

Luxembourg, 29/09/2018

Public

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	STRUMA MOTORWAY (LOT 3-1 AND LOT 3-3)
Project Number:	2018-0134
Country:	Bulgaria
Project Description:	The project concerns the construction of an approximately 40 km long section of the Struma Motorway, consisting of two motorway sections: Lot 3.1 (including a dual-tube, two-lane Zheleznitsa Tunnel) and Lot 3.3.
EIA required:	yes
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise ¹ :	no

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

The route of Struma Motorway is part of TEN-T Core Network Orient/East-Med corridor on the territory of Bulgaria. For implementation purposes, Struma Motorway has been divided into 5 lots, with Lots 0, 1, 2, and 4 already completed and operational. The complexity of the construction works and route selection required splitting of Lot 3 into three sub-sections, where Lot 3.2 (from Krupnik to Kresna, including the Kresna Gorge section) will be a separate project.

SEA

The project was part of the SOP-T 2007-2013, which was subject to a strategic environmental assessment following Bulgarian legislation in accordance with SEA Directive 2001/42/EC. The Environmental report was approved on 21 February 2007. The project is part of the General Transport Master Plan (2011), which was subject to a SEA procedure finalized with the Decision No 1-1/2010 on 12 March 2010 issued by the Ministry of Environment and Waters (MoEW).

EIA

The project relates to the construction of a new motorway and falls under Annex I 7b of the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU '*construction of Motorways and Express Roads*', for which the EIA is mandatory. The EIA procedure was carried out between 2006 and 2008 for the whole Struma Motorway from Dolna Dikanya to Kulata (Lots 1-4). The MoEW is the competent authority to issue EIA decisions in consultation with other authorities responsible for environmental sector. Based on the EIA Report, its Supplements and the results from the public consultations the MoEW issued a favorable EIA Decision No. 1-1/2008 on the 15 January 2008, approving the implementation of the Struma Motorway project. The Decision

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.

Luxembourg, 29/09/2018

describes the approved alignment for the Struma Motorway based on a combination of variants studied and contains conditions for further development and mitigation measures. The EIA Decision 1-1/2008 was subject to one appeal to the court from the Sandanski Municipality concerning the alignment near the town. Supreme Administrative Court Decision ruled it out on 3 November 2008.

The negative environmental effects of the project identified in the EIA Report and its supplements (2007) might be expected due to changes in local ecological network, loss of cultivated soil, changes in local water environment. On a local scale, the project implementation will lead to increased noise, air, soil and ground pollution, disturbances during the construction phase, changes in landscape, socioeconomic impact from the affected private and common property lands.

The EIA Decision 1-1/2008 and the Negative Screening Decision 28/2009 contain mitigation measures for the different stages of the project, in particular:

- for the design stage: realignment of various sections of the route to achieve the best possible ecologically admissible, technically feasible and economically advisable variant, fencing surrounding important meadows, species' overpasses, construction of structures preventing the animals from entering the roadway, construction of noise protection barriers, etc.
- before the construction works start: removal of all species, particularly turtles, from the route alignment, preparation of water, air quality, noise monitoring plan;
- during the construction: no construction compounds/storage of waste in protected areas, preparation of Emergency Action Plan to respond to incidents, removal of humus and storage at a certain place, separate collection of waste, keeping the equipment in good working order to avoid air and noise pollution;
- during operation: all bridges facilities must be fitted with noise protection facilities.

Because of implementation of certain conditions stipulated in EIA Decision 1-1/2008 and the outcome of additional surveys, the alignment of Lot 3.1 and 3.3 was modified on certain sections as compared to the alignment described in the EIA decision. The impact of these changes was assessed during the procedures developed in 2015 and finalized with negative screening Decisions 5/2015 for Lot 3.1 and 6/2015 for Lot 3.3 respectively, issued on 9 April 2015. Based on the criteria listed in Annex III of the EIA Directive, the assessment concluded that the changes have no significant impact on environment, hence no need for developing an EIA Report. However, the negative screening decisions stipulated for a number of additional mitigation measures.

Assessment of effects on Natura 2000 sites

The MoEW is also the Competent Authority for Natura 2000 sites. According to the Article 6 (3) of Habitats Directive an Appropriate Assessment (AA) was carried out and results were provided as an Appendix to the EIA Report Supplement of October 2007. The AA was approved by the MoEW together with the EIA Report in Decision No. 1- 1/2008 of 15.01.2008. The AA study prepared in 2007 covers all 4 Lots of the motorway by assessing the impact of the project on the following Natura 2000 sites: SCI – BG0001013 Skirno, SPA – BG0002107 Boboshevo, SPA – BG0002099 Kocherinovo, SCI BG 0001022 Oranovski Gorge - Leshko, SCI – BG0000366 Kresna – Ilindentsi, SPA – BG0002003 Kresna Gorge, SCI – BG 0001023 Rupite- Strumeshnitsa, SPA – BG 0002098 Rupite. The EIA and the AA conclude that the project either has no direct impact on the sites, or the measures defined in the EIA decision were deemed to be sufficient to minimize the negative impacts.

