

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name: *FLUVIUS SMART METERS*
Project Number: *2020-0527*
Country: *Belgium*
Project Description: The project comprises the rollout of an electricity smart metering scheme in the Flemish region, during the period 2020-2024.

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

The project comprises the installation of ca 3.1 million electricity smart meters, replacing existing electro-mechanical meters over the entire Flemish region. The installation of the first batch of meters forming part of the rollout commenced in 2019 and is currently on-going. The project scope to be financed by the EIB covers the meters to be installed during the period 2020-2024.

The new metering system will allow for remote readings, near real-time consumption information and communication with consumer devices. Ultimately, these capabilities will increase consumer awareness of the cost of energy supply and thus spur energy efficiency. The deployment of smart meters is expected to lead to a more efficient and flexible power system, as well as to energy savings for the consumers.

Environmental Assessment

The components of the project are not subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment as per the Directive 2014/52/EU amending the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU.

The main impacts of the project are the electromagnetic radiation resulting from the communication means used for collecting the information from the smart meters and the disposal of the existing meters that will be replaced. Machine-to-machine communication technology has been selected for data transmission, whereby the electricity meter communicates with other devices wirelessly, via the existing 4G mobile communications network.

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, 18.11.2020

For all electricity meters procured under the project's scope, the promoter sets as a requirement that the radio equipment of the meter complies with the Radio Equipment Directive 2014/53/EU.

On behalf of the Flemish Department of Environment, an independent research institute in Belgium measured the electromagnetic radiation from the first batch of electricity meters that are currently being installed. The results of the aforementioned testing are publicly available on the website of the Department of Environment².

As of January 2023, electricity consumers sensitive to radiation will have the option to choose a wired communication solution for the new meter to be installed in their premises. The meters concerned under this option do not form part of the EIB-financed scope, as their technical design is yet to be developed.

Regarding the disposal process of meters, the promoter follows the requirements set out in the regional Flemish legislation, i.e. (a) the Materials Decree and its relevant implementing decision Vlarema, as well as (b) the implementing decision of Vlarem II.

Whilst the project may facilitate energy savings, in itself the project is not expected to have significant impact on CO₂ emissions. As a conservative approach, the savings in end-user consumption have not been considered in the Carbon Footprint calculation.

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

The promoter processes personal data of the consumers in its network according to the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 and national legislation.

The promoter runs an information campaign on the smart metering rollout, in order to inform the public about several aspects of the rollout. Information relating to the metering set up, the technical characteristics of the meters, as well as the process for the replacement of the existing electromechanical meters, is available on their website and on social media.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Bank reviewed the environmental and social capacity of the promoter including its organisation, processes and procedures, and deemed them to be good.

Based on the information available, the project is expected to have minor residual impacts and thus is acceptable in environmental terms for the Bank's financing.

² <https://archief-algemeen.omgeving.vlaanderen.be/xmlui/handle/acd/254878>