

Environmental Examination Report

( 1 ) Project Name

Lithium Carbonate Development Project

( 2 ) Project Site

the republic of Argentina , Salta Province

( 3 ) Project Outline

Development of lithium carbonate from brine extracted from salt lakes

( 4 ) Category Classification

Category A

( 5 ) Reason for Classification

The project belongs to sensitive sector (Mine sector), includes sensitive characteristics and is located in or near sensitive areas under the Environmental Guidelines.

( 6 ) Environmental Permits and Approvals

An Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) was prepared in accordance with the applicable national framework, and approval with some conditions was obtained from the Salta Provincial Secretariat of Mining and Energy in August 2025.

( 7 ) Pollution Mitigation Measures

The planned air quality levels comply with applicable local standards and are also designed to meet international standards. With respect to water quality, waste management, and noise and vibration, it has been confirmed that appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented.

## ( 8 ) Natural Environment

Although conservation-important flora, mammals, avifauna, reptiles, and microbial ecosystems have been identified around the project site, it has been confirmed that appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented through, among others, a wildlife management plan prepared in accordance with a plan approved by the relevant authorities, as well as rescue and relocation plans and regular monitoring. Furthermore, while water abstraction may cause a decline in water levels, recovery is expected after operations cease, and appropriate measures for water resource management and monitoring will be implemented.

## ( 9 ) Social Environment

The project does not involve resettlement. It has been confirmed that appropriate measures will be implemented to address pastoralist communities that may be affected by the project.

## ( 1 0 ) International Standard

IFC Performance Standards and World Bank General EHS Guidelines

## ( 1 1 ) Others, Monitoring

Taking the above environmental review into consideration, monitoring will be conducted, among others, with respect to compliance with the conditions attached to the ESIA approval, the status of outstanding permits and approvals, groundwater levels, the preparation and implementation status of the Biodiversity Action Plan and related compliance, as well as consultations with pastoralist communities and the project sponsor's responses.

**Q1.** Please provide the address of the project site.

Address of the project site : Salta, Argentina

**Q2.** Please provide a brief explanation of the project.

The Project is a lithium brine development in an area that covers approximately 2,794 hectares of mining titles and mining easement landholdings at the Salar del Rincon, located in Salta Province of Argentina.

**Q3.** Is it a new project to be implemented or a project that has been implemented? If it has been implemented, has it received a serious complaint from local residents or a directive for improvement, a stop-work order, a project suspension order, etc., from a local environmental authority?

- New project to be implemented
- Project that has been implemented (with a complaint)
- Project that has been implemented (without a complaint)
- Other ( )

**Q4.** Do the laws or regulations of the country where the project will be implemented require the project to conduct environmental and/or social impact assessments (such as an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA))? If so, have they been conducted or planned?

- Required (Assessments done)
- Required (Assessments in progress or being planned)
- Not Required
- Other ( )

**Q5.** If environmental and/or social impact assessments have been conducted, have they been approved in accordance with the environmental and social impact assessment system of the country where the project will be implemented? If so, please also specify the date of the approvals and the name of the authorities.

- Approved (without condition(s))
- Approved (with condition(s))
- Under approval process
- Other ( )

Date of Approvals : By July 31 2025

Name of Authorities : Mining and Energy Secretariat

**Q6.** Are there any environmental permits required other than environmental and/or social impact assessments? If so, have they been obtained? Also, if required, please specify the name of the permits.

- Obtained
- Required, but not obtained yet
- Not required
- Other ( )

Name(s) of required permit(s) : Please refer the permit listing document

**Q7.** Will the project be specified after JBIC made a funding commitment (as in the case of a two-step loan, where sub-projects cannot be specified at the time of a funding commitment)?

(Yes/No)

If "Yes", please disregard the following questions.

If "No", please go to Q8.

**Q8.** Will JBIC's funding be used to serve as support for international balance of payments or to be used for the provision of goods or services that does not involve installation or implementation in particular sites or regions, as in the case of export/import or lease of machinery or equipment that is not connected with a particular project?

