

Public

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	BIALYSTOK MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE IV
Project Number:	2019-0910
Country:	Poland
Project Description:	Municipal framework loan for urban infrastructure investments in the City of Białystok mainly focusing on social housing, energy efficiency, education, sports, public open spaces, culture, climate adaptation, municipal buildings, public and multimodal transportation and urban roads.
EIA required:	This is a framework loan operation and most of the schemes are unlikely to fall under the Annex I or Annex II of the EIA Directive (2014/52/EU amending Directive 2011/92/EU)
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise:	No

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

The operation is a framework loan to the municipality of Białystok, located in the North-East of Poland, 50km away from the Belarus border. The operation aims to support the implementation of the City's multi-year investment plan to be implemented in the period 2020-2024 and focuses on the modernisation of public services and on improvements to the quality of life of the local population.

The operation is consistent with the Municipality's Development Strategy 2020 and Białystok Climate Adaptation Strategy 2030. The investments are expected to focus on and include and urban infrastructures such as municipal buildings, energy efficiency improvements, schools and kindergartens, sports facilities and green open spaces, and urban transport schemes including roads, streets and intersections. Most schemes will be small or medium size and some of them are expected to benefit from EU funding.

The Polish EIA law, which is compliant with EU Directives, entered into force in November 2008 (Act on Providing Information on the Environment and Environmental Protection, Public Participation in Environmental Protection and on Environmental Impact Assessment). According to the Act, the Competent Authority issuing environmental permits for urban roads of national significance is the Regional Director for Environmental Protection (RDEP) after consultation with the Regional Sanitary Inspectorate. For other urban projects (i.e. other urban roads, urban renewal, etc.) the Competent Authority is the Municipality of Białystok.

The investments will be implemented in highly urbanized areas, outside the vicinity of protected areas, such as Natura 2000. From the indicative list of investments submitted to the Bank by the Promoter, most of the schemes are unlikely to fall under the Annex I or Annex II (screened in) of the EIA Directive (2014/52/EU amending Directive 2011/92/EU). Nevertheless, the Bank will require the Promoter to provide updated information for each scheme prior to allocation. Should any scheme under this framework loan fall under Annex II and be “screened in” by the Competent Authority, the Promoter shall deliver the full EIA report to the Bank, if applicable, before the Bank funds are allocated. For schemes falling under Annex II and “screened out” by the Competent Authority based on Annex III criteria, the Promoter shall deliver a copy of the respective decision, upon the Bank’s request before funds are allocated.

Environmental impacts at the construction stage are expected to be short-lived and reversible, at a level which is deemed acceptable. At construction, the projects might result in increased noise levels, vibrations from heavy traffic to and from the sites, and impacts on air quality. Special mitigation measures will be applied in line with the relevant legislation.

Environmental impacts at operation stage will be connected to noise, air pollution occasioned by road use and generated waste. Special mitigation measures have been proposed in order to reduce impacts to legal thresholds (e.g. noise barriers and dust control). Furthermore, this framework loan has projects that are expected to contribute to mitigate climate change such as energy efficiency improvements, and green open spaces as well as development of footpaths and cycle paths, which contribute to sustainable mobility.

Social Assessment, where applicable

There is no self-standing social assessment for the operation. However, the framework loan’s overall social impact is expected to be positive resulting from the implementation of the individual schemes, which include improved educational facilities and new street lighting; construction of cycle paths; new and improved green open spaces; and communal sports facilities and recreational areas in schools.

Investments in urban development and renewal will improve the quality of public infrastructures and the overall public realm. Also, investments in urban transport are expected to contribute to reducing pressure on public space and promote sustainable mobility. Improvements to public spaces and more modern education and sport facilities will contribute towards achieving a greater quality of life for residents and will contribute to improving the City’s attractiveness.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

The City’s Development Strategy 2020 is a public document subject to extensive public consultations and approvals. The consultation process is embedded in the Planning process and procedures (Law on planning and spatial management – official journal 2015.22 of 27.03.2003).

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

The building permits for the individual schemes will stipulate the monitoring of environmental requirements prior to, during, and post construction.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Promoter will be required to act according to the provisions of the relevant EU Directives, including SEA (2001/42/EC), EIA (2014/52/EU amending 2011/92/EU), Habitats (92/43/EEC) and Birds (2009/147/EC) Directives as transposed into national law.

In schemes where applicable, the Promoter will be requested to deliver the EIAs to the Bank before Bank funds are allocated. For schemes falling under Annex II and “screened out” by the Competent Authority based on Annex III criteria, the Promoter shall deliver a copy of the respective decision, upon the Bank’s request, before funds are allocated. However, given the nature of the individual schemes and the sectors concerned, most of the schemes are deemed not to have significant negative environmental impacts. Schemes will be located outside protected areas including Natura 2000. Nevertheless, the Promoter has to provide evidence of the compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives (if applicable) before the Bank funds are allocated.

The overall negative residual impacts of the schemes are small, whilst the projects will have a positive influence on the living conditions of the City’s inhabitants including sustainable mobility, as well as on the City’s spatial layout. Infrastructures and areas in need of improvement will be upgraded, providing a safer environment and opportunities for various activities for the local residents. Furthermore, the project will include the implementation of energy efficiency measures in buildings, green open spaces as well as development of footpaths and cycle paths, which are expected to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation. In relation to the energy efficiency schemes, the Promoter will be required to provide Energy Performance Certificates obtained in line with the EU Directive 2010/31/EU during implementation or after completion of works, upon the Bank’s request.

The EIB support would further the economic development of the City through the successful implementation of projects that are consistent with the EIB public policy goals of improving socio-economic infrastructure, supporting the environment and achieving cohesion objectives supported through EU co-financing.

The operation is a continuation of two previous framework loans that are fully disbursed and mostly implemented. Overall, the promoter has demonstrated to have the institutional capacity to manage the environmental and social issues. Therefore, given the nature of the operation and the procedures concerning EIA and nature protection put in place by the competent authorities in Białystok, subject to conditions mentioned above the framework loan is acceptable to the Bank in environmental and social terms.