



Luxembourg, 20 November 2024

Environmental and social data sheet

Overview

Project name:	BILBAO PORT EXPANSION	
Project number:	2023-0530	
Country:	SPAIN	
Project description:	The Project includes the second phase of the extension of the Central Pier (<i>Espigón Central</i>) of the Port of Bilbao as well as investments in the development of the onshore power supply network and the deployment of facilities for the generation of renewable energy within the port limits.	
EIA required:	Yes	
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise ¹ :	No	

Environmental and social assessment

The Project consists of the following components:

1. The necessary works to undertake a 30-ha expansion of the central quay (*Espigón Central*) through localised dredging, installation of concrete caissons and land reclamation with fill material from two nearby road and rail tunnel Projects;
2. The installation of two 5,5 MW wind turbines within the limits of the port connected to a battery storage system and all the ancillary infrastructure; and
3. The purchase and installation, including the necessary works, for eleven onshore power supply distribution points across several locations within the port limits, as well as the necessary connecting infrastructure (electricity network), including an underwater 30 kV cable between two locations within port limits;

Environmental assessment

All Project components are part of the Promoter's Strategic Plan 2023-2026. No Strategic Environmental assessment (SEA) in accordance with the Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment is required for the plan.

Project component no. 1:

This component entails an expansion of the central quay of 30 ha, intended for servicing the offshore wind industry. This is the second phase of the expansion construction Project approved in 2013 and it will approximately double the surface area of the quay. The works for first phase of the quay construction were initiated in 2016 and concluded in 2023. The works for the second phase started in 2023 and are expected to be concluded in 2027.

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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Projects with such characteristics are listed in Annex I of the EIA Directive 2014/52/EU 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 Promoter undertook two EIA procedures and two subsequent EIA decisions (DIA) were issued and published by the competent authority, the Spanish Ministry of Environment, in 2013:

- BOE-A-2013-4817 issued by the Ministry of Environment on 17.04.2013 – covering the construction of the Central Quay;
- BOE-A-2013-4817 issued by the Ministry of Environment on 17.04.2013 – covering the outer sea dredging;

Both decisions include assessments according to the Habitats and Birds Directives and both are still valid, as the execution of the first phase of the Project (quay construction phase I and outer sea dredging) was initiated within four years following the issuance of the permits, as required by the provisions of the Spanish Law of Environmental Assessment as amended (EIA Act 21/2013, transposing the EIA Directive). No residual impacts were identified in the assessments.

The two EIA decisions include conditions for the construction and operation of the quay. The conditions include monitoring and control of dredging related turbidity plumes, preventive design and filling of quay compartments, mapping, and preventive management of polluted sediments in the port seabed, noise mapping and reduction, dust minimization and controlled runoff of the supernatant after compartment filling.

However, two key elements of this Project component have been changed by the Promoter since the 2013 EIA decisions were issued and ahead of the execution of the second phase:

- a) The material to be used for the land reclamation of the quay construction works will no longer be sourced from offshore dredging. Currently, the Promoter foresees that these materials will be primarily sourced from the excavations performed from two neighbouring Projects concerning the construction of a road and a rail tunnel respectively:
 - i. The road tunnel *Subfluvial de Lamiako* will connect the two banks of the nearby Nervión river;
 - ii. The *Variante Sur Ferroviaria* rail tunnel will connect the port railways to the general railway network bypassing densely populated urban areas.

The works of the two tunnel Projects have not yet started at the time of drafting this document. In the meantime, the Promoter accepts filling material from other smaller Projects in the vicinity of the port that meet the required soil characteristics and are free from pollution, as per the Promoter's procedures.

The EIA decisions for the tunnel Projects have been issued and published:

- BOB 234: Orden Foral 5560/2023, issued by Department of Natural Environment and Agriculture, Provincial Council of Biscay on 7 December 2023;
- BOE-A-2024-8347: Environmental impact statement for the Project "Informative study of the Bilbao southern railway variant. Phase 1", Ministry for Ecological Transition, and the Demographic Challenge of Spain on 16 April 2024;

As stated in the respective EIA decisions, no residual negative impacts of these activities have been identified in relation to the Project to be financed by the EIB.



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- b) The expected future use of the facilities has changed after the EIA decision was issued. While originally intended as a container terminal the quay is now intended for expanding the existing offshore wind hub based within the port and zero and low emission multimodal solutions;

To fully understand whether the proposed changes could lead to new or increased level of impacts, the Promoter and the EIB engaged the services of a specialised consultant in June 2024.

