

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name: PRAGUE RING ROAD SECTION D0 511 BECHOVICE-D1
 Project Number: 2024-0431
 Country: Czech Republic
 Project Description: Greenfield construction of an eastern section of the Prague ring-road. The R0 motorway section has 2x3 lanes configuration and has a length of 12.64 km. The road is part of TEN-T Core Network and will divert significant volume of transit traffic from Prague urban centre.

EIA required: yes

Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise¹: yes

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

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

The project involves construction of a 12.6 km long motorway section with the alignment outside settlements. It is a part of a gradually constructed Prague ring road, which features in the Transport Policy of the Czech Republic 2021-2027 with outlook to 2050, and its implementing documents.

The Transport Policy, Transport sector strategies 3rd phase and Transport program 2021-27, were subject to the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the Directive 2001/42/EC. The SEA screening decision was published on 16 February 2021 for The Transport Policy, on 27 October 2021 for the Transport programme and on 15 April 2024 for the Transport sector strategies.

Due to its characteristics, the project falls under Annex I of the EIA Directive and was therefore subject to EIA procedure in line with the applicable legislation.

The EIA process was initiated and processed according to Act No. 100/2001 Coll., on environmental impact assessment. The public hearing of the intent and its effects on the environment was held on 27 September 2017. At the end of the EIA assessment, the Ministry of the Environment issued an Obligatory statement on the assessment of the effects of the implementation of the intent on the environment - issued on 23 November 2017.

It is notable that this was a second EIA process following the original one in early 2000, that was carried out in accordance with § 11 paragraph 1 of Act No. 244/1992, on environmental impact assessment and was concluded by the Consent opinion by the Ministry of the Environment issued on 26 November 2002. Following the amendment of the Act No. 100/2001,

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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on environmental impact assessment, in 2015, new obligations arose including the need to apply/ for the issuance of a so-called verification opinion in accordance with the transitional provisions of Act No. 39/2015. Without issuing a verification binding opinion it was not possible to obtain a decision in the follow-up procedure. Since the original EIA assessment was carried out in accordance with the legislation in force at the time (i.e. in accordance with Act No. 244/1992), the new procedure for the project was applied in accordance with Resolution of the Government of the Czech Republic No. 430 of 11 May 2016, which approved the procedure in the case of ensuring repeated assessment of the effects of transport construction projects on the environment, originally assessed according to Act No. 244/1992, on environmental impact assessment. Consequently, the project was subject to a new EIA assessment pursuant to § 4 of Act No. 100/2001, on environmental impact assessment, as amended by Act No. 39/2015.

Four variants of the ring-road, including the project section, was evaluated not only in the spatial planning documentation of various levels, but also in the original EIA process itself in 2000, and led to the issuance of a favourable opinion of the Ministry of the Environment, in which the most suitable variants of the solution were selected from the point of view of environmental impact and where the conditions for the implementation and operation were clearly specified. The second EIA assessment was then carried out for the selected variant with the least environmental impact.

The zoning permit for the project was issued on 30 July 2020 and the construction permit was issued on 3 July 2024. Both are in force.

Natura 2000

The impact on protected sites was assessed by two respective regional authorities in 2016.

- The Regional Office of the Central Bohemian Region, Department of the Environment and Agriculture issued the Statement of the nature protection on 31 October 2016, excluding significant influence of the project alone or in conjunction with other plans or concepts on the Sites of Community Importance or Special Protection Areas determined by the relevant government regulations. The justification states, among other things, that Sites of Community Importance or Special Protection Areas under the jurisdiction of the Regional Office are not located at the site or in the wider vicinity of the project [the nearest such area of the Natura 2000 system – SCI CZ0213058 Lom na Plachtě with the object of protection by one species of European importance, the firefly (*Bombina bombina*) – is at a distance of 6.8 km in the north-east direction from part of the project in cadastral area Říčany u Prahy at the nearest points.
- The Department of Environmental Protection of the Municipal Authority of the City of Prague issued the statement of the nature protection on 21 November 2016, which determined that the project has no significant impact on the Sites of Community Importance or Special Protection Areas. The justification states that the project will not change the natural conditions on the SCI territory as has no effect on soil chemistry, nutrient content or moisture conditions, nor on the woody composition of stands. In addition, no Special Protection Areas are defined in the territory of the Prague Capital City. The nearest protected site is the site *Blatov and Xaverovský háj*, approximately four kilometers away from the project.

