

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name: EMSCHER RENATURIERUNG II
Project Number: 2015-0917
Country: GERMANY
Project Description: 2017-2020 investment programme related to the restructuring of a regional waste water system in North Rhine-Westphalia

EIA required: yes

The project is implemented as a coherent programme that comprises a number of separate schemes. Some of the schemes may require an EIA.

Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise¹: no

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

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

This is the third operation in support of the Emscher programme. The Water Framework Directive (WFD) (2000/60/EC) does not permit the use of the Emscher River as an open sewer. In order to satisfy the requirements of the Directive (and to improve water quality in the river), the promoter - Emschergenossenschaft is investing into (i) an underground wastewater transport infrastructure and (ii) the Emscher river bed restoration, which, in future, will receive only storm-water in addition to its normal flow. The project is developed by an experienced promoter and takes into consideration environmental and social aspects as required by European and national environmental requirements. According to the German planning procedure, environmental impact assessment (EIA) including impact on nature conservation sites is an integral part of the project approval cycle. Emschergenossenschaft has already prepared and will prepare for each of the project components that require an EIA the relevant assessments. For the main project under this operation, the Abwasserkanal Emscher (AKE), the relevant documentations have been submitted to the Bezirksregierung Münster (approval administration for this sewer) in line with § 170 LWGNWG (North Rhine Westphalia water law). The Bezirksregierung approved the project in 2008. This approval decision has been amended in December 2015 to reflect changes to the project scope: In the course of the project optimisation, the number of manholes has been reduced, by extending the operational distance for the inspection and maintenance works from 600m to 1200m; Furthermore, originally planned bio-filters will be replaced by UV oxidation which results in reduced land uptake; Finally, the third pumping station will be constructed in Oberhausen, instead of at WWTP Emschermündung. The EIA planning consent provides a non-technical summary and is publicly available also through the Bank's website. Since the project concept dates back to 1990 the SEA Directive is not applicable.

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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The main positive environmental and social impacts can be summarised as follows:

- as the wastewater will be transported through an underground sewer pipe and not discharged into the Emscher River, odour and health issues will be alleviated. As a result an increase in the value of housing and recreation areas along the Emscher River can be expected.
- it is expected that the river restoration will allow the re-establishing of biodiversity along the Emscher river in the long run,
- flood retention areas will help reduce the threat of floods caused by heavy storms.

Negative environmental and social impacts are:

- loss of farm land due to construction of flood retention areas,
- disturbance of population living along the Emscher River and close to works locations due to construction activities,
- temporary increase of traffic around the construction sites.

The project contributes to the Bank's transversal objective, Climate Action (Adaptation) by additionally increasing the resilience of the Emscher River basin against floods. The region of North Rhine-Westphalia has assessed the vulnerability of the Emscher River valley within the process that led to the adoption of the regional adaptation strategy (Anpassung an den Klimawandel. Eine Strategie für NRW, 2009) and in particular through the research project *Klimawandel in Nordrhein-Westfalen. Regionale Abschätzung der Anfälligkeit ausgewählter Sektoren* (Potsdam-Institut für Klimafolgenforschung, 2009). Regional climate models predict an increase in average temperature by 1.5-2.3°C and rainfalls between -3% to+10% by 2060 in comparison to 1961-1990. A more important trend would be the shift of rainfalls towards winter months and an increase in the frequency of extreme weather events which puts pressure on the existing drainage and flood protection infrastructure.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

Since 2001 Emschergenossenschaft has engaged into a close dialogue with civil society and the main stakeholders of the project and has been implementing a comprehensive communication programme. Emschergenossenschaft's internet portal presents a collection of publications related to environmental and social aspects.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In line with the Water Framework Directive, implementation of the project will result in the termination of wastewater discharges into the Emscher River and in the creation of appropriate conditions for the revitalisation of the natural ecosystem in the Emscher River valley. The project is acceptable for EIB financing.