

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name: **WATER INFRASTRUCTURE - ACUAMED**
 Project Number: 2011 0048
 Country: SPAIN

Project Description: The project concerns a large investment programme for the implementation of water, wastewater and environmental protection infrastructure across five Mediterranean River Basins of Spain, namely Cuenca del Ebro, Jucar, Segura, Mediterranea Andaluza and Cuencas Internas de Catalunya. It includes five components: desalination, environmental recovery and flood prevention measures, wastewater reuse, bulk water supply systems and irrigation efficiency measures.

EIA required: YES (the project consists of multiple schemes: 28 interventions with a total of 45 subcomponents, out of which 21 subcomponents require an EIA)

Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise¹: NO (Details are provided in section: "Carbon Footprint")

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

The Promoter complies with the requirements of EU EIA Directive 85/337/EEC, amended by Directives 97/11/EC and 2003/35/EC, as well as Birds Directive 2009/147/EC and Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.

The project is eligible under Article 309 point (c) of the EC Treaty point (environmental protection) because of its positive impact on the quality of water bodies and the management of water resources in a region confronted with pressing water scarcity issues.

Where required, the Promoter carries out Environmental Impact Assessment procedures and any required mitigating measures are implemented as appropriate.

An SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment) according to Directive 2001/42/EC was carried out, as the interventions are part of the national programme A.G.U.A.. The programme definition included a scoping exercise and an assessment of reasonable alternatives. The process resulted in the publication of the Environmental sustainability report for urgent interventions of AGUA program in the Mediterranean basins (*Informe de Sostenibilidad Ambiental de las Actuaciones Urgentes del Programa AGUA en las Cuencas Mediterráneas*) which provided the environmental justification of the program as a whole.

In some cases, regional environmental authorisations (EIA's) have not yet been obtained and may lead to delays in the construction of the desalination plants, in particular.

Competent authorities independently monitor compliance with effluent discharge permits.

All energy consumption for desalination plants will be of renewable energy origin.

The promoter's undertakings are the following:

- The promoter shall not commit any EIB funds against schemes that require an EIA according to EU and national law without, prior to commitment, submitting the EIA and non-technical summary of the EIA to the Bank for review and publication on the Bank's website.

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.

- The promoter shall not commit any EIB funds against schemes without receiving consent from the competent authority regarding the Habitats and *Natura2000* sites and compiling the relevant Forms A/B, that may be sent to the Bank on request.

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

Compliance with applicable Environmental Legislation:

EIA Directive 85/337/EEC, amended by Directive 97/11/EC and 2003/35/EC:

Most works fall under Annex 2 for which the Member State determines whether an EIA is required. According to Article 4.2, this can be done either through nationally set thresholds, or else the competent authorities (in this case the Regional Authorities or “Comunidades Autónomas”) analyse on a case by case basis the environmental requirements for the works. Following an Environmental Impact Screening (EIS), a total of 21 subcomponents (out of 45) require an EIA (including the Annex I projects).

Whilst Non Technical Summaries for most of the subcomponents have already been provided to the EIB, for the remainder an undertaking has been included that the promoter shall not commit any EIB funds against schemes that require an EIA according to EU and national law without, prior to commitment, submitting the EIA and the non-technical summary of the EIA to the Bank for review and publication on the Bank's website.

Desalination Plants:

Royal Decree 1/2008, transposing the EIA Directive, states (as required by Annex II of the Directive), that an EIA is required for desalination plants with a production capacity in excess of 3.000 m³/day.

All desalination plants have gone through the EIA and the Environmental Impact Declarations have been adequately published in Spain's Official Journal. Equally, all *Natura2000* permits have been obtained.

Additionally, the Region of Valencia requires a specific environmental authorisation “Autorización ambiental integrada” related to all interventions which could eventually contaminate waters or soil. This authorisation is still under process for the desalination plants within this region and should be obtained prior to entering in operation.