The scope of the consultancy assignment included, among others, assessments of the validity of the 2013 environmental baseline and the legal compliance of the Project environmental documentation. A report with the outcomes of the assignment was issued in October 2024.

The main conclusions of the consultant's report are that:

- a) In accordance with the Spanish EIA Act 21/2013, no screening of the Project changes was needed as it was found beyond doubt that no significant impact would result from the proposed changes. The consultant's subsequent analysis of the potential environmental impacts demonstrate that no significant impacts would have been identified if a screening was conducted at the time;
- b) No significant baseline change is identified, and no new residual impacts can be expected from Project implementation. Ongoing monitoring programmes ensure the availability of updated environmental information;
- c) The EIA procedures conducted for the two tunnel Projects demonstrate that no residual impacts derived from the excavated material being transported and deposited in the quay are identified;
- d) No residual impacts on any NATURA 2000 sites including sites designated ex-post the issuing of the 2013 EIA decisions have been identified;
- e) The use of materials from the two tunnels are also not expected to result in any residual impacts on any NATURA 2000 sites.
- f) No significant negative impacts compromising the maintaining or achieving of objectives specified in the River Basin Management Plan for the area elaborated according to the Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy Water Framework Directive: "Hydrological Plan of the Eastern Cantabrian Hydrographic Demarcation 2022-2027" are expected. Further, the reduction of the amount of sand to be extracted from the Zone II (due to reduced outer sea dredging) will reduce the impacts on the biotic and abiotic elements used to determine the quality of water bodies.

Project component no. 2:

There will be two wind turbines (each 5.5 MW) to be installed within the scope of the Project. Wind power installations are included in Annex II (3) (i) of the EIA Directive and therefore an EIA screening decision is required for this component. The wind turbines will, according to the information provided by the Promoter, be installed in 2026.

No environmental procedures have yet been conducted for the wind turbine component. Consequently, the Bank will require the Promoter to provide the relevant information prior to disbursement of the corresponding part of the loan.

Project component no. 3:

This component includes eleven onshore power supply distribution points, connecting infrastructure (electricity network), including an underwater 30 kV cable between two locations within port limits; OPS connection points/transformer substations.



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This component's elements are not listed in the annexes of EIA Directive. However, the underwater cable will be established in a waterbody included in a River Basin Management Plan elaborated according to the Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy Water Framework Directive: "Hydrological Plan of the Eastern Cantabrian Hydrographic Demarcation 2022-2027". The competent authority is expected to be consulted prior to the establishing of the cable.

The Bank will require the Promoter to provide the relevant information prior to disbursement of the corresponding part of the loan.

EIB Paris Alignment for Counterparties (PATH) Framework

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

Public consultation and stakeholder engagement

Project component 1 (quay and dredging) has been the subject of public consultations which took place during the EIA procedures in 2012-2013. The subsequent Project change of landfilling material (source/transportation) has also been subject to public consultations during the EIA procedures in the two tunnel Projects in 2023-2024. According to the reasoned conclusions in the respective EIA decisions (previously referred to), the consultations have been conducted in compliance with the EIA Directive. The consultations have not resulted in any change of component 1.

As no environmental procedures have yet been conducted for the remaining components, the Bank will require the Promoter to provide the information prior to disbursement of the corresponding part of the loan.

Conclusions and recommendations

Given the above, the following environmental undertakings are to be applied.

Undertakings:

- The Promoter shall report any future changes in the primary sources of materials used for quay landfilling (changes from materials included in the 2013 EIA decisions and from the road and rail tunnels as main sources) to the EIB. Reporting shall take place prior to implementing the changes and shall include references to applicable environmental approval documentation issued by competent authorities;
- The borrower is screened-in under PATH and does not currently meet the PATH requirements with regards to resilience. A contractual obligation will accordingly be included in the loan documentation;

Conditions:

Prior to disbursement of the tranche corresponding to the windmills:

- The Promoter shall provide to the Bank a copy of the screening decisions issued by the competent authority. Should an EIA procedure become necessary, the Promoter shall provide a copy of the EIA report and EIA decision/development consent.



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Prior to disbursement of the tranche corresponding to the underwater cable of the OPS component:

- The Promoter shall provide a copy of the permission/official opinion from the competent authority for the approval of the submarine cable;

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