



Luxembourg, 13 June 2024

Environmental and social data sheet

Overview

Project name: PORT OF ESBJERG EXPANSION
 Project number: 2022-0762
 Country: DENMARK
 Project description: The project will expand the capacity of the Port of Esbjerg, by deepening of the navigation channel to enhance the port's capacity and interconnectivity for both civil and military use. It will also create a new 57ha terminal to cater to the needs of the offshore wind energy industry of the North Sea.

EIA required: Yes

Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise¹: No

Environmental and social assessment

Environmental assessment

The port expansion component of the project is part of the municipal plan supplement No 2018.13 and local plan No. 01100-0007 on the extension of the Port of Esbjerg.

The three components of the EIB investment include:

1. The works for the extension of the port terminals to the West (*Esbjerg Havn, Etape 5*);
2. The deepening of the navigation channel of the Port of Esbjerg (*Uddybningen af Grådyb*);
3. The dredging of certain areas next to the *Scorpiuskaj* and *Aquariuskaj*;

All components fall within Annex I of Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 amending Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (the EIA Directive).

The Danish Civil Aviation and Railway Authority (*Trafikstyrelsen*), under the Ministry of Transport, is the competent authority in line with Section 2 of the Danish Ports Act for the parts of the project within the boundaries of the Port of Esbjerg (components 1 and 3 in full, as well as parts of component 2). The Coastal Directorate of the Ministry of Environment (*Miljøministeriet, Kystdirektoratet*) is the authority responsible for the remainder of the project (the navigation channel, most of component 2 above).

1. Extension of the port terminals to the West (*Esbjerg Havn, Etape 5*):

The Port of Esbjerg conducted an EIA of the project in 2020. The competent authority issued a favourable opinion on 24 September 2021 under several conditions related to the execution of the works, requirements of the Marine Strategy Directive, sea, and sediment management conditions. Furthermore, consultations by the Government of Denmark with UNESCO in relation to the necessary protection of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site, which lies in the

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.



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vicinity of the project location, confirm that this EIB investment component does not cause any significant impact on the site. However, the environmental permit incorporates several recommendations from a request from UNESCO requesting the promoter to implement an Environmental Management Plan and to carefully monitor any impacts during construction and operation of the new harbour facility and requesting a commitment by the promoter to implement the said recommendations. The project is therefore not in conflict with the long-term goal of the area to preserve its outstanding universal value.

As part of the EIA procedure, a transboundary consultation in line with the requirements of the Espoo Convention was carried out with Germany and The Netherlands on potential transboundary effects of the project on the environment. The consultation hearing ended without a reply from the consulted counterparts.

The EIA report integrates an Appropriate Assessment. The project area is very close to Natura 2000 site No. 89: Wadden Sea. Due to the size of the Natura 2000 site No. 89, the area is subdivided into four habitat sites and nine bird protection areas. Only Habitat Area No. 78 and Bird Protection Area No. 51, Bird Protection Area No 53 and Bird Protection Area No 57 are located close to the project area and were therefore included in the impact assessment. Other Natura 2000 sites are further away from the project site and, according to the report, there is no risk that these will be affected by the project. Overall, it is assessed that the implementation of this EIB investment component will not result in any significant negative impacts to habitats or birds based on conservation objectives for them in Natura 2000 area No. 89:

The EIA report also contains a detailed assessment in relation to the objectives set out in the River Basin Management Plans and in the Marine Strategy Directive. Overall, it is assessed that the construction and operation phases of the project will not hinder the achievability of the objectives of good ecological and chemical status or will cause degradation of the current ecological and chemical status of coastal water body 121, *Grådyb* or coastal water body 119, *Vesterhavet, Syd*.

The assessments also show that the construction phase of this EIB investment component will not significantly affect the state or environmental objectives of the Marine Strategy Directive descriptors, and that the extension of the Port of Esbjerg will not worsen the current environmental status or delay the achievement of good environmental status in the North Sea ecosystems. At the same time, the project will not prevent or negatively affect the sustainable exploitation of marine resources. It is considered that the operational phase of the project will not significantly affect the sustainability criteria or environmental objectives of Denmark's Marine Strategy. Thus, the operation of the project will neither worsen the environmental status nor hinder the achievement of good environmental status for North Sea ecosystems. At the same time, operations will not prevent or negatively affect the sustainable use of marine resources.

As part of the EIA, an assessment of the impact of the port expansion on the population and human health has also been carried out, including noise, air pollution and visual disturbances. In addition, impacts on recreational conditions have been described and assessed, as well as the socioeconomic effects of environmental impacts. There have been no significant impacts on the population or human health identified and no significant socioeconomic effects of the environmental impacts are expected.

Based on the EIA report, the environmental permit states that no significant negative environmental consequences from the implementation of the concerned EIB investment component are expected.

The Danish Coastal Directorate has calculated that the risk of flooding due to storm surges in the Wadden Sea will increase in the future. Against this background, the berth structures have



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been designed/dimensioned to facilitate that the berth and the hinterland in the future can be raised about 1 m, if necessary, to meet the demands imposed by climate change.

2. Deepening of the navigation channel of the Port of Esbjerg (*Uddybningen af Grådyb*):

The Port of Esbjerg conducted an EIA of the project in 2023. The competent authorities have issued the environmental decisions related to this component in March 2024.

