

Luxembourg, 26<sup>th</sup> October 2022

## Environmental and Social Data Sheet

### Overview

Project Name:	<i>BALTIC POWER OFFSHORE WINDFARM</i>
Project Number:	<i>20210696</i>
Country:	<i>Poland</i>
Project Description:	<i>Development, construction and operation of a very large-scale (up to 1.2 GW) offshore windfarm in the Polish Economic Exclusive Zone in the Baltic Sea, located 23 km to the north of the Polish coastline.</i>
EIA required:	yes
Invest EU sustainability proofing required	yes
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise <sup>1</sup> :	yes

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

### Environmental and Social Assessment

The project consists of the development, construction and operation of a very large-scale fixed-bottom offshore windfarm in the Polish Economic Exclusive Zone in the Baltic Sea with an estimated nominal capacity of around 1140 MW. It will be located 23 km to the north of the Polish coastline, on the level of the municipalities Choczewo and Łeba. Both municipalities are located in an EU Less Developed region; categorised internally as EIB Priority Cohesion region (Pomorskie). The concession covers a total area of ~130 km<sup>2</sup> (2.5-times the area of Luxembourg City).

The promoter has the permitted right to install up to 240 turbines of a minimum capacity of 5 MW. Based on the latest preliminary design information, the promoter seem to have chosen a turbine type with a unit capacity of up to 15 MW. Given the maximum capacity of 1200 MW granted by the permit, this would result in 80 wind turbines.

Electrical equipment such as internal array cabling and transformers (LV/MV/HV) and civil works (foundations, access) are part of the project scope. The wind farm will be connected to the onshore high voltage network. The landing point of the cables at the seashore is composed of sea dunes and forest areas. Due to the environmental conditions and the dynamic nature of the shoreface zone (dunes), Horizontal Directional Drillings (HDD) are planned to cross the sea defence zone at the sea-land interface

#### Environmental Assessment

Wind farms adhere to the national legislation having transposed Annex II of Directive 2014/52/EU amending Directive 2011/92/EU, thereby leaving it to the competent authority to determine if an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is mandatory. Given the project size, the competent authority required an EIA to be conducted. The relevant environmental surveys and inventory surveys for the EIA were carried out in 2018–2020. The assessment and studies were conducted in accordance with the national guidelines, manuals and other materials concerning the preparation of an EIA. Four phases of the project were considered construction,

<sup>1</sup> 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 CO<sub>2</sub>e/year absolute (gross) or 20,000 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e/year relative (net) – both increases and savings.



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exploitation, simultaneous construction and exploitation, as well as decommissioning. The EIA studies are based on an “envelope concept” of the project. This means that in the case of the evaluation of a chosen parameter and the possibility of applying different technical solutions, the environmental impact assessment has been carried out for the solution, which is potentially most burdensome to the environment.

The environmental studies of the EIA have satisfactorily assessed potential impacts by the project on the sea floor (sediment), water quality, fish populations, marine mammals and benthos organisms. Similarly, residual impacts on human environment and landscape caused by visual obstruction from installing vertical structures in an otherwise horizontally undisturbed environment were part of such assessment.

Further, there were surveys related to the quantity and type of birds using the project area at different times of the year. Given the low abundance of seabirds in the planned project area, the studies concluded that the project will not lead to the displacement of bird species habitats within the sites of nature conservation. The impact on migrating birds by the wind farm becoming a barrier, is expected to be limited, as there is a development-free space on the eastern and western side of the wind farm in order to enable bird passages. Collision risk, disruption to flight paths, and direct or indirect habitat loss were analysed.

The environmental studies showed that there are no significant impacts related to the exact location of wind turbines inside the wind farms’ development area with respect to all environment components in all phases of the project. In the construction phase, during the work foundations, underwater noise will be generated. Its greatest intensity will be related to driving large-diameter monopiles into the sea bed.

Taking into account that underwater noise generated at such a level may cause a significant negative impact on marine organisms (fish and mammals) subject to protection in the Natura 2000 site Ostoja Słowińska (PLH220023), a noise reduction system will be implemented during the execution of the works. Several concepts of the noise reduction system can be applied. Among the currently used solutions, single and double air curtains, noise barriers or cofferdam systems are used. At present, it has not been determined which noise reduction system concept will be employed. The fundamental condition determining the selection of specific noise reduction solutions will be not to exceed the temporary threshold values for fish and marine mammals at the boundary of the Natura 2000 site Ostoja Słowińska (PLH220023). Simultaneous piling works should be limited to a maximum of two locations, irrespective whether two sources are located within the project’s area, or whether one of them is located in another wind farm area. In the event that the noise measurements result in exceeding the above mentioned threshold, the pile driving should be ceased and additional minimizing measures should be taken to achieve the noise limit.

