

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name: N25 New Ross Bypass PPP
 Project Number: 20140019
 Country: Ireland

Project Description: The project consists of the construction of approximately 14.6 km of dual 2x2 road (N25 and N30 routes) and 1.2 km of single 2X1 carriageway (New Ross N30 route) road to bypass the town of New Ross on Ireland's N25 route and link the N25 with the N30 New Ross to Enniscorthy road. The bypass will improve access from the cities of Cork and Waterford to the port of Rosslare and includes the 900 m long Barrow Bridge. As the bypass will be part of the comprehensive TEN-T network, the project is eligible for inclusion in the Project Bond Initiative and is likely to be procured as a PPP.

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 falls under Annex I of the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU and an EIA was done in October 2007. A positive Environmental and Planning permit (An Bord Pleanála) was issued in 12/2008 by the Competent Authority for the project. In addition the project results from the Wexford County Development Plan 2013 – 2019 and the Regional Planning Guidelines for the South East Region 2010-2022 which fall within the scope of the (SEA) Directive 2001/42/EC and therefore, a Strategic Environmental Assessment, has been done. The main impacts of the project are varied but include agriculture and forest land conversion, noise and vibration (2 areas by 8 dB), visual intrusion, and severance of communities and habitats, impacting migration routes and water runoff, archaeological (on six sites) and architectural heritage (8 features). Positive impacts include improved air quality in the town, safety and reduction of urban congestion. Arising from the EIA the Competent Authority has issued (in the schedule of Commitments) a range of mitigating measures including installation of acoustic screens, further inventory gathering, some fencing and (landscaping) screens and plantings, animal crossings, and restriction of working practices, drainage works, archaeological works and regular monitoring.

With regard to the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and Birds Directives (79/409/EEC) the promoter has advised that the project intersects designated conservation area or Natura 2000 area (River Barrow and Nore cSAC – site code 002162) and proposed Natural Heritage Area (estuarine area, Lower River Barrow pNHA - site code 000689). The bridge will have three piers with one of the piers falling in the N2000 River. Mitigation measures are planned for these and other sensitive sites located nearby. The Competent Authority has ruled that the project would not have a significant impact on any Natura 2000 site. The Bank will be requiring that the Competent Authority provides signed declarations (Forms A/B) regarding the significant impact, as a condition for disbursement against this scheme.

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 project is expected to have positive impacts for the environment along the existing route and along the roads from which traffic will divert. Communities adjacent to the old route will benefit by way of improved safety, reduced noise, vibration, local pollution. Although the schemes will have some negative impact, these have been assessed and adequate mitigation compensation and management measures have been identified in consultation with relevant stakeholders and included in the final designs. The procedures followed by the Promoter are satisfactory and the project is acceptable for Bank financing with conditions.

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been done for the Wexford County Development Plan 2013 – 2019 and an assessment of different alternatives was carried out at this stage.

In all the sections alternate route/variants were examined. Initially 46 options were selected and reduced to five. In the second phase five emerging routes were examined with two being taken to the next phase before the final route was chosen.

A range of criteria including ecology, agriculture, economics, archaeology, noise among others were used in the analysis. At Barrow River nine alternative bridge crossings were examined with four being shortlisted. All allowed for a 36 m high clearance for ship navigation. The three-tower extrados bridge option was selected as it offered the best balance of overall performance across 11 examined criteria which included whole life costs, construction complexity and the environment.

The opening of the bypass will result in positive impacts arising out of a reduction in traffic flow through New Ross. Noise levels will exceed the 60 dB limit in possibly 2 locations but this will be mitigated via noise barriers or berms. Air quality is expected to remain below the limit. Surface water quality will be affected by the operation of the road however mitigation measures including oil interceptors at outfall locations will reduce the impact of contamination. Severance will affect several farms along the route (52%) and new land segments will have to be created. Some 27% of the farms will be severely impacted and compensation will be necessary. Archaeology: 6 sites (monuments) will be affected. Mitigation measures include preservation by record or in-situ. Architectural heritage (within 50 m) of the bypass: The project will have a direct impact on 8 features. Mitigation measures will involve preservation measures.

With regard to the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and Birds Directives (79/409/EEC) the project will pass through a Natura 2000 area (River Barrow and Nore: site code 002162) and a proposed Natural Heritage Area (Lower River Barrow pNHA site code 00689). The scheme was subjected to an Article 6.3 appropriate assessment exercise and the Competent Authority concluded that the project would not have a significant impact on Natura 2000 sites. Eight ecological sites were identified along or adjacent to the bypass with some protected species. Impacts to ecological sites will range from permanent, moderate, negative to permanent major, negative. Mitigation measures are outlined to reduce the impacts to the designated conservation areas, ecological sites and terrestrial fauna. During construction there will also be some temporary moderate impacts to the conservation areas. The recreation of habitats with replacement planting, in Natura 2000 areas, will offset any long-term impacts associated with the land take. One ecological site (at Glenmore Junction) will experience some permanent impacts including the movement of fauna. However once the fauna become used to the mammal underpasses and the presence of the new road, residual impacts will reduce over time. Regarding aquatic ecology, a preliminary assessment has been done at the river Barrow, and river Nore (N2000) and pNHA (oak lands). Potential impacts exist to these and the seven streams assessed. However mitigation measures have been outlined to reduce the impacts to aquatic ecological resources and if adopted, at all seven locations, they are not expected to be significant.

Social Assessment, where applicable

Land acquisition was 90% complete at appraisal. A total of 133 Ha of land (117 Ha of agricultural) is to be acquired including 90 land owners, 5 dwellings and approx. 44 farms (10

dairy, 13 beef, 3 tillage, 17 mixed crops and livestock & 1 horse rearing). At appraisal 6 properties were still not acquired, one which included a large area was not likely to be closed before June 2014.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement, where required

Preliminary consultation was held in September 1999 and in March 2000 a public exhibition event was facilitated by the Wexford and Kilkenny County Councils. A first public consultation event was held in July 2000 in New Ross. In excess of 2,500 responses were received. A second public consultation event was held in November 2001 in New Ross at which the route was displayed and subsequently posted in the public library. Under the EIA procedure a public scoping was done in June 2005. Consultation was held with several public bodies and authorities. In addition an oral hearing was held in April 2008 as part of the EIA procedure. Comments from the public were invited. In addition further consultation was also undertaken with landowners likely to be impacted during the route selection stage.

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

There has been one main legal challenge (12 March 2009) to the planning process in relation to Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. A decision was handed down (on 2 March 2010) that the grounds raised were insubstantial and refusing leave to apply for judicial review.

An environmental management plan and/or method statement is to be developed for the project by the PPP co. The management plan would include i) air quality management ii) noise and vibration iii) humans iv) landscape and visual v) terrestrial ecology vi) aquatic ecology vii) water soils and geology viii) agronomy ix) architectural and archaeological heritage. Very detailed conditions and guidelines have been earmarked by the Wexford County Council arising out of the EIS and are enclosed in a "Schedule of Commitments" document which has been reviewed by the Bank. Environmental monitoring will be done by the two County Councils (Wexford and Kilkenny).