Environmental impacts

The project will have positive impacts in terms of decongesting the capital's current traffic network, improving level of service on roads in the area of project influence, reducing noise and pollution levels at urban areas and improving road safety.

Negative impacts include conversion of agriculture, urban and forestry land, noise and vibration to previously unexposed population, visual intrusion and severance of communities and habitats.

The project will lead to a permanent use of 171.58 ha of mainly agricultural land and 1.25 ha of forest land.

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The project is expected to marginally increase air pollution for certain pollutants and project locations. Compensatory measures have been determined and will be implemented. They include, among else, re-naturalisation of small streams, wetland parks with pools and groves.

All excavated soil will be reused as part of the project, with no need for its permanent deposit.

The overall impact of the project on carbon emission is neutral, with concentration of CO₂ from traffic to be spatially redistributed.

The project is expected to contribute to the reduction of the urban heat island effects, by moving vehicular traffic from the urban centre.

The project will have a positive noise impact, as the noise levels for currently exposed population will decrease due to decrease traffic volumes and the newly exposed population will be exposed to only low noise levels thanks to the careful design considerations. Noise reduction measures along the project road include 6.5km of noise barriers, 13km of earth mounds and two tunnels.

The planting of trees and shrubs is proposed on the slopes of notches and trenches and on all other open areas, especially inside ramps of intersections. Planting of approximately 8,000 trees was required as a compensatory measure under the EIA decision. Nevertheless, over 89,000 trees and over 200,000 shrubs are expected to be planted. The selection of trees for the greening of the road body in the context of vegetation modifications was based on potential vegetation in the area, dendrological survey and habitat characteristics (microclimate, waterlogging, etc.). Xerophyte plants are prevailing given the calcium soils in the area. Only native domestic trees with a link to potential vegetation of the area are recommended for vegetation plantings on the body of the road. In addition to the actual greening of the road body, vegetation green strips are designed along the road with the aim to detach the road from the residential development, to integrate the building into the surrounding landscape.

To ensure the protection of existing watercourses against increased runoff of rainwater and accidental leaks of petroleum products, ground retention reservoirs and underground reservoirs will be built.

An environmental monitoring programme was developed with concerned municipalities and authorities and its implementation version is available. Monitoring will be carried out according to the predefined measures and main data will be made publicly available on biannual basis, through a GIS portal. Environmental monitoring covers following areas: soil, surface and underground water, noise, air quality and biodiversity. The procurement of the environmental and water monitoring services is expected to be completed by end 2024.

Biodiversity

A biodiversity assessment was carried out as part of the EIA study. Only common species of plants not protected under national legislation were identified in the area impacted by the process. The presence of several protected animal species was confirmed at the same time: ants of the genus *Formica*, the fragile swallowtail (*Anguis fragilis*), the common toad (*Bufo bufo*), the hedge lizard, the fragile and the collared lizard. Several mitigation measures have been defined to ensure their protection during project implementation and operation.

A dedicated study on the permeability of the new motorway infrastructure was carried out aiming at the conservation of landscape networks and to the conservation of biodiversity in the nature. The permeability of the designed road was found sufficient except for one location, where a biotope wildlife corridor will be created to reduce the barrier effect and the wildlife mortality. Besides, several preventative measures have been determined and integrated into project design and implementation requirements. The design notably integrates two bridges for the transfer of bio corridors.

Although the project will have some negative biodiversity impacts, these have been properly assessed and adequate mitigation, management and monitoring measures have been identified in consultation with relevant stakeholders and included in the final designs, which are



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subject to the EIA decision. The residual negative impacts on biodiversity are expected to be limited.

Climate adaptation

A climate change vulnerability assessment was carried out for the project and is included in the EIA Report. As per the assessment, the project is only moderately sensitive to climate change impacts. The assessment informed design choices in relation to pavement materials, bridge structure design and drainage.

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.

Paris alignment

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 Prague's sustainable urban mobility plan.

The project encompasses soft mobility components including approx. 8km of cycling paths that will be integrated in the inter-urban cycling network. All existing bicycle paths intersecting the project will be connected.

Czech's alternative fuel infrastructure national policy framework has been assessed to have shortcomings, but the country has shown improving commitment to plan for alternative fuel infrastructure.