During the construction phase, the project will have impacts on the landscape, including the cultural landscape, due to traffic of vessels, for the construction, transport of structural components, surveys, and supervision. The impacts on the landscape will be short-term, temporary, and will depend on how long an observer can see the construction and the transported components. Hence, the impact is assessed as negligible, although it varies depending on the distance of an observer from the wind farm and the type of the landscape affected.

The studies also investigated potential significant impacts on marine protected areas in the coastal zone including nature conservation sites onshore, such as Przybrzeżne wody Bałtyku (PLB990002, distance to site 8.96 km), Ostoja Słowińska (PLH220023, 20.19 km), Ławica Słupska (PLC990001, 25.50 km), Hoburgs bank och Midsjöbankarna (SE0330308, 55.47 km).



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It was concluded that the integrity of Natura 2000 sites will not be significantly impacted by the project.

Given the neighbouring offshore wind farms under consideration, cumulative environmental impacts caused by these were equally considered. Currently, none of these other projects have been implemented. The projects are at various stages of development. Four of them have obtained a decision on environmental conditions. Cumulative impacts of the project with other offshore wind farms may be expected if more than one of them are, at the same time, in the construction/operation/decommissioning phase, assuming that these projects will be implemented. The intensity and scale of these impacts are not currently known.

The project is located in the Polish Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The distances of this area to the boundaries of the EEZ of other countries are: more than 60 km to the Swedish Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ); 100 km to the Danish EEZ; more than 85 km to the Russian EEZ; more than 190 km to the German EEZ. Thus, no transboundary impacts are expected from a single offshore wind farm such as the project.

The site of the planned project was initially not covered by the provisions of local development plans. The competent authorities however announced after having granted concession permits to various offshore wind farms the instigation of the planning process, with the aim to develop a draft "Spatial Development Plan for the Polish Maritime Areas". The plan was published in 2021. The aims were to identify the main conflicts in the pilot area, bring together transboundary approaches for dealing with them, and develop a draft maritime spatial plan that actively supports the principle of sustainable maritime development. The plan covers the following sea usages: water transport, water sports and recreation, fishing, maritime structures including artificial islands and submerged structures, technical linear infrastructure, nature conservation, cultural heritage, dredging, vegetation, ichthyofauna, sand extraction, dumping. A full SEA was not carried out, but available information about physical conditions was compiled.

### **EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise**

The direct CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from an offshore wind farm are deemed negligible. In accordance with the Bank's current Carbon Footprint methodology, it is calculated that based on the avoidance of electricity generation from a combination of existing and new power plants in Poland, the total relative effect of the project is a net reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions by approximately ~2770 kt/year. For the annual accounting purposes of the EIB Carbon Footprint, the project emissions will be prorated according to the EIB lending amount signed in that year, as a proportion of project cost.

### **EIB Paris Alignment for Counterparties (PATH) Framework**

As per PATH guidelines, the counterparty is not in scope as it is a multi-shareholder SPV.

### **Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement**

The competent authorities have involved the public by sharing the information on submission of the EIA report together with the information on the possibility to review the EIA report and on the right to submit comments and requests within a period of 30 days. Publications took place twice on the authority's website and in its offices, during 04/2021 and 07/2021.

The competent authorities granted a conditional environmental approval. The conditions comprise a variety of monitoring obligations for the promoter (seabirds, migrating birds, marine mammals, etc.). The decision also includes the obligation for the promoter to prepare documentation for the re-assessment of the environmental impact of the project, in accordance with national environmental legislation. The competent authority justified the need for a re-assessment to confirm the conclusions regarding the magnitude and intensity of the



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environmental impacts, based on the final technological solutions adopted in the construction and process engineering design, once choices for the various technological options, considered in the environmental studies are made.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The EIA studies describe the potential environmental impacts of the project in a comprehensive and exhaustive manner. They indicate that the project does not cause significant negative impacts on the environment; neither separately nor in conjunction with other projects for which the decisions on environmental conditions have been issued, regardless of the technology used such as e.g. the type of foundation or the size of wind power stations. This also applies to the impact on Natura 2000 Ecological Network sites. The studies conclude that the planned project is in line with the expectations of national and regional policies and strategies, in particular regarding environmental protection (reduction of pollution emissions), sustainable development (the use of renewable energy sources) and energy security (independence from external energy sources) and is in line with the environmental objectives of the binding strategic and planning documents analysed.

Based on the information made available by the promoter, and with appropriate conditions and monitoring, it is concluded that the project is acceptable in environmental and social terms for Bank financing.

The following conditions are currently proposed:

- Environmental studies of the re-assessment and resulting permit for the project to be issued and in force prior to financial close (with electronic copy to the Bank);
- Summary environmental monitoring reports for the project, as to be submitted to the competent authority under permit conditions, shall be sent in copy to the Bank.

Further conditions might emerge as a result of the re-assessment and would be proposed prior to financial close.