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## Environmental and Social Data Sheet

### Overview

Project Name:	ALIMENTATION EN EAU POTABLE NORD DU BENIN
Project Number:	2023-0186
Country:	BENIN
Project Description:	The project comprises the construction in Benin of 38 multi-village rural water supply schemes in the Atacora and Donga departments, and the rehabilitation and the extension of the water supply system of the city of Djougou, in the Atacora department.
EIA required:	yes
According to environmental national legislation.	
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise <sup>1</sup> :	no

### Environmental and Social Assessment

#### Environmental Assessment

The general objective of the operation is to support the Government of Benin's Action Plan 2021-2026 and its goal of ensuring universal access to water. The project will increase access to water supply services by strengthening service delivery in rural and urban areas of the Atacora and Donga departments in the North of Benin. Works essentially concern the construction of 38 multi-village drinking water supply systems (SAEP-mVs) for the rural component. The project will also support the increase of water abstraction and water treatment capacity, together with the extension of the water supply network and associated infrastructure in urban and peri urban areas in the city of Djougou. In both cases, household connections and standpipes will be included in the works. The project is structured as parallel financing with the World Bank, complementing the Program for Results AQUA-VIE, supporting water supply services in rural areas of the country.

The operation will have two promoters. Société Nationale des Eaux du Bénin (SONEB) will be responsible for the urban component of Djougou. The National Agency for Drinking Water Supply in rural areas (ANAEPMR) will be responsible for the preparation and implementation of SAEP-mVs. The Ministry of Energy, Water and Mines is responsible, through the General Directorate for Water, for water resources policy. It will ensure the project's compliance with national guidelines for water supply in the project area. According to the Law nr 98-030 of 12 February 1999 on the environment, ABE (Benin's Environmental Agency) is the entity responsible for the implementation of the environmental policy defined by the government. It is responsible for reviewing and approving ESIA reports and proposing the technical opinion on the environmental acceptability of the project to the Minister in charge of the environment. The final approval is reflected in the Environmental Compliance Certificate issued by the Ministry.

<sup>1</sup> Only projects that meet the scope of the Carbon Footprint Exercise, as defined in the EIB Carbon Footprint Methodologies, are included, provided estimated emissions exceed the methodology thresholds: 20,000 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e/year absolute (gross) or 20,000 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e/year relative (net) – both increases and savings.



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Article 36 of Decree No. 2017-332 specifies the content of the EIA report. According to the provisions of this Decree, there are two types of environmental impact assessments namely i) in-depth Environmental Impact Assessments, which apply to large projects whose potential impacts are considered significant, or to medium-scale projects to be implemented in sensitive ecosystems; and ii) simplified Environmental Impact Assessments, which apply to micro-projects to medium-scale projects that are not located in a sensitive ecosystem, and to specific activities. Under the EIA Directive 2014/52/EU amending Directive 2011/92/EC, all project components under this operation would fall under Annex II, therefore, being subject to the decision of the competent authority.

A preliminary ESIA including an ESMP was carried out for the urban component of Djougou. It has been published on the Bank's website. A full ESIA and ESMP will be financed by the EIB loan. The rural component is complementary to the AQUA-VIE Program, which has already an operational structure in place that will also benefit the EIB project. An Environmental Action Plan was prepared under the World Bank Program. A Reference Guide for Environmental and Social Management was followed by a training program for the various stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Program. To support the phase of operations, a Guide for the E&S Management of SAEP-mVs was also developed in 2020.

As concluded by the preliminary ESIA, negative impacts are expected to be minor and acceptable with appropriate mitigation measures during the phase of construction and operation. Drinking water supply comes entirely from groundwater. The AQUA-VIE Program has launched a study to support groundwater resources monitoring. A better knowledge of groundwater resources will contribute to more sustainable management of water resources and, in the long run, ensuring drinking water security, especially in areas where groundwater sources are not reliable or might be affected by climate change. Preliminary information concludes that the project activities are not likely to have substantial impacts on protected areas or to significantly transform natural habitats or significantly alter areas of biodiversity and/or potentially important cultural resources. Impacts are expected to be generally positive in the long term. The rate of access to drinking water will significantly improve, which will promote a better health and hygiene of populations, reduce waterborne diseases, and improve living conditions. Living environment in schools and other public places (markets, health centres, public and private administration) will improve through permanent access to drinking water.

