Early Warning System

EIB-20240336

MAURITANIA RAILWAY MODERNISATION

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Quick Facts

Countries	Mauritania
Specific Location	Zouerate; El Aouj and Atomai
Financial Institutions	European Investment Bank (EIB)
Status	Approved
Bank Risk Rating	U
Voting Date	2025-07-16
Borrower	Société Nationale Industrielle et Minière (SNIM)
Sectors	Infrastructure, Mining, Transport
Investment Type(s)	Loan
Investment Amount (USD)	$ 125.00 million
Project Cost (USD)	$ 512.00 million

Project Description

According to the Bank’s website, the project concerns the capacity expansion of the railway line owned and operated by SNIM, linking the iron ore mining area of Zouerate with the port of Nouadhibou, an extension of the line to new mining sites of El Aouj and Atomai (42 km of new railway lines) to meet the transport needs generated by these two mining sites.
The promoter's investment programme includes the acquisition of rolling stock (locomotives and wagons) and equipment for infrastructure maintenance, as well as the extension of maintenance facilities.

The aim is to increase the quality, capacity, availability and reliability of rail operations in Mauritania and contribute to SNIM's competitiveness. It is expected to generate time and vehicle operating cost savings, reduce the maintenance costs of the infrastructure and improve railway safety.
This will prevent the modal shift from rail to road and, thereby, present climate, environmental and road safety benefits.

Early Warning System Project Analysis

The project will be implemented mostly on the existing alignment of the railway and within the existing right of way; therefore potential negative environmental and social impacts are likely to be minor. The project was subject to an environmental social impact assessment (ESIA) in accordance with the national legislation. However violations did occur with regards to labour rights and environemnt in the existing mining operations in Zouerate.

People Affected By This Project

Evidence from the iron ore mining hub in Zouerate indicates a pattern of environmental, health, and labour-related harms linked to long-standing SNIM operations. Dust emissions from open-pit mines have been documented to spread into nearby settlements, exposing workers and residents to respiratory risks, as noted in both an African Development Bank ESIA and a detailed JICA sector report (AfDB ESIA; JICA report). The same JICA assessment highlights poor waste management practices, including disposal of waste oil and use of explosives, which pose risks of groundwater contamination in an already water-scarce environment (JICA report). These environmental risks are compounded by weak regulatory oversight, with limited enforcement of environmental standards. In addition, labour tensions have been recorded, including strikes and dismissals of workers at the state-owned mining company (SNIM labour dispute).

Investment Description

- European Investment Bank (EIB)

Under EFSD+ Guarantee

Private Actors Description

Société Nationale Industrielle et Minière (National Industrial and Mining Company) is a Mauritanian company, operating in the research, exploitation, processing, transport and export of iron ore.

Private Actor 1	Private Actor 1 Role	Private Actor 1 Sector	Relation	Private Actor 2	Private Actor 2 Role	Private Actor 2 Sector
-	-	-	-	Société Nationale Industrielle et Minière (SNIM)	Client	-

Contact Information

No contacts available at the time of disclosure.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

You can submit an information request for project information at: https://www.eib.org/en/infocentre/registers/request-form/request-form-default.htm

ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISM OF EIB

The EIB Complaints Mechanism is designed to facilitate and handle complaints against the EIB by individuals, organizations or corporations affected by EIB activities. When exercising the right to lodge a complaint against the EIB, any member of the public has access to a two-tier procedure, one internal - the Complaints Mechanism Office - and one external - the European Ombudsman. A complaint can be lodged via a written communication addressed to the Secretary General of the EIB, via email to the dedicated email address: complaints@eib.org, by completing the online complaint form available at the following address: http://www.eib.org/complaints/form via fax or delivered directly to the EIB Complaints Mechanism Division, any EIB local representation office or any EIB staff. For further details, check: http://www.eib.org/attachments/strategies/complaints_mechanism_policy_en.pdf

When dissatisfied with a complaint to the EIB Complaints Mechanism, citizens can then turn towards the European Ombudsman. A memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the EIB and the European Ombudsman establishes that citizens (even outside of the EU if the Ombudsman finds their complaint justified) can turn towards the Ombudsman on issues related to 'maladministration' by the EIB. Note that before going to the Ombudsman, an attempt must be made to resolve the case by contacting the EIB. In addition, the complaint must be made within two years of the date when the facts on which your complaint is based became known to you. You can write to the Ombudsman in any of the languages of the European Union. Additional details, including filing requirements and complaint forms, are available at: http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/atyourservice/interactiveguide.faces

Bank Documents

- 09/09/2025 ESDS-MAURITANIA RAILWAY MODERNISATION
- 09/09/2025 ESIA-MAURITANIA RAILWAY MODERNISATION - Notice d'impact environnementale et sociale (NIES
- JICA report on Mauritian mining sector

Media

- Massive miners strike in Mauritiania