Luxembourg, 29/09/2018

Based on additional studies, in 2015, the route of Struma motorway was optimized and the impact assessment concluded that, on both sections - Lot 3.1 and Lot 3.3, the optimized version is more favorable than assessed options in the 2007 AA study. The main reasons for such a conclusion are:

For Lot 3.1

- the optimized route will affect only 0.09% of the BG0001022 Oranovski Prolom-Leshko, therefore no significant impact is expected;
- the ecological corridors of bears and wolves are not affected as the optimized route of motorway crosses the area through a 2 km tunnel;
- the optimized route is moved further away from the biological corridor of Struma River and its floodplain terraces, therefore the negative impacts on migratory water birds will be reduced and possible impacts such as habitat destruction, fragmentation of nesting habitat and food will be avoided;

For Lot 3.3

- the optimized route passes peripherally the site BG0002003 Kresna Gorge in 3 sections mainly through agricultural land and it will not affect significantly the integrity, structure and functions of the site;
- the expected impact of withdrawal of potential nesting and food habitats of birds is negligible since the areas affected are water areas, arable land, extensive grain cultures, non-forest area;
- the optimized route of motorway passes outside the protected zone of BG0000366 Kresna - Ilindentsi, so a direct or indirect destruction and damage to natural habitats, habitats of species subject to protection, is not expected;
- a significant negative impact is not expected on the populations of mammals, including bats, invertebrates, amphibians and reptiles protected in the area of site BG0000366 Kresna – Ilindentsi as the optimized route passes mostly agricultural land which are not typical habitat for the mentioned protected species.

Declaration by the authority responsible for monitoring NATURA 2000 sites was issued on the 10 September 2015, stating that the project is not likely to have a significant negative impact on the protected sites.

Construction Permits

Most of the section-by-section construction permits for works on Lots 3.1 and 3.3 were issued in 2016 and 2017. Permit No PC-12 for section from km 370+400 to km 372+000 on Lot 3.1 was issued on 21 March 2018. For Zheleznița Tunnel section on Lot 3.1, the construction permit is expected in May 2019, after elaborating and approving the detailed design.

Climate change

The risk assessment concluded that flood degradation and adverse geodynamic process have significant risk and changes in the temperature and rainfall have high risk.

In response to the risks identified, the so-called structural measures for adaptation and resilience against climate changes are incorporated in the project design. This concerns: road pavement; drainage system; abrasion resistant bridges (mechanical abrasion) and slopes and earth embankment facilities resistant to landslides and soil erosion. Due to the implemented measures, the project is not at any particular high risk from climate change impacts.

Luxembourg, 29/09/2018

Social Assessment

Land acquisition is almost completed, except for the sections at the end of Lot 3.1 and the beginning of Lot 3.3 where the new re-alignment of Lot 3.2 requires adjustments. For the entire project, an area of approximately 373 ha of agricultural, forest and urbanized land has been acquired. There has been a total of 38 complaints, which all have been settled by the court and closed. There were no cases of involuntary resettlement.

The project implementation will improve traffic safety and living conditions along the existing road. Road safety audits at design stage have been performed in accordance with Bulgarian legislation.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

When preparing the relevant EIA decision and the relevant AA, The Ministry of Environment and Waters consulted the municipalities and communities situated along the new motorway alignment and the general public was informed by announcements in regional newspapers. The EIA and the AA Reports for the motorway were presented at various public hearings during 2007 and no negative opinions were collected. The EIA decision was subject to one appeal to the court from the Municipality of Sandanski concerning the alignment near town. The Supreme Administrative Court of Bulgaria on 03.11.2008 ruled out this appeal.

During the procedures developed in 2015 the promoter notified the investment proposal to the concerned local authorities. No objections or comments were received. All issued building permits are published. According to the Bulgarian legislation, the development consent must be published on the issuing authority's website and in State Gazette.

Public consultation and stakeholder engagement during the SEA and EIA stages has been carried out in compliance with the requirements of the applicable legal framework. The proposals and recommendations received during the consultations have been dealt with in issuing the environmental decisions and reflected in requirements for the design. There is no particular risk of delays because of public dissatisfaction.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The project falls under Annex I of EIA Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended, requiring a full EIA. EIA procedures have been completed in 2008, followed by supplemental screening decisions in 2015. Construction permits are being issued on section-by-section basis since 2016. The project complies with applicable EU and National legislation, including SEA and EIA legislation.

Undertaking

The promoter shall submit to the Bank information regarding any new Supplemental EIA decisions, if required, for issuing or updating construction permits.

Under these conditions, the project is considered acceptable for EIB financing from an environmental and social point of view.