MERSİN-ADANA-OSMANİYE-GAZİANTEP

HIGH STANDARD RAILWAY LINE CONSTRUCTION WORKS AND PROCUREMENT OF ELECTROMECHANICAL SYSTEMS PROJECT

REC ULUSLARARASI

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL PROGRESS REPORT

(AUGUST 2023)

About the Project

The Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, General Directorate of Infrastructure Investments has commissioned REC Uluslararası İnşaat Yatırım Sanayi ve Ticaret A.Ş., a subsidiary of Rönesans Holding group of companies, for execution of the project entitled Mersin-Adana-Osmaniye-Gaziantep High Standard Railway Line Construction Works and Procurement of Electromechanical Systems. Upon commissioning, the project shall be operated by TCDD and TCDD Transportation.



Benefits of the Project

The project is expected to deliver the benefits set forth hereunder:

- Reduce travel time between Mersin and Gaziantep cities from 6 hours down to 2 hours;
- Increase the share of railways in intercity transportation;
- Improve fast, safe and economical means of transportation;
- Improve integration with other rail system lines;
- Offer the capacity of transporting 202 million passengers and 1731 million tons of freight throughout 33 years in total;
- Reduce the costs for intercity logistics;
- Increase the usage rate of railways by reducing the travel time; reduce traffic congestion and accidents on highways, and promote more sustainable means of transportation, reducing carbon emissions;
- It is expected that the number of tourists visiting the region shall increase thanks to reduced time of travel and improved comfort, and accordingly the region around the project area shall experience an improvement in the economic terms;
- Contribution to development of both local and intercity transportation and development in the economy, particularly for Mersin, a major port city;
- Improvement in local employment; and
- Improvement in local commerce

Current Situation

REC International's main construction sites are established at Yenice, Adana Train Station, Yakapınar, Yarbaşı and Nurdağı district border along the alignment. Furthermore, the construction sites of the subcontractors are established in Akdeniz, Tarsus, Düziçi and Nurdağı districts.

Currently, the project completion rate stands at 8.05%. 9.20% of excavation works, 4.04% of the backfilling works and 19.04% of the rock fill works are completed.

The land acquisition efforts are currently in progress. The land expropriation works have been completed at the rate of 83% in Mersin-Adana, 93% in Adana-Ceyhan, 26% in Toprakkale-Bahçe, and 96% in Nurdağı-Bahçe. The land expropriation works are completed by 74% in total within the scope of the MAOG Project.

The construction operations of the project are currently in progress, and the project pays utmost care for the environment and demonstrates high social sensitivity towards the people likely to be affected by the project operations along the alignment. In this context, all matters concerning the environmental, ecological and archaeological aspects are duly considered, and while operations are executed after taking necessary measures in line with both national and international standards, all efforts are exerted by our specialized teams in order to eliminate any probable grievances of people affected by the project in the socio-economic terms. The operations executed under the project are monitored by the independent consultants on quarterly basis.



MANAGEMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Training

All personnel attend to training on Environment, Social, Biology, Archaeology, Occupational Health and Safety aspects prior to deployment to the work and then took refresher trainings at regular intervals.
In addition to the training sessions set forth above, on-site training is also delivered at regular intervals based on requirements in order to reinforce deliberate participation of the employees to sustainability.

Air Emissions

Water is sprinkled at regular intervals especially in summer and during dry weather conditions in order to prevent dust emissions arising from construction works and to minimize any possible negative impact due to dust.
The air quality is monitored by measuring PM10 and PM2.5 values and settled dust periodically.

Water Quality and Wastewater Management

The quality of the water resources is monitored regularly by performing analyses on water quality through sampling from the underground and surface water resources in the vicinity of the work areas.
The wastewater generated from the project operations and domestic use by the personnel is treated in the wastewater treatment plants available within the camp area and then discharged in line with the applicable legislation.

Waste Management

The packaging, hazardous and non-hazardous wastes generated due to construction works are sorted at the source in line with the provisions of the applicable local legislation and the international standards; then transferred to temporary waste storage areas and disposed of/recycled through the firms licensed by the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change.
In order to prevent pollution of the soil, all measures should be taken as required particularly by establishing the systems capable of preventing spillage/leakage in order to prevent any fuel and oil spillage that may occur at the site from leaking into the ground.



Biodiversity Management

The seeds from 8 endangered plant species were collected and placed under preservation in line with the Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) and the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) drawn up according to IFC Performance Standard 6 (Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources) under the scope of the Project.The construction operations were suspended between April and June, the spawning period of the fish in the wetland areas. 24 Water Turtles encountered during the biodiversity studies were relocated to suitable habitats away from the construction area. Soil Management Approximately 50.000 m3 of vegetal/topsoil was stripped during the excavations performed before the construction operations and such vegetal/topsoil is currently stockpiled along the line and at vegetal/topsoil storage areas in order to be used wherever appropriate.

