

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	LANA RIVER FRONT - URBAN REDEVELOPMENT
Project Number:	2016-1020
Country:	Albania
Project Description:	Urban Redevelopment of Lana River front (approx. 2 km) in the City of Tirana. Investments include the reorganization of streets and associated urban infrastructure on either riverbank as well as the improvement of the Lana River to prevent future flooding in the area.
EIA required:	Yes
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise ¹ :	no

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

The Project comprises works along approximately 1.8 km of the Lana River (tributary to Tirana River) and completes the rehabilitation of the River already implemented along approximately 16 km upstream of the Project area. It will be implemented by the Municipality of Tirana (Promoter) through a dedicated Project Implementation Unit (PIU).

More specifically, the Project involves extending the two boulevards, which are parallel to the Lana River, namely “Gjergj Fishta” and “Bajram Curri” Boulevards, contributing to urban regeneration through equipping the riverside area with urban infrastructure (drainage, sewage, public lighting, green areas, bus and cycle lanes) and improving the integration and connectivity of both riverbanks with the City. It will also include cleaning and dredging works in the Lana riverbed, regularising and re-directing the course of the River to avoid flood problems in this area.

The Project is firmly rooted in the planning framework prepared for the City, particularly where it seeks to adapt to climate change, improve residential amenities and enhance the City’s transport permeability. The Project is implemented as a result of the priorities identified in the “Tirana Urban Development Plan”, subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment and, in the “Tirana Climate Change Adaptation and Vulnerability Assessment” and the related Action Plan, which provides a number of recommendations to address the increasingly frequent extreme flood events. Therefore, the Project is also designed to minimise the recurring and increasing problem of flooding and improve the resilience of urban infrastructure in specific vulnerable areas of the City, including parts of the city centre.

Due to its size and technical characteristics, if located within the EU, the Project would fall under Annex II of EU EIA Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU and EIB requirements, requiring a case-by-case determination whether the Project shall be made subject to an assessment. The Project is classified as Annex II under Albanian legislation regarding environmental assessment - Law 10440 on Assessment of Environmental Impact, Law 10431 on Environmental Protection and Law 10448 for Environmental Permits, being subject of a Preliminary Environmental Impact Assessment that was made available to the public.

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 Ministry of Environment is the relevant Environmental Competent Authority and needs to provide the environmental authorisation for this Project before construction starts. The permitting process is currently on-going. The Preliminary Environmental Impact Assessment assesses all the typical impacts for a River rehabilitation project and does not reveal any particular issues that cannot be adequately mitigated.

Negative environmental impacts arising from the construction phase are expected to be linked to noise and dust, waste generation, visual impact, soil pollution, wastewater generation and impacts in biodiversity. All these will be temporary and reversible. The available Environment Management Plan (integral part of the Preliminary Environmental Impact Assessment) proposes mitigation measures to address them. The use of specific machinery and proper signalisation during the works, replacement of damaged vegetation with local species according to the recommendation of the biodiversity specialist, waste separation and disposal sites, controls for the water discharges and irrigation to avoid dust are among the proposed mitigation measures. All these measures are deemed acceptable to guarantee the minimal impact on environment during construction.

In line with National Law for Protected Areas (Law 8906) and Law for the Protection of Biodiversity (Law 9587) and, given the urban location of investments, none of the infrastructure works will be implemented inside or in the vicinity of any natural protected areas.

Overall, the Project will support investments that increase resilience to climate change related risks and will have a net positive environmental impact contributing to the improvement of the urban environment and flood protection through the separation of wastewater and rainwater collection systems as well as the cleaning of the riverbed and riverbanks. In addition, sustainable mobility measures (e.g. pedestrian and bicycle paths as well as bus lanes) are included, thus contributing to decrease local traffic-related emissions. The Project contributes to the climate action objectives of the Bank, both in terms of climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Environmental Management Plan

A copy of the Environment Management Plan (EMP) has been provided to the Bank, including the mitigation measures to be taken into account during implementation as well as defined roles and responsibilities to carry out specific tasks in order to ensure that the environmental impacts will be minimal over the time. The Promoter will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the EMP at the site. External audits are expected to be performed until the end of the construction period.

Social Assessment

The Project site and its immediate surroundings along the Lana River, have suffered from a lack of residential amenities, poor connectivity with the rest of the City and environmental degradation. The area is subject to periodic flooding resulting from unplanned and poorly regulated residential development and suffers from deficiencies in the public infrastructure serving the area. It is also to be noted that in this segment of the River, the wastewater and polluted rainwater from the surrounding neighborhoods are discharged, which increases the urban pollution of the River. The population currently living on both riverbanks is approximately 20,000. Total 65,000 people, including those living in neighbouring areas, will benefit from the Project.

