

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	Oulu City Underground Parking
Project Number:	2013-0320
Country:	Finland
Project Description:	The project concerns the financing of an underground parking facility to promote the urban development of the city center in Oulu, Northern Finland. The project will be financed under the Oulu Urban Infrastructure framework loan (2013-0164).
EIA required:	no
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise ¹ :	no

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

The Underground Parking project falls under Annex II of the EIA Directive, as an Urban Development and subsequently, have to be screened by the Competent Authority. The Competent Authority for the Kivisydän Underground Parking in Oulu is the North Ostrobothnia Centre for Economic Development. The authority issued a decision on 29/08/2011.

After the completion of the screening procedure it has been decided that an EIA was not necessary, in addition the competent authority indicates that in an earlier stage, the publication of the Spatial Plan for the Underground Parking Area in 2007, gave stakeholders the opportunity to be involved.

The main impacts will stem from the construction works, residual impacts from the operation, once the construction works are completed, will be minimal. During the construction period there will be emissions to the air from machinery and excavation works. The main pollutant will be dust. Other construction-related impacts are noise and vibration from machinery and excavation works, as well as the creation of transports. Huge amounts of rock will be transported on trucks from the site through the city center. Once the works are completed it is generally expected that the overall net environmental and social impact will be positive.

Given the nature of the operation and the procedures concerning EIA and nature protection put in place by the competent authorities in the Northern Ostrobothnia region, the Oulu City Underground Parking is acceptable in environmental terms.

The overall net environmental and social impact of the operation is positive, with improved city environment and in particular social and economic conditions for the inhabitants in the City of Oulu.

Environmental and Social Assessment

Oulu is the regional capital of Northern Ostrobothnia region and the largest city in the county with 191 000 inhabitants. It is the most populous city in Northern Finland and the sixth most

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.

populous city in the country. The urban area of Oulu accounts for approximately 48% of the county population. The city is among the fastest growing cities in Finland which has put the pressure on the entire urban infrastructure. The planned project is responding to many of the challenges caused by the population growth and the increased need for improved access to the City center, not only for visitors and inhabitants arriving by car, but for pedestrians and cyclists.

The project pursues a competitive city in accord with the some of the provisions of the EU's Leipzig Charter such as creating high-quality public spaces, modernising infrastructure networks and the promotion of efficient urban transport.

The project is innovative (one of the EU 2020 goals) in the view that it promotes integrated use of land i.e. putting some services (e.g. waste disposal, parking spaces) under the surface and creating spaces for other developments. Also, the Oulu City Center Underground Parking directly contributes to the city's transport policy objectives and aims to:

- Improve accessibility of the Oulu commercial center and solve parking problems.
- Create space for real estate development and other economic developments.
- Increase the safety of pedestrian and cyclists by facilitating the creation of pedestrian areas and more space for bicycle lanes.

Several public organisations, NGOs, etc. were consulted on the Project. A local branch of the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation (Suomen Luonnonsuojeluliitto) officially filed a complaint against the Project. According to the NGO too little was said about the alternatives. The final conclusion of the consultation process was however that the Spatial Plan for the Underground Parking Area has no adverse environmental effects.

The Oulu City Underground Parking project has been criticised by some members of the City Council in 2007 and by an Environmental NGO, the local branch of the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation (FANC), as it was thought that the project would undermine public transport and causing nuisance during the construction as well as damaging building structures on the surface due to vibrations during excavation and blasting. An online petition against the project gathered some 17.000 signatures some years ago. However, it is considered that the political opposition against this project has declined after the issuing of construction permits and the commencement of the actual construction works in 2012.

No negative social impacts are foreseen, on the contrary it is expected that the social impacts of the project will be overall positive. The everyday life for the inhabitants and associated social relations and routines will be improved thanks to improved mobility, improved accessibility to the City center, improved civil protection and by freeing up public spaces for economic development and the creation of new employment opportunities in the City center.