

## Environmental and Social Data Sheet

### Overview

Project Name: A11 BRUGGE PPP

Project Number: 20100717

Country: Belgium

Project Description:

The A11 project is a 11 km motorway on a new alignment connecting the harbour of Zeebrugge and the Belgian coast with the E40 and the E34 motorways in Flanders. It is a dual 2 lane carriageway with a design speed of 120 km/h. Main project components include: 3 interchanges, 1 moveable bridge, 3 viaducts and 3 tunnels.

EIA required: YES

Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise<sup>1</sup>: NO

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

The project was identified in the Mobility Plan of the Flemish Region "Ontwerp-Mobiliteitsplan", approved in 2003, predating the application of SEA Directive (2001/42/EC).

The project falls under Annex I of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive 85/337/EEC and hence an EIA is mandatory. A two stage EIA has been carried out, in accordance with applicable environmental legislation in Flanders. The first stage was done at the planning level, with the so called Strategic Environmental Assessment, which was approved by the Flemish Ministry for Environment on August 29<sup>th</sup> 2007. The second stage assessment was approved on April 29<sup>th</sup> 2009 by the same authority. In both cases, an appropriate assessment in compliance with Art 6(3) of the Habitat Directive was conducted and the results were integrated in the impact assessment.

The project crosses the "Poldercomplex" Special Protection Area and Natura 2000 site BE2500932 and is close to "Polders", Special Area of Conservation and Natura 2000 site BE 2500002. The appropriate assessment concluded that the project is likely to have a significant impact on these protected areas and compensation measures have been proposed. The assessment did not identify any protected species and it has been confirmed that one priority habitat, included in the impacted protected area, will not be adversely affected by the project. The competent authority confirmed these assessments in the approval of the EIA. The promoter has certified compliance with the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and Birds Directives (79/409/EEC), through the appropriate opinion (Form B) issued by the competent authority.

The promoter will be required to notify to the European Commission of the compensatory measures adopted to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected, in line with the provisions of Article 6.4 of the Habitats Directive. Subject to this condition, the project is acceptable for the Bank in Environmental terms.

<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.

## Environmental and Social Assessment

### EIA process

The EIA was carried out in line with Belgian legislation, Decree of 18/12/2002 concerning general provisions on environmental policy and EIA, in accordance with the EIA Directive.

The main findings of the EIA (impacts and compensation/mitigation measures) are:

- Water: The water system in the polder area affected by the project is very sensitive to the saltwater/freshwater equilibrium in the upper soil layers, which will be affected by underground works. This could impact agriculture and habitats of high ecological value. A ground water model has been developed resulting in particular design requirements. A number of artificial water catchment ponds will be constructed, to attenuate water run off before it enters the local surface water system.
- Fauna and Flora: A major Special Protection Area (SPA), BE2500932 the "Poldercomplex" will be crossed by the project, and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), BE 2500002 the "Polders" is located in its vicinities (both part of Natura 2000). An appropriate assessment on these sites was included in the EIA, in which alternative routes were compared and which identified unavoidable impacts: direct land intake, fragmentation and disturbance (mainly noise). A compensation plan is ongoing by which 28 ha of Polder grassland and meadows and 8 ha of reed marsh are being acquired and will be developed as alternative habitats, outside of the Natura 2000 sites, between 2012 and 2014. Other mitigating measures are: reduction in light emission, 5 eco-tunnels, ecological design of water catchment ponds and preservation of a number of old hedges.
- Noise: The new motorway is crossing open countryside and will result in increased noise levels along the route. Detailed noise studies have been performed. Sound barriers and other measures have been proposed. Noise impact in the SPA is tackled by compensatory measures described above. It is expected that migratory birds present in the Natura 2000 areas will move to the new habitats to be developed.
- Landscape: the project is partly located in an open polder area and in some places close to protected cultural heritage (e.g. ancient farm buildings). The project will not pose any threat to Brugge's status of UNESCO's world heritage site, as it is fully located outside its boundaries. UNESCO was thus not consulted in the EIA process. Preventive and mitigation measures are: reduction of visual impact by planting trees (except in the open polder landscape), restoration of original landscape features where possible (e.g. around some protected farms) and design parameters of the motorway to minimise visual intrusion.
- Social: the project will have a positive influence on traffic flows and traffic safety in the wider area. The high capacity of the A11 motorway allows for a more optimal mixture of freight traffic and other traffic and significant volumes of freight traffic will be moved away from local roads and local villages. The project will not entail resettlement of people and land acquisition is progressing normally, in line with the applicable legislation. Overall, social impact will be positive.

The Flemish authorities will implement adequate monitoring of the compensation areas and of the water levels, flows and quality during the construction and operation phase.

### Public consultation and disclosure

The EIA notification file was made available for public consultation to the Municipalities of Damme, Bruges and Knokke-Heist, from 6 October 2008 through 4 November 2008. The relevant documentation was made available to the public in the referred town halls, prior public notification. In parallel, institutional consultation was carried out among different authorities and public administrations. The comments and remarks received were discussed in a meeting on 23 December 2008 and resulted in a number of guidelines, incorporated in the final EIA report on 30 March 2009. Given that the project is a DBFM, the final design will be proposed by the preferred bidder (to be appointed). According to the tender requirements, such design shall have a lower overall impact and shall be subject to public consultation before the application for building permit.

**EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise**

Project is not included - the EIB draft Carbon Footprint Methodologies only include emissions from Investment Loans, and large allocations under Framework Loans, above the methodology thresholds.