

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name: PAIS VASCO KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY 2
 Project Number: 2011-0548
 Country: Spain

Project Description: The project comprises parts of the various sectoral investment programmes of the Basque Country Region of Spain, in support of the knowledge economy, in order to create the conditions for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. It has three components: (i) education, primarily investments in education and training including its facilities; (ii) research, development and innovation, with the contribution of the Basque Country Government to technical and scientific Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) programmes; and (iii) cultural heritage, to improve the well-being of citizens and contribute to social cohesion, preserve patrimony, and promote tourism. All the subprojects are located in the Basque Country, Spain.

EIA: Required X

The EIB rules for publication of EIA documentation for projects located in the EU (the Non-Technical summary publically available as soon as possible, at least prior to disbursement) do not apply to multi-scheme project as it is the present case. However a specific condition for reporting on environmental matters applies for individual schemes costing above EUR 25 million.

(based on the ESDS of the project Pais Vasco Knowledge Economy, 2008-0733, approved by the Board, Ref. CA/449/11)

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

In Spain the compliance with the relevant national and EU environmental laws is under the responsibility of the autonomous communities. The environmental control of the project is therefore managed by the Basque Government environmental authorities.

Education activities are not expressively mentioned in the Annexes I and II of the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU. However the project (a multi-sector/multi-scheme operation) may include some components, e.g. large school facilities that could be considered urban development projects and thus could fall under Annex II of the Directive. In this respect, the Basque Government has confirmed that new schools outside urban areas require an EIA. In general, each new construction has to follow an approval process (including location and construction permits) through which it is ensured that the appropriate environmental procedures are adopted.

With particular reference to Natura 2000 sites (falling under Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC or Birds Directive 79/409/EEC), the promoter will ensure that the schemes comprised in the education infrastructure plans at the regional and municipality levels will have either no impact or a general principle of impacts mitigation will be put in place.

The RDI activities of this project will be mainly carried out in existing facilities, already authorised that will not change the scope due to the project; an EIA is therefore not needed as per the EIA Directive. In case of new construction, the promoter will ensure that all the relevant environmental and building permit have been obtained.

Specific conditions covering the environmental matters, i.e. compliance with the EIA, Habitats and Birds Directive, for individual projects above EUR 25 m apply to this project, as well as the undertaking to provide reports of the audits made to the public research installations to meet EU requirements.

Overall the project is considered to be acceptable with minor negative residual impacts.

Environmental and Social Assessment

Impacts and Mitigation

The promoter has a responsible environmental policy through which the project impacts are expected to be mitigated. Environment is one of the five pillars of Estrategia Euskadi, the Basque autonomous community plan until 2013. The community has advanced legislation in preparation regarding energy efficiency/greenhouse gas emissions, climate change, contaminated soils, waste materials of construction and biodiversity protection.

Environmental criteria will be included in public sector procurement criteria from 2011. Standards of sustainable construction have been approved. Certification to ISO 14006 for the Basque Public Administration Environmental Management System is expected from year 2011. The Basque government published a list of best available clean technologies for orientation of private sector investment. Also in collaboration with companies and municipalities it published a Plan of efficient use of resources to reduce consumption of raw materials. The Basque government has worked with EU institutions and other international programmes on environmental issues.

Various project components will address environmental aspects (e.g. the landscape recovery of the "Salinas de Añana") and social aspects (the rehabilitation of schools for access by handicapped children and of cultural heritage buildings)