

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	<i>Interbiak Lamiako tunnel</i>
Project Number:	<i>2022-0267</i>
Country:	<i>Spain</i>
Project Description:	<i>Construction of an underground road link "Lamiako Tunnel" connecting two banks of the Nervion river in the outskirts of Bilbao, Spain. The road link will connect to A8 Santander-Bilbao TEN-T Core network Atlantic corridor, within the Bilbao Urban Node. The 3.9 km long link consists of a 3.2 km twin tube tunnel and connecting roads, including two interchanges and three at-grade intersections. Each tube will include two lanes one-way road. In addition, the western tube will integrate a single-track underground light metro over 300 m.</i>

EIA required: yes

Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise¹: yes

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

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

The project consists of the construction of an underground road link including two tunnel tubes under the Bilbao estuary formed by the Nervión (Ibaizabal) river and its connecting road infrastructure. The project intersects with the municipalities of Getxo, Leioa, Portugalete, Sestao and Trapagaran of the Bilbao metropolitan area, Spain.

The project is included in the Bilbao Metropolitan Territorial Partial Plan (PTP del Bilbao Metropolitano) approved on 26 September 2006 and reviewed on 5 October 2021², in the Third Basque Country Road Plan 2017-2028 (Tercer Plan General de Carreteras del País Vasco 2017-2028) approved on 19 May 2020, which was subject to an SEA procedure, and in the Biscay Territorial Sectorial Road Plan (Plan Territorial Sectorial de Carreteras del Territorio Historico de Bizkaia) approved on 15 April 1999³.

The project falls under the Annex II of the EIA Directive and was screened in for an EIA. The EIA report was prepared according to the requirements of the national and regional legislation

¹ 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 CO₂e/year absolute (gross) or 20,000 tonnes CO₂e/year relative (net) – both increases and savings.

² The reviewed Bilbao Metropolitan Territorial Partial Plan was provisionally approved on 25 April 2023 and the final approval by the Basque government planned for spring 2024.

³ The reviewed Biscay Territorial Sectorial Road Plan was provisionally approved on 23 April 2023. It was subject to SEA procedure.



Luxembourg, 15 November 2023

and published on 20 April 2023 on the competent authority's website, along with the provisional project approval, marking the launch of the 30-day public consultation. The competent environmental authority is the Regional Department of Sustainability and Natural Environment of the Regional Administration of the Historical territory of Bizkaia (Departamento de Sostenibilidad y Medio Natural). The environmental authority is expected to issue the environmental decision before 15 November 2023.

The project is not expected to directly affect any Natura 2000 site; the closest "Marine Space of the Mundaka-Cape of Ogoño" (SPA ES0000490) is located 6.9 km north of the project. However, the SAC ES2130003 - "Ría del Barbadún", located almost 9 km west of the project, lays in the vicinity of the Bilbao port where the deposits of materials excavated during tunnel construction is planned to be discharged.

The project is located in an urbanised and heavily anthropized environment, although there are some spots of natural vegetation formed by areas of grassland and woods. The project is not located within any area of recovery and conservation of flora, the closest being located 3.5 km away. However, the project is located 7 km away from the Area of Special Interest for the conservation of *Genista legionensis*, a shrub endemic to the Cantabrian Mountains, the only population of this species in the whole Autonomous Community (not a Natura 2000 site). The impact on the flora is considered not significant. Mitigation measures will be implemented in case any of the two species of protected flora (*Soldanella villosa* and *Linaria supina subsp. maritima*), potentially present in the area are identified at any stage of project implementation.

With regards to the impacts on biodiversity, the project is not located in the vicinity of any protected areas at state or regional level (Biosphere reserve, Ramsar site, or Protected Natural area) and the analysis carried out showed that there are no impacts from the projects on those areas.

According to the EIA, the richness of animal species in the area, consisting mostly of avifauna species, mammals, but also of reptiles, amphibians and fishes is very high. The project runs through or close to the scopes of application of the management plans of two species catalogued in the Basque Catalogue of Endangered Species (CVEA): European mink (*Mustela lutreola*) - "In danger of extinction" - and thorny fish (*Gasterosteus aculeatus*) - "Vulnerable". Preservation management plans were developed for the application in the project area. They include but are not limited to restrictions on works around the Ballonti river in respect of the biological cycle of the protected species.

The project entails civil works of great magnitude in an urban environment but located mainly underground. The underground location mitigates the negative impacts during construction, such as emissions of pollutants, noise and vibrations arising from excavation and construction operations and from punctual congestions generated by traffic restrictions. Construction phase impacts were quantified as moderate in the EIA report.

According to the information provided by the promoter, the material excavated during the tunnel construction are planned to be used for the expansion works in the Port of Bilbao and requires an authorization or permit from competent authority. The impact of the discharge of the excavated material and of its transport to the discharge location has been assessed and adequate mitigation measures and monitoring arrangements were defined to be included subsequently in the environmental decision.

