

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	SOFICO – Walloon Waterways & Roads Modernisation
Project Number:	2017-0936
Country:	Belgium
Project Description:	The project covers a part of the 2018-2022 investment programme of SOFICO, a public sector entity in charge of managing and financing the structural road and waterway networks in Belgium's Walloon Region. The project scope includes the renewal and enlargement of an inland waterway lock complex along the Meuse, which is a TEN-T waterway, at Ampsin-Neuville and the rehabilitation of two TEN-T roads in the region, including widening of some sections for one of them. The project's key objectives are supporting sustainable inland waterway transport and improving traffic conditions and road safety.
EIA required:	Yes
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise ¹ :	Yes

Environmental and Social Assessment

The project to be financed is managed by the Government of Wallonia (Belgium) and it is part of the Walloon Waterways and Roads Modernisation Programme for the period 2019-2024 (the Programme). Within this programme, there are two main components concerned: (i) the renewal of the navigation lock of Ampsin-Neuville, and (ii) the rehabilitation and upgrade works on various locations of the Walloon TEN-T road network, namely the E411 and E420/N5 roads.

Environmental Assessment

The Programme is a financial and budgetary framework for river and roadworks within the Walloon Region. As such, the programme is not subject to the requirement to produce a Strategic Environmental Assessment according to 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.

The Promoter conducted an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the Ampsin-Neuville lock enlargement, in line with the requirements set forth by Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (the EIA Directive). Following a review of the presented EIA as well as in alignment with other legal considerations, the Competent

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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Authorities (SPW de l'Aménagement du territoire, du Logement, du Patrimoine et de l'Énergie and SPW de l'Agriculture, des Ressources Naturelles et de l'Environnement) granted a permit for this project component on 19 July 2016.

The EIA concluded that there are a number of impacts that are a consequence of the project and can be split in two main groups: impacts during project implementation and impacts during the project's operational life.

During the lock construction, some of the main identified impacts relate to:

- Air and soil quality, particularly with regards to the demolition of buildings where asbestos is present and the dust generated by the works;
- Soil and underground waters, particularly with regards to the presence of contaminated soils and river bed materials and the need for their remediation;
- Surface water and hydraulics;
- Noise and vibration, particularly related to that produced by construction equipment;
- Flora, in relation to the destruction of it in areas where the works will be conducted or the expansion of invasive species, and fauna, particularly related to aquatic fauna due to temporary water quality degradation due to the presence of sediments;
- Landscape and heritage, particularly with regards to the modification of the existing landscapes until the works are completed;
- Socio-economics of navigation, concerning the impact on the navigation and, in particular, the approach to the lock that will remain operational during the works;
- Mobility and road safety, as the course of the road N90 is to be modified as part of the lock works as well as the traffic generated by the works;
- Utility networks and the need to divert these as part of the works;
- Refuse management and the adequate disposal of the different types generated by the works; and
- Health and safety and security, and the effect the works may have on the health of those involved and the people passing nearby the works.

The EIA proposes a number of measures for the Promoter and other project stakeholders to successfully mitigate those impacts during the construction phase. These include: grouping and limiting noisy construction activities to daytime, avoid working during the mating season for mammals, avoid construction works on the fish trap during high floods and construction of the new quay walls on the right bank before or in parallel with the construction of the new 12.5x225m lock.

During the lock operation, the main impacts relate to the same areas as during the construction phase:

- Air, energy and soil quality, particularly with regards to the increased emissions by larger vessels sailing through the lock, although this effect is compensated by the modal shift expected from roads to river barges or the improved energy efficiency of the new facilities;
- Surface water and hydraulics, particularly with regards to the higher utilisation rate of water to operate the enlarged locks;
- Flora, where the project is expected to have a positive impact, and fauna, where the Promoter will implement a fish pass resembling the natural environment;
- Landscape and heritage, where the project is expected to have a positive visual impact;
- Socio-economics of navigation, concerning the impact on the navigation and, in particular, the reduction of transport unit rates due to the increase in vessel size and the modal shift expected from road to river barges;
- Mobility and road safety, with the positive impact generated by the reorganisation of road N90;
- Refuse management and the adequate disposal of the different types generated by the lock operation; and
- Health and safety and security, and the positive effect the works may have on the future lock operation with state-of-the-art facilities.

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As during the construction phase, the EIA proposes a number of measures for the Promoter and other project stakeholders to successfully mitigate those impacts during project operation. These include measures to limit light impacts by avoiding white-blue lights and lights with high UV radiation, by limiting light diffusion and through the installation of variable lighting systems to avoid unnecessary light. Also measures to create additional habitats are proposed.

The project components related to the Walloon roads E411 and E420/N5 are being assessed in line with the principles set forth by Article D.66, § 2 of Book 1 of the Environmental Code of Wallonia (transposing 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). According to the Promoter, out of the seventy-six (76) sub-components, twenty-eight (28) sub-components for the E411 road and all eleven (10) sub-components for the E420/N5 road are expected to be subject to a review by the Competent Authority (Screening Procedure) with the subsequent issuance of a planning permit (*Permis d'urbanisme*). As of the date of publication of this document, one (1) sub-component is expected to require an environmental permit, permits for one (1) sub-component were granted with no requirement by the Competent Authority to conduct an environmental impact assessment, one (1) permit request has been submitted and it is pending response and the remaining thirty-eight (38) are pending to be submitted by the Promoter to the Competent Authority. It should be noted that, according to the Promoter, the sub-component *Réhabilitation entre Arlon, Weyler et Sterpenich et création d'une bande de covoiturage sur la BAU* (E411) did not require a planning permit nor, consequently, the drafting of an impact notice and/or the realization of an impact study addressing the potential transboundary environmental impacts, because it consists on the rehabilitation of an existing road.