According to the EIA report, the deepening of the channel will have a moderate impact on coastal morphology. Therefore, mitigation measures are put in place so that the project will have an overall small impact on coastal morphology. In relation to the hydraulic impact of currents, waves and water level conditions, the deepening of the channel is considered to have a negligible effect.

It is estimated that the deepening has a small impact on water quality, bordering on the insignificant, as changes in the prevailing wind directions may have a greater impact on current patterns and water quality in the area during the construction phase.

Regarding the construction phase, it is considered that the project will have small to negligible impacts on seabed fauna, birds, surface and ground waters and commercial fishing. The project will have a small positive impact on resource consumption for materials for the recovery of the excavated material, as it can be used for the expansion of *Esbjerg Havn Etape 5* and the maritime infrastructure. Regarding the operational phase, impacts are also considered to be small to negligible for the aforementioned.

A screening for impacts of the project on the Natura 2000 site nr. 89, the Wadden Sea (DK-00AY-176 and DK-00AY-057), has been conducted. The conclusion of the screening is that the said sites will not be affected by the project. The results of the sediments transport modelling show that sediment transport will not be critical and will not reach the sites. Further, no significant effects are identified on the German Natura 2000 sites, DE-0916-391 and DE-0916-491, as well as the Dutch Natura 2000 sites.

It is assessed that the deepening will not have significant negative impacts on any of the Wadden Sea protected elements/reserves (Wadden Sea Plan, the Wadden Sea as Nature and Wildlife Reserve, the Wadden Sea National Park or the Special Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA). No cross-border impacts have been identified either. It is also concluded that the project will have no significant impact on the UNESCO Wadden Sea World Heritage Site or the surrounding landscape and nearby larger ecosystems. The project is therefore not in conflict with the long-term goals of the area (preservation its excellent universal value).

The impact on cultural heritage, including maritime archaeological interests, is considered to be small, as the risk of damage to sites or wrecks has been reduced by the inclusion of the conditions specified by two local museums in the permits.

It is considered that the deepening of the navigation channel does not worsen the risk of flooding or increased wave erosion. However, as future storm surges are expected to become more extreme due to climate change, it cannot be ruled out that the project will lead to a small increase in flood and erosion risk in the future.

As part of this EIA, the promoter has assessed the cumulative effects of the navigation channel deepening and the extension of the port terminals to the West (*Esbjerg Havn, Etape 5*) as well as other projects which are not part of the scope of the EIB investment. There will be a coincidence in time with the construction phase of both components for the expansion of the port. An increase of traffic on the channel it is therefore expected. The cumulative impact is estimated to be small.



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3. The dredging of certain areas next to the *Scorpiuskaj*:

Component no. 3 of the EIB investment is part of a larger project of which a significant part is already built and operational.

The Port of Esbjerg conducted an EIA of the project in 2010. The competent authority, the Danish Coastal Directorate, issued a favourable opinion by letter dated 29 July 2010 for the project *Esbjerg Ny Sydhavn* (now referred to as *Esbjerg Østhavn*) which was part of the Port of Esbjerg Master Plan 2004-2014. The master plan covered five stages, where the first and second stages were completed by previous extensions of the existing port areas. The project *Esbjerg Østhavn* deals with stages 3 and 4, where these works are included (stage 4.2). This authorisation was granted based on the EIA report of 25 May 2010, drawn up in accordance with Section 3(1)(1) of Order No 809 of 22 August 2005 on the environmental assessment of certain installations and measures in the Danish maritime territory.

As it is the case of all other EIB investment components for this project, the works will be executed in the vicinity of a protected area, the Wadden Sea. Based on the EIA report, the environmental permit state that there will be no significant environmental consequences derived from the implementation of the concerned EIB investment component.

EIB Paris Alignment for Counterparties (PATH) Framework

The counterparty, Port of Esbjerg, is in scope and screened-in with respect to the EIB PATH framework, because of its high vulnerability.

The counterparty already meets the requirements of the EIB PATH framework with its existing alignment plan(s).

Public consultation and stakeholder engagement

All three projects have been the subject of separate public consultations which took place in the following dates:

1. 16 February 2021 to 13 April 2021;
2. 14 September 2022 to 12 October 2022; and
3. February 2008;

The dates above are provided in the same order of appearance as the EIB investment components described above.

The Danish Nature Conservation Association raised a formal complaint against the adoption of the local plan (local plan No. 01100-0007) relevant to the project, by the Municipality of Esbjerg. The Board of Appeal received the complaint from the municipality on 3 February 2022. On 8 July 2022 the Board of Appeal rejected the appeal.

In addition, the Danish Nature Conservation Association also raised a formal complaint about the environmental assessment procedure followed in relation to the Promoter's intent to expand the port and they appealed the environmental decision on 6 October 2021, challenging the need to undertake the overall project. However, the Complaints Board dismissed the complaint on 14 July 2023.



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Conclusions and recommendations

Given the above, the following environmental undertaking is to be applied:

Undertakings:

- The Promoter undertakes to report to the Bank any future changes to the conclusions of the Appropriate Assessment, in view of the site-specific conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 site No. 89: Wadden Sea as confirmed and defined by the Competent Authority.

Based on the assessment performed by the Bank's Services the project is acceptable for EIB financing in environmental, climate and social terms.