

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name: RTE ELECTRICITY NETWORK PROGRAMME 2015-2019
 Project Number: 2014-0628
 Country: France
 Project Description: Multi component investment programme covering the period 2015-2019 aimed at reinforcing the electricity transmission infrastructure of France.

EIA required: yes for 19 schemes

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 is a multi-component investment programme comprising the implementation of 33 transmission schemes dispersed throughout France with voltage levels ranging from 63 kV up to 400 kV plus 3 information system schemes. The programme addresses some key needs of the French power system such as reinforcing the electricity network in Brittany and connecting and integrating anticipated renewable energy generation developments in the North of France.

The programme comprises 336 km of overhead lines (of which 288 km are related to refurbishment or uprating of existing lines), 685 km of underground cables, new substations and transformers, as well as other operations of refurbishment, reconstruction or modernisation of existing substations.

The programme schemes concern facilities operated at voltage levels up to 400 kV. Two schemes, all involving 400 kV overhead lines, fall under Annex I of the EIA Directive (2011/92/EU) and have to undergo a full EIA while some of the remainder fall under Annex II which requires the national competent authority to determine the need for a full EIA based on Annex III criteria. The current national development plan of the promoter – *Schéma décennal de développement du réseau 2014* – has been subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment according to the national legislation transposing the SEA Directive 2001/42/EC.

The 19 schemes subject to a full EIA are at various stages of the EIA process. The environmental impact studies have been finalised for 14 of them and a *Déclaration d'Utilité Publique* has been granted by the competent authority for 5 of them. Appropriate assessments have been carried out for the schemes involving Natura 2000 sites and the impacts on these sites have been carefully assessed. The environmental impact analysis carried out along with the conclusions of the EIA consents indicate that, subject to the implementation of specified mitigation measures and conditions, the schemes would neither have significant adverse effects on the environment nor adversely affect the integrity of any European site in view of the site's conservation objectives. For five schemes the environmental impact studies are in progress.

Overall, the environmental capacity of the promoter is deemed strong. Based on the information available, the programme is expected to have minor negative residual impacts and thus is acceptable in environmental terms for Bank financing.

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.

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

Environmental and social considerations have been incorporated in the design of the projects from the earliest stage. Line and cable routes as well as substation locations have been selected so to minimise proximity and crossing of human settlement and of sensitive areas.

A large portion of the programme will involve the implementation of new underground cables or the replacement of existing overhead lines by underground cables with limited or positive social impacts. The programme also comprises the implementation of Gas Insulated Substations (GIS) for five schemes in order to improve the environmental and public acceptance of these projects.

No significant impacts have been identified. During construction, the environmental impacts are expected to relate to dust, noise, vibration, traffic disruption, and vegetation clearance. Environmental impacts during operation will concern electromagnetic fields (EMF), noise disturbance, vegetation clearance, and impact on flying vertebrates. When relevant, appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented to minimise impacts according to the environmental impact studies and/or to the conditions expressed in the EIA consent. This includes measures to contain the effect of noise during operation, specific maintenance procedures to minimise potential leakage of SF₆, protection of vegetation, compensatory planting, coordination with local authorities and property owners, use of directional drilling to cross sensitive areas as well as of heliborne works when appropriate. When necessary, construction works will be executed avoiding breeding seasons of wildlife species. In densely populated areas, particular attention will be paid to contain the effect of noise during the construction works. Regarding the schemes relating to works in substations, contamination from oil leakage of transformers is mitigated through the appropriate design of bunds and remote pits.

As regards the landscape integration, mitigation measures include burial of existing distribution overhead lines, indemnities related to visual impacts, implementation of new substations in GIS technology when appropriate, as well as specific design of towers.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

The Strategic Environmental Assessment of the national development plan (*schema décennal de développement du réseau 2014*) underwent a 6-week public consultation in end 2014. The conclusions of the public consultation have been included in the appendix 1 of the final version of the national development plan and are available on the promoter's website². The national development plan, along with its Strategic Environmental Assessment³, will be submitted for approbation to the national competent authority in 2015.

One scheme, involving the implementation of the 400 kV overhead line *Avelin – Gavrelle*, has been subject to a large public consultation from 12/10/2011 till 13/02/2012 (*Débat Public Avelin – Gavrelle*). Nine public meetings have been held, including three thematic meetings on electromagnetic fields and health, energy policy as well as on environment. The conclusions of this *Débat Public*, as well as the minutes of the public meetings and the underlying documentation, have been published on a dedicated website⁴. Following that, the promoter has involved the stakeholders in the selection of the design of new towers aimed at improving the visual impact of a portion of the route of the 400 kV line *Avelin – Gavrelle*.

Regarding the other schemes, appropriate public consultation will be held by the competent authority when relevant.

² http://www.rte-france.com/sites/default/files/sddr_2014_v3.pdf

³ http://www.rte-france.com/sites/default/files/synthese_rapport_environnemental_2014.pdf

⁴ <http://cpdp.debatpublic.fr/cdpd-lille-arras/>

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

The promoter is certified to meet ISO 14001. The promoter monitors and publishes a set of indicators that reflect its environmental performance, namely in terms of wastes, effluents and greenhouse gas emissions.

The promoter has set up dedicated representatives to handle noise-related complaints at regional level. As regards the electromagnetic fields, the promoter has initiated control plans which will be carried out by independent laboratories in a selection of urban areas.

Bank Environmental Conditions

The environmental impact studies and non-technical summaries of the projects *Avelin – Gavrelle, poste 225/63 kV de Grimaud, création du poste 226/63 kV de Pluvigner, renforcement du réseau 225 kV de Perpignan, and Dordogne Ouest 225/63 kV* shall be sent to the Bank at the start of the corresponding public enquiries.

The Promoter undertakes not to allocate the Bank's funds to the transmission programme components that require a DUP (*Déclaration d'Utilité Publique*), until the corresponding DUP has been granted. Copies of the DUP decrees shall be sent to the Bank as soon as published.

The promoter shall store and keep updated any documents as may be relevant for the programme supporting the compliance with the provisions of the EU EIA, Habitats and Bird Directives and shall upon request promptly deliver such document to the Bank.