



Luxembourg, 15 November 2022

## Environmental and Social Data Sheet

### Overview

Project Name: Leaf Space  
 Project Number: 2021-0262  
 Country: Italy

The project concerns the worldwide expansion of a ground station network for the communication with Low Earth Orbit satellites. The expansion will increase the coverage and the communication capacity of the network. In addition, new services will be developed to support also high throughput, thanks to connections through higher frequency bands and optical transmission and to track launchers during their take off. The project implementation will take place during the years 2022 to 2024.

EIA required: No

Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise<sup>1</sup>: No

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

### Environmental and Social Assessment

#### Environmental Assessment

Leaf Space is a European pioneer in the development and operation of an own ground station network tailored to the needs of small Low Earth Orbit satellites. Since 2014 the company has worked to establish meanwhile a sizable network of ground stations and it plans to grow this further to achieve a worldwide seamless coverage. The company offers a wide range of flexible products in from of shared but also dedicated stations for the communication from the ground to the satellites in space or even to launchers during take-off.

The new ground station dishes are typically installed at existing sites already used for such purposes. Such sites are sometimes located in remote areas, which limits the disturbance by their operation. The software related R&D is carried out in rented facilities located in Italy. These facilities also include some smaller rented lab space for testing purposes of Leaf Space's assets.

Therefore, the project investments are expected to have a limited residual environmental impact and are unlikely to fall under the annexes of the EU EIA Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by the directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and the Council if installed in Europe.

<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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## **Other Environmental and Social Aspects**

The company is a start-up with today about 30 employees. The company is small and still young and needs to develop a more sophisticated environmental tracking and reporting system. However, the company is due to its business model not exposed to major residual environmental risks apart from substances included in batteries and air conditions systems as well as the power consumptions for the operation of the satellite dishes, the offices and the labs. There are no hazardous substances used and the devices will be recycled when reaching their end of life.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The R&D project is profiting from the existing R&D and testing facilities, which help to smoothen the project implementation. The new ground stations will be placed at sites, which are already used for such activities. The CO<sub>2</sub> emissions generated by the project and the company are limited due to the small scale and the type of activities.

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