

## Environmental and Social Data Sheet

### Overview

Project Name:	VALECO-RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS PORTFOLIO
Project Number:	2016-0242
Country:	France
Project Description:	Construction and operation of 2 solar photovoltaic power plants and 8 windfarms totalling 181MWp. The plants are located in different regions in France.

EIA required: yes

Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise<sup>1</sup>: yes

(Details for projects included are provided in section: "EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise")

### Environmental and Social Assessment

The Project aims at producing up to 421 GWh per year of wind and solar photovoltaic electricity to be exported to the national high voltage network. The project comprises the construction and operation of a portfolio of eight windfarms and two solar photovoltaic power plants in France totalling 181MW. The ten sub- projects are small or medium size, with capacities ranging from 10MW to 38MW. The Project is implemented in three phases consistent with the progress of each sub-project. The sites are located close to Decazeville, Saint Paul de Fenouillet, Limoux, Lacaune, Saint Affrique, Chateaufort, Prémont, Moreuil and Thennes.

#### Environmental Assessment

All sub-projects fall under Annex II of the EIA-Directive (2011/92/EU), requiring the competent authorities to determine whether an EIA is required. Each individual sub-projects has been screened in and has undergone a full EIA, including public consultation, in line with applicable legislation in France. No resettlement of local population is envisaged. The sub-projects are located in rural areas or on former industrial sites. None of the ten sub-projects are located in Natura 2000 Network, but six (Decazeville, Puech del Vert, Prémont, Fenouillèdes, Chateaufort and Cambon) are located near Natura 2000 or Site of Conservation Importance (SCI) areas. As a result, Appropriate Assessments in line with Art.6.3 of the Habitats Directive have been carried out by the relevant competent Authorities for these six sites. The permits of 3 sub-projects are challenged by the local community in 4 legal court cases that the Bank will closely monitor.

The ten sub-projects have been implemented in compliance with the French Decree 2009-1414 (19/11/2009), ICPE Decree 2011/984 (23/08/2011), Decree 2014/450 (02/05/2014) and

<sup>1</sup> 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 CO<sub>2</sub>e/year absolute (gross) or 20,000 tons CO<sub>2</sub>e/year relative (net) – both increases and savings.

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the Order dated 18 December 2009 that define the approval process for ground mounted solar photovoltaic plants and wind projects.

Each individual sub-project entails limited local impacts on the fauna and flora, the landscape, the soil and groundwater and has no substantial cumulative impact in the regions. The EIAs generally recommend adequate preventive, corrective and mitigation measures during the construction and operation phases. The building permits require the full implementation of mitigation measures identified in the respective EIAs and appropriate assessments.

The promoter has successfully carried out public consultation for each of the sub-projects wherever required by the French regulation.

Phase 1 indicative completion date: mid-2017
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- ***Decazeville (11.4MW solar PV plant, Aveyron)***

The project consists of ground mounted polycrystalline modules with axis-tracker system. The project is located on a former mining area and wasteland with potential landfill gas. A full EIA (2013) with public consultation was completed in July 2015 with adequate recommendations. The compensation measure includes *inter alia* the reforestation of 4.4ha. Mitigation measures include bats monitoring and a 3 year environmental impact reporting during 10 years to the Authorities as required in the building permit. An Appropriate Assessment has been completed in July 2013. It concludes that the project has no impact on the species and habitats that have been reported in the neighbouring Natura 2000 site (Puy du Wolff)

- ***Puech Del Vert (11.8MW windfarm, Tarn):***

The project consists of 5 Enercon E70 - 2,3MW with 57m hub height. The project is located in the Parc Regional du Haut Languedoc. A full EIA with public consultation was completed in 2011 with adequate recommendations. Mitigation measures include 5 year birds and bats monitoring report to the Authorities, noise monitoring with associated curtailment plan. An adequate construction schedule considering the breeding and nesting periods is also required in the building permit. The Regional Park has implemented a windfarm development plan for the period 2011-2023, limiting the number of wind turbine to 300. The development plan has been supported by public hearings conducted in 2012. An Appropriate Assessment has been completed in August 2010. It concludes that the project has insignificant impact on the fauna located in 3 neighbouring SCI sites and on the birds.

- ***Bois de Merdelou (11.8MW windfarm, Aveyron):***

The project consists of 7 Enercon E70 - 2,3MW with 64m hub height. The project is located in the Parc Regional du Haut Languedoc. A full EIA with public consultation was completed in 2010 with adequate recommendations. Mitigation measures include 5 year birds and bats monitoring report to the Authorities, noise monitoring with associated curtailment plan. An adequate construction schedule considering the breeding and nesting periods is also required in the building permit. The Regional Park has implemented a windfarm development plan for the period 2011-2023, limiting the number of wind turbine to 300. The development plan has been supported by public hearings conducted in 2012. As the construction site is not located near a protected area, the competent Authorities did not require an Appropriate Assessment.

Phase 2 indicative completion date: end-2017

- ***La Bruyère (11.8MW windfarm, Aude):***

- The project consists of 5 Enercon E82 - 2,35MW with 69m hub height. A full EIA with public consultation were carried out in 2004. Mitigation measures include birds and bats monitoring report to the Authorities, noise monitoring with associated curtailment plan. An adequate construction schedule considering the breeding and nesting periods is also required in the building permit. As the construction site is not located near a protected area, the competent Authorities did not require an Appropriate Assessment.

