

Luxembourg, 16 October 2024

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name: DARS - NOVO MESTO EASTERN BYPASS
 Project Number: 20190720
 Country: Slovenia
 Project Description: The project concerns the construction of a new expressway and eastern bypass of the city of Novo Mesto in southern Slovenia, from the junction with the A2 motorway in the north to Poganci in the south.

EIA required: yes

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 is part of the Operational Programme for the Implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy in the Period 2014 – 2020, prepared by the Transport Development Strategy of the Republic of Slovenia, and the National Spatial Plan for which a SEA procedure was carried out.

The project falls under Annex I of the Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU and is thus subject to mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

The project has been divided in three stages, which are implemented in two phases as follows:

- Phase 1: Stage 1 and Stage 2, from the Novo Mesto east junction to Osredeč junction;
- Phase 2: Stage 3a, from Osredeč junction to the Poganci junction, and Stage 3b (not part of this project), from Poganci junction to the Koroska Vas area

Phase 1 (Stages 1 and 2)

The EIA for stages 1 and 2 was completed in November 2019 and amended in November 2020 and January 2023 following a change in the national regulatory framework. The building permit for Stages 1 and 2 was first issued in October 2021² by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Spatial Planning (the competent administrative body for construction matters, hereinafter MNVP).

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.

² Building permit No 35105-37/2020-2550-170 of 20. 10. 2021



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Following the issuance of the building permit, four actions were brought before the Administrative Court, leading to the revocation of the permit. The promoter supplemented the project documentation accordingly (no design changes were necessary), and the building permit was reissued in July 2023. In September 2023, a new lawsuit was filed at the Administrative Court against the building permit. Several clarifications were provided by the promoter, and the final verdict determining the validity of the building permit of Phase 1 is expected before the end of 2024.

Phase 2 (Stages 3a, Stage 3b and 4)

The EIA for the second phase (which includes Stage 3a) is being supplemented in response to comments, and therefore the non-technical summary has not been published yet. The report will cover cumulative impacts of Stage 1 and Stage 2. The building permit of Phase 2 is expected to be issued in March 2025.

Environmental impacts and mitigation measures (Phase 1)

According to the environmental impact assessment report of Stage 1 and 2, the planned construction does not have significant adverse effects on the environment. Yet, the EIA report and AA have identified measures that need to be implemented to avoid, reduce and mitigate negative impacts during construction and operation, including but not limited to:

- Noise protection: Permanent and temporary noise barriers will be installed, passive noise protection, installation of a quieter asphalt wearing course (SMA8).
- Air protection: Speed limitation when PM10 pollution is declared excessive by the municipality of Novo Mesto, and appropriate cleaning of pavement surface.
- Water protection: Rain water will be collected in a closed system and be depolluted prior to be discharged to the environment. 5 retention basins with oil separators and one concrete retention basin with an oil separator.
- Protection of biodiversity: Protective fences for game and wildlife will be installed along the road corridor.
- Disposal of excavated ground: All excavated earth will be reused.

Natura 2000 (Phase 1)

As part of the EIA procedure launched in 2018, the project was subject to an Appropriate Assessment study (AA), as required by Art. 6(3) of the Habitats Directive and by the Slovenian legislation³. The area of direct and indirect impact was defined in accordance with the national regulation⁴, i.e. within a 2 000 metre radius of the project area for all species and habitat types, and 4 000 metres downstream and upstream of the Krka river. Accordingly, three sites were subject to the AA: The SAC Krka s pritoki (SI3000338), which is intersected by the project, and two other sites which are within a 2 km radius of the project (SI3000378 SAC Rakovnik and SI5000012 SPA Krakovski Godz -Šentjernejsko polje).

According to the findings in the appropriate assessment (AA), direct and permanent significant impact on species/habitats have been identified in area SAC Krka with tributaries. In addition, temporary impacts (noise emission) have been identified on some of the birds for which SPA Krakovski gozd — Šentjernejsko polje has been designated. No impacts are expected on the species for which SAC Rakovnik has been designated.

With the implementation of the identified measures, the project will have a non-significant impact on the conservation status of the natural habitats and species of community interest that justified the designation of the site. No significant cumulative impacts are expected.