The Promoter is considered adequately qualified for environmental management including the capacity to screen projects according to the EU environmental acquis, mirrored in national and regional legislation, as applicable.

As confirmed by the Competent Authority (SPW de l'Agriculture, des Ressources Naturelles et de l'Environnement, Département de la Nature et des Forêts, Direction de la Nature et des Espaces verts) and in application of Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (Habitats Directive) and Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (Birds Directive), the Project is not likely to have significant effects on sites included or intended to be included in the NATURA 2000 network.

In application of 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) impacts of the lock project have been assessed. The Project component does not involve a new modification to the physical characteristics of a surface water body or alterations to the level of bodies of groundwater which deteriorate the status of a water body or cause failure to achieve good water status/potential.

For the road project components, these impacts will be assessed as part of the permitting process and the related environmental impact screening executed by the Competent Authorities. This will include an assessment of the impacts on groundwater bodies and water quality and mitigating measures will be prescribed to avoid negative impacts.

As these assessments have not been executed yet there is no full information about the expected impacts at this stage. The results of these assessments will have to be provided to the Bank before disbursement against these components.

As aforementioned, the Lock Project component received development consent on 19 July 2016 and the appeal period is already exhausted as issued by technical and delegated

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officials pursuant to Article 81 § 2 of the law of 11 March 1999 on environmental permits in the Walloon Region.

Social Assessment

Due to the characteristics of the works to be financed, no social impacts are foreseen. In addition, no land expropriation is envisaged for any of the works to be financed.

All major construction projects entail a certain risk of occupational health and safety accidents if adequate measures are not implemented by all project stakeholders. The Promoter is expected to comply with all applicable legislation in the field and it is considered to be adequately qualified for occupational health and safety management.

EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise

Inland waterway component

It is expected that the inland waterway lock enlargement will reduce significantly the transport carbon emissions in the region as a result of the expected scale increase in inland waterway transport and modal shift away from road transport. The traffic demand for road (North - South direction) and the IWW (East – West) projects do not influence each other. A full life cycle assessment has been performed by the Promotor, which assessed that the project will reduce transport emissions with 4200 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent a year in average over the 75-year lifetime of the project, which is the double of the estimated CO₂ equivalent emissions emitted during the construction of the project.

No standard EIB methodology for Carbon Footprint of inland waterway projects is established. Hence, the inland waterway component is not included in the EIB carbon footprint exercise.

Road component

The project is included in the EIB carbon footprint exercise. The carbon footprint calculations are executed in line with the published document “Methodologies for the Assessment of Project GHG Emissions and Emission Variations, 21 December 2018”:

This resulted in the following estimated annual emissions generated from the use of the project in a standard year of operation:

- Absolute (gross) emissions are 1,186,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per year;
- Relative emissions are 4,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per year.

The project boundaries are:

- In the base case: the existing E411 between Overijse and Luxembourg and the existing N5 between Traversée de Somzée and Frasnes-lez-Couvin;
- In the “with project case”: the upgraded E411 between Overijse and Luxembourg and the upgraded N5 between Traversée de Somzée and Frasnes-lez-Couvin.

The baseline is the forecast third party emissions, in the absence of the project, from the existing network only within the boundaries defined above. The forecast for absolute emissions relate to the upgraded roads. The forecasts reflect the Services’ assumptions on traffic, traffic growth, speed/flow, infrastructure capacity and fuel consumption.

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

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Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

A public information meeting for the inland waterway lock component prior to the initiation of the EIA process was conducted in Amay (Belgium) on 15 December 2014. The public consultation process was conducted as part of the EIA process took place between 18 November 2015 and 17 December 2015 in the municipality of Huy (Belgium).

As mentioned earlier concerning the roads component of the project, a number of the sub-components require planning permission (*Permis d'urbanisme*). As part of the process to grant planning permission, the relevant authorities conduct public consultation processes where members of the public may raise their formal concerns about the different projects.

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

The roads component of the project lies on the TEN-T network and is therefore subject to the provisions of Directive 2008/96/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on road infrastructure safety management. Road safety audits at various stages of design, construction and operation have been or will be performed.

The project is expected to have some positive environmental impacts in terms of an overall reduction in greenhouse gas emissions due to its decongestion effects as well as road safety improvements.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Disbursement conditions

For project components where the planning permit has not been granted, disbursement will be conditional on the provision to the Bank of the planning permits and documentary evidence demonstrating compliance with the EIA directive: a copy of the EIA's or an EIA screen-out decision and justification based on Annex III of the EIA Directive by the Competent Authority as part of the planning permitting process, as applicable.

Undertakings

The Promoter shall undertake to implement the mitigation and monitoring methodology in accordance with the project's planning authorisations and subject to any further modifications that may be identified during the following project stages.

The above conditions and undertakings being met, the project is acceptable for EIB financing.

PJ/SQM/ECSO 15.10.15