

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	NGN BROADBAND INFRA (SPL-20140375)
Project Number:	2021-0459
Country:	Croatia
Project Description:	The project relates to the construction of a public wholesale and passive backhaul fibre network in predefined targeted areas, where the existing backbone infrastructure does not support the upgrade to Next Generation Access (NGA) networks.
EIA required:	no
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise ¹ :	no

(details for projects included are provided in section: "EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise")

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

The roll-out of approximately 5 600 km of linear fibre for the construction of a Next Generation Network (NGN) backhaul infrastructure aims to connecting up to 450 prioritized settlements, each having more than 1 000 inhabitants. In addition, the project entails the connection of public administration bodies located in the same targeted areas to the backhaul infrastructure, supporting symmetric access speeds above 100 Mbps.

As confirmed by the competent authority (Ministry of Environment and Energy), investments in fixed telecommunications projects (mainly civil works for fibre rollout) do not fall under the EIA Directive 2014/52/EU amending Directive 2011/92/EC, therefore an EIA screening determination was not carried out. Furthermore, the Ministry of Environment and Energy issued a screening decision stating that the project is not likely to adversely affect the NATURA 2000 sites in its area of implementation, therefore, no appropriate assessment needs to be carried out. The Ministry confirmed as well that the project should not deteriorate the status of the water body or cause failure to achieve good water status/potential.

The promoter will use existing duct wherever it is possible, however it is expected that new ducts will be required for approximately 45% (2.450 km) of the deployed fibre. Therefore, related works have limited environmental effects, apart from disturbances during the execution of civil works mainly alongside roads, motorways, railways, gas and oil pipelines, and which will be mitigated by appropriate measures. Moreover, the design assumes that approximately 75% of active backhaul nodes will be located in existing colocation facilities, while the remaining 25% will be new nodes installed in existing indoor spaces.

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, 3 September 2021

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

The project is identified as a major opportunity for Croatia's economic, social and sustainable regional development. The project belongs to the Operational Programme Competitiveness and Cohesion 2014 – 2020 for Croatia. The development of the network is expected to contribute to decreasing GHG emissions, e.g. by enabling teleworking and videoconferencing, hence reducing travel needs, but the impact of the project on climate change (GHG emissions) is categorised as non-quantifiable.

The promoter has got an integrated management system and applies the principles of socially responsible business and thereby demonstrates its aspiration to constantly improve the quality of its operations and its care for the users of its services. This is reflected by a long list of certifications, such as ISO 9001 (quality management), ISO 14001 (environment management), OHSAS 18001 (occupational health and safety management) and ISO 50001 (energy management system).

Conclusions and Recommendations

In the light of the above, the project is acceptable for EIB financing in E&S terms.