

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	BREITBAND NIEDERSACHSEN
Project Number:	2014 0404
Country:	Germany
Project Description:	The programme concerns the roll-out of several passive fibre access infrastructures in Niedersachsen in order to provide high speed fixed broadband telecom services to residential and business users in uncovered rural areas. The passive infrastructure will be owned by districts (Landkreise) and operated by private companies.
EIA required:	No
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise ¹ :	No (probably)

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

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

The programme relates to the deployment of public broadband telecommunication networks in the German federal state of Niedersachsen. The individual projects are at district level and still need to be developed further. In case the project cost will be above EUR 50 m, it will be appraised individually by the Bank. Below that threshold the assessment is delegated to the intermediary Bank including related assessment and reporting obligations.

In general investments in fixed telecommunications networks (e.g. including civil works investments for fibre roll-out and transmission systems) do not fall under Annex I or II of the EIA Directive 2011/92/EC. Therefore projects under this programme will not be required to perform an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) according to the Directive. Normally fixed telecommunications systems have limited residual environmental effects, apart from disturbances during the construction phase, which can be mitigated by appropriate measures.

Overall and taking a prudent approach the programme's environmental and social rating can be classified as acceptable for the Bank's financing. The environmental impact of the individual projects will need to be appraised at a later stage, including the possible impacts on protected flora and fauna (Habitats 92/43/EC and Birds 79/409/EC) for networks being rolled-out in less densely populated areas, which are potentially located close or within Natura 2000 sites.

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

Fixed telecommunications networks have limited residual environmental effects, apart from disturbances during the construction phase for the underground cable installations. Normally such civil works require an approval by the local competent authorities, which add specific mitigation measures according to the local situation. Also this programme aims at making use of existing infrastructure, like ducts, manholes, etc. Furthermore the public promoter encourages the use of as much as possible publicly owned space for the trenching and cable installations.

EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise

Due to the small size (district level projects) and the passive nature of the networks, it is expected that the emissions will be well below the Bank's thresholds of the Carbon Footprint Exercise. Therefore it is unlikely that a detailed CO₂ emission assessment will be required at appraisal stage of the individual projects.

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

The wide spread availability of broadband networks is one of the key element for the implementation of initiatives aiming at improving the sustainability of the society, like smart grids or smart cities. The programme will therefore have a strong contribution to overall environmental and social sustainability.