

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	VERBUND PSP REISSECK II
Project Number:	2011-0368
Country:	Austria
Project Description:	The project is a 430MW pumped storage scheme for hydroelectric power generation, located within the boundaries of the municipalities of Mühltal, Reisseck and Zandlach (Kärnten) at an altitude between 1600m and 2300m. It makes use of existing reservoirs and consists of new electricity generating equipment, a 3.5km long underground high voltage transmission cable, a new underground system of around 6km long water and access tunnels, shafts, caverns, the new Reisseck II pump and turbine house, a construction camp, various lay down and storage areas, and the enlargement of the existing access road.
EIA required:	Yes
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise ¹ :	Yes
(Details are provided in section: "Carbon Footprint")	

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

The project connects existing hydroelectric power generation schemes that so far operate independently. It ties in two pumped storages and optimises the use of existing large reservoirs and their significant difference in altitude. The project requires interface works and the construction of new components, which primarily will be located underground. The promoter has conducted an environmental impact assessment, including an assessment of nature conservation issues. The EIA was submitted to the authorities in October 2008 and approved in October 2009. The project will impact on several Natura2000 sites, but such impacts on fauna, flora and habitats can be limited to an acceptable level through mitigation and compensation measures identified in the EIA for the duration of construction and operation of the project. The EIA is comprehensive and of high quality, its results are acceptable to the Bank. Authorities in charge of Natura2000 areas have been fully involved in the EIA process and agreed to the suggested mitigation and compensation measures.

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

The EIA has identified impacts to fauna and habitats, some of temporary and others of permanent nature, requiring a variety of mitigation and compensation measures for particular issues. The main new permanent access road from the Mühldorfer Graben to the Schoberboden will fractionate protected forest, a Natura2000 site, without mitigation or restoration possibility. Other access roads to the various construction areas will impact in a

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.

similar manner on Natura2000 sites that protect reptiles, amphibians and marmots. Construction activities will also affect endangered grasshopper species, but not impact on critically endangered flora.

The livelihood of birds will be impacted through the presence of construction sites, lay-down areas, access roads, two material supply cable lifts as well as construction noise and light. Impacts on birds will however be temporary and minor during construction and not significant during operation of the project. Various types of bats have been identified in the project area, all of which are protected under the FFH-Directive. Potential impacts on bats are assessed as marginal and not significant.

The EIA suggests replacing lost protected areas with new nearby forest. Other measures requested in the EIA comprise biotopes to be restored or newly established. This includes the reinstallation, replacement or relocation of several sensitive habitats. Although some permanent loss of existing herpetofauna will occur due to the long-term utilisation of access roads within protected areas, the measures required in the EIA will limit the intensity of impacts to acceptable levels during the construction and operation phase. The permanent nature of some of the mitigation measures is even expected to improve the situation of protected fauna and habitats in the long-term. The implementation of the measures is supervised by appropriately qualified people appointed by the authorities.

EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise

The project will have absolute CO₂e emissions of some 562kt annually as a result of the electricity needed for water pumping during around 2900 hours per year. The alternative would be to operate a combination of combined cycle gas fired power plants and peaking plants, which also emit CO₂ emissions. The relative CO₂ emissions are estimated at 138kt per year. However, it is to note that a gas alternative would not enable storage of excess intermittent renewable electricity during periods of low demand. Pumped storage is at this stage of technology the only large scale means offering this. The Bank envisages financing some 40% of the project cost, which, on a pro rata basis, results in a carbon footprint in absolute terms of some 225kt annually and a relative footprint of 55kt annually.

Social Assessment, where applicable

The EIA identified the possibility of minor and temporary exceeding of noise limits (Hattelberg, Seenplateau) during construction. There will be no unacceptable noise impacts on humans from the operation of this project. Impacts from traffic will be low.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement, where required

The public was invited to provide comments on the EIA following notice from the coordinating Austrian authority 'Amt der Kärntner Landesregierung' in regional newspapers and the "Amtsblatt zur Wiener Zeitung". The EIA documents have been made available in the municipalities of Reisseck and Mühldorf, and on the website of the competent authority. A consultation session with stakeholders took place in September 2009 under the responsibility of the Kärntner Landesregierung. None of the parties involved objected to the environmental assessment of the project.

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

As specified in the project's EIA documentation