

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	<i>LITPOL LINK INTERCONNECTOR</i>
Project Number:	<i>20140100</i>
Country:	<i>Lithuania</i>
Project Description:	The Project consists of the Lithuanian part of the asynchronous interconnector Lithuania-Poland, known as LitPol, and the associated reinforcement of the Lithuania network. LitPol comprises the construction of a 500 MW back-to-back station at Alytus in south-western Lithuania and the erection of a double-circuit 400 kV OHL from Alytus to Elk in north-eastern Poland. The route length of the OHL is 150 km, of which 48 km will be erected in Lithuania from Alytus to the Polish border. The associated network reinforcement encompasses the construction of a 53-km long, double-circuit 330 kV OHL connecting Alytus to Kruonis.
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

Given its technical characteristics, the Project falls under Annex I of the EIA Directive and was subjected to both a SEA and an EIA. The Lithuanian part of LitPol was granted favourable EIA decision in December 2010 while the associated overhead line Alytus-Kruonis was granted favourable EIA decision in August 2013. The Polish part of LitPol was also subjected to EIA and was granted favourable EIA decision in December 2013.

The EIA studies and the conditions under the EIA decisions indicate that, subject to the implementation of the specified mitigating measures, the Project would neither have significant adverse effects on the environment nor adversely affect the integrity of any European site on view of the site's conservation objectives. Additionally, the environmental capacity of the promoter is deemed acceptable.

The Project is therefore acceptable to the Bank in environmental terms.

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

Lithuanian part of LitPol

The route of the OHL Alytus-Polish border was selected in order to minimise crossing or proximity to sensitive natural environments (protected areas, forests, valuable flora areas, surface water bodies) and to residential areas. Circa 50% of the OHL route (26 km) will be built alongside an existing 110 kV OHL. This would facilitate construction works, avoid new fragmentation of the ecosystems as well as additional visual pollution.

Based on the results of simulations, beyond the OHL protection zone set out according to Lithuanian legislation (30 m on each side from the outermost conductor) the electric and magnetic fields generated by the OHL are well below the limits specified in the relevant EU

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.

regulation. When local conditions allow, the OHL will be located at distances from houses larger than the protection zone.

The main mitigating measures that have been planned to minimise the impacts during construction and operation are as follows:

- The project area is rich of rivers and lakes that will be unavoidably crossed by the OHL. In order to limit the impacts, no pylons will be constructed in the river protection belts and no construction sites will be installed near lakes and ponds and within their protection zones.
- Cutting of forest will be limited as much as possible. Where cutting is unavoidable, compensatory plantations will be realised in coordination with forestry agencies and landowners.
- Where the OHL does not run in parallel to the existing 110 kV OHL and where technically possible, measures for mitigating the impact on landscape will be implemented. These measures may involve position, height and design of towers, spacing between towers and colouring solutions, depending on the characteristics of the surrounding areas.
- Land along the OHL route and at construction sites will be restored to the original state, including restoration of plant cover based on former plant diversity principles.
- In bird-sensitive areas, flight diverters (visible objects, including balls, plaques and markers) will be installed on the ground wires of the OHL. Other measures, such as making unfavourable conditions to nesting or perching on towers and isolating conductors nearby the towers, may be implemented to reduce the risk of birds' electrocution.
- Impact upon fauna during the construction of OHL will be minimised by planning construction works during the cold season when the young animals are nearly grown up and able to move away from construction machines. Works when the ground is frozen will also result in less damage to the soil. If works are carried out in spring or summer every day prior to starting work an expert in living nature should inspect the section and move away any animal (hedgehogs, hares etc.) found.
- Noise containment measures will be planned and implemented at Alytus site so that the noise level at night and at the hedge of the substation perimeter does not exceed 55 dBA.

The protected areas falling within the easement the OHL comprise the Sabališkės state pedological reserve, small parts of Meteliai regional park (which includes areas significant for the protection of birds and habitats (BSPA and HSPA)) and parts of Žuvintas biosphere reserve (which includes areas significant for the protection of habitats (HSPA)).

The Sabališkės pedological reserve contains a model ground cover of the Eastern Lithuanian highlands, which is under protection. As it could be affected by a direct damage to soil during the construction activities, the EIA decision establishes that the OHL cannot cross the reserve and that here the soil cannot be damaged in any way.

