

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	LANGUEDOC ROUSSILLON GRANDE VITESSE
Project Number:	2013-0546
Country:	France
Project Description:	TENT-T project for the railway bypass of Nîmes and Montpellier, composed of a new line with mixt traffic and high speed traffic, of 70 km length. This operation will finance part of the Region's contribution to the PPP already financed under project number 2009-0159
EIA required:	yes
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise ¹ :	no

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

The decision on implementation of the Nîmes-Montpellier-Perpignan-Le Perthus modernisation, in 13 March 2000, preceded the applicability of the SEA Directive, 2001/42/EC, an analysis was nevertheless carried out of the three components in this modernisation programme: this project, the new line Perpignan-Le Perthus (forming the French part of the Perpignan-Figueres line) and the modernisation of the existing conventional line Montpellier Perpignan.

The project falls within Annex I of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive 2011/92/EU, and an EIA with public consultation was carried out and received approval under the décret de DUP (Déclaration d'Utilité Publique) of 16 May 2005. The EIA also addressed the impact of the project on Natura 2000 areas and a number of mitigation and compensation measures have been prescribed following an appropriate assessment in line with the requirements of the Habitats Directive. A statement on nature conservation (form A/B or equivalent) will be required prior to any disbursement.

The alignment of the project was slightly changed as a result of the public consultation, in order to reduce the impact (particularly noise) on the village of Mauguio. The EIA process included the analysis of the cumulative effect with the construction of a new parallel motorway to alleviate traffic congestion on the existing A9 motorway parallel to the project – this is known in France as the *dédoulement autoroutier de l'A9*.

Other than noise, main factors influencing the project were the need to minimise its hydraulic impact and nature conservation aspects. This has been done satisfactorily.

Subject to the above-mentioned condition, the project is acceptable for the Bank from an environmental and social point of view.

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.

A particularly relevant occurrence was the designation in April 2006 of the Costière Nîmoise, site FR9112015 of the Natura 2000 network in France, as Special Protection Area, SPA. Furthermore, there are protected species, in particular the Outarde Canepetière (*tetrax tetrax*) and the Œdicnème Criard (*Burhinus œdicnemus*) present in this SPA. This has led to the implementation of a significant action plan by the promoter, one of whose measures is the identification of an area of 500 ha of compensation habitats, in line with the requirements of the Habitats Directive. Of this total, 382 ha had already been acquired by end January 2014.

In addition to the Natura 2000 site mentioned above crossed by the project, other sites are present some kilometres to the southeast of the line, notably the Natura 2000 site Camargue Gardoise (FR9101406) and the Pre-Sites of Community Interest (pSCI) Étangs Palavasiens (FR9101410) and Étang de Manguio (FR9101408). The impact of the project on these sites was assessed within the scope of the EIA. Extensive investigations were carried out, which led to the conclusion that the impact of the project was not significant there.

As part of the promoter's plan for dealing with environmental matters and nature conservation matters in particular, environmental experts on the field have been gathering the necessary environmental information and producing inventories that were subsequently handed over to the concessionaire. Agro-environmental measures have also been contractualised, aiming at achieving environmentally-friendly farming methods over an area of 640 ha.

Given the hydraulic sensitivity of the area crossed by the project, including the flood plains of the Vidourle, Rhony and Vistre watercourses, the hydraulic structures of the project have been designed for a 1 in 100 year flood – or for the largest known historical flood in the case of the Vidourle and the Vistre structures.

Archaeological investigations are required on a total of 16 sites and are completed on 13 sites to date. A small area of land associated to the substation in Castelles (Lattes municipality) will need to be more specifically reviewed under the archaeology process.

An Environmental Action Plan has been put in place and its implementation is ongoing satisfactorily.

The CNM DUP was granted in May 2005, with a validity of 10 years. An extension of the DUP decree is in progress.

Social Assessment

At end January 2014, the total land acquired by amicable settlements is 706 ha of the total 865 ha (82%). Expropriations are ongoing according to the law for approximately 200 ha.