Recurrent droughts will continue to affect water resources in Benin. Variability in the seasonal climatic regime and lack of early warning systems will exacerbate the country's vulnerabilities. Groundwater monitoring, a better management of ground water resources, and the integration of climate change related risks into the dimensioning of the proposed investments will improve the resilience of water supply services delivered. Therefore, the proposed operation will contribute to adaptation to climate change.

The project has been assessed to be Paris aligned against resilience goals.

### **Social Assessment, where applicable**

Any project whose implementation results in the involuntary physical or economic displacement of at least one hundred people is subject to a resettlement action plan (RAP) according to the national legal framework. This document is independent and attached to the ESIA report. During the preparation of the ESIA, the Promoter will identify whether the urban component of Djougou will require the preparation of a RAP or other resettlement document in line with EIB E&S standards, as well as a grievance mechanism.

A grievance mechanism is operational as part of the AQUA-VIE Program, which will be applicable to the EIB financed components. The World Bank's experience so far concludes that the collaboration between ANAEPMR and the National Agency for Domain and Land (Agence Nationale du Domaine et du Foncier - ANDF) is successful. The construction and operation of



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water supply systems follow the Guidelines for Social and Environmental Management and are certified as environmentally compliant by ABE. Also, all construction sites are secured by acts established by the ANDF.

A positive impact of the operation will be the recruitment of local labour for the execution of the works. It would certainly lead to an increase in the income of the households.

The operation is likely to have a significant impact on gender equality and women's empowerment. In 90% of rural households in Benin, water fetching is done by women and girls. Women in Benin spend on average close to 4 hours per day on unpaid work including water collection. Lack of water and sanitation facilities is a contributing factor to the high dropout rate between lower and secondary school. Informed by gender analysis, the promoter has in place clear strategies, actions, and commitments to address gender equality challenges linked to water access, ensure that women's needs are considered during the project design, and promote women's representation in employment and water management.

Benin is member of the International Labour Organization since 1960 and signatory of eight fundamental ILO conventions, the two Occupational Safety and Health related conventions not yet ratified. Compliance with both labour and occupational health standards during construction and operation are part of the tender documentation, and thus will be part of their contractual obligations, under the supervision of the promoter and consultants.

### **Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement**

Public consultation is integrated in the environmental legal framework of Benin. Titre V of Decree No. 2017-332 defines the requirements and the process to follow. Planning activities within the AQUA-VIE Program have included participation of the local population and local authorities for the identification of sites and the realization of ESIA's, which includes the holding of public consultations. It makes possible to reflect and integrate the expectations, concerns, and points of view of the stakeholders concerned in the infrastructure to design. A framework for stakeholder consultation is included in the GRGES

### **Other Environmental and Social Aspects**

Both promoters have shown good understanding and management capacity of E&S aspects of the project. They have previous experience in the preparation and implementation of recent projects financed by international IFIs.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The project will have a high positive social impact and will contribute to the country's adaptation to climate change conditions. It will also improve public health. The project is not expected to have any significant negative impact on the environment nor any significant negative social impact with appropriate mitigation measures.

With the following conditions in place, the project is acceptable for financing in environmental and social terms:

### **Disbursement conditions**

#### **SONEB**

#### **All disbursement conditions linked to works**

- The Environmental and Social Impact Assessment, the Environmental and Social Management Plan, Grievance Mechanism and the Resettlement Action Plan (if



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required) of the project are satisfactory to the Bank and sent to be published on the Bank's website, together with the favorable opinion of the competent authority in charge of the environment in Benin.

- Confirmation that compensation to those people affected by the project, in relation to the disbursement in question, has taken place;

### **ANAEPMR**

#### All disbursement conditions linked to works

- The Environmental and Social Impact Assessment, the Environmental and Social Management Plan, and the Resettlement Action Plan (if required) of the project are satisfactory to the Bank and sent to be published on the Bank's website, together with the favorable opinion of the competent authority in charge of the environment in Benin.
- Confirmation that compensation to those people affected by the project, in relation to the disbursement in question, has taken place;

### **Undertakings**

#### **SONEB & ANAEPMR**

- The promoter commits to comply with the recommendations of the project's ESMPs during the implementation of the project;
- The Promoter undertakes to inform the bank on the progress of environmental and social aspects during the execution of the project.
- The promoter commits to update of the Guidelines for social and environmental management (GRGES) as needed (only ANAEPMR).