

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	Mano River Union Road
Project Number:	2018-0114
Country:	Liberia
Project Description:	Upgrade of the 47 km long gravel road from Sanniquellie to Loguato, at the border with Ivory Coast
EIA required:	Yes
Carbon Footprint ¹ :	No

Environmental and Social Assessment

The project consists of upgrading the existing 47.1 km gravel road in Liberia's Nimba County from Sanniquellie to Loguato at the Ivorian border, to a two-lane 45.8 km paved road including the construction of new drainage structures and reinforced concrete bridges. Apart from the civil works, the project includes accompanying technical assistance components such as technical and road safety audits, financial management support and HIV/AIDS awareness services.

The project will be co-financed with the African Development Bank (AfDB) (approved in 2018), and the EU through blending with an AIP grant (approved in 2017). The latter also financed the project's preparatory studies (feasibility study and impact assessments) and detailed project design.

Environmental Assessment

If located within the EU, the project would fall under Annex II of the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU and would likely require an environmental impact assessment based on the potential for significant effects on the environment.

An Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA), which was conducted in accordance with Liberian, EU and AfDB ESIA procedures, was financed by the EU and endorsed by Ministry of Public Works (MPW). The MPW also commissioned an

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

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Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP). The documents are available for the public.

The environmental assessment consisted of two main components: i) an environmental baseline study to gather project-relevant environment data, and ii) an impact assessment followed by suggested mitigation measures for negative impacts. The main identified environmental and social issues include the loss of vegetation and agriculture land and possible increased level of wastes and siltation of rivers and streams. No major impacts on wildlife were identified for the road corridor since it will mostly follow the existing alignment and does not pass through wildlife reserves or protected area. Where realignments are needed, due consideration will be given to specific environmental and social issues, including in respect of protected areas. Mitigation measures include: i) incorporating environmental controls and best management practices throughout the operation and decommissioning phases, ii) regular assessments of environmental conditions during construction and operation, iii) establishing credible monitoring and verification programmes, iv) providing capacity building to local teams, v) establishing an efficient environmental incident reporting system, and vi) working with stakeholders to implement the identified community-related mitigation strategies.

It is also worth noting that Liberia ranks high in the precipitation index, causing the road to be inaccessible for prolonged periods of time. As such, the paving of the road and upgrades on bridges and its drainage systems will substantially improve reliable and safe access to local and regional economic activity (mainly agriculture), as well as basic social services such as healthcare and education.

The project is slightly positive in terms of CO₂ impact. Overall, the project will decrease emissions by 600 tonnes CO₂e/year to 4.200 tonnes CO₂e/year, which represent approximately 13% of the baseline emissions of around 4.800 tonnes CO₂e/year.

The Liberian Environmental protection Agency was involved throughout the assessment process, as well as Nimba County local authorities.

Social Assessment

The project will contribute to a number of improvements such as increased mobility and safety, reduced level of road accidents, improved access to trade and economic activities, and improved access to health and other essential services.

Social impacts of the project during construction include, among others, involuntary economic and physical resettlement as well as perturbation to public from civil works and earth moving; accident risks to communities from construction-related traffic and disruptions to normal traffic patterns; and the influx of workers. On the other hand, generation of employment and beneficial impacts to local economy are expected during the construction period.

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The main adverse social impact is related to land acquisition and physical and economic displacement (livelihood). Efforts have been made during design phase to minimize land acquisition, resettlement and adverse impacts on people in the project area. Namely, the RoW for densely settled areas was reduce to 40 and 50ft in all settlements and 75ft for areas of embankments to minimize the social adverse impact within the limit of the technical requirement and cost effectiveness. Despite the best efforts to minimize the adverse social impacts, resettlement has been, to some extent, unavoidable. 172 tree crop owners are going to be affected by the project as well as 505 structures, 137 of which are residential structures.

The promoter has commissioned a Resettlement Action Plan (RAP), with support from the EU and to be consistent with EIB requirements. The RAP is being prepared in consultation with all project-affected persons and will be finalized before signature of the loan. The RAP will be disclose on the website of the Promoter and EIB. EIB finance will be subject to implementation of the RAP prior to the handover of sites to the work contractors. To avoid any disproportionate negative livelihood impacts on vulnerable groups, identified vulnerable households will receive an assistance allowance. The project was designed so as not to impact religious structures and cultural assets, for the cases where that is not possible the project will the ritual ceremony to allow its removal.

Other potential social risks arising due to the project are: (i) poor application of relevant labour standards related to employee working conditions during construction and operation; and (ii) poor occupational and community health and safety during construction. These will be addressed primarily through the inclusion of contractual obligations for the first tier suppliers and contractors, which will be enforced by the Promoter's supervision team.

In accordance with national law on labour standards and ILO obligations ratified by Liberia (Liberia ratified 6 out of 8 ILO fundamental conventions), the works contracts will aim to comply with ILO core labour standards.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

Liberian legislation requires public participation for projects that require an EIA. The Road Administration as part of the ESMP process has conducted stakeholder consultations. A comprehensive public consultation program was undertaken to ensure that all of the information pertaining to the project and its likely impacts is disseminated, in order to implement it in a transparent manner. Further public consultations will be undertaken for finalisation of the RAP and a SEP will be prepared to guide public participation thereon.

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

The Promoter will rely on supervising engineers for project environmental and social supervision of contractors' environmental and social requirements, and for monitoring and reporting on environmental and social performance. The PIU will be strengthened by experts, financed through the TA budget.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The project has limited negative environmental impacts during construction and operation, while some social impacts are expected during (pre)construction phase. The residual impact after compensatory and mitigating measures is expected to be limited if adequately addressed in line with the project's environmental and social management plans. Subject to the fulfilment of the below-mentioned conditions, the project is acceptable for EIB financing in E&S terms.

Before signature:

- The Borrower/Promoter shall provide a final version of the RAP to the satisfaction of the Bank.

Before first disbursement

- The Borrower/Promoter shall provide copies of all environmental and social documents applicable to the project to the satisfaction of the Bank, as required pursuant to the legislation of Liberia and under the EIB's environmental and social standards, and prior to commencement of any work on the Project component concerned, namely final versions of the:
 - Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA), approved by the regulatory authority
 - Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP), including a Workers Influx Management Plan.
 - Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) outlining the ongoing and foreseen consultation process with the Project Affected Peoples (PAPs) and including an accessible project wide Grievance Mechanism to the satisfaction of the Bank
 - copies of all environmental and social licences applicable to the Project component;
 - a declaration by the competent authority that the project is not likely to have significant effects on any sites of nature conservation importance.
- The Borrower will make sure that the PIU and supervision teams include environmental and social experts to implement the ESMP and RAP;

Following disbursements:

- The promoter should update the Bank before each disbursement on the implementation of the ESMP, SEP and RAP and confirm compliance of contractors and subcontractors with the ESAP, to the satisfaction of the Bank.

Undertakings

- The Borrower will ensure that the ESMP, Core ILO conventions relevant Bank's social and environmental standards are included in the tender documents of the main work contracts;

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- The Borrower will implement the project in accordance with the agreed ESMP, RAP and SEP;
- The Borrower agrees to have implemented the relevant measures of the RAP, including payment of full compensation, prior to the commencement of civil works for each section;
- The Borrower will comply with the Bank's social and environmental standards and will monitor and report on its implementation regularly, to the Banks satisfaction.
- The Borrow will present an end of term evaluation of RAP implementation prepared by a third party;
- The Promoter shall undertake an annually third party labour audit to the project related works.