

## Environmental and Social Data Sheet

### Overview

Project Name:	ONSHORE WIND GREEN ENERGY PROGRAMME LOAN
Project Number:	2020-0850
Country:	Austria
Project Description:	Construction and operation of onshore wind farms in Austria.
EIA required:	Multiple scheme, projects not identified yet. Depends on the underlying investments
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise <sup>1</sup> :	no

### Environmental and Social Assessment

#### Environmental Assessment

This Programme Loan ('PL') serves as an umbrella under which the Bank supports onshore wind power projects in Austria. In total, 6-10 different sub-operations with a total project cost of 300 MEUR are envisaged under this PL, subject to individual appraisal and approval.

In Austria, wind projects need to be located inside preferential wind farm development zones, if and where defined by regional wind power development plans. Such plans identify precise zones for wind development incl. corresponding turbine height limitations on the basis of Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA). The Bank has appraised several wind power projects in Lower Austria, Burgenland, and Styria, which all benefit from such development plans and the underlying strategic planning of nature conservation aspects.

Wind farms fall under Annex II of the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU (as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU). It is therefore up to the Member State's competent authority to judge whether an individual wind farm requires an EIA or not, based on criteria defined in Annex III of the EIA Directive. According to the relevant federal Austrian Act (UVP Act, 2000), wind farms with an installed capacity of at least 30 MW or when comprising more than 20 turbines are screened in. Lower thresholds apply for wind projects inside protected areas (15 MW, 10 turbines).

The Bank's experience is that most wind farms in Austria undergo an EIA process. In such cases, promoters' Environmental Impact Studies (EIS) typically address all relevant risks (biodiversity, noise, shadow flickering, visual impacts) through expert studies, and consider

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<sup>1</sup> 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 CO<sub>2</sub>e/year absolute (gross) or 20,000 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e/year relative (net) – both increases and savings.

Luxembourg, 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2021

cumulated impacts with neighbouring wind farms. Projects typically undergo comprehensive avifauna impact assessments. EIA studies typically conclude that projects do not have significant negative environmental impacts post mitigation.

Also screened-out projects need to produce expert studies on key risk areas (biodiversity, noise, shadow flickering) during permitting. However, no public consultation takes place during their authorisation.

Often, Austrian wind farms are located in the proximity of Natura 2000 sites, protected under the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC and the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC. In such cases, Appropriate Assessment studies are typically carried out and competent authorities typically confirm inside permits that the wind farms have no significant negative impacts on the integrity of these sites.

Concerning the present operation, compliance of each individual project with the relevant EU directives will be verified at appraisal at sub-operation level.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The Bank has substantial experience with the appraisal of wind farm projects in Austria. Based on this experience, it is expected that residual environmental impacts of wind power projects in sub-operations are minor.

This Programme Loan ('PL') serves as an umbrella under which the Bank supports onshore wind power projects in Austria. The following conditions apply to all sub-operations:

- Each sub-operation will be subject to individual appraisal and approval.
- Additional E&S loan conditions will be defined at sub-operation level, if and where required.
- A separate ESDS will be produced per sub-operation.

In view of the above, the Programme Loan is deemed satisfactory from an environmental and social perspective.