Other components such as the interconnection between desalination plants and the water network or network reinforcements, which are included in the works related to the desalination plants, fall under Annex II of the EIA Directive and were screened out by the competent authority, and have hence not been subject to an EIA.

Environmental protection and flood prevention:

Interventions in this component fell under Annex II of the EIA Directive. Out of the 13 sub-interventions in this component, 8 were screened out and the rest obtained their environmental permits.

Waste water reuse:

Waste water treatment plants (WWTP) over 150 000 p.e., fall under Annex I of the Directive and hence require an EIA. An EIA was so far carried out for 3 WWTPs: Pinedo (800.000 p.e.), Sueca and Albufera Sur within this programme.

There are two remaining interventions where the environmental permits still need to be obtained: 1. Vinalopó-Alacantí (3.2.o.1): connection between WWTP in Monte Orgegia (Alicante) and Rincón de León (Alicante) and 2. WWTP expansion in Murcia-Este (2.2.r).

Bulk water supply systems:

Most interventions didn't require an EIA, however three sub components did, and have already been obtained. One of them required an EIA because it concerned the recharge of an aquifer, while the other two were water mains which connect different water systems with

distances longer than 40 km, falling under Annex II of the EIA Directive and being screened in by the competent authorities.

Only one intervention still has to be resolved in terms of the requirement of an EIA prior to the start of the works (3.2.i.1 – Modernization channel canal Júcar-Turia).

Irrigation:

Irrigation systems have undergone an EIA in all cases, and permits awarded.

SEA Directive 2001/42/EC

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Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (91/271/EC)

The project will contribute to compliance with the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (91/271/EC). In this context, the main expected benefit of the proposed project is the preservation / recovery of the surface water resources in the basins of the region through the improvement of the quality of the effluent discharged in the rivers and used by the farmers. In all cases, a tertiary treatment in the form of a wetland (filter) will improve wastewater quality by removing nutrients.

For each of the interventions, it has been verified if receiving waters are environmentally sensitive areas (LIC – Lugares Importancia Comunitaria). In 75% of the cases, interventions are in *Natura2000* sites.

Biodiversity issues:

Habitats directive 92/43/EC and Birds Directives 79/403/EEC

The promoter is required to submit to the EIB a declaration (Form A or Form B) from the Competent Authority that the project will have no impact on any nationally or internationally classified conservation sites. For each of the interventions, it has been verified if receiving waters are areas protected for birds (ZEPA – Zonas especiales para conservación de las aves).

Climate change aspects:

All energy used in the desalination plants is from renewable origin, therefore mitigating net additional emissions due to the technology choice of desalination. The promoter has secured this through a contract with the utility which guarantees that the energy will be supplied from renewable sources.

Waste water reuse instead, will reduce CO₂ emissions as it will reduce pumping from aquifers (which in most cases are already over utilized - leading to saline water intrusion in the coastal areas with all the impacts thereof on nature). In most cases farmers will be able to replace the traditional aquifer pumping by reuse of effluents from the WWTP's.

EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise

The project is not included - the EIB draft Carbon Footprint Methodologies only include emissions from Investment Loans, and large allocations under Framework Loans, above the methodology thresholds.

Social Assessment, where applicable

Social impacts include the disruption to services, noise, and temporary occupation of public or private space, traffic disruptions, and safety hazards. All these impacts will require strict management to minimise the negative disturbances, inconveniences and impacts.

The project will generally benefit public health, by reducing pollution risks of drinking water relying on the surface waters where the environmental protection works will be carried out. Pollution risks in some areas were high (particularly in case of floods), and works carried out mainly in the Ebro river will prevent such health risks from dispersion of pollutants which were in the river bed.

Flood prevention works will have a very important benefit for the population in some urban areas, which has traditionally been an important problem in the Mediterranean coast of Spain due to the intense rainfall in short periods.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement, where required

Foreseen as part of the EIA process in all cases in which the EIA has been required.

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

N/A