

Public

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	<i>SILESIA SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME</i>
Project Number:	<i>2021-0206</i>
Country:	<i>Poland</i>
Project Description:	The project will support eligible investment schemes in selected cities and regions in Silesia in southern Poland. The operation is expected to support urban and regional development and infrastructure modernization. The loan will be structured as a Programme Loan with Framework Loans supporting eligible cities and self-governing regions.
EIA required:	Multiple-scheme operation. Some of the schemes are likely to fall under Annex I or II of the EIA Directive and may be screened in.
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise:	No

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

The Programme Loan will support implementation of the development strategies and investment programmes of selected municipalities and self-governing regions in Silesia in southern Poland, particularly in the regions *Dolnoslaskie and Slaskie*. Concrete promoters (and thus location) are not known at this stage, however, it is envisaged that the operation will comprise about ten sub-operations (some of the potential promoters have been identified and expressed their interest). Eligible cities would represent mid-size municipalities with total population between 100,000 and 350,000 inhabitants, thus this operation would be complementary to other EIB operations dedicated to small cities on one side (intermediated loans) and larger cities on the other side (large individual operations). Smaller cities with proven track-record in project implementation and sizeable capex programmes will be also eligible on a case-by-case basis.

Taking into account the responsibilities and investment needs of the relevant municipalities and regions, the eligible investments will primarily comprise sustainable urban and regional transport infrastructure and systems, urban renewal, revitalisation and regeneration including public buildings modernisation dedicated to education, health and social care, culture and administration, energy efficiency, environmental protection, climate adaptation and sustainability.

The Bank will only finance investments that are compliant with the EIB Public Policy Goals (particularly Integrated Territorial Development and Sustainable Transport) and investments which are considered to do no significant harm in terms of their climate impact, according to the EIB's Climate Bank Roadmap 2021-2025 (CBR)¹, which reflects the approach of the EU

¹ The EIB Group Climate Bank Roadmap 2021-2025, <https://www.eib.org/en/publications/the-eib-group-climate-bank-roadmap.htm>

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taxonomy and follows from the agreement reached at the Paris Climate Conference in 2015 (CBR, Annex 2).

It is expected that selected components (investments) would contribute to the EIB Climate Action and Environmental Sustainability objective (envisaged in the areas of public transport systems, energy efficiency and climate adaptation). It shall be reiterated that this EIB objective refers to investments which not only do no significant harm, but also make a significant contribution to the mitigation of climate change or to enable adaptation to climate change, or substantially contribute to environmental sustainability reflecting the approach of the EU taxonomy (CBR, Annex 4).

The investment programmes of the envisaged promoters are planning led taking into account climate adaptation strategies. This is the case for the self-governing regions (voivodships) as well as for all cities to be supported, given that in Poland all cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants have an obligation to develop and implement climate adaptation plans. It is therefore envisage the operation and the underlying framework loan will include climate adaptation measures as well as investments in environmental sustainability.

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 Mayor of the City.

The competent authority for Natura 2000 areas is the corresponding "Voivodship's" Regional Director for Environmental Protection. Given the scope of this operation and eligible sectors included, it is possible that some infrastructure schemes may be located in the vicinity of Natura 2000 areas, thus requiring screening procedure. However, at this stage there were no identified projects located directly in Natura 2000 zones.

It is foreseen that the Programme will have an impact on the environment both during construction and operation. At construction stage, it will increase noise levels, and will impact water and air quality. Adequate mitigating measures will be required in the designs such as drainage systems, management of earthworks, waste, and landfills, reinstatement of damaged vegetation with local species and wildlife protection with underpasses or rehabilitation of existing structures for the road projects.

Investments in public buildings and other urban infrastructure (social, health, culture, education and sports facilities) will typically comprise rehabilitation and modernisation, rather than new construction. Many of the schemes will therefore not likely to fall under the EIA Directive. Improvements in this infrastructure should lead to improvements in energy efficiency as well. The Programme's impact at the construction stage is expected to be short-term and reversible, at a level which is deemed acceptable.

At operation stage, main impacts will be related to noise and emissions from motor vehicle traffic linked to road projects. The Bank will verify whether special mitigation measures according to legal emission thresholds including the construction of noise barriers or fences will be applied where needed.

Overall long-term effects should be positive (reduction of noise, energy savings). The Project is expected to include sustainable mobility schemes (e.g. public transport infrastructure, rolling-stock, pedestrian areas, bicycle paths, Smart City components), which contribute to the climate mitigation objectives of the Bank.

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Social Assessment, where applicable

No separate social impact assessments have been carried out; however, it is generally deemed that the overall social impacts of the proposed Programme Loan (comprising several sub-operations) are positive, with improved quality of life for the inhabitants of the participating cities and the Silesian Agglomeration.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

The consultation process is embedded in the Planning process and procedures (Law on planning and spatial management – journal of laws 2015.22 of 27.03.2003). The Development Strategies of the participating cities and regions were subject of public consultation procedures.

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

The individual project building permits will stipulate monitoring of environmental requirements prior to, during, and post construction. In addition, road safety is expected to improve, thanks to the upgrading of the road network and public transport infrastructure to current safety standards.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Environmental and Social issues will be reviewed case-by-case for each underlying Framework Loan with specific recommendations as appropriate. For each underlying Framework Loans a separate Environmental and Social Data Sheet will be published.

The Promoters 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 and Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) as transposed into national law. In projects where applicable, the Promoters will be requested to deliver the EIAs to the Bank before Bank funds are allocated.

For Schemes having a potential impact on protected areas including Natura 2000 sites, the Promoters have to provide evidence of the compliance (including screening) with the Habitats and Birds Directives (if applicable) before the Bank funds are allocated. For schemes triggering art. 4.7 of the Water Framework Directive (WFD), the promoter has to provide evidence of the compliance with the WFD before the Bank funds are allocated.

The Programme is expected to contribute to more efficient urban and regional transport systems and sustainable mobility with reduction of emissions, enhancement of quality of living and efficiency of public services, preservation of cultural heritage and environmental sustainability of the cities and regions including energy savings. The investments will thus contribute to more sustainable urban and regional development and are in line with the Bank's criteria for the sector.

The investments will be implemented by selected cities and regions in Silesia, which are deemed to be sufficiently experienced in carrying out investment schemes of such type.

In conclusion, the overall environmental and social impact of the proposed Programme Loan is expected to be positive and subject to conditions mentioned above, the Programme is considered acceptable for EIB financing from environmental and social point of view.