Overall, the socio-economic impact for the City and residents is expected to be positive due to improved sanitary and health conditions, flood protection measures, air quality, improved traffic conditions, accessibility and road safety and a general improvement in the quality of life due to the regeneration of urban spaces.

The Project nevertheless will trigger the involuntary physical and/ or economic displacement of approximately 1,100 persons living in 320 buildings (most of them informal settlers) currently located in the project physical footprint area. The population occupying this area might include Roma groups as well as refugees or migrants. The ongoing census will provide additional information on the project affected population. The Municipality of Tirana is in the process of preparing a Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) in line with EIB standards 6. The RAP will be subject to public consultations and will include grievances and redress mechanism.

The physical works in the affected area will start only after compensation of Project Affected People (PAP) has been completed.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

The Project is derived from and included in the several urban plans and strategies, with the Tirana 2030 General Local Plan appearing to be the main reference document currently. These plans have been subject to varying levels of public consultation, with the Tirana 2030 plan being the subject of public hearings, stakeholder meetings and the reception of written comments.

The Preliminary Environmental Impact Assessment was made available to the public and the Promoter has carried out all legally required public and stakeholder consultation process as part of the permitting stage. In addition, the Preliminary Environmental Impact Assessment and Resettlement process include further requirements for stakeholder engagement, consultation and management of potential complaints. A stakeholder's engagement plan will be drafted to capture and coordinate these activities.

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

During the Project's due diligence, the Promoter has demonstrated sound practice with respect to environmental, health and safety management. However, given that the Municipality of Tirana has limited human resources, a PIU has been set up and will be supported by an external team of consultants. It is deemed that the capacity of the Promoter, supplemented by dedicated TA through project implementation will be sufficient to manage the environmental and social aspects in line with EIB standards.

Labour Standards

Albania has ratified all *Core Labour Standards*, as defined in the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at work. The Promoter, through the Project Implementation Unit, is committed to make grievance mechanism available to all Project personnel including contractors and sub- contractors. Furthermore tender documents and subsequent agreements with selected contractors will include requirement relative to the management of environmental and social aspects of the contract works, in line with the applicable national requirements, ILO standards and EU requirements (including: working conditions, occupational and community health and safety). The promoter will periodically monitor the contractors' compliance with labour standards.

Occupational and Public Health, Safety and Security

In line with EIB standard 9, the Promoter and contractors alike, will be responsible for the preparation and implementation of health, hygiene and safety (and related) plans as well as workers training, throughout the duration of the Project..

Furthermore, a Social Action plan detailing mitigation actions, identified during the Project due diligence to be taken into account during implementation has been prepared. The Promoter will be responsible for implementing and monitoring the Social Action Plan.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Project intends to have long-term positive environmental and social impacts in terms of improved traffic conditions, accessibility and road safety, higher standard of living in Tirana, flood protection, social inclusion, as well as public health benefits and improvement of the urban environment.

The Project must comply with the EIB Environmental and Social Principles and Standards, as well as the EIB Environmental and Social Handbook². In particular, the Promoter will be required to provide to the Bank:

² <http://www.eib.org/infocentre/publications/all/environmental-and-social-practices-handbook.htm>

- As soon as available and in any case prior to first disbursement, a copy of the Environmental Authorisation issued by the Competent Authority, including confirmation that the Project does not affect any natural protected areas;
- As soon as available and in any case prior to first disbursement, a Resettlement Action Plan for the displacement triggered by the Project and a stakeholder engagement plan. The Promoter shall not commence any resettlement before agreement of the Bank to the corresponding RAP. In addition, the physical works in the affected area will start only after compensation of PAP has been completed.
- The Promoter will ensure that any environmental and social mitigation and compensation measures are implemented in accordance with the Environmental Management Plan, Social Action plan, Resettlement Action Plan and the Stakeholders Engagement Plan (inclusive of a grievance mechanism) and will immediately notify the Bank of any adverse environmental or social impact arising during implementation.
- Evidence to the satisfaction of the Bank, that the PIU managing the Project includes a person responsible to monitor environment, climate and social impacts, including road safety.

Therefore, given the nature of the operation and the procedures concerning Environment and Social put in place by the Promoter, subject to conditions mentioned above which are included in the Finance Contract, the Project is acceptable in environmental and social terms.

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