



## Environmental and Social Data Sheet

### Overview

Project Name:	Atlas Iberia RE Green Loan – Nijarmar
Project Number:	2020-0839
Country:	Spain
Project Description:	Project Nijarmar, a solar PV plant part of the financing of a portfolio of greenfield onshore wind and solar PV projects in Spain and Portugal

EIA required: yes (simplified)

Invest EU sustainability proofing required: yes

Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise: yes

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

### Environmental and Social Assessment

The Nijarmar Project consists of the construction and operation of a solar photovoltaic (PV) plant with a total capacity of 27.6 MWp located in the municipality of Lucainena de las Torres, province of Almeria, region of Andalucía. The project scope includes the associated infrastructure for the grid connection.

The Project’s point of interconnection to the grid is the Carboneras – Vera 132 kV line owned by E-Distribucion, with a grid limitation of 21 MWac.

The interconnection is composed of the following:

- 30 kV underground line from the Project area to the Nijarmar 132/30 kV substation, located 1.2 km from the Project area;
- A switching centre and a 650m long 132 kV overhead line connecting to the Carboneras – Vera 132 kV line owned by E-Distribucion, which is the point of connection for the Project. This part, although built by the Project, will be transferred to E-Distribucion once completed.

### Environmental Assessment

According to the regional law of Andalucía “*Ley 7/2007, de 9 de julio, de Gestión Integrada de la Calidad Ambiental*”, the Project is included in the category 2.6.BIS of its Annex I “*Categorías de actuaciones sometidas a los instrumentos de prevención y control Ambiental*”, and it is subject to the Unified Environmental Authorization (AAU) by the abbreviated procedure.

An Environmental Impact Study (EIS) was carried out in 2018 covering PV plant and interconnection infrastructure, and the Project obtained the Unified Environmental



Authorization (AAU) on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2020, for the PV Plant + Nijarmar Substation + 132 kV electric line to the point of connection.

The general quality of the EIS report in terms of the impact assessment methodology, desk studies and field work conducted is considered acceptable. The EIS also includes a cumulative impact assessment considering neighbouring infrastructure, including other solar PV plants and transmission lines.

The EIS concludes that the impact of the project is acceptable during both construction and operational phases, provided that the preventive, corrective and compensatory measures defined are implemented. The following is noted:

- Flora: Two critical habitats are detected in the study area: 6220\_0 Pastizales anuales mediterráneos, neutro-basófilos y termo-xerofíticos (*Trachynietalia distachyae*) and 6220\_1 Pastizales vivaces neutro-basófilos mediterráneos (*Lygeo-Stipetea*).
- Fauna: The birds and chiropteran that are under a certain degree of protection in the study area are: Bonelli's eagle (*Hieaaetus fasciatus*), Little bustard (*Tetrax tetrax*) and Greater horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*).

The EIS, however, concludes that there is no impact on the above.

The Project (including interconnection infrastructure) is not located within a protected area such as Natura 2000. However, the closest Natura 2000 area (ZEC ES6110005 Sierra de Cabrera-Bédar) is only 1.7 km away from the PV plant area.

Mitigation measures defined in the EIS were further complemented by conditions of the environmental permit and can be summarised as follows:

Preventive and corrective measures:

- Installation of the PV Plant adapting to the slope where earthworks must be the minimum necessary for the correct installation of the trackers and fixed structure, respecting its maximum assembly tolerances. In addition, large cut slopes (>2m) should be avoided.
- According to the non-substantial modification of 15/03/24, in relation to the slopes, fixed structure will be installed in the most sloped areas and trackers in the rest of the PV Plant to ensure minimum earthworks.
- Internal path shall not be less than 6 meters wide and will not be paved with rigid pavement of any kind.
- An Environmental Monitoring Plan (PVA) will be active throughout all the phases of the Project (construction, operation, and dismantling).
- Perimeter fencing with hunting mesh anchored directly to the ground, without barbed wire crown.
- Along the entire perimeter, a continuous natural hedge will be planted using species (*Ziziphus lotus*, *Rhamnus lycioides*, *Rhamnus alaternus*, *Genista spartioides*, etc.).
- Reflective substances may not be incorporated into the soil or materials that increase the albedo (to increase the efficiency of the modules), as they would cause changes in the soil substrate that would result in a denaturalization of the landscape.



Corrective measures shall include landscape integration (replacement of damaged vegetation, silvicultural treatments, irrigation) and actions on fauna (installation of water points, stone shelters, bird perches, nest boxes for bats).

The EIS report and environmental permit cover the entire lifecycle of the Project, including the decommissioning phase, with the aim to reinstate the Project area to its original state. All remaining materials, waste, or excess soil shall be managed by an authorized waste manager appropriate for the nature of each type of waste. Restoration shall include the attempt to maintain the terrain's original topography. The decommissioning shall not affect the implemented vegetation screen and the planting, nor other complementary measures for birdlife habitat improvement. Disposal of all waste generated during the project life, including the decommission phase, shall be subject to the relevant Spanish legislation.

### **EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise**

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 (combined margin for intermittent generation), the total relative effect of the project is a net reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions by ca. 17.2 kt CO<sub>2</sub>-eq/yr.

For the annual accounting purposes, the project emissions will be prorated according to the EIB lending amount signed in that year, as a proportion of project cost.

### **Climate Assessment**

The Project substantially contributes to the climate change mitigation objective. The Project has been assessed for Paris alignment and is considered to be aligned both against low carbon and resilience goals against the policies set out in the Climate Bank Roadmap and the Bank's Energy Lending Policy. Residual risks from physical climate hazards are deemed low.

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

In Spain, the land needed for any project considered of public utility can be expropriated; the expropriation is carried out by the relevant authorities in the interest of the promoters. In order to do so, a public utility declaration ("DUP / Declaración de Utilidad Pública") needs to be obtained by the promoter.

However, in this case all the required land has been secured (purchased or leased) without the need of expropriating.

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

A public consultation process was carried out as part of the regional environmental procedure. No further stakeholders engagement activities were undertaken. Under the construction contract, the main contractor has an obligation to put in place a grievance mechanism.

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



Recent reports are pointing out the possibility of use of forced labour in the supply chain of solar PV panels. The promoter has robust human and labour rights policies in place, rejecting the use of any form of forced or compulsory labour. Such policies also put the same obligations on suppliers and sub-suppliers.

An enhanced forced labour due diligence was carried out by the promoter on the modules' supply chain up until polysilicon level, confirming that none of the components and sub-components are manufactured in a high forced labour risk area.

The project shall also comply with the EIB Environmental and Social Standards, which foresee a zero tolerance for the use of forced labour.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The Project has obtained the required environmental and construction permits for the solar PV plant and its power evacuation infrastructure. The related Environmental Impact Study was carried out.

The Project is expected to have limited social and environmental impact, provided that all mitigation measures, as included in the EIS and environmental permit, are implemented.