The project is in line with the principles of the "Climate protection policy of the Czech Republic 2017" and supportive of its objective to integrate local climate change concerns into transport policy. It is aligned with the National Action Plan for Clean Mobility (2019) and Czech Republic's National Energy and Climate Plan (2020).

The climate risk of the project is assessed as low, and the project is therefore considered to be aligned with the adaptation requirements. The project and its design incorporate climate change adaptation measures in accordance with the national technical codes and legislation. The Services ran the Adapted Economic Test on the project resulting in an EIRR above 7% threshold. The project is therefore aligned with the CBR.

EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise

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

- Estimated annual emissions of project in a standard year of operation:
 - Forecast absolute (gross) emissions are 187 k tonnes of CO2 equivalent per year.
 - Forecast emission saved are 51 tonnes of CO2 equivalent per year.

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

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.

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Social Assessment

Land acquisition

The project will permanently occupy 2,227,422 m² of land; the land acquisition was started in July of 2022 based on a valid zoning decision. The area of temporarily occupied land amounts to 335,112 m². Currently, 90% of land has been acquired.

The project implementation required the expropriation of one family house and one commercial building – a service station temporarily permitted until the commencement of the project. The two assets have been acquired by the promoter in accordance with applicable legislation and there are no ongoing litigations concerning the two acquisitions.

Social impacts

The overall impact of the project on communities is expected to be positive, with impacts such as reduction of travel costs and road safety improvements. The project is also expected to improve the quality of life of the inhabitants in the localities crossed by the existing roads in the areas of influence of the new motorway, because of reduced air and noise pollution, as well as job creation.

The communities directly affected by the new alignment is expected to be negatively impacted by increased air, noise and light pollution. Nevertheless, those impacts will be mitigated by a set of systematic and local measures. Communities in the proximity of the construction site will be temporarily affected by the negative impacts of construction activities, notably noise and dust pollution. Mitigation measures, including noise barriers along selected local roads, have been defined and will be implemented. The applicable regulatory framework in conjunction with regular monitoring by relevant authorities is expected to limit those impacts to acceptable levels.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

A number of public hearings and consultations have been held during project preparation. As part of the EIA process, the public hearing organized on 21 March 2017, in the residence of the mayor of Capital City of Prague with presence of involved public authorities, representatives of associations such as the Society for Prague Ring Road, Stop trucks and Automat, allowed to exchange on the preliminary outputs of the EIA documentation.

On 11 May 2017, a presentation of the project was held for the public and representatives of the affected city districts in Uhřetěves. A final discussion with the public was also an integral part of the meeting. On the 30 May 2017, a presentation of the project took place for the public and representatives of the affected city districts in Běchovice. A final discussion with the public was also an integral part of the meeting.

The final public hearing within the EIA process took place on 27 September 2017. Written records of public consultations are available in Environmental Authority public register.

After 2017, a number of consultations with relevant authorities took place, including building authorities, municipalities and committees of city districts. The public assisted to some of these consultations.

Two topics were repeatedly raised and addressed during the consultations: noise and light pollution. The final design reflects discussions and requirements of impacted population. To reduce the negative impacts, the alignment is mostly in a cut, with noise walls erected in areas close to settlements. The noise studies were prepared and updated during project preparation and show compliance with the current hygiene limits. Light smog was mitigated by removing the lighting of the large traffic signs from the project in accordance with the new wording of the legislation.



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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. Road safety audit at design stage was carried out in 2022 and its recommendations have been reflected in final project design documents.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The project is included in the Transport Policy, Transport sector strategies 3rd phase and Transport program 2021-27, which were subject to the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in 2021. It falls under Annex I of the EIA Directive and was therefore subject to EIA procedure in line with the applicable legislation.

At the time of appraisal, the EIA decision as well as the construction permit have been issued and fully in force. The compensatory measures required before the start of construction activities have been put in place.

Subject to the fulfilment of the below-mentioned conditions and undertakings, the project is acceptable for EIB financing in E&S terms:

Undertakings

- Promptly inform the EIB about any changes/updates in the project design which may affect any decisions (including, among others, administrative decisions, or internal decisions of the promoter) to implement the project.
- Promptly inform the EIB on any significant environmental and social claims, proceedings or investigations commenced, pending, or risk of being initiated regarding environmental and social matters affecting the project.