(Yes/No)

If "Yes", please disregard the following questions.

If "No", please go to Q9.

**Q9.** Are there any environmentally sensitive area(s) shown below in or near the project site(s)?

(Yes/No)

If "Yes", please mark the applicable items and go to Q10.

If "No", please go to Q10.

- (1) National parks, nationally-designated protected areas (coastal areas, wetlands, areas for ethnic minorities or indigenous peoples, and cultural heritage, etc., designated by national governments)
- (2) Forests with important ecological value (including primary forests and natural forests in tropical areas)
- (3) Habitats with important ecological value (including coral reefs, mangrove wetlands, and tidal flats)
- (4) Habitats of rare species requiring protection under domestic legislation, international treaties, etc.
- (5) Areas in danger of large-scale salt accumulation or soil erosion
- (6) Areas with a remarkable tendency towards desertification
- (7) Areas with unique archaeological, historical or cultural value
- (8) Areas inhabited by ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples, or nomadic peoples with traditional ways of life (including areas which are used for cultural and spiritual purposes) and other areas with special social value

**Q10.** Does the project involve the following characteristics?

(Yes/No)

If "Yes", please specify their scale and go to Q11.

If "No", please go to Q12.

- (1) Involuntary resettlement or loss of means of livelihood (Number of affected people: )
- (2) Groundwater pumping (Scale: 3,030K $m^3$ /year)
- (3) Land reclamation, land development, and land clearing (Scale: 2,877 ha)
- (4) Logging (Scale: ha)

**Q11.** Under the environmental and social impact assessment system of the country where the project will be

implemented, do the applicable characteristics (1) – (4) of Q10 above and their scale serve as the basis for executing an ESIA for the project?

- Yes, they do  No, they do not  
 Other ( )

**Q12.** Is the project likely to have a significant social impact, including human rights?

(Yes  No)

If “Yes”, please describe the impacts and go to Q13.

If “No”, please go to Q13.

- Likelihood of a significant impact on human rights ( )  
 Other ( )

**Q13.** Will JBIC’s funding or NEXI’s insurable value be equal to or less than 5% of the total project cost, or will JBIC’s funding or NEXI’s insurable value be equal to or less than SDR 10 million? (If the funding or insurable value is additional to a project that has been supported by JBIC or NEXI, please add up the previous funding or insurable value and the funding or insurable value being considered to apply for this time.)

(Yes  No)

If “Yes”, please disregard the following questions.

If “No”, please go to Q14.

**Q14.** Is the project for capital investment or working capital in a project that has been implemented and does it involve no material change in output or function (as in the case of maintenance of the existing facilities, non-expansory renovation project, and acquisition of rights and interests without additional capital investment)?

(Yes  No)

If “Yes”, please disregard the following questions.

If “No”, please go to Q15.

**Q15.** Is the project in any of the following sectors?

(Yes) No

If “Yes”, mark the applicable sectors and go to Q16.

If “No”, please disregard the following question.

- (1) Mining  
 (2) Oil and natural gas development  
 (3) Pipelines  
 (4) Iron and steel (projects that include large furnaces)  
 (5) Non-ferrous metals smelting and refining  
 (6) Petrochemicals (manufacture of raw materials; including complexes)  
 (7) Petroleum refining  
 (8) Oil, gas, and chemical terminals  
 (9) Paper and pulp  
 (10) Cement plants (including a greenfield quarry)  
 (11) Manufacture and transport of toxic or poisonous substances regulated by international treaties, etc.  
 (12) Thermal power  
 (13) Nuclear power

- (14) Hydropower, dams, and reservoirs
- (15) Power transmission and distribution lines involving large-scale involuntary resettlement, large-scale logging, or submarine electrical cables
- (16) Roads, railways, and bridges
- (17) Airports
- (18) Ports and harbors
- (19) Sewage and wastewater treatment having sensitive characteristics or located in sensitive areas or their vicinity
- (20) Waste management and disposal
- (21) Agriculture involving large-scale land-clearing or irrigation
- (22) Forestry
- (23) Tourism (construction of hotels, etc.)

