

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name: Breitband Lörrach
Project Number: 2020-0939
Country: Germany
Project Description: The Project concerns the roll-out of Very High Capacity Networks in the district of Lörrach, Germany. The long-term target is to connect every household with an optical fibre cable for the provision of Gigabit broadband services by 2030+. The specific focus of this initiative are non-urban areas, which present nearly half of all households in the district. Such premises are located in rural and in very remote areas and they include also business districts, schools as well as other public premises.

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

Environmental Assessment

The Project concerns the commercial deployment of a passive fibre access network spread across semi-rural and rural areas in the administrative district of Lörrach. The network cables will be installed underground and predominantly laid down alongside roads in ducting systems. The excavation material will be used to refill the trench if possible, in order to limit the amount of building waste. There is also a need for the installation of a limited number of cabinets and facilities, which are required for the termination and handling of the fibre cables. They will be put at suitable locations mostly on public ground.

The activities financed by the Project are not included in any of the Annexes of the EU Directive 2014/52/EU amending the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU. However according to national legislation, a permit from the competent authorities is required, which verifies the environmental impact of the cable routes and may request mitigation measures such as a re-routing or additional mitigation measures including suitable reinstatement works.

The Promoter has a public ownership similar to some of the other utility providers. Therefore, the works on the underground networks can be closely aligned, thus achieving a high rate (60%) of joint trenching works to limit the overall impact during the construction phase.

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: 20000 tonnes CO₂e/year absolute (gross) or 20 000 tonnes CO₂e/year relative (net) – both increases and savings.

Luxembourg, 23 September 2021

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

The wide spread availability of broadband networks particularly outside densely populated areas is one of the key enabling technologies helping to improve the sustainability of the society through digital solutions such as e-government, smart business applications, distance learning, and also tele-working. The Project may also provide backhaul capacity to mobile sites, to allow for the full exploitation of (5G) mobile data services.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The provision of a reliable high quality broadband infrastructure is important for the widespread use of internet-based services such as e-government, e-learning/home-schooling, teleworking and online transactions. The existing infrastructure in the rural areas of the district is not able to provide latest gigabit services. Therefore, the Project will have a strong contribution to the overall social sustainability particularly in less densely populated areas.

Due to the local public ownership of the Promoter, whenever feasible the construction works for the fibre will be coordinated with works necessary for other distribution networks for power, water and gas in order to limit the disturbance and environmental impact during the construction period.

Considering the above, the Project is acceptable for the Bank's financing in environmental and social terms.