

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name: Digitalisierung Brandenburg
Project Number: 2019-0277
Country: Germany
Project Description: The framework loan relates to the roll-out of Very High Capacity (VHC) infrastructures in the federal state of Brandenburg for about 10% of households. The networks will be implemented by the districts and they will enable gigabit broadband telecom services to residential, businesses and schools in uncovered rural areas (Next Generation Access white spots).

EIA required: No

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

The project concerns the deployment of a fibre access network in rural areas of the German federal state Brandenburg. The network cables will be mostly deployed alongside roads in underground ducting systems. The excavation material will be used to fill in the trenches and thus limit the amount of waste. There is also a need for a limited number of cabinets, which are required for the handling of the fibre cables. They will be installed at suitable street side locations making reuse of already existing installations of the telecom operator winning the tender.

The project does not fall under the Annexes of the EU Directive 2014/52/EU amending the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU. However before the construction work can start, a permit from the competent authorities is required, which verifies the environmental impact of the cable routes and may request mitigation measures such as a re-routing or additional protection measures and suitable reinstatement works.

The project implementation will be carried out by established operators already operating an access network based on other technologies. Therefore the reuse of existing network elements such as cabinets, facilities and ducts are typical work practise and thereby limiting the residual environmental effects, apart from disturbances during the construction phase.

¹ Only projects that meet the scope of the Carbon Footprint Exercise, as defined in the EIB Carbon Footprint Methodologies, are included, provided estimated emissions exceed the methodology thresholds: 20 000 tonnes CO₂e/year absolute (gross) or 20 000 tonnes CO₂e/year relative (net) – both increases and savings.

Luxembourg, 16 June 2020

The subsidy scheme used by the federal state of Brandenburg, addresses established local and national operators. Those companies are experienced in the rollout of such networks and generally have a good environmental management as well as health and safety systems in place.

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

The wide spread availability of broadband networks particularly in more rural areas is one of the key enabling technologies helping to improve the sustainability of the society through digital solutions such as e-government, smart business applications and also tele-working. The project can also provide backhaul capacity to mobile sites, to allow for the full exploitation of (5G) mobile data services.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The provision of a reliable high quality broadband infrastructure is important for the widespread use of internet-based services such as e-government, e-learning, teleworking or online banking. The existing infrastructure in those rural areas is not able to provide latest gigabit broadband services. Therefore, the project will have a strong contribution to the overall social sustainability particularly of the rural areas.

The project itself is profiting from existing infrastructures of the winning bidders and this will limit the environmental impact during the construction period.

Considering the above, the project is acceptable for the Bank's financing in environmental and social terms.