

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	UNITED UTILITIES WATER & WASTEWATER (AMP5-2)
Project Number:	2013008
Country:	United Kingdom
Project Description:	United Utilities Water PLC (UU) provides water and wastewater services to a population of 6.8 million people in the North-West of England, including the towns of Liverpool and Manchester. The Programme forms part of United Utilities' capital expenditure programme for the regulatory period 2010-15 (AMP5), specifically those under implementation under the second half of the period. The individual schemes are located through the entire service area. The Programme is driven by EU Directive compliance in the areas of water and environment as well the need to maintain service levels and improve water management against a backdrop of predicted climate change and demographic developments.

EIA required: yes

Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise¹: no

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

The Programme is strong environmentally driven and therefore has predominantly positive effects on the environment. Most of the works to be carried out under the Programme are upgrades of existing sites, reducing the overall impact of construction. Major new works are being carried out below ground, causing minimal disruption. A major wastewater treatment works extension in Liverpool requires full EIA.

The Promoter has excellent environmental awareness and proven EIA practices. The Promoter generally complies with the requirements of EU EIA Directive 85/337/EEC, amended by Directives 97/11/EC and 2003/35/EC, as well as Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. The Promoter is used to carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment procedures where required by the competent authorities and mitigating measures are applied as appropriate. An SEA was carried as part of a statutory Water Resources Plan. The quality and environmental regulators independently monitor compliance with effluent discharge permits and drinking water quality standards. The Programme is considered sound for EIB financing.

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. The promoter shall not commit any EIB funds against any scheme without receiving consent from the competent authority regarding the Habitats directive and submitting the relevant forms to the Bank prior to the commitment of EIB funds.

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

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 is an appointed water and sewerage company. Statutory duties with regard to the protection of the environment are embedded within key legislation for the UK water industry, including duties in relation to conservation of biodiversity and natural habitats. Many of the investments derive from undertakings with the Environmental Agency and Drinking Water Inspectorate, who not only play a leading role in planning the investments, but also closely monitor implementation and operation. In particular, the promoter has built its investment planning on a Water Resources Plan, required under the Water Act, with a long-term view of the availability and demand for water throughout the service area, most recently prepared in 2009 and subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment. A key element of the Water Resources Plan is an assessment against designated Habitats.

Compliance with applicable Environmental Legislation (national and EU), including EIA legislation is inherent to the definition of the investments programme, with close cooperation between the environmental and economic regulators. Specifically, the Promoter complies with the requirements of EU EIA Directive 85/337/EEC, amended by Directives 97/11/EC and 2003/35/EC, as well as Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. The Promoter carries out Environmental Impact Assessment procedures where required by the competent authorities and mitigating measures are applied as appropriate. The quality and environmental regulators independently monitor compliance with effluent discharge permits and drinking water quality standards. A major wastewater treatment works extension in Liverpool required for compliance with the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive as well as achievement of good ecological and chemical status in the Mersey Estuary under Water Framework Directive was subject to a full EIA.

The investment programme is strongly driven by environment, quality and resource efficiency. A large part of the investment programme is devoted to enhancing performance of the sewage collection and treatment system in order to ensure full compliance with European Bathing Waters and Shellfish Directives and tightening of discharge consents under the Urban Wastewater and Water Framework Directives.

Substantial investments are also being made in first time sewerage schemes, reducing the risk of pollution of local watercourses or groundwater. Investments are also being made into reducing the negative effects of drinking water abstraction on the environment, primarily to avoid entrainment of protected fish species at surface water intakes. Both Climate Change mitigation and adaptation figure significantly, with substantial investments being made in enhanced energy recovery from wastewater sludge and in reducing the flooding of properties by strengthening the sewer systems within a framework of more holistic approaches to surface water management. UU also carries out upstream work in the form of wetland restoration, providing significant water quality and carbon benefits.

Many of the works require special consideration of local wildlife even where there are no special nature conservation areas, such as for instance interim or permanent measures to protect newts or other animals. This is particularly the case for works on pipelines that transverse large areas. Some of the works on new large pipelines, storage and pumping for reduction of Unsatisfactory Intermittent Discharges from the sewer systems are being construction using tunnelling in order to avoid disturbance in urbanised and recreational areas.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

Public consultation takes place at all levels of the definition of investments and their detailed roll-out, starting with consultation for the key planning documents such as the Water Resource Management Plan and proceeding with the definition of the major schemes during the scoping and implementation phase, which also includes definition of compensatory measures in local communities for disruption caused. Given the necessary tight controls of implementation in order maintain delivery of the capital programme within the agreed regulatory timeframe, early identification and resolution of environmental consenting issues are crucial to delivery of the investment programme. In particular, it is sought to maintain close relationships with the competent authorities, the Environment Agency and Natural England, with identification of potential Habitats/EIA Directive issues already at concept stage.