

## Environmental and Social Data Sheet

### Overview

Project Name: ROUTE E420 ROCROI-CHARLEVILLE MEZIERES RTE-T  
Project Number: 2013-0626  
Country: France  
Project Description: Motorway development on the E420 corridor between Rocroi on the border with Belgium and Charleville Mézières (TEN-T).

EIA required: Yes

Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise<sup>1</sup>: 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 involves the construction of 31 km of a new TEN-T motorway south of Charleville-Mézières to Rocroi near the Belgian border. The project extends the A34 and provides localised noise, visual and air quality benefits from the transfer and reduction of traffic on the existing road network. An environmental impact assessment (EIA) was undertaken in accordance with national legislation and Directive 2011/92/EU. Potential adverse cumulative effects include those on flora and fauna, land-use, water environment and landscape.

The project crosses and is located close to nature conservation sites. Following appropriate assessment, an application related to derogation from protection of certain habitats and species was granted by the competent authority in November 2010. Recommendations from the EIA process, appropriate assessments, and stakeholders have been incorporated in the design, construction and operation phases including mitigation, compensation and off-setting measures – especially for biodiversity impacts.

The project was declared having an “utilité publique” in February 2007. Planning, building and environmental permissions have been granted allowing construction to start in 2011. Existing authorisation under water regulation was under challenge and recently ruled in favour of the claimant by the tribunal court. The EIB will ensure that all necessary approvals will be in place before financing the project.

### Environmental and Social Assessment

#### Environmental Assessment

##### Compliance with applicable Environmental Legislation

Studies investigating an improved road connection between the Belgian border and Charleville-Mézières (A34) started in 1992. This was prior to the requirements of the strategic environmental assessment (SEA) Directive 2001/42/EC.

The project is a class of development that falls under Annex I of the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU. The obligation to conduct an EIA in France dates to Law No. 76-629 of 1976 on

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<sup>1</sup> 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 CO<sub>2</sub>e/year absolute (gross) or 20,000 tons CO<sub>2</sub>e/year relative (net) – both increases and savings.

protection of nature (Loi de Protection de la Nature) and its implementing decree in 1977. The law is governed by the Environmental Code (Code de l'Environnement). Both the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC and the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC are transposed into French law through the French Environmental Code.

### **Planning and Environmental Procedure**

The development of the project can be traced to early 2000s with the specification of infrastructure between Charleville-Mézières and Rocroi by the Minister of Works, Transport and Housing. An environmental study (étude milieu naturel) informed the debate in March 2001. Preliminary studies and public consultations were undertaken between 2003 and 2004 including studies on flora and fauna informing the constraints and environmental issues related to possible alignment variants.

An EIA for the project was completed in 2005 and was included in the application for public utility declaration (déclaration d'utilité publique [DUP]) whose committee was held from July to September 2005. The EIA was complemented by appropriate assessments (étude d'incidence) – in accordance with Article 6.3 of the Habitats Directive – on Natura 2000 sites also undertaken in 2005. The DUP commission inquiry issued a favourable opinion in 2005 and following further project optimisations and studies the project was declared having an “utilité publique” in February 2007. The DUP was conditional upon obtaining derogation from protection of certain habitats and species in accordance with Article L.411-2 of the Environmental Code. Following the DUP a dossier summarising State engagements was produced for the project.

Complementary environmental studies on flora and fauna were completed between 2008 and 2010 to inform the dossier applying for derogation from protection of certain habitats and species. The dossier was completed in mid-2010 and approved by the Region and the competent authority – the national committee for the protection of nature (comité national de la protection de la nature [CNP]) between September and November 2010. Authorisations under the water regulations were obtained for the project in March 2011 allowing construction works to commence in July 2011.

Existing authorisation under water regulation was under challenge and recently ruled in favour of the claimant by the tribunal court. The Bank will not finance the project prior to authorisation under water regulation being obtained.

### **Environmental Impacts**

The project involves the new construction of approximately 31 km of dual carriageway motorway with associated habitat loss, flora, fauna, water environment, air quality, noise, visual and landscape impacts. Approximately 430 ha of predominantly natural and agricultural land will be converted including areas designated under EU nature conservation legislation.

The project includes environmental protection and mitigation measures including water drainage, treatment and filtration systems for surface and groundwater, river protection measures and planting. Numerous measures for mitigating impacts on fauna include 8 large mammal crossings – including one 40 m wide in the Potée forest (forêt des Potée) – amphibian passages, small wildlife passages, hedge planting and structures for birds and bats. Landscaping, fencing and acoustic screens are to be constructed to mitigate visual, noise and safety impacts. General environmental protection and preservation measures have been specified for construction and operation stages related to resource use, landscape, air, water and noise impacts.

### **Natura 2000 and Biodiversity**

The project is identified to cross the special protected area (SPA): plateau Ardennais (FR2112013) and is close to the site of community interest (SCI): Rièzes du plateau de Rocroi (FR2100270). Following an earlier application for derogation from protection of certain habitats and species for clearing operations in 2009, a revised submission for the whole operation was prepared in mid-2010 in accordance with the Environmental Code. This was submitted to the prefect of Ardennes which granted authorisation between September and November 2010 taking advice from the competent authority.

The project includes compensatory and off-setting measures, of which the more significant include: 21 ha of special wetland habitat (offset ratio 3:1), 206 ha of wetlands, 70 ha of woodland, 144 ha of grassland with protective management measures, and the creation of nest boxes, nesting platforms and spawning pools. The cost of environmental measures (including associated structures and land acquisition) was estimated at 24.6 m EUR, excluding VAT (2009 prices) – or approximately 9% of estimated total cost of works.

### **Climate Change**

The project involves considerable earthworks, construction of drainage and retention structures that may be vulnerable to climate change – particularly flooding risk. The project was designed to French inter-urban motorway standards and Eurocodes (for civil structures). No further allowance for climate change was included in the design process.

### **Social Assessment**

The project has evidenced consideration of sustainable development principles during the design process, covering environment, social and economic factors. Social and economic issues were considered together through project development. The planning and environmental process required stakeholder consultation and public inquiry.

The project, at appraisal, is compliant with health and safety legislation transposing Directive Directive 92/57/EEC, through the labour code.

### **Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement, where required**

Public debate and consultation was undertaken at key stages during the project development as part of the planning and environmental assessment process. Public inquiries were organised by the Region between February and April 2003, and further in June 2003 in accordance with the Environment Code informing the national commission for public debate (commission nationale du débat public [CNDP]). A programme of consultation of project variants to stakeholders was also undertaken in 2004 prior to the DUP submission. The Ministerial decision of June 2005 approving the project for preliminary design initiated the public inquiry which was held during July and September 2005. The inquiry commission report was issued in October 2005 with a favourable decision including conditions. After receiving DUP status in February 2007 conditional upon appropriate assessment on protected species, further inquiries were held relating to authorisation under the water regulations, compensation measures and for land acquisition procedures during 2010 and 2011. The findings of the consultations, including those obtained from the CNPN derogation on protection of species, were taken into account.

Project documentation including results of studies and supporting documentation has been published on the internet and available via the Region's webpage.

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

Monitoring is stipulated for environmental, social and economic impacts of the project at key stages of the project lifecycle. A monitoring committee oversees compliance against State and project commitments.