- ***Premont (37.95MW windfarm, Aisne):***

The project consists of 11 Vestas V117 - 3,45MW with hub height of 91,5m. A full EIA (2014) with public consultation was completed in 2015 with adequate recommendations. Mitigation measures include birds and bats monitoring report to the Authorities, noise monitoring with associated curtailment plan. An adequate construction schedule considering the breeding and nesting periods is also required in the building permit. The 2014 Appropriate Assessment concluded, taking into account direct, indirect and cumulative impacts on SCI Marais d'Isles located at 16km from the windfarm, that there are no significant effects on the avifauna and the Natura 2000 sites including species for which the site was designated as long as a number of mitigation measures and actions are in place (as spelled out in the permit) during pre-construction, construction and operation.

- ***Fenouillèdes (23MW windfarm, Pyrénées Orientales) :***

The project consists of 10 Enercon E82 - 2,35MW with hub height of 59m. A full EIA including public consultation was carried in 2012. Specific studies on bats (2006) and avifauna (2007) were updated in 2012. This update led to the carrying out of a very specific study on the impacts of the windfarm on the Aigle de Bonelli in 2012. A monitoring programme for the birds and noise is to be put in place to determine whether or not, at certain times of the year, a number of turbines would have to be shut down. A specific monitoring programme has been agreed with a local avifauna-specialised Non-Governmental Organisation. The 2012 Appropriate Assessment concluded, taking into account direct, indirect and cumulative impacts on SCIs in the study area (perimeter of 15km from the windfarm) that there are no significant effects on the avifauna and the Natura 2000 sites including species for which the sites were designated as long as a number of mitigation measures and actions are in place (as spelled out in the permit) during pre-construction, construction and operation.

Phase 3 indicative completion date: end-2018

- ***Chateauvert (12MWc Solar plant, Var):***

The project consists of ground mounted polycrystalline modules with axis-tracker system. A full ESIA with public consultation was carried out in 2014. The location of the solar plant is at the edge of a forested area quite heavily impacted and degraded by human activity. The project also carried out a specific forestry study. The project has committed to creating a forestry reserve which has for objective to preserve local endemic tree species. Mitigation measures with respect to clearing of certain plant

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species, ground feeding birds and ground nesting birds have been included in the permit. Following an Appropriate Assessment, in line with Art. 6.3 of the Habitats Directive, the AA for this particular project concluded, taking into account direct, indirect and cumulative impacts, that there were no significant impacts on any of the species for which the site of conservation importance Val d'Argens was designated and no fragmentation of habitat

- ***Cambon La Planésié / Cambon La Rocaille 29.9MW windfarm, Hérault):***

The project consists of 13 Enercon E70 - 2,3MW with hub height of 64m. A full EIA with public consultation was carried out in 2012. Specific studies were done on avifauna and bats. Mitigation measures were listed in the permit which included that no construction is to take place during the nesting and breeding period, obligatory spacing between identified turbines (so as to allow passageway for birds) and implementation of a monitoring programme for local bats and birds. This monitoring programme was validated by DREAL in 2013. Following an Appropriate Assessment in line with Art. 6.3 of the Habitats Directive, the Appropriate Assessment for this particular project concluded, taking into account direct, indirect and cumulative impacts on sites of nature conservation importance (SCIs) in the study area, that there were no significant impacts on identified SCIs nor on any species for which the sites were designated.

- ***Chêne Courteau et Terres de l'Abbaye (27.60MW windfarm, Somme):***

The project consists of 8 Vestas V117 - 3,45MW with hub height of 91,5m. A combined EIA (2009) with public consultations was completed in 2010 for the two sites. Mitigation measures include birds and bats monitoring report to the Authorities, noise monitoring with associated curtailment plan. An adequate construction schedule considering the breeding and nesting periods is also required in the building permit. As the construction site is not located near a protected area, the competent Authorities did not require an Appropriate Assessment.

### **EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise**

- The emission savings are estimated at 245 800 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent per year, based on 367 GWh/a average annual generation (P90-10y) over the Project life.
- The Project provides intermittent power generation. Following the Bank's Carbon Footprint methodology, it is assumed that 75% of the electricity generated by the Project is replacing power generation in existing French power plants and 25% of generated electricity is replacing power generation in new gas fired combined cycle power plants.
- 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.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The EIAs confirm that the sub-projects generally do not have any significant negative impacts if all mitigation measures are fully implemented. Deforested land shall be compensated by the reforestation of an equivalent surface area nearby. Further mitigation measures comprise the birds and bats monitoring and noise reduction.

The Project will also contribute to reducing the emissions of air pollutants and greenhouse gases, ultimately supporting climate change actions in the European energy sector.



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The Bank is overall satisfied with the low negative environmental and socio-economic impacts of the project. It will be carefully monitoring all the outstanding studies required during operation to ensure that these are in line with the Bank's Environmental and Social Standards. The Bank will also closely monitor a number of pending claims which have been reported in sub-projects of the second and third phases of this operation, and will not disburse its loan to these sub-projects until it is not satisfied with the relevant status of such claims.

#### Disbursement conditions

- Positive review of situation concerning legal actions and claims

#### Undertakings

- social issues be reasonably followed up and mitigated
- Bank's positive review of additional environmental and social studies required by the Authorities

Bank's positive review of additional environmental and social studies required by the Authorities With the conditions in place, the project is deemed acceptable for Bank-financing in environmental and social terms.