The OHL will have no impact upon the protected immovable values, protected animal species finding places and birds breeding places in the Žuvintas biosphere reserve, Meteliai regional park, Gulbynės ornithological reserve and Balbieriškis forest because the OHL does not directly cross these areas. The HSPA of the nearby Meteliai regional park, Žuvintas lake and Bukta forest with their protected immovable values will not be affected either as there will be no direct impact upon the growth places. There will be no significant impact upon the protected animal species in these areas as the OHL will not have direct influence their habitats.

OHL Alytus-Kruonis

Based on EMF measurements from similar double-circuit, 330 kV lines, beyond the protection zone set out in the Lithuanian legislation (30 m on each side from the outermost conductor), the electric and magnetic fields generated by the OHL are expected to be within the limits specified in the relevant EU regulation. When local conditions allow, the distance of the OHL from houses will be greater than the protection zone.

The OHL does not cross any Natura 2000 site and will run predominantly in agricultural areas, which nevertheless include a mosaic of less anthropogenically affected ecosystems, such as forests, grasslands and aquatic ecosystems.

The main mitigating measures that have been planned to minimise the impacts on such ecosystems during construction and operation are as follows:

- The OHL crosses several surface-water bodies of the Nemunas river basin. In order to limit the impacts, no pylons will be constructed and no construction sites will be installed within the protection zones of surface water areas.
- The fertile soil layer removed during the construction activities will be stored and later used for land restoration along the line route. In order to minimise the threat of soil erosion by water, land restored on the slopes steeper than 10% will be sown with deep-rooted perennial grasses. On slopes steeper than 30%, erosion will be controlled through reinforcement with retaining walls and through planting shrubs and trees.
- Construction and maintenance works in bird-sensitive areas will not be carried out during the bird-breeding season between March and July. Additionally, construction works in the Nemunas river valley will not be carried out during migratory periods (the spring and autumn seasons). In the most sensitive places where there is the risk of birds' collision, flight diverters (visible objects, including balls, plaques and markers) will be installed on the ground wires of the OHL.

Social Assessment, where applicable

Compensation for servitude restrictions will be guaranteed to landowners whose plots are intersected by the easement of the OHLs. Compensation will also be provided for crop destruction, deforestation and other impacts, in accordance with the Law on Land of the Republic of Lithuania.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement, where required

Lithuanian part of LitPol

Information about the EIA process was published on 22 and 23 January 2010 in several newspapers, in the advertisement boards of the involved Alytus district municipalities, on the website of the project coordinator LitPol Link and of the Alytus region environmental protection department. It was possible to examine the EIA documentation at the offices of the EIA organiser (Sweco Lietuva) and of the involved Alytus district municipalities and on the website of the Project coordinator LitPol Link and of the Alytus region environmental protection department.

EIA report public presentations took place from 13 to 19 July 2010 in eight municipalities. Additionally, the EIA organiser prepared a special informational booklet (1000 units), describing the project, the associated possible impacts, the possibilities for the society to get acquainted with EIA documentation and participate in the EIA process, which was distributed to the public at municipalities.

Before issuing favourable EIA decision, the Alytus Region Environmental Protection Department consulted the relevant stakeholders and the public and held a final public meeting on 17 December 2010.

International consultations with Poland under ESPOO convention started in March 2010 but later it was bilaterally decided not carry out an international environmental impact assessment procedures for LitPol.

OHL Alytus-Kruonis

Information about the public presentation of the EIA report was published on 2 October 2012 in several newspapers, in the advertisement boards of the involved municipalities, on the website of Litgrid AB and of the Klaipeda University Coastal Research and Planning Institute. EIA report public presentations took place on 18 and 19 October 2012 in four municipalities and were later repeated in December 2012.

Before issuing favourable EIA decision, the Environmental Protection Agency consulted the relevant stakeholders and the public and held a final public meeting on 17 July 2013.

EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise

The source of CO₂ equivalent (CO_{2e}) emissions for the Project is the ohmic losses of the network equipment being installed through the Project. At Project completion the corresponding absolute emissions are estimated at 9 kt CO_{2e} per year.

Luxembourg, 28th November 2014

These absolute emissions are however largely offset by the reduction of system losses enabled by the Project compared to the alternative without the Project. Therefore, at completion, the Project is expected to enable a saving of 117 kt CO_{2e} per year.