³ Nature Conservation Act/ZON of 1999 as amended and the AA Ordinance of 2004 as amended

⁴ Rules on the assessment of the acceptability of effects caused by the execution of plans and activities affecting nature in protected areas (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 130/04, 53/06, 38/10, 3/11)



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Climate adaptation

A climate change risk assessment has been carried out for the project and is included in the EIA Report. As per the assessment, the project is highly vulnerable to extreme precipitation and soil instability. The promoter has taken the necessary measures to strengthen the resilience of the project to the impacts of climate change. In particular, project design has been adapted in the area of drainage structures where the run-off capacity was increased by 14%, and retention basis and oil traps are located above the anticipated 100-year flood level. In addition, the diameter of rainwater discharge pipes and number of culverts were increased in urban areas. Supporting and retaining walls have been designed to withstand conditions of extreme precipitation. The major bridge across the Krka River has been designed in such a way, that pillars in the riverbed are fully avoided.

According to the risk analysis, with the implementation of prescribed standards and identified adaptation measure, the residual climate change risk for the project is insignificant.

Climate mitigation

The project has been assessed for Paris Alignment in accordance with the policies set out in the EIB Climate Bank Roadmap (CBR). The project is considered to be aligned with the low carbon goal as it consists of large new road capacity infrastructure construction meeting the EIB eligibility criteria for Transport, including passing the adapted economic test introduced under the CBR and is consistent with the Municipality of Novo Mesto's sustainable urban mobility plan.

The project encompasses soft mobility components including more than 6 km of cycling paths that will be integrated in the urban bicycle network and a separate pedestrian and bicycle bridge across the Krka river. All existing bicycle paths intersecting the project will be connected.

EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise

The project is excluded in the Carbon Footprint exercise on the following basis:

- Estimated annual emissions of project in a standard year of operation:
- Forecast absolute (gross) emissions are 5,100 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per year.
- Forecast emissions avoided are 700 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per year.

The baseline is the forecast third party emission, in the absence of the project, from the existing network. The forecasts reflect the Services' assumptions on initial traffic, traffic growth, speed/flow, infrastructure capacity and fuel consumption.

Social Assessment, where applicable

Land acquisition

Land acquisition for Phase 1 (stages 1 and 2) has been completed and all land has been acquired by the Republic of Slovenia. The project requires the demolition of 6 residential buildings, whereby all owners have received a just compensation. No purchase of residential buildings required involuntary resettlement.

Land acquisition for stages 3A and 3B is almost completed.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement



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From 18 December 2020 to 18 January 2021, a public consultation was conducted as part of the application process to the building permit for Stage 1 and 2. The documentation published included the EIA report and AA report. Four public hearings were conducted in the premises of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Spatial Planning in Ljubljana from 12 to 13 May 2021, gathering close to 50 participants.

A similar consultation process will take place for Stage 3.

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

Road safety

The project falls under the scope of the application of the European Directive 2008/96/EC on Road Safety Infrastructure Management (Directive 2008/96/EC) as amended by Directive (EU) 2019/1936.

Therefore, road safety audits were conducted for stages 1 and 2 at the draft design stage, and a similar audit will be conducted for Stage 3.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The project is subject to mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), which was completed for one component of the project (Phase 1, Stages 1 and 2). The building permit for the first phase is expected in October 2024, and for the second phase in March 2025.

The following conditions to EIB financing have been defined:

- Condition for first disbursement:
 - The Promoter will provide EIB the building permit for Phase 1 (Stages 1 and 2) and information about the outcome of the lawsuit.
- Condition for all disbursements:
 - The Promoter will provide EIB with the final building permit for Stage 3 as required by the national legislation before any disbursement can be made against scheduled expenditures for works on Stage 3.
- Undertakings:
 - The Promoter will share with EIB the EIA and AA reports, including all attachments, as soon as they are approved by the relevant authorities.
 - The Promoter will share with EIB the road safety audits conducted at different stages of project implementation.

Subject to compliance with the above conditions, the project is considered acceptable for EIB financing from an environmental and social perspective.