

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name: MERANO - MALLES RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE
 Project Number: 20150055
 Country: Italy
 Project Description: The Project consists of the electrification and the upgrade of the signalling and communication system of the Merano-Malles rail line, a 60 km long single track railway serving the Venosta Valley in the Italian Alps.

EIA required: No

Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise¹: No

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

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

The 60 km railway line Merano – Malles crosses the Venosta/Vinschgau Valley in the Autonomous Province of South Tyrol in the Italian part of the Alps.

The works include putting in place poles with catenary, building one new substation at Coldrano and two emergency substations in Malles and Lagundo, upgrading 17 stations by lengthening and partially replacing platforms, building 3 new underpasses at stations and adapting 2 km of the train trajectory to make it less curvy to allow for higher operating speeds. The line will be equipped with ERTMS Level 2.

The line crosses one Natura 2000 site (Ontaneto di Oris - IT 3110005 - site) and is on short stretches close to other sites (Habitats and Birds Directives respectively 92/43/EEC and 2009/147/EEC). These are the following: Steppica Sonnenberg (IT3110010, IT310044, IT310044), di Cengles (IT 3110005) and di Sluderno (IT 3110002).

The project falls under Annex II of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive (2011/92/EU) and hence competent authorities decide on a case by case basis whether a full EIA had to be carried out or not, including public consultation. The project has been screened out according to article 4(3) of Directive 2011/92/EU by the competent authority; Office for EIA/Amt für Umweltverträglichkeitsprüfung of the Autonomous Province of South Tyrol.

For the screening decision in the context of the EIA Directive an impact study was made with a separate study of the impact of the project on passing birds. This general study looked at the impacts on CO₂ emissions, electro magnetism, noise (during construction and in operation) and visibility of the new structures (catenary). The relevant authority deemed the impacts on nature and the environment not severe and mentioned the benefits of less emissions as the energy for the electrified line will come from renewable sources in the future (compared to diesel trains now). To mitigate the effects on passing birds the catenary poles will be made 0.6 m higher or partially insulated.

The Office for Landscape Ecology/Amt für Landschaftsökologie, the competent authority for the supervision of Natura 2000 areas, stated, based on an appropriate assessment, that no significant negative impacts are expected on the Natura 2000 area that is crossed by the rail line (Ontaneto di Oris - IT 3110005) since the project does not affect directly or indirectly any

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.

of the habitats for which the site was designated as Natura 2000 (Natura 2000 declaration Form A, part II).

The project will make it possible to increase the train service capacity from Bolzano to Malles which should attract additional users. Furthermore electric trains that have a larger capacity will be used and the frequency of services will improve. These improvements will enhance the accessibility and attractiveness for users, thus strengthening the demand for rail services in the region.

The Promoter has done analyses, but has not yet drafted a comprehensive long term transport plan. The Promoter undertakes to provide the Bank with a thorough long-term transport plan for the whole province including its Strategic Environmental Assessment according to the Strategic Environmental Directive 2001/42/EC.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

The screening procedure including relevant documents were published on a website for 6 weeks².

The Promoter has in 2005 furthermore involved an organisation that represents people with disabilities (“independent L.”) to assess Venosta Valley railway. The outcome was positive. Most stations were ranked “accessible” and no station was considered “not accessible”.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- The project will make it possible to run direct train services from Bolzano to Malles, and increase the timetable frequency. The project will enable train operators to use electric trains that have a larger capacity and increase the frequency of services. These improvements will enhance the accessibility and attractiveness for users, thus strengthening the demand for rail services in the region. The greater use of public transport will contribute to a decrease in the use of cars, which could be expected if the project was not implemented. In this context, the project is expected to have positive environmental impacts in terms of energy efficiency, air pollution, noise and emissions.
- The Promoter undertakes to develop a thorough long-term transport plan for the whole province and including a Strategic Environmental Assessment.
- A preliminary assessment procedure of the project was undertaken, including an appropriate assessment of impacts on Natura 2000 areas, and the competent authorities concluded that a full EIA procedure was not required as there are no significant adverse effects, also not on any of the nearby Natura 2000 sites.
- Considering the above, the project is acceptable for Bank financing from an environmental point of view.

² <http://www.provinz.bz.it/umweltagentur/uvp/veroeffentlichung-projekte.asp>