

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name: *ROUTE CENTRE EUROPE ATLANTIQUE (RCEA)*
Project Number: *20170221*
Country: *France*
Project Description: *The project consists in the upgrading of the existing National Road RN79, Route Centre Europe Atlantique (RCEA) to a double-carriageway 2x2 lane toll motorway for an overall length of 92 km between Montmarault, in the department of Allier, and Digoin in the department of Saône-et-Loire in central France.*

EIA required: YES

Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise¹: YES

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

Compliance with applicable Environmental Legislation

The project does not belong to a plan or investment program or Transport Master Plan in France that require mandatory application of the procedures SEA Directive 2001/42/EC relative to the evaluation of environmental impacts. The procedures of the EIA Directive 2011/92/EC are therefore directly applicable for the project.

The project falls under Annex I of the EIA Directive 2011/92/EC and requires a full EIA, including public consultations. The project crosses 3 special protection areas (SPA) as designated under the EU Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds 2009/147/CE and 3 Sites of Community Importance (SCI) as defined in the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.

Planning and Environmental Procedure

An EIA including public consultations for the project was carried out in April 2006. The environmental impacts of the project were assessed for all areas comprised within a distance of about 200 meters on either side of the current national road (that will be upgraded maintaining the same alignment) as well as interchanges, toll gates, service and rest areas located in the territory of the 23 municipalities crossed by the project. Only limited expropriation of land is expected for the project.

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.

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The main environmental risks for the project are related to the increased noise and potential pollution of soil and water during the construction phases, especially in the area where the road crosses the river Allier.

The main negative residual impacts after completion are linked to the conversion and permanent loss of land, visual intrusion of the new tolling stations and interchanges as well as potential increase in air pollution and noise on alternative roads after the upgrading of the RCEA to a toll motorway.

Numerous measures will be implemented to reduce, mitigate or manage negative impacts both during construction and operation. These include installation of noise barriers, wildlife corridors and hedge plantation as well as protection of shorelines of watercourses and creation of alternative pools and wetlands.

In addition, to minimise the impacts of the project in the area near the Allier river the current Viaduct crossing the river will be doubled and extended from 220 m to 400 m, whereas the rock armour currently utilised to contain the shorelines near the bridge abutments on the left bank of the river will be displaced to restore the natural bed river.

Positive impacts after project completion are expected to include time savings, reduced vibrations as well as a significant reduction in number and severity of roads accidents.

Natura 2000 and Biodiversity

The project crosses 3 special protection areas (SPA) as designated under the EU Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds 2009/147/CE (i.e.: FR8310079 - Val d'Allier Bourbonnais, FR8312007 - Sologne bourbonnaise, FR2612002 - Vallée de la Loire d'Iguerande à Decize) and 3 Sites of Community Importance (SCI) as defined in the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (i.e.: FR8301015 - Vallée de l'Allier nord, FR2601017 - Bords de Loire entre Iguerande et Decize, FR8301014 - Étangs de Sologne bourbonnaise)

The assessment of the possible impacts on the Nature conservation Sites located in the area was finalised by the relevant office of the French Ministry of Environment as part of the Environment impact assessment in April 2016. This assessment concluded that the project is likely to have significant effects only on certain fauna (otters, beavers and cistuses) and fish species (Allis shad, South-west European Nase, Atlantic salmon) within the site "FR8301015 - Val de l'Allier nord". The assessment also indicated the relevant measures to eliminate or reduce said impacts, both during the construction and operation phases, like fencing of the road and construction site, confinement of interventions in the river, installation of storm water treatment systems and establishment of accident response plans.

The environmental assessment concluded that, subject to the implementation of these mitigation measures, the project is not likely to have a significant impact on the habitat and species associated with the Natura 2000 sites crossed or located in proximity of the project

However, the confirmation from the competent authority on compliance with the EU Habitats Directive is still to be provided and some sections of the existing road, notably those built in the 1980s prior to the entering into force of the EU Habitat (92/43/EEC) and Birds (79/409/EEC) directives may not fully meet the current environmental requirements. The finance contract will include a disbursement condition in this respect.

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EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise

The project is included in the carbon footprint exercise on the following basis:

Estimated annual emissions generated from the use of the project in a standard year of operation:

- Forecast absolute(gross) emissions are 147,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per year
- Forecast emissions increase is 15,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per year

The project boundaries are:

- In the base case: the existing 92 km long RCEA national road between Montmarault, and Digoïn;
- In the "with project" case: the new double-carriageway 2x2 lane toll motorway section between the same junctions.

The baseline is the forecast third party emissions, in the absence of the project, from the existing national road with the boundary defined above. The forecast for the absolute emissions related to the upgraded and widened double-carriageway 2x2 lane toll motorway. The forecasts reflect the Services' assumptions on traffic, traffic growth, speed/flow, infrastructure capacity and fuel consumption.

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'.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

Public debates and consultations concerning the declaration of public utility of the project and the amendment of the decree establishing the Val d'Allier nature reserve were undertaken at key stages during the project development, planning and environmental assessment process from 25 April to 17 June 2016.

Two public meetings were held on 18 May 2016 in Montmarault and on 1 June 2016 in Toulon-sur-Allier. All main aspects of the project were discussed including impacts in terms of noise and use of land as well as locations of the service areas, rest areas and road interchange RCEA / RN 7 in relation to the villages of Montmarault and Dompierre-sur-Besbre that are designated as "village étape" in France.

The report of the inquiry commission was issued on 18 July 2016 with a favourable decision including 7 recommendations in relation to the project and 1 recommendation in relation to the amendment of the decree establishing the Val d'Allier nature reserve. A request for the issuance of the declaration of public utility was then submitted to the Council of State in December 2016.

The signing of the Declaration of Public Utility by the Council of State took place on the 20 April 2017: The amendment of the decree establishing the Val d'Allier nature reserve was finalised and published during on the 10 May 2017.

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Conclusions and Recommendations

From an environmental and social standpoint the Project is acceptable for Bank's financing subject to the submission, prior to first disbursement of:

- Written confirmation (Form A or B or equivalent) from the relevant authorities that the possible impacts of the project on Nature Conservation Sites have been assessed in compliance with the requirements of the EU Habitat (92/43/EEC) and Birds (79/409/EEC) directives. This shall include the assessment of the measures to be implemented along the existing road sections which were built prior to the entering into force of the EU Habitat (92/43/EEC) and Birds (79/409/EEC) directives.
- Evidence that all the environmental regulatory procedures and specific environmental permits related to the works for which the disbursement is being requested have been successfully completed by the selected concessionaire.

PJ/SQM/ECSO 15.10.15