THERE IS LIFE HERE



Cultural Heritage Management

An impact corridor, 2 KM in width, was established throughout the existing line extending between Mersin, Adana, Osmaniye and Gaziantep provinces, and surface survey studies were carried out on the entire area by the consultant senior archaeologists. Based on the findings from the surveys conducted at the site in 2022, the registration processes and the outcomes thereof for 72 cultural heritage features such as Train Station Buildings, Mounds, Necropolises, Ruins of Historical Structures, Aqueducts, Historical Bridges, Hillside Settlements with archaeological qualities discovered within the impact corridor were determined by concerned Regional Cultural Heritage Conservation Boards (Boards in Adana, Hatay and Gaziantep provinces). In 2022, we offered necessary support to the concerned Regional Conservation Boards in order to complete the registration procedures for 72 cultural heritages. The registration efforts ended with registration of 62 cultural heritages, which are taken under conversation.
The railway bridge located on Adana-Seyhan River and so-called "Blue Iron Bridge" by the local community was registered and taken under conversation by Adana Regional Cultural Heritage Conversation Board thanks to the initiative of REC International. The historical bridge is taken under conversation and a new railway bridge is constructed next to this historical bridge within the scope of Mersin-Adana-Osmaniye- Gaziantep High Standard Train Project. In this manner, the historical bridge taken under conservation has been registered as another cultural heritage asset for our country just like other archaeological structures by conserving its architecture and aesthetics without any impact from the ongoing construction operations.

Occupational Health and Safety Studies

The occupational health and safety policy and the Zero Tolerance Policy drawn up by Rönesans Holding's Headquarters OHS-E Department in line with the corporate approach on occupational safety are implemented in our project.
Several hazard-specific plans and procedures have been created and are implemented in order to secure and oversee the health and safety of the personnel. Said procedures shed light on how to carry out any work in the safest way possible, and are used as guidelines.
An agreement was achieved with the Joint Health Safety Unit in order to ensure legal compliance and to engage with the Occupational Health and Safety practices in the project, and accordingly, 17 occupational safety specialists and 43 healthcare professionals were recruited. 18 occupational safety specialists were recruited for REC, and recruitment of 17 occupational safety personnel was procured for the subcontractor firms. In total, a team consisting of 95 specialists is involved in the project operations in order to conduct Occupational Health and Safety inspections and ensure full compliance with the procedures. Such personnel is distributed and assigned to the project sections in line with the legal regulations and depending on the requirements. The number of the personnel employed at the occupational health and safety unit shall increase in line with the increase in the number of workers.
The operations in progress are demarcated using barriers and the public is information as required by posting warning signage. In order to ensure safe flow of the traffic, flagmen are employed and deployed at the areas with probable contact with the public in order to secure safe passage for the heavy equipment. A Traffic Unit has been established to manage and install traffic signs and signals as well as provide directions for all traffic activities.

MANAGEMENT OF THE SOCIAL IMPACTS

Public Information Meetings

Public Information Meetings were held with the concerned village headmen and the citizens in 72 out of the 167 villages and neighborhoods within the project impact area during the Pre-Construction Period wherein the construction operations and the grievance mechanism were clarified by the Community Liaison Officers. Informational posters were posted and grievance boxes were placed at locations readily accessible by the community members in the neighborhood where said meetings were held.
Further Pre-Construction Period Information and Consultation meetings shall be organized in all neighborhoods in line with the construction and operation periods of the project. Pursuant to the project's Stakeholder Engagement Plan, meetings are held also with the women in addition to the village headmen. Informational meetings on the project and joint project execution activities are performed under the scope of the Local Government Meetings with attendance of the Governor, District Governor, Municipalities, Universities, Public Institutions, Development Agencies, Associations and NGOs.



Land Acquisition

Pursuant to the land acquisition efforts, the consolidation and expropriation works by TCDD are still in progress.
A Resettlement Action Plan and Livelihood Restoration Plan was drawn up by REC International in order to minimize any negative impact on the land owners affected by the project.
Joint efforts are still in progress to minimize any negative impact arising from land acquisition practices in line with said plans.

Local Employment

Local employment opportunities are provided within MAOG Project to the communities affected by the project. Majority of the workers were employed from the communities residing in the villages, neighborhoods and districts within the impact area, thus offering support to development of local communities within the scope of the project. Currently 1723 people are employed in this project, 898 of whom are employed locally. 52% of the personnel employed by the project are employed from local communities.

Grievance Mechanism

The grievance mechanism aims to allow the stakeholders to express their concerns and grievances with ease. The grievances are registered within 2 work days, and then the investigations are conducted by the experts as required and a feedback is provided within 10 work days. The grievance is resolved within 30 work days and the outcome is provided to the person filing the grievance.
Information about the grievance mechanism was provided to the 72 neighborhoods and the staff working within the company. The grievances and requests we have received to date pursuant to the grievance mechanism have been logged on regular basis. 72% of such grievances and requests have already been finalized, and the efforts are in progress to finalize remaining grievances and requests by taking necessary actions.

Contact Us;

Toll-Free Line: **0800 531 00 11**

Mersin - Adana Public Relations Expert : **0538 682 78 45**

E-mail: **maog.sosyal@ronesans.com**

Web Site: **mersingaziantepyht.com/tr**

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