**Q16.** Please provide information on the scale of the project (project area, area of plants and buildings, production capacity, amounts of power generation, etc.). In addition, please explain whether an environmental and/or social impact assessment is required on account of the large scale of the project in the country where the project will be implemented.

The Project is a lithium brine development situated in the renowned "Lithium Triangle," known for its significant lithium reserves. The project area covers approximately 2,794 hectares of mining titles and mining easement landholdings at the Salar del Rincon, located in the Salta Province of Argentina. Rio Tinto intends to develop the Project in two stages of 25ktpa each, with the feasibility study currently under way.

The proposed investment entails financing the extraction of lithium in the Altiplano-Puna region, which is ~1,500 km from BA. The project site has an altitude of 3,800m and total Salar de Rincon area of 435km<sup>2</sup>

An environmental impact assessment has been submitted to the Salta authorities in 2024. We are currently waiting for the comments/feedback from the authorities.

**RioTinto**

# Rincon Permits Fortnightly Report

January 2025 (week 1)



# Permits Status

## Powerline (1<sup>st</sup> 33kV)

Submission	Approval Baseline	Approval Forecast
Oct-23	Mar-24	Mar-25

### Notes:

- Consulta previa date with Olacapato **completed**.
- Public hearing on **7th February 2025**.
- CAMMESA recommendation sent to ENRE. Waiting for ENRE notification of approval
- EDESA contract for O&M of the transmission line – in contract finalization phase.

## Construction Camp

Submission	Approval Baseline	Approval Received
29-Aug-23	Aug-24	29-Oct-24

### Notes:

- **DIA received – Approved**
- Bids expected by Friday Nov 29th

## Quarries

Submission	Approval Baseline	Approval Forecast
28-Feb-24	Jun-24	<Mar-25

### Notes:

- Comments received on 25th Jul, responses **submitted** on 7<sup>th</sup> November

## ESIA

Submission	Approval Baseline	Approval Forecast
14-Apr-24	Jul-25	Jul-25

### Notes:

- Consulta previas with all communities **completed**.
- Responses to Mining Secretariat not sent per request from regulators, waiting for comments from Recursos Hidricos and Secretariat de Meio Ambiente to provide a consolidated response to all comments.
- Site visit with Secretariat de Meio Ambiente (three representatives) completed in December

## Water Drilling Permit (Train 1)

Submission	Approval Baseline	Approval Forecast
Jan-25	Feb-25	Jan-25

### Notes:

- Draft Wellfields Execution Plan reviewed. Final version planned for late Dec / early Jan
- Permit request to drill 10 wells **submitted** on 15<sup>th</sup> November

## Water Rights (Train 1)

Submission	Approval Baseline	Approval Forecast
Jan-25	Mar-27	Mar-27

### Notes:

- Wells need to be drilled and tested prior to permit submission
- 2 months float in the schedule

# Key Issues / Risks

## Powerline

- Delays in ENRE approval, prevent engineering beginning for the La Puna substation modifications which holds up the purchase of long lead item equipment such as switchgear which can be 12 months procurement time (informal discussions have begun with operators to start engineering ahead of ENRE approval).
- EDESA contract negotiations delayed affect ability to finalise power line and Rincon Substation engineering and also the ESIA

## Construction Camp

- Tender process late by more than 1 month

## Quarries

- More than 3 months to provide response to regulators
- Source for concrete material still not identified.
- Base case is to source material from existing quarries in Catua

## ESIA

- Near critical path, only 2 weeks float in the schedule
- ESIA update strategy to be endorsed by SteerCo
- Disparity in drawdown between ESIA and FS model, higher drawdown close to Rincon Lagoon
- Disparity in draw could be a concern for IFC

## Water Drilling Permit (Plant 1)

- Permit request submitted ahead of schedule
- No concern

## Water Rights (Plant 1)

- Permit could take up to 12 months, regular engagement with Recursos Hidricos is required to reduce timeline.