

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	CLSG interconnection
Project Number:	2009-0712
Country:	Regional West Africa
Project Description:	The project consists of a 1350 km, 225 kV transmission line to interconnect the West African countries of Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. The purpose of the project is to improve the dilapidated, isolated electricity systems of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea by providing a backbone transmission infrastructure and interconnection to increase the reliability of the electricity systems and allow the development of regional electricity trade. The project includes 12 substations of which several will act as hubs for electrification of the secondary cities of the countries.
EIA required:	yes
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise:	no

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

The project, if implemented inside the EU, would fall under Annex 1 of EIA directive, requiring an EIA. The promoter has conducted an ESIA with an international consultant. The process has included public consultation. The identified environmental risks are typical for high voltage transmission projects, including vegetation and forest cleaning, visual impact, 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 plan.

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

Environmental impact assessments have been reviewed during project planning by the donors (WB, AfDB, KfW and EIB) environmental teams, and are at present being reviewed by the national Environmental Authorities. ESIA was completed in January 2012 under procedures and with results acceptable to the Bank, and submitted for approval of the national competent authorities in April 2012. The implementing entity (Regional Transmission Company, RTC) has not yet been established at the time of the appraisal. The planned organisational charts of this RTC entity show appropriate environmental and social organisations. This organisational structure and the environmental permits from the competent authorities will be verified and reported to the CD prior to the signature of the project implementation agreement.

The project route in Liberia and Sierra Leone comes into vicinity of several protected and environmentally sensitive areas. These areas were examined with several routing alternatives; nine alternative line routes for the three environmentally sensitive areas in Sierra Leone section; and eight alternative line routes for the three areas in Liberia section were developed. The areas of environmental sensitivity in Sierra Leone are Gola Forest National Park, Nimini Hills Forest Reserve and Outamba-Kilimi National Park. The sensitive areas in Liberia are Nimba Nature Reserve, one of the remaining high biodiversity areas in West Africa, Gbedin Wetlands, a proposed Ramsar site and the proposed Lake Piso Multiple Protected Area, which is also a proposed Ramsar site.

The proposed routes were selected in consultation with the environmental authorities, public, NGOs and electricity utilities. The routes correspond in each case the option with least environmental impact, and none of the proposed routings will cross any of the identified protected areas. The line route avoids all densely inhabited places and consists almost entirely of farmland, which can be cultivated again after the construction works have finished.

The project is expected to supply renewable hydro electricity from Guinea and natural gas-dominated electricity from Cote d'Ivoire to networks of Sierra Leone, Liberia and eastern Guinea forestal area, where the prevailing generation is at the moment based on diesel engines. The project is thereby expected to reduce the carbon emissions compared to the existing situation and to the alternative load growth scenarios.

Social Assessment, where applicable

The project will require 71 households to be relocated or resettled. The number of project affected people (PAP) is substantially higher (1640 households with 10158 individuals). These PAPs lose some agricultural land (for tower footings) or the construction works affect or disrupt their agriculture livelihoods. The number of affected people is reasonably small compared to the length of the line. Compensation schemes are established to PAPs, and they acknowledge the special needs of the different vulnerable groups. ESMP&RAPs include grievance mechanisms for PAPs.

The transmission line of the project will be equipped with insulated ground wire, which allows the electrification of areas that the line bypasses. The substations of the project will act as electrification hubs for the second cities of Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea. The funding of the project includes (under AfDB package) as well resources for the development of medium voltage network and to the rural/peri-urban electrification. The RTC is not expected to implement these electrification schemes, but AfDB will establish the schemes with rural electrification agencies and national utilities. Such en-route electrification schemes have elsewhere reduced significantly the opposition against electricity transmission projects, and diminish vandalism and stealth of tower structures.

The project company is planned to be set up to follow internationally accepted labour standards and health/safety rules and require these provisions as well from their contractors. Transmission line projects typically do not have large labour camps, but a larger number of smaller encampments along the line route that are less likely to create conflicts or health concerns with local communities. Foundation and some assembly works are well suited for local employment.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement,

The consultations were carried out with regulatory agencies, local Officials, project-affected persons and local communities prior to the preparation of ESIA. The communities predicted to be affected by the project were identified and consulted to determine the potential impacts during the implementation and operation of the project.

The main issues rising from the public consultation were concerns on the land use and compensation, employment opportunities and the electrification of the affected communities.

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

None

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