

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	LA CABRERA AND TALAYUELA SOLAR PV
Project Number:	2018-0659
Country:	Spain
Project Description:	<i>The project comprises the financing of two solar photovoltaic plants, for a total combined capacity of 482 MWp, and their ancillary interconnection infrastructure.</i>
EIA required:	yes
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise ¹ :	yes

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

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

The project comprises the financing of two solar photovoltaic plants, for a total combined capacity of 482 MWp, and their ancillary interconnection infrastructure. The Talayuela plant (300 MWp) will be implemented in the municipalities of Talayuela, Rosalejo and Navalmodal de la Mata Cáceres located in Extremadura in southwestern Spain. They will connect to the grid via a 21 km 400 kV aerial power line. The La Cabrera plant (182 MWp) will be located in the municipality of Alcalá de Guadaíra, Seville, Andalucía, southern Spain, and will be connected to the grid via a 13 km 220 kV aerial line.

The operation will contribute to the achievement of the Spanish 2020 targets for the reduction of CO₂ emissions, which require additional renewable energy capacity to become operational in the next two years.

The authorisation procedure and compliance with EU EIA, Birds and Habitats directives are deemed satisfactory following the Bank's review of individual EIA documentation, appropriate assessment on Natura 2000 sites and support biodiversity studies.

The Talayuela photovoltaic plant is included in Annex I of EIA-Directive 2011/92/EU (amended by EIA Directive 2014/52/EU), requiring a full EIA to be performed. The process started in January 2018, when the promoter submitted the application to the competent authority, the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Tourism, based on the size of the plant, for the approval of the project. The application was submitted for both the plant and the interconnection line. It contained the Environmental Impact Assessment Study, as well as the relevant technical documentation. The project received the environmental license in July 2018.

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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La Cabrera photovoltaic plant falls under Annex II of EIA Directive 2011/92/EU (amended by EIA Directive 2014/52/EU), requiring the competent authority to decide whether a full EIA is necessary. Originally, the promoter decided to split the project into 4 different plants, each of them smaller than 50 MWp, in line with the former energy regulation. The projects, “Primo Alemán”, “Los González”, “Hazas de las Sesenta” and “Cerrado Cabrera”, following the regional screening criteria, required a full EIA process (‘Autorización Ambiental Unificada’ in the regional environmental regulation) to be performed. The common interconnection line used for the plants has been also subject to an independent EIA process. The process started in May 2017 for the PV plants and in September 2017 for the interconnection line, when the relevant application was sent to the competent authority, accompanied by the technical and environmental documentation. The corresponding licenses were granted in May 2018 for the PV plants and in September 2018 for the line.

Biodiversity Assessment

The Talayuela plant

In the case of Talayuela, the landscape is typical of Extremadura, mostly made up of flat and soft hills, scattered oaks and pastures, currently used for extensive cattle breeding, and hunting to some extent, without any other economic activities.

The plant is located in the vicinity of several Natura 2000 sites, such as “Cañada del Venero” (ES4320062), where it is adjacent; “Llanuras de Oropesa, Lagartera y Calera y Chozas” (ES4320062), “Complejo Lagunar Ejido nuevo” (ES0000411), “Charca Dehesa Boyal Navalmoral”(ES000011), “Río y pinares del Tiétar” (ES0000427), “Río Tiétar” (ES4320031) and “Embalse de Valdecañas” (ES00000329). These areas are mostly protected because of their interest for the birds, as they are included in a major area, IBA (Important Bird Area), “Campo Arañuelo-Embalse de Valdecañas”. The competent authority has established that the project’s footprint will not negatively impact any of such sites.

With regard to the impacts of the project, these are mostly concentrated during the construction phase, and include disturbance to the fauna, because of the construction activities (noise, dust, vibrations, etc.). Construction will avoid critical periods for the breeding of bird species. Protected species will also be relocated before the construction activities start in such sections. Some reserved areas have to be arranged prior to the start of construction for the conservation of steppe birds. In the case of vultures, the promoter will accommodate a location where these birds can be fed.

During the operational period, the main impact is the exclusive use of land, and the associated loss of habitat for the fauna and flora. The structures will be installed hammering the poles into the ground, avoiding the need for major soil movements. As for the cables, they will be installed underground in trenches, respecting the original profile. The only buildings will be the project substation and control building. Humid cleaning of the modules would be required in case of prolonged dry periods, but the water demands are deemed very low. The promoter has been required to relocate individuals of oaks, and if it is not possible, to plant 10 new units per each one lost. Finally, the promoter has also been required to implement a cattle breeding management plan, in order to restore the original uses of the land.

The promoter has carried out a bird census for a period of 12 months. The main protected species found in the area are the Crane or the Spoonbill, as well as some birds of prey, among others. The conclusion is that the project will have a moderate impact on these populations, and only the transmission line might impose a higher hazard, because of the

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collision risk. For this purpose, the promoter has been required to install anti-collision devices, mostly signalling spirals, over the ground cable.

