

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name: S10 Schnellstrasse Süd
Project Number: 2011-0062
Country: Austria
Project Description: Construction of a 22 km section of the S10 Mühlviertler Schnellstraße between Unterweikersdorf and Freistadt.

EIA: Required
Not required

Summary of Environmental and Social Assessment, including key issues and overall conclusion and recommendation

The project does not fall under the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC) since its approval process was completed before the Directive came into force in July 2004 (Transport master plan for Austria called "Generalverkehrsplan Österreich" approved in 2002). No SEA was therefore performed.

The project falls under Annex I of the EIA Directive 85/337EEC as modified. It has undergone a full EIA with public consultation and environmental approval has been provided on 03.07.2009.

In line with the Road Safety Directive 2008/96/EC, the project's design underwent a road safety audit in 2007 and was adapted accordingly. An audit will also take place before the opening to traffic.

The main residual negative impacts of the project are: conversion and permanent loss of agricultural and forest land, additional noise, vibration, visual alteration of the landscape and severance of flora and fauna habitats. Various mitigation measures have been specified in order to reduce the negative impacts of the project, such as retention basins for water protection, noise barriers (12 km in total), animal crossings, fish paths and replanting of wet meadows. Long tunnels also contribute to reducing the environmental impact of the project. These mitigation measures are satisfactory.

In addition to any negative impacts usual in a new road project, e.g. noise, positive impacts are expected due to the removal of through traffic from existing towns (Freistadt and, to a lesser extent, Neumarkt). Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) will in the future be prohibited from using the local road network (except for local traffic), a measure that will further enhance the positive aspect.

There is one Natura 2000 area in the vicinity of the project (Tal der Kleinen Gusen) as well as one protected water area (Wasserschutzgebiet) but these are not affected by the project.

The Promoter will be requested to provide, before first disbursement, documentary evidence that the requirements of the Habitats Directive have been fulfilled (Form A/B or equivalent document to the satisfaction of the Bank).

Under these conditions, the project is acceptable to the Bank from an environmental point of view.

Environmental and Social Assessment

The project concerns the construction, on a new alignment, of 22 km of the S10 Mühlviertler expressway in the north of Austria. The new section will start at Unterweikersdorf and end north of Freistadt after having by-passed the town. It will include 8 tunnels (including 2 major ones), 24 bridges and overpasses and 6 culverts.

Environmental Impact and Mitigation

Austria has an elaborate system of EIA (Bundesstrassengesetz 1971, Umweltverträglichkeitsprüfungsgesetz UVP-G 2000), including public consultation, which is an integral part of the project authorisation process.

Full EIA was performed and completed for the full S10 motorway including the project and the 15 km section connecting to the border. Subsequent administrative procedures for the project are ongoing at State level (Governor), district level and municipal level. ASFINAG has an extensive experience in dealing with all this process and the approximately 90 requisite procedures are progressing well.

The main residual negative impacts of the project are: conversion and permanent loss of agricultural and forest land, additional noise, vibration, visual alteration of the landscape and severance of flora and fauna habitats. Various mitigation measures have been specified in order to reduce the negative impacts of the project, such as retention basins for water protection, noise barriers (12 km in total), animal crossings, fish paths and replanting of wet meadows or other types of plants. Environmental monitoring is planned to be carried out during 10 years after the project's opening to traffic.

The B310 which is currently used to travel from Unterweikersdorf to the north and which will be replaced by the S10 has very high gradients and is sinuous. The alignment of the expressway will improve these characteristics and have a positive impact on road safety aspects. There will be some emission reduction during the project's operation and also displacement of those emissions away from urban areas.

The project is also expected to have positive impacts within Freistadt, a town with a population of about 7500 inhabitants, who currently suffer from high levels of noise, vibration, local pollution and accident risk from the large volume of long distance traffic passing through the town. The project will remove from the town a very significant portion of this traffic.

The Tunnel Safety Directive applies, which relates to both the design elements and operating elements.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

Several alignment alternatives were explored at feasibility study stage in 2004, based on a 3 major criteria which were (i) Traffic and technical aspects, (ii) Costs and (iii) Environmental aspects. All criteria and sub-criteria were agreed with the project sponsors, the project team and the organisation of cooperation, with citizens which included members of the public affected by the project and specialist working groups, as well as the weight of each sub-criterion. It is to be noted that overall, environmental criteria had a total weight of 50%.

Public consultation was widely organised, both at the Region's level with conferences to discuss regional and inter-regional issues, and at the local level with working groups comprising representatives of the various stakeholders (local council, tourism, farm owners...) of the 4 main areas of the project (South, Neumarkt, Kefermarkt and Center).

In each area, two public hearings were held. Furthermore, every affected land owner and property owner was contacted and informed directly.

Overall, over 40 events and working groups were carried out. No opposition to the project was recorded after the whole consultation process.