

Initial Project Summary

Project Location: Akkar, Lebanon

Name of Applicant: Akuo Energy

Name of Project: Sustainable Akkar SAL

Project Description: The proposed Project involves the construction and operation of an 82.5 MW wind farm in the area of Jabal Akroum, Akkar on Lebanon's northeastern border with Syria. The Project area is approximately 10 km². Land parcels needed for the Project will be leased or purchased from families in Jabal-Akroum Kfartoun, the Municipality of Aandqet and the Jaafar Family (i.e. Rweimeh Village). The Project will lease 126,332 m² of land for 28 years and acquire 13,255 m² of land permanently. The Project is one of three wind energy projects being developed through signed Power Purchase Agreements with the Government of Lebanon. The other two projects are Lebanon Wind Power and Hawa Akkar. The three projects are located along the same ridge line and will share transportation route of wind turbine generator (WTG) components and internal tracks.

The Project will comprise the construction and operation of up to 21 WTGs ranging in power rating from 4.2 MW to 5.3 MW, underground cable networks, external and internal access roads, power substation and temporary and permanent maintenance buildings, parking/laydown/assembly areas, and a substation. Villages in the Project's direct area of influence include: Fnaidek, Karm Chbat, Rweimeh Village, Chadra, Machta Hammoud, Mqaible, Aandqet, and Jabal Akroum-Kfartoun.

The Mountains of Akkar-Donnieh Important Bird Area (IBA) is located approximately 5 km to the southwest of the Project site. It contains habitats very similar to those found within the Project site, namely pine, oak and juniper dominated woodland types with high altitude sparsely vegetated alpine areas. Up to 50,000 soaring birds pass through the area each year during autumn and spring migration periods. The Project site is bounded to the west by the Oudine Valley, which is a bottleneck for migratory birds as they tend to fly through the valleys that cross the perpendicular mountainous hills ahead of them. The Oudine Valley leads the birds to a shallower valley along its direction NNE-SSW. This shallow valley continues south until it joins the Wadi Al Arayish of Zahleh, and it constitutes one of the main flyways of soaring migratory birds in Lebanon.

Environmental and Social Categorization and Rationale: The Project has been reviewed against OPIC's categorical prohibitions and determined to be categorically eligible. The Project is screened as Category A because the Project represents a greenfield wind project which could have significant adverse environmental and social impacts that are diverse and irreversible. The major environmental and social concerns related to the Project include the potential for impacts on resident and migrating birds and bats, cumulative impacts, and impacts to community health and safety resulting from increased traffic and movement of heavy equipment during construction and shadow flicker during operations.

There are no known inhabitants within the Project Area; no resettlement or economic displacement is anticipated. Access to grazing and hunting areas will be affected though alternative areas are available and the impact to overall grazing and hunting practices is anticipated to be minimal. A number of informal Syrian and Palestinian refugees reside near and along the transportation corridor and may experience traffic-related impacts.

Environmental and Social Standards: OPIC's environmental and social due diligence indicates that the Project will have impacts that must be managed in a manner consistent with the following International Finance Corporation (IFC) 2012 Performance Standards: PS 1: Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts; PS 2: Labor and Working Conditions; PS 3: Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention; PS 4: Community Health, Safety, and Security; and PS 6: Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources. Performance Standard 5, 7, and 8 are not triggered by the Project at this time. Applicable provisions of the IFC General Environmental, Health and Safety (EH&S) Guidelines and the EH&S Guidelines for Wind Energy also apply to the Project.

Location of Local Access to Project Information: The Company held a public consultation meeting in Fnaidek village as part of their ESIA process. Concerns and questions raised were around impacts on birds, noise, job opportunities, corporate social responsibility and community engagement. The Company has developed a draft Stakeholder Engagement Plan and Community Grievance Mechanism to guide on-going Project stakeholder communication and engagement.

A local language version of the ESIA's non-technical summary will be made available starting on June 17, 2019 at the Project's new office in Kfartoun:

Lebanon, Akkar Caza, Kfartoun, Kfartoun Main Road, Jouret el Tini street, Khaled Hassan bldg.
Ground Floor.