Actuations on certain land, such as public forests, cattle routes (“Vías Pecuarias”) and rivers (“Dominio Público Hidráulico”), among others, will require specific authorisation that is still ongoing.

La Cabrera PV plant

La Cabrera is located in lands currently dedicated to agriculture, mostly dry farming cereals and sunflower, with some scattered patches of olives.

The closest Natura 2000 area is “Río Guadaira” (ES6180013), located at ca. 1500 meters, but there are no other protected areas in the vicinity of the plant. The environmental authority has confirmed that the project does not have any impact on the area.

As in the case of Talayuela, there are some vulnerable bird species in the vicinity of the plant, such as the Montagu’s Harrier or Little Bustard. The main impacts are expected to be associated to the transmission line – mostly collision - and for them some mitigations have been found, based on Royal Decree 1432/2008, which establishes measures to protect flying species from collision and impact on high voltage aerial lines.

The expected impacts are identical to the ones assessed in the case of Talayuela. Mitigants for the construction phase include, apart from the standard construction environmental protection measures, the exclusion of works during the breeding period of the birds. As for the operational period, considering that the land was already anthropised, no additional mitigation measures have been established.

Monitoring

The environmental impact studies include environmental monitoring programmes, in order to monitor and control the foreseen impacts during construction and operation as well as the effectiveness of mitigation measures to reduce the environmental impact of the project. The programme will mainly monitor closely particular indicators of noise, protection of the atmosphere, protection of the physical environment (soil and hydrology), vegetation, flora and fauna, historical and cultural heritage and waste management.

EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise

The direct CO₂ equivalent emissions of the project are negligible. In accordance with the Bank’s current Carbon Footprint methodology it is calculated that based on the avoidance of electricity generation from a combination of existing and new power plants in Spain (75% operating margin and 25% build margin), the total relative effect of the project is a net reduction in CO₂ equivalent emissions by 480kt CO₂e/yr. 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 the project cost.

Social Assessment, where applicable

It is expected that the implementation of none of the project’s components will lead to involuntary physical or economic displacement or resettlement.

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The Talayuela plant requires about 825 Ha, comprised of the solar field, ancillary facilities and environmental buffers, over a land that had marginal previous economic use and has been voluntarily leased to the owner. With regard to the transmission line, the promoter is engaging with the owners in order to reach voluntary agreements for the rights of way, although some agreements are still missing.

In the case of La Cabrera, 460 Ha will be required. For the solar plants, the lands have been leased to the owners, as the compensation is in line with the benefit they obtained from the original agricultural use. Similar to the other plant, for the transmission line the promoter is engaging with the owners in order to reach voluntary agreements for the rights of way, although some agreements are still missing.

For the pieces of land where a voluntary agreement cannot be reached, the promoter intends to require expropriation, in line with the Spanish legislation. In Spain, all projects required for the implementation of the different activities within the electricity sector, including generation, promoted by public or private companies, are considered public utility, and are subject to urgent forced expropriation, to be carried out by the authority in the interest of the promoters.

All land lease agreements and/or legal rights, including expropriation procedures and rights, namely “Declaración de Utilidad Pública” and administrative concessions concerning certain public lands for the installation of all project components will be further assessed during Stage 2 of appraisal.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

Talayuela was subject to the mandatory public information phase during the environmental impact assessment phase in April and May 2017, after which no complaints were received.

The sub-projects comprising the La Cabrera plants (Hazas de los Sesenta, Cerrado Cabrera, Los González and Primo Alemán), were subject to public information in January 2018, while the interconnection line was published in June 2018. No complaints were received for any of the components.

Conclusions and Recommendations

For all project components, the main negative residual impacts have been evaluated to be minimal and will mainly be concentrated during construction, as the permanent loss of habitat has been deemed acceptable by the environmental authority. They will be mitigated with detailed project control mechanisms, as defined in the environmental documents.

The relevant environmental and social mitigation and compensation programmes have to be put in place and will be assessed during Stage 2 of appraisal. Those programmes are developed as part of the Environmental Management Plan and are included in the individual EIA report, and will include measures to avoid, reduce and mitigate the environmental impact, as well as monitoring indicators.

Similarly, administrative authorisations for the use of certain pieces of land of public ownership will be required; this will be further assessed during Stage 2 of appraisal.

As far as the expropriation process is concerned, the Bank will assess the procedure carried out in line with the applicable national regulations at Stage 2 appraisal.



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The promoter is deemed to have adequate experience and to be able to implement the local regulations and the EIB's Environmental and Social standards. The capacity of the promoter to address environmental and social impacts and further mitigate their risks is based on its extensive track record built over time and its global presence.

With the above-mentioned conditions in place, the EIA processes and their results are acceptable to the Bank.