

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	<i>Afforestation and Erosion Control II</i>
Project Number:	2012-0532
Country:	<i>Turkey</i>
Project Description:	Supporting forest rehabilitation, afforestation and erosion control activities in Turkey during the period 2014-15 through the Ministry of Forestry and Water Works (MoFW).
EIA required:	no
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise ¹ :	yes

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

The operation is a programme of investments focussed on afforestation, improved forest management and erosion control measures in Turkey. It will support selected elements of the MoFW's afforestation and erosion control programme during the 2-year period 2014-15, and is expected to include erosion control activities on 155,600 ha; rehabilitation of 110,000 ha of degraded forest land; and new afforestation on 80,000 ha. The programme builds on an existing operation which is supporting a similar programme of activities. It will also include investments in equipment and facilities to carry out these works and to facilitate improvements to the quality of forest management.

The activities will take place around the country, focusing in particular on the most erosion-prone regions of the Anatolia Peninsula.

Because of the project's focus on afforestation, erosion control and soil rehabilitation works, it is likely to deliver multiple environmental benefits, and is expected to contribute to both EU and Turkish environmental policy objectives in the fields of climate change, biodiversity and soil management. In the longer term, it will also contribute to an increase in the use of forest-derived bioenergy.

The programme contributes to both climate change mitigation and adaptation. Growing forests sequester carbon and standing forest ecosystems are important carbon stocks, so the project's measures to promote new afforestation and improve the management of existing forests make an important contribution to climate mitigation. Meanwhile, the increasing droughts and intense precipitation are likely to exacerbate the already serious problem of soil erosion. The present operation's extensive measures to address this are a valuable step towards adapting to this increased risk.

Public sector forestry and erosion control activities are exempt from EIA in Turkey. All activities are subject to detailed decrees which conform to the requirements of the Ministry of Environment and the General Directorate of Environmental Impact Assessment. New afforestation activities require detailed Implementation Plans, for which the agreement of the local community is obligatory. The procedures are considered to be consistent with EU practices.

However, there is a possibility that some of the related works – storage facilities, small-scale infrastructure – may require an EIA. Therefore an undertaking has been included, as follows:

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 promoter shall not commit any EIB funds against schemes that require an EIA according to EU and national law without, prior to commitment, submitting the EIA and the non-technical summary of the EIA to the Bank for review and publication on the Bank's website.'

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

The programme is expected to deliver multiple environmental benefits. It will sequester greenhouse gases, protect against soil erosion, protect water resources, enhance biodiversity and improve forest ecosystem health. It is in support of the Turkish government's ambitious plans to address climate change and improve natural resource management, which underpin economic growth and sustainability.

The operation complies with applicable national and EU legislation on sustainable forest management and safeguarding of protected areas. The General Directorate of Forests also carries out a range of activities in support of resolutions under the Forest Europe process (the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe), as well as the United Nations Forum on Forests.

Soil erosion is a severe problem in Turkey. The majority of the country's soils are prone to erosion risk due to the country's topography and steep slopes, with 59% of agricultural land affected. The present operation will continue to support Turkey's ongoing programme of soil erosion mitigation works.

The new Strategic Plan 2013-17 includes a range of quantitative annual performance indicators. These include coverage of enhanced forest management plans which integrate biodiversity conservation; implementation of improved silvicultural measures to improve timber output from productive stands; achieve 30% forest cover by 2017; fight erosion; and increase area of forest covered by certification (FSC). A selection of these performance indicators will be tracked during project monitoring.

All Turkey's forests are managed according to detailed Forest Management Plans, and the projects included in the programme will be implemented within the framework of these Plans. In addition, an Implementation Plan is systematically carried out for all afforestation projects in Turkey. This covers environmental suitability, species selection, plantation density, soil, vegetation, topography, slope and other considerations relating to technical feasibility and site suitability. Consultation with and approval of local land users is a criterion for site selection.

Social Assessment

Disputes over ownership, boundaries and rights of use have characterized the recent history of Turkish forests. Completion of forest cadastral surveys and settlement of ownership disputes is a priority challenge. Furthermore, approximately 25% of the Turkish population lives either within or on the margins of the forest, or within a 10 km radius of a forest area. These people tend to be of a lower income level than the remaining 75% of the population. Many depend on the forest for fuelwood, grazing and other traditional uses. Managing forests to meet these needs, preventing overexploitation, and taking local people's interests into account in planning further forest expansions, are essential for the long-term success of the activities supported within this operation.

In conducting new afforestation and erosion control works, the interests of local people and forest villagers are taken into account. If disagreements arise, the authorities will propose an alternative, but ultimately the consent of the local people is essential if the works are to proceed. In certain limited cases, financial compensation may be provided (by the Ministry for Disaster Recovery).

EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise

When the full programme has been implemented, the estimated overall annual **sequestration** of the project in a standard year is estimated to be approximately 227 kT CO₂e.

This breaks down as 80 kT CO₂e on the 110,000 ha rehabilitated forest; and about 146 kT CO₂e on the 80,000 ha of newly planted forest.

For the annual accounting purposes of the EIB Carbon Footprint, the project emissions will be prorated according to the EIB lending amount signed in that year, as a proportion of project cost.

PJ/ECSO 10.07.12