



Luxembourg, 10/12/2021

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	<i>FLUVIUS ENERGY TRANSITION INFRA</i>
Project Number:	<i>2021-0561</i>
Country:	<i>Belgium</i>
Project Description:	The project is an investment programme for electricity distribution grid infrastructure in the Flemish region of Belgium during the period 2022-2026.
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

The project is an electricity distribution expansion and refurbishment/upgrading programme supporting enhanced grid usage for the purpose of the Energy Transition in Belgium. The programme encompasses a large number of medium voltage (MV) up to 36 kV, and low voltage (LV) electricity distribution schemes, including approx. 11,000 km of new overhead lines and underground cables in the Flemish region of Belgium.

Environmental Assessment

The schemes of the Programme do not meet the minimum thresholds for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening set out in national legislation as per provision of Article 4(3) of Directive 2014/52/EU amending the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU. Under the Flemish environmental legislation, (i) overhead lines with voltage level equal to or above 150 kV and longer than 15km require an EIA, and (ii) power lines with voltage level equal to or above 150 kV and with a length between 5km to 15 km need to undergo an environmental screening, following which the competent authorities determine whether a full EIA is required or not. Therefore, none of these schemes will require an EIA. Environmental analyses, as appropriate, may however be carried out for some schemes in the context of the permitting process.

The schemes will be screened with respect to the need for appropriate assessment under the EU Habitats and Birds Directives. Given the characteristics and the typical impacts of the programme schemes and considering the promoter's planning policy of avoiding crossing Natura 2000 sites, the promoter at this stage expects that none of schemes will be screened in for an Appropriate Assessment.

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, 10/12/2021

The project has the potential for some low to moderate environmental and social impacts. During construction, the environmental impacts are expected to relate to dust, noise, vibration, traffic disruption, soil excavation and vegetation clearance. Environmental impact during operation will concern electromagnetic fields (EMF) and noise disturbance. Appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented to minimise impacts during construction and operation. Particular attention will be paid to contain the effect of noise, vibrations and traffic disruption during the construction works.

The promoter is an experienced distribution network operator in Belgium, with an in-house team responsible for the environmental and social aspects of projects. The promoter has developed an environmental management plan and has established an action plan to follow up its implementation. The environmental and social due diligence has followed the investment programme lending approach according to the EIB's procedures and standards. The due diligence focused on the promoter's capacity and capability to implement the programme in line with the EIB environmental and social standards and requirements. Based on this assessment and considering the performance on environmental and social matters in a past operation, the environmental capacity of the promoter is deemed to be acceptable; it has the experience and the capacity to appropriately manage the investment programme.

Physical climate change risks relevant to the area of installation of the project schemes, i.e. mainly extreme rainfall events, flooding and storms and high winds, are mitigated in the design stage, by adapting -as necessary- the design or the location of the equipment.

The project has been assessed for its Paris alignment and is considered to be aligned both against low carbon resilience goals in line with the EU Taxonomy Regulation and with the EIB Energy Lending Policy. The programme is expected to generate positive environmental impacts by enabling the integration of renewable energy generation in the distribution system of the region, thus supporting national and EU decarbonisation goals.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Bank reviewed the environmental and social capacity of the promoter including its organisation, processes and procedures, and considers them to be acceptable. Based on the information available and with appropriate conditions and monitoring, the programme is expected to be acceptable in environmental and social terms for the Bank's financing:

- The promoter undertakes to ensure that all programme components will undergo a biodiversity screening in accordance with the EU Habitats and Birds Directives. Should a component have a potential impact on a site of nature conservation, the undertaking is extended to inform the relevant authority and implement the procedures under Articles 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive.
- The promoter undertakes to store and keep updated any documents that may be relevant for the project and which support the compliance with the provisions under the EU Habitats and Birds Directives (Form A/B, or equivalent declaration by the competent authority) and shall, upon request, promptly deliver such documents to the Bank.