



Luxembourg, 21 January 2022

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	EPIC MALTA MOBILE AND FIXED NETWORK EVOLUTION
Project Number:	2021-0442
Country:	Malta
Project Description:	The project concerns investments in the upgrade of the promoter's mobile network with advanced 4G/LTE, early deployment of 5G, roll-out of fixed very high capacity (VHC) network as well as upgrades to the core network and the IT systems.
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

Investments in the infrastructure of fixed and mobile telecommunications networks, such as optic fibre networks and mobile base stations, are not mentioned in any of the Annexes of Directive 2014/52/EU amending the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU.

Mobile telecommunications systems have limited environmental effects, apart from the visual impact of base station towers and Electromagnetic Field (EMF) radiation. The disturbances during to the construction of the fixed FTTH network are mitigated by appropriate measures.

Concerning the "Habitats" Directive 92/43/EEC and related Natura 2000 protection sites, the relevant legislation does not include any provision regarding telecoms infrastructures, since individual schemes are small and not expected to have any significant negative impact.

The promoter will make use of existing infrastructure to the extent possible with the aim of reducing the disturbances during construction. For the access part of the Fibre to the Home (FTTH) component of the project, the use of aerial connections will cause some visual disturbances, although the promoter will benefit from the already available aerial infrastructure to reduce the marginal impact of its new network rollout.

ICT infrastructure represents a key infrastructure to enable the deployment of low-carbon and decarbonisation scenarios. Its deployment will lead to significant sustainability benefits across the whole economy and fulfils the Paris Alignment criteria as set out in the EIB's CBR (Climate Bank Roadmap).

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

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.



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Regarding the limitation of EMF exposure to the general public, the promoter will adhere to the guidelines set out by the International Commission for Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP), which are the basis for the levels mandated by the Maltese Environmental Health Directorate. EMF is under continuous study by international organisations, and in 2011, the WHO/International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has classified EMF radiation as possibly carcinogenic to humans.

The compliance with the ICNIRP levels is regularly monitored by the regulatory body MCA and is publicly available information. Any areas with high radiation that could be accessible to third parties are cordoned off and clearly signposted with hazard warning signage that include the promoter's contact number for powering down the site in case access is required.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Investments in fixed and mobile telecommunications networks do not fall under Annexes of Directive 2014/52/EU amending the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU. The residual project risks are related to the impact of EMF exposure to the general public, a subject that is under continuous study by international organisations.

Hence, the project is considered as acceptable for the Bank's financing from Environmental and Social terms.