

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name: IRISH FLOOD PREVENTION PROGRAMME
Project Number: 2014-0394
Country: Ireland
Project Description: Financing the on-going flood protection and prevention programme in Ireland for the period 2015-2020

EIA required: yes

Non-Technical Summaries (NTSs) available at this stage were provided and published on EIB website. For other projects the Promoter shall provide the link to a website where the NTSs are published or send copies to the Bank.

Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise¹: no

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

Environmental and social due diligence has followed the programme lending approach according to EIB's procedures and standards i.e. due diligence was focussed on the Promoter's capacity and capability to implement the programme in line with EIB environmental and social standards and requirements.

Schemes form a part of the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management programme, which was subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment in compliance with the EU SEA Directive 2001/42/EC. Most of the components are likely to require a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment according to EIA Directive 2011/92/EU.

Impacts during the construction and operation phase are expected to be mitigated by good practice and work organisation following the competent authorities' requirements.

The Promoter shall not commit any EIB funds against schemes that require an EIA or biodiversity assessment according to EU and national law without, prior to commitment, receiving consent from the competent authority, and the Non-Technical Summary of the EIA having been made available to the public. The Promoter shall store and maintain updated the relevant documents supporting compliance with EU environmental legislation, to be provided to the Bank upon request.

The Office of Public Works is an experienced promoter with a good capacity and capability to implement the programme. The programme is acceptable for Bank's 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

Flood Risk Management Plans developed as a part of the National Catchment-based Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Programme, are subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment according to the national legislation *European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations* (2004 to 2011).

Most of new flood risk management schemes arising from the CFRAM will be of a scale which requires EIA. In these cases, the relevant projects are subject to an EIA in accordance with the national legislation:

- *Arterial Drainage Acts* (1945 and 1995 as amended);
- *European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations* (1989 to 1999);
- *European Communities (Arterial Drainage) Regulations* (2009);
- *European Communities (Public Participation) Regulations* (2010)
- *European Union (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Arterial Drainage) Regulations* (2012).

In general, EIAs are published on the OPW website dedicated to the public consultation of a given scheme.

If a part of a new flood risk management project is to be located in or near Natura 2000 Sites, the relevant plans and projects are subject to an Appropriate Assessment in accordance with the national legislation: *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011* (SI No.477 of 2011). The Office of Public Works (OPW) liaises with the *National Parks and Wildlife Service* of the *Department of the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht* where operations may have an effect on environmentally sensitive areas.

The schemes encompass major positive impacts in terms of human health and safety, property protection and some minor positive for migratory fish and their habitats (improvement of fish passage).

Potential minor negative impacts of the schemes during construction are expected to be restricted to increased traffic, noise, minor vibration and dust generation, which could be to some extent mitigated by adhering to good construction practices and proper work organisation.

The number of protected species present in and adjacent to the rivers means that a minor residual negative impact could potentially occur to the natural environment (e.g. loss of or disturbance to designated habitat, change in river characteristics affecting migratory fish or altering river fauna diversity and densities). Therefore all in-river and on-the banks works in environmentally sensitive areas are to be approved by the competent authority which will prescribe appropriate measures to mitigate the impacts (e.g. timing of works, vegetation clearance outside the breeding period, translocation of species). Should the scheme involve dredging works, the material shall be handled in compliance with applicable waste legislation. No major impacts are envisaged during operation. Dredging works may be required in some places by maintenance programme and these may result in habitats disturbance, which could partially be mitigated by timing of works. No significant impact on long term water quality is expected. However, the schemes will inevitably result in a permanent significant change on water levels during flood events during periods of high surface water levels in the vicinity of the flood defence works.

In the *Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan for Flood Risk Management*, it is recognised that climate change will have a considerable impact on flood risk in Ireland, notably through sea level rise aggravating coastal floods and through the more frequent occurrence of heavy rainfalls that could lead to an increase in both fluvial and pluvial floods. Therefore the preparation of flood risk management schemes is guided by the principle of adaptability of the schemes. Vulnerability of communities is assessed through two future climate change

scenarios (mid-range and high-end) and decision is made through option analysis whether to pursue structural measures with appropriate allowances in design or 'adaptable' measures which could in the future be upgraded in technically feasible and cost-efficient manner. The climate change impact consideration for design is either through an explicit allowance that increases peak flow (by 15%-20%) or through applying a design standard of a 1-in-200 years flood (instead of a 1-in-100 years).

OPW has an Environment Section that seeks to ensure through research and monitoring that operations are as environmentally compatible as possible.

Social Assessment

The project is expected to bring considerable social benefits by reducing the risk or impact of floods in the priority areas with significant flood risk. At least 8000 properties will benefit from reduced flood risk. By alleviating the flood risk, the project will enable further balanced development of the local communities in the project areas. The construction works will also contribute to the employment creation.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

Extensive consultations are carried out in accordance with the regulations including public advertisement in the national press, open forum type Public Consultation Days and direct notifications with a series of public authorities. A statutory process of public exhibition is set out in the Arterial Drainage Acts 1945 to 1995 including an evaluation by a Minister of Government of the EIS, adoption of the EIA and adoption of the flood relief project, followed by advertisement of the Minister's decision in the national press.

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