Once completed, the project will marginally contribute to climate change mitigation by including a component of light metro infrastructure, which will enable modal shift. It will have positive impacts on air pollutants and carbon emissions and contribute to the reduction of road crashes. At the same time, noise and air pollution, will increase at local points, around the intersections leading to the tunnel tube entries.

Climate Change Adaptation

According to the climate risk and vulnerability assessment annexed to the EIA study, the most significant risks are related to changes in precipitation and temperature patterns, flooding and heat waves. The effect of an urban heat island has been assessed as well but found marginal thanks to project characteristics. The project vulnerability is mainly associated with the heat



Luxembourg, 15 November 2023

waves and flooding. Three action plans were prepared to address the two climate vulnerabilities and guided the choice of suitable materials and equipment.

The project is consistent with the National Integrated Energy and Climate Plan (PNIEC) and with the Basque Country's Climate Change Strategy 2050. The project design meets the requirements of current design standards to accommodate increased physical climate risks. After the application of proper mitigation measures, the climate risk of the project is rated "low".

Paris alignment

The project was assessed by the Bank's Services for Paris Alignment in accordance with the policies set out in the Climate Bank Roadmap ("CBR"). The project is considered aligned with the low carbon goal as it consists of a capacity expansion of an existing road infrastructure meeting the EIB eligibility criteria for Transport, including passing the Adapted Economic Test introduced under the CBR and is consistent with national and EU level infrastructure planning.

The latest EC assessment checklist from 2022 shows that all the requirements of Annex I to Directive 2014/94/EU relevant to EVs and charging infrastructure are covered. The Spanish National Implementation Report (NIR) expects up to five million electric vehicles on the roads by 2030, representing around 16% of the vehicle fleet by that time. Considering the current situation and expected trend developments, this level of ambition appears to be broadly consistent with the pace of deployment of electric vehicles considered necessary for a full transition to carbon neutrality by 2050. While not sufficient at the time of the last assessment in 2018, the number of EV public charging points has been rapidly increasing in the last years, bringing the country back on track to reach its national targets.

EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise

The project is included in the Carbon Footprint exercise on the following basis:

- Estimated annual emissions of project in a standard year of operation:
 - Forecast absolute (gross) emissions are 69,400 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per year.
 - Forecast emissions avoided are 7,700 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per year.
- The project boundaries are given by the new tunnel and the alternative urban connection comprising some sections of the following roads between Artaza and Trapagaran: Bi-637, N-637 (including the Rontegi Bridge over the Nervión river) and the A-8 (Autovía del Cantábrico).

The baseline is the forecast third party emission, in the absence of the project, from the existing network, only within the boundary defined above. The forecasts reflect the Services' assumptions on initial 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.

Social Assessment

The project is expected to have overall positive social impacts on the population of the affected municipalities. It will improve connectivity between the two banks of the Nervion river and contribute to social cohesion in the greater Bilbao Metropolitan Area. By reducing travel distance and improving traffic flows, the transport emissions are expected to diminish. Nevertheless, construction works will lead to a temporary increase in road traffic mainly in the project area and associated adverse effects on local population.

The project involves neither private land acquisition nor relocation of persons or businesses.

Road safety impact assessment and road safety audits are expected to be carried out in accordance with the EU Road Infrastructure Safety Management Directive (2008/96/EC) and



Luxembourg, 15 November 2023

the tunnels design is expected to comply with the Minimum Safety Requirements for Tunnels Directive (2004/54/EC). The road safety impact assessment has been elaborated; it foresees positive road safety impacts of the project.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

As part of the EIA process, the environmental authority has carried out a consultation with identified groups of interest, mainly the concerned municipalities and other public administrations and bodies that may be affected. The public consultation was launched on 20 April 2023 for a period of 30 days.

Several concerns were raised by public bodies and individuals. Areas of concern refer mainly to noise and air pollution during construction and to building stability due to excavation works.

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

In compliance with the provisions of Law 21/2013, of 9 December, on environmental assessment and its subsequent amendments, an Environmental Monitoring and Supervision Program (PVA) was drafted in order to establish a system that guarantees compliance with the indications and the measures provided for in this Environmental Impact Report (EIA).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The project falls under the Annex II of the EIA Directive and was screened for an EIA. The Declaration of Environmental Impact by the Department of Sustainability and Natural Environment of the Provincial Council of Bizkaia is expected to be published after the completion of public consultation.

The following conditions to EIB financing have been defined:

- Before finance contract signature:
 - Availability of the final environmental decision.
- Before first disbursement:
 - The Promoter will provide EIB with the final project approval as required by the national legislation.
 - The Promoter will provide EIB with the required authorization or permit for the discharge of material excavated during tunnel construction, including its assessment of environmental impacts.

The following undertakings have been defined and shall be applied:

- The Promoter will share with EIB the road safety audits conducted at different stages of project implementation.

Subject to compliance with the above conditions, the project is considered acceptable for EIB financing.