

**Public**

## **Environmental and Social Data Sheet**

### **Overview**

Project Name: CAPE VERDE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAMME  
Project Number: 2018-0600  
Country: Cape Verde  
Project Description: The project concerns the promoter's investments in Cape Verde to increase the availability and quality of mobile and fixed high speed broadband services (based on 3G, 4G and FTTx) as well as the construction and installation of a submarine cable branch for linking Cape Verde with a Latin America to Europe submarine cable system.

EIA required: to be confirmed

Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise<sup>1</sup>: no

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

### **Environmental and Social Assessment**

#### **Environmental Assessment**

The project includes the deployment of a new submarine cable branch to connect the Cape Verde islands to the main trunk of the EllaLink cable system, which links Portugal to Brazil. The implementation of this part of the project will be performed by ASN, a reputable company and one of the world leaders in these activities.

At the time of appraisal, the contract with EllaLink has not yet been signed. The project design is subject to the desktop studies and the maritime survey, which will be performed after the signature of the contract. The supplier will select the best route for the cable taking into account the conditions of the marine environment in the area, as well as human activities such as fishing, navigation, the location of other cables and will verify its adequacy with a maritime survey. The precise location of the landing point in Santiago island will be confirmed at that moment. Finally, there will be a study of the terrestrial route and the landing station location. One of the criteria for the final design and planning of the works will be to minimise potential environmental impacts during construction, which will be done based on best practices and adequate mitigation measures, such as avoiding breeding periods of turtles, impacts on marine mammals and coral reefs. The most vulnerable part of the cable route will be the segment between the shallow waters and the landing point, although with industry best

<sup>1</sup> Only projects that meet the scope of the Pilot Exercise, as defined in the EIB draft Carbon Footprint Methodologies, are included, provided estimated emissions exceed the methodology thresholds: above 100 000 tons CO<sub>2</sub>e/year absolute (gross) or 20,000 tons CO<sub>2</sub>e/year relative (net) – both increases and savings.

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practices and adequate mitigation measures potential environmental impacts in this area would only be minor and temporary, as works will just last for a few days, the time it takes to deploy the cable.

The other main project components (3G/4G mobile broadband and FTTx networks) will be deployed in towns and urban areas, prioritising the reuse of existing infrastructures and therefore minimising potential impacts during construction, which would in any case be minor and limited to the implementation time. The promoter is not planning to deploy these networks in any environmentally sensitive area, so they would not be subject to EIA.

During operation of the mobile network, the potential impact is related to electromagnetic field (EMF) radiation from base stations and microwave radio equipment. Studies are ongoing to further assess the potential long-term effects of use on human health. In the meantime, the EMF radiation produced by mobile handsets has been classified by the International Agency for Research on Cancer, a WHO specialized agency, as possibly carcinogenic to humans. So far, mitigation measures adopted are limits to the radiation of the mobile base stations, restrictions to their locations, the control of the power of the handsets and guidelines for consumer usage. Cape Verde has adopted exposure limits aligned with the ones stipulated by the ICNIRP (International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection). The telecommunications regulator is responsible for monitoring the compliance of the operators' networks. According to the promoter, there have not been any relevant non-compliances detected until now.

If the project were in the EU, it would not require Environmental Impact Assessments because telecommunications projects are not included in Annex I or II of the European EIA Directive 2014/52/EU amending the Directive 2011/92/EU, and therefore are not subject to Environmental Impact Assessments as per the Directive. The relevant Cape Verdean environmental law (Decree 29/2006) is consistent with the corresponding EU directives in this respect, and does not require EIAs for telecommunications projects not affecting environmentally sensitive areas. As the location of the submarine cable landing is uncertain at the moment, and the maritime environment is particularly sensitive in the islands, the authority responsible for awarding the construction permits for the submarine cable (Ports and Maritime Institute of Cape Verde) may require an EIA depending on the cable's location. For those components subject to a screening decision, the provision of copies of the environmental impact study and the screening decision report that are satisfactory to the Bank, as well as, if finally required, the EIA approved by the corresponding authority and satisfactory to the Bank will be a condition for respective disbursement.

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

The promoter is a signatory of the UN Global Compact and produces an annual Corporate Sustainability Report using the GRI standards. The promoter operates with a quality management systems certified according to ISO-9001:2015. The project is expected to result in wide-ranging socio-economic benefits thanks to the improvements in the quality and availability of broadband access as well as the increased use of digital services.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The potential environmental impacts of submarine cables are typically minor, short term, localized at the landing points and become negligible with the application of mitigation measures and industry best practices. The fixed and mobile broadband access networks also



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included in the project will be deployed mainly in urban areas, and the promoter will reuse in many cases existing infrastructures, so potential impacts during construction will be limited. The potential environmental impacts during operation of mobile networks are related to EMF radiation. The mitigation measure is to adopt exposure limits, which in Cape Verde are aligned with the ICNIRP guidelines. EIAs are not required for telecom networks not located in environmentally sensitive areas as per relevant Cape Verdean environmental legislation. However, as some parts of the project (notably the submarine cable component) are not yet fully defined, the decision for the requirement of an EIA is still pending. For those components subject to a screening decision, the provision of copies of the environmental impact study and the screening decision report that are satisfactory to the Bank, as well as, if finally required, the EIA approved by the corresponding authority and satisfactory to the Bank will be a condition for respective disbursement.

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