

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	OEBB AUSBAU WESTBAHN PRIORITY TEN-T
Project Number:	2012-0198
Country:	Austria
Project Description:	Expansion of capacity on the Westbahn railway (TEN-T PP 17) corridor (St. Pölten, Ybbs, Linz)
EIA required:	Yes
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise ¹ :	Yes

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

The initial development plans for the doubling of the WestBahn between Linz and Vienna were prepared in the 1990 following the act prescribing the creation of high capacity rail links in Austria of 1989. The SEA Directive was only adopted in 2004. The SEA is thus not required.

The proposed St-Polten-Loosdorf scheme falls under the requirements of Annex I of the EU Directive 2011/92/EU on environmental impact assessment, and has been the subject of a full EIA covering the whole scope of the scheme including public consultation, which was completed in 1997. Although works started in 1999, there was a complete construction stop in 2000 which lasted till 2009. To restart the works, the promoter made some small changes to the design and requested an extension of the development consent, which includes the environmental permit. In 2011, the Competent Authority (in this case the Bundesministerium für Verkehr, Innovation und Technologie or BMVIT) issued a decision extending the development consent till 2018.

The proposed Ybbs-Amstetten scheme and the Linz Gleisdreieck-Linz Hbf scheme fall under the requirements of Annex II of the EU Directive 2011/92/EU, according to which the need for a full EIA is decided on a case by case analysis by the Competent Authority. In the case of Ybbs-Amstetten, project preparation started in 1997 and in accordance to the applicable EIA legislation in Austria at that time (the UVP1993) no EIA was required. The Competent Authority (BMVIT) confirmed this when they issued the development consent for the scheme, in the period 2004-2007. Also the Linz scheme did not require an EIA, as was confirmed in the development consent issued in 2007.

The project does not impact upon protected areas such as the Natura 2000 areas, and this has been formally confirmed by the promoter for the all project sections.

Comprehensive mitigating measures are being implemented such as landscaping, re-planting, creation of wet areas and animal crossing bridges. All three schemes have extensive noise barriers. Taking into account the above, the project is acceptable to the Bank.

¹ Only projects that meet the scope of the Pilot Exercise, as defined in the EIB draft Carbon Footprint Methodologies, are included, provided estimated emissions exceed the methodology thresholds: above 100,000 tons CO₂e/year absolute (gross) or 20,000 tons CO₂e/year relative (net) – both increases and savings.

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

The initial development plans for the doubling of the WestBahn between Linz and Vienna were prepared in the 1990 following the act prescribing the creation of high capacity rail links in Austria of 1989. The SEA Directive was only adopted in 2004. The SEA is thus not required.

The Competent Authority, for matters related to EIAs, is the Bundesministerium für Verkehr, Innovation und Technologie (BMVIT). BMVIT is also the authority that issues the development consent, and because of the Austrian consolidated development consent procedure, BMVIT is obliged to apply all substantive approval provisions that are required for the project's implementation under federal administrative law. By issuing the development consent, the Competent Authority confirms that all permits, approvals and declarations related to the project have been obtained.

The proposed St-Polten-Loosdorf scheme has been the subject of a full EIA covering the whole scope of the scheme including public consultation. The EIA has been completed in 1995 and in 1997 the Competent Environmental Authority (in this case the Bundesminister für Wissenschaft, Verkehr und Kunst) gave its approval. Although works started in 1999, there was a complete construction stop in 2000 which lasted till 2009. To restart the construction works, the project promoter requested an extension of the building permit, which was obtained in March 2011 after an extensive consultation procedure. The building permit was extended till 31 December 2018. The decision, made by BMVIT, mentions that the results of the previous environmental decision are still applicable and that there is no need for an update of the EIA.

In the case of Ybbs-Amstetten, project preparation started in 1997 and in accordance to the applicable EIA legislation in Austria at that time (the UVP1993) no full EIA was required, given that the works find place within 100 meter from the outermost track of the existing route. Only for the middle section of the scheme (abschnitt Hubertendorf-Blindenmarkt), some works find place outside this 100 meter perimeter and therefore the Competent Authority asked the promoter to add to the feasibility study a public participation procedure in accordance to the UVP1993, which was executed in 1998. The Competent Authority (BMVIT) issued the building permits for all three parts of the scheme in 2004, 2005 and 2007, which confirm that the schemes are in accordance with EIA legislation.

The Linz Gleisdreieck-Linz Hbf scheme did not require an EIA, and the development consent issued by the Competent Authority in 2007 includes a paragraph that confirms this.

The project does not impact upon protected areas such as the Natura 2000 areas, and this has been confirmed by the promoter during the mission. The St-Polten-Loosdorf scheme runs close to the Natura 2000 area 'Pielach-No-Alpenvorlandflüsse' but the Competent Authority has declared after investigation that the project has no impact on the area. The Ybbs-Amstetten scheme crosses the Ybbs-river, which is also a Natura 2000 area. The Competent Authority has issued a decision that states that the promoter may construct the requested railway bridge, provided it fulfils three conditions: 1) there shall be an supervisor that will monitor impacts on the river during construction 2) construction activities on the river may only take place in between May and October or between December and February and 3) the promoter shall notify 14 days before start of works the local fishing authority. The Linz scheme is completely within the existing railway corridor inside the city of Linz and does not come close to any Natura 2000 area.

The Bank received formal confirmation of the Competent Authority that all three schemes have no significant impact on protected areas (form A).

The act of 1989 (prescribing the creation of high capacity links in Austria) stipulates in Article 4(3) that the project design has to incorporate the environmental sustainability of the project and needs to specify the measures envisaged to ensure that the environmental impact of the project during construction and operation will be kept to a minimum. The schemes under the project have been designed accordingly. Comprehensive mitigating measures are being

implemented such as landscaping, re-planting, creation of wet areas and animal crossing bridges. All three schemes have extensive noise barriers.

EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise

The Bank's footprint assessment indicates that the implementations of the project would result in an avoidance of CO2 emissions of about 45 thousand tonnes in an average year. The absolute yearly emissions once the project is implemented would be around 13 thousand tonne, whilst about 58 thousand tonnes of CO2 would be produced yearly if the project is not implemented.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

To issue a building permit, Austrian law prescribes public consultation. For all three schemes consultation has taken place in the period 2007-2012.