expected.
- SPA Zlatno pole (code BG0002103) - the route of the motorway passes approximately 4.8 km south of its southern border, significant impact on the area is not expected.
- SCI Ostar kamak (code BG0001034) - the route of the motorway passes approximately 1.8 km north of its northern border, significant impact on the area is not expected.
- SCI Sakar (code BG0000212) - the route of the motorway passes approximately 6.7 km northwest of its western border.

The assessment carried out in 2010 and reported within the 2010 EIA Report concluded that the project implementation will lead to direct and indirect effects on the animals and their habitats including within the three crossed sites NATURA 2000 and the ecological corridors connecting them, but the impact will have a local character without leading to drastic reduction of the total suitable habitat area. However, mitigation measures (including limitations on construction activities within certain periods over a substantial length of the project) have been proposed and the cumulative effects have been recommended to be considered very carefully in further development of the region to prevent future additional loss of species' habitats in the areas determined as significantly important for conservation of animals.

The EIA Decision no. 37/2010 issued on 02.07.2010 which however amends and supplements the previous ones mentions a series of specific measures aiming to protection of NATURA 2000 sites and other protected areas.

The Natura 2000 Declaration issued in October 2010 was reasoned by reference to the "Resolution made on 02.07.2010 for amending and supplementing previous resolutions on EIA No. 37/1994 and No.04 OC/2007" (i.e. the previous EIA Decisions).

The last EIA decision issued for the project (No 26-PR/2011 of 04.07.2011) concerns the reconstruction of the engineering networks in the area of the project. It concludes that the related works are unlikely to have a significant negative impact on natural habitats, populations and habitats of species subject to conservation in protected areas

Mitigation measures

A number of mitigation measures have been included in the project design. The estimated proportion of their cost in the total cost of the project is 5%. This figure is explained as covering the cost of the following works:

- Noise protection walls (m): 17,100
- Safety nets (m): 263,481
- Landscape design, trees planted: 10,163
- Landscape design, shrubs planted: 1,358,739
- Landscape design, watering lawns (tonnes): 55,590

Apart from them, other mitigation measures will be taken during the construction and operation stage. These include specific monitoring and are comprised in the EMP developed as part of the detailed design.

Development Consent/ Construction Permit

According to Bulgarian legislation the Construction Permit/ Development consent is issued not only on the basis of an approved EIA procedure but of a number of other documents related to the future works. Construction Permits for big linear projects are issued for specific works, normally section by section along the line of route following design completion. Additionally, the Water Body Use Permits will be required for all construction, modernization or rebuilding works on structures crossing surface water bodies. Such a permit gives the right to use a surface water body and is a basis for approval of the investment designs and issuing of Construction Permits. The East Aegean River Basin Directorate (BD-IBR) - Plovdiv will issue these water permits.

Development Consents in the form of a Construction Permit have been issued by the Bulgarian Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works (MRDPW) for each specific project section before the start of the actual works.

Positive impacts

The project implementation is expected to overcome current problems along the corridor by using a completely new route as well as providing a road link with better operational conditions. The environmental benefits of the project may be expressed by:

- An overall reduction of emitted exhaust gasses and noise achieved due to the reduced travel time, decreased travel length and the eliminated congestion.
- As the alignment of the motorway will be changed and located away from the populated areas, the population directly affected by a high level of noise and harmful emissions will be reduced.
- Moreover, the population of the towns and villages presently situated along the existing roads will be subject to less noise and air pollution.
- Significant decrease of the number of traffic accidents along the new alignment.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement, where required

Consultations with authorities concerned by the project due to their responsibilities for environmental protection

- The MOEW is the main consulted environmental authority responsible for issuing consenting decisions relating to EIA and Natura 2000 in the context of this project.
- Executive Environmental Agency (ExEA): responsibility to carry out management, coordination and information functions as regards to control and environmental protection in Bulgaria; it designs and manages the National System for Environmental Monitoring and Information on the state of environmental components and factors on the country.

- Regional Inspectorate on Environment and Water (RIEW) – Stara Zagora and Haskovo: responsible, together with the MoEW for the control of implementation of the municipal environmental plans
- East Aegean River Basin Directorate (BD-IBR) – Plovdiv: responsible for the preparation of the River Basin Management Plans, issuing permits according to water legislation and managing information databases on water resources and water quality. The directorate control the state water bodies, the state of water infrastructure and utilities, manage exclusive state property with water that is not given to the concession and collect fees for water use and discharges into water bodies.