Luxembourg, 21/10/2015

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	OMVG - INTERCONNECTION
Project Number:	2006-0128
Country:	Regional-West Africa
Project Description:	Electricity transmission interconnector between member countries of the OMVG (Organization for the Development of the Gambia River: Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and Guinea-Conakry)
EIA required:	yes
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise[1]:	yes

(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 consists of 925 km of 220 kV transmission line, eight new substations and the extension of three existing substations. It would, if implemented inside the EU, fall under Annex 1 of EIA directive, requiring an EIA. The promoter, with the assistance of World Bank has conducted environmental studies with international consultants. The original ESIA was conducted in 2006-2007, and updated in 2014. The ESIA has identified environmental and social risks based on sound baseline information. The process has included public consultation related to substations, but not yet for the transmission lines.

The environmental and social studies have so far included Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIA)s and Environmental and Social Management Plans (generic) and Resettlement Policy Frameworks (RPFs). The detailed Resettlement Action Plans (RAPs) and detailed ESMPs are not yet done.

The identified environmental risks are typical for high voltage transmission projects, including vegetation and forest cleaning, visual impact, electro-magnetic fields (EMF), avifauna collisions and resettlement of people from transmission corridor. The study includes appropriate mitigating measures like re-routing the line at the areas of environmental protection, visual impact minimisation and resettlement action framework. The presented ESIA and related ESMP are still not considered final, as the exact line routing and tower siting are not defined yet. The line routing has been provided as 2 km wide corridor, and the line contractor who will do the detailed planning of the line will propose the exact centreline of the transmission line and exact siting of towers. These will thereafter be subject to detailed ESMP of the contractor, RAP and supplementary public consultation. Such consultation can only take place after/during detailed design so that the population can assess how significantly they are directly affected by the project. The detailed resettlement action plans will as well be done after detailed routing is available, and the Bank requires them as disbursement conditions. Overall, the environmental and social impacts of the project have been methodologically identified, can be largely mitigated and the remaining impacts are considered acceptable.

[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

The ESIA process has been conducted using international (World Bank, AfDB and EIB) requirements as guidelines, and is compliant with these regimes. The environmental impact assessments and other environmental documentation have been reviewed during project planning by the donors environmental teams. The national Environmental Authorities who have reviewed the EIAs have submitted their opinions of the ESIAs as Environmental Permits.

The project line route does not cross protected areas or natural parks 95% of the line corridors are savannahs or agricultural land, 5% is classified as forests. The line routes in Senegal, Gambia and Guinea-Bissau are largely on flatter lands while the line route in Guinea is also in mountainous areas. The environmental impacts are mainly caused by clearing of the vegetation from line route, and by potential avifauna collisions. The mitigating measures include line route choices and bird diverters.

The project conveys hydro electricity from Kaleta hydro power plant that is under commissioning to the four participating countries. That hydro replaces oil-based generation that is predominant in the tree countries that are not interconnected to any networks (Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and the Gambia), and as well in regionally interconnected Senegal which at the moment has no own renewable resources (but imports some hydro from Mali). The project is therefore reducing carbon emissions and mitigating climate change.

EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise

The project enables renewable electricity production that replaces electricity presently produced from fossil fuels with diesel plants. Estimated emissions savings of project (pro-rata share with interconnected hydro Kaleta power plant) are 370 kilotons of CO2 equivalent per year.

For the annual accounting purposes of the EIB Carbon Footprint, the project emissions will be prorated according to the EIB lending amount signed in that year, as a proportion of project cost

Social Assessment

The social impacts of the project are arising mostly from the transmission lines. The line routing (925 km) is based on preliminary field surveys, and the specifications along the route are not yet detailed enough. The social assessment has concluded that line routing can be done in such a way that settlements near the corridor of impact are not affected and physical resettlements are rare, and implemented by replacing the houses at the line corridor with new houses outside the corridor, which therefore does not prevent the continuation of affected persons livelihood.

The social management plan includes plans for community support programs for improvement of the acceptability of the project for affected communities. These plans include community health and education improvements. These plans are still at this stage indicative only as the exact routing has not been defined. The highest priorities for community expressed by the local population in consultations were employment opportunities, electricity and access roads.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

The public consultation has been carried out at the substation sites during the ESIA revision process (August 2014). The public consultation related to the transmission lines is expected to take place in 2016, during and after the detail design of the transmission lines. The ESMP includes safeguards related to vulnerable people, stakeholder engagement plan and grievance mechanisms.