

## Environmental and Social Data Sheet

### Overview

Project Name: CANTABRIA WATER INFRASTRUCTURE  
Project Number: 2012-0155  
Country: SPAIN  
Project Description: Investments in water distribution (Autovía del Agua) and sanitation (Plan de Saneamientos) in Cantabria, Spain. The sanitation portion of the project is partially included in the Operational Programme Environment (OPE) and cofinanced by FEDER funds.

EIA required:

EIA not required:

Carbon Footprint: are the project emissions estimated to exceed the absolute (gross) or relative (net) emissions thresholds (100,000 or 20,000 tons CO<sub>2</sub>e/year respectively) of the EIB Carbon Footprint Pilot exercise? Scope, boundary, baseline and thresholds are defined in the EIB draft Carbon Footprint Methodologies.

Yes  - details are provided in section: "Carbon Footprint"

No

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

The large majority of Cantabria's water supply comes from surface water sources. The water component will interconnect intra-regional river basins and will allow the preservation of environmental river flows through the transfer of water from one system into another when needed regardless of the water supply demand, thus avoiding over-exploitation of water sources.

Both water and wastewater components are part respectively of the Cantabria Sanitation Master Plan 2007-2010 and Water Supply Master Plan 2007-2012. They are both subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment, as required by Ley 9/2006 Evaluación Ambiental Estratégica (in compliance with SEA Directive 2001/42/EC).

The project consists of 7 schemes, out of which 4 required an EIA (three of them with conditions because of impact on Natura 2000 sites). Two components are still at a very early stage of project preparation and the EIA procedure has not started yet.

An Environmental Impact Assessment has been carried out for the Autovía del Agua in line with EIA Directive (2011/92/EU). The Environmental Impact Statement for the Autovía del Agua was issued by the competent authority, the Consejería de Medio Ambiente, and published on the 25th April 2006 (Boletín Oficial Cantabria BOC No 79). The document specifies areas of exclusion and acceptability conditions in others due to the presence or proximity to protected areas or Natura 2000 sites.

The water supply component, namely the Autovía del Agua, will allow a sustainable growth on the coastal areas as well as the preservation of the required environmental flows for different rivers in the region. The wastewater components will improve aquatic environmental conditions throughout the autonomous region of Cantabria, ensuring compliance with EU Urban Waste Water Treatment (UWWT) Directive (91/271/EEC) and the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC).

The Promoter, through its Dirección General de Medio Ambiente and Subdirección General del Agua has shown a good environmental awareness and has developed operating procedures to optimise the performance and cost-effectiveness of its systems. It fully complies with Natura 2000, European Bird and Habitat Directives. The approval process of the investment programme complies with the requirements of the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC).

The Promoter undertakings are the following:

- 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 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 the consent from the competent authority, when required, regarding the Habitats directive and submitting the relevant forms to the Bank.

## **Environmental and Social Assessment**

### **Environmental Assessment**

#### **Environmental Assessment**

The European Commission has referred Spain to the EU Court of Justice for breaching two pieces of EU environment legislation. Spain is currently failing to ensure that waste water from agglomerations with more than 10,000 inhabitants that discharge into sensitive areas is properly treated. The lack of adequate treatment systems, which should have been in place since 1998, poses risks to human health, to inland waters and the marine environment. In the second case, Spain has also failed to submit its plans for managing river basins to the Commission. These plans, due to be adopted by 22 December 2009 at the latest, are essential for achieving the EU's objective of 'good status' for European waters by 2015. So far only one plan has been adopted in Spain, and the Commission is therefore taking Spain to the EU Court of Justice.

Cantabria has made good progress since 2003 and will reach, after the project completion, nearly full compliance with the WWT Directive. The wastewater component includes 4 wastewater treatment plants and various sewerage systems, improving the quality of effluents that are discharged to surface and coastal waters of the Cantabrian Sea; it will ensure compliance with the relevant EU Directives i.e Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (91/271/EC as amended by 98/15/EC), Bathing Directive 2006/7/EC and the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC). These interventions are located all over the 4 regions and therefore do not lead to accumulated effects. The programme has been approved by the Cantabrian Ministry of Environment –Consejería de Medio Ambiente, Ordenación del Territorio y Urbanismo- and the works consist mostly of new sewers/collectors connecting to the existing and new WWTPs. Official approval of both Water and Sanitation Master Plans are subject to River Basins Master Plans; none of the three River Basin Management Plans for Cantabria –whose preparation includes public consultation- have been approved yet (Planes Hidrológicos de la Demarcación Hidrográfica del Cantábrico Occidental, de la Demarcación Hidrográfica del Duero y de la Demarcación Hidrográfica del Ebro).

In addition, the project will support the development of wastewater reuse and contribute to improving the management of water resources. Thus it is consistent with the objectives of the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and the Bank's lending policy in the

water sector i.e. promotion of wastewater and sanitation services, development of new water supply i.e. wastewater reuse. For these reasons, the operation is eligible under Article 309 (c) of the EU Treaty (common interest-protection of environment).

Compliance with applicable Environmental Legislation (regional -Ley de Cantabria 17/2006 de Control Ambiental Integrado-, national -Real Decreto Legislativo 1/2008 Texto Refundido de la Ley de Evaluación de Impacto Ambiental de Proyectos- and EU), including EIA legislation is inherent to the definition of the investments programme foreseen in the Water Supply and Sanitation Master Plans. Specifically the Promoter complies with the EIA Directive 85/337/EEC, amended by Directive 97/11/EC and 2003/35/EC.

#### Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation

Cantabria is affected by more extreme weather conditions, presumably as consequence of climate change. Statistics show longer periods with no rainfall during the last years. This results in more frequent drought periods, floods and sewer overflows.

The proposed infrastructure will contribute to the Climate Change adaptation and mitigation in different ways:

- a) Adaptation: The water component aims at improving the capacity and operational flexibility of water transfer between the different river basins; it will increase the guarantee of water supply to the coastal populations during drought periods and hence is expected to improve climate change resilience
- b) Adaptation: Sewerage component: new design criteria for sewerage systems, adopted by the Subdirección General del Agua. It is based on replacing combined sewerage systems by new separate ones, building strategic storm water reservoirs and new precipitation statistics recalculations (the design standards have also increased the return period to 50 years).
- c) Adaptation: the existing WWTP in Solórzano is to be replaced by a new under one project component because its location is in a flooding area.
- d) Mitigation: the promoter operates a sludge drying facility since 2008, being the final destination for sewage sludge; this process avoids the production of greenhouse gases and produces in turn sludge pellets which are sold for use in agriculture, in compliance with EU Sewage Sludge Directive 86/278/EEC.

#### **Social Assessment, where applicable**

Social impacts include the possible disruption of services, noise and temporary occupation of public or private space, traffic disruptions, and safety hazards. All these impacts will require strict management to minimize the negative disturbances, inconveniences and impacts common for this type of project and will be addressed in the planning permission.

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

Public consultation takes place at all levels of the definition of investments. All projects are screened and the environmental authority decides whether or not a full EIA is required.

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

N.A.

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