

## Environmental and Social Data Sheet

### Overview

Project Name:	RURAL TELECOM NETWORK EXPANSION
Project Number:	2015-0740
Country:	Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon
Project Description:	The project consists of the purchase and installation of mobile telecom equipment to extend the reach of telecommunication services to rural communities of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Cameroon currently not served by any operator. The project is to be implemented from 2016 to 2018. Services will operate using the frequency bands awarded to established operators under revenue share agreements. It includes investments in the core, access, transmission components and energy equipment.
EIA required:	Yes
EIAs may be required by local authorities in the process of site approval in which case they will be made available on EIB website. According to the Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by the Directive 2014/52/EU if the project was in Europe EIAs would not be mandatory.	
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise <sup>1</sup> :	No

### Environmental and Social Assessment

#### Environmental Assessment

The promoter is a start-up company in the process of developing the Environmental and Social capability for compliance with the Bank's requirements. A set of E&S loan conditions and undertakings have been defined in order for the Bank to check AMN's Environmental Policy and Environmental Management Plan that will be prepared by a well trained and experienced consultant hired by the promoter. Specific conditions for sites requiring Environmental authorisations and resettlement of populations are also stipulated as well as for periodic reporting on E&S issues to assure compliance of the project's roll out with EIB principles and guidelines.

The electromagnetic fields produced by mobile telephony are classified by the International Agency for Research on Cancer, a WHO specialized agency, as possibly carcinogenic to humans. Studies are ongoing to further assess the potential long-term effects of use. So far mitigation measures adopted are limits to the radiation of the mobile base stations, restrictions to their locations, the control of the power of the handsets and guidelines for consumer usage.

<sup>1</sup> 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 CO<sub>2</sub>e/year absolute (gross) or 20 000 tons CO<sub>2</sub>e/year relative (net) – both increases and savings.

Taking that also into account, the project's E&S policy and management plans as well as the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) that may be required by the competent authorities in the process of authorisation of the sites, shall address particularly the following issues:

(i) selection of sites to install the base stations to avoid mostly electromagnetic, visual and noise impacts; (ii) safe design of towers; (iii) waste management plan; (iv) measures for security of workers; and (v) a utilisation whenever possible of electronic top up of the subscriber account instead of the use of scratch cards, although this will be a responsibility of the partner Mobile Network Operator for which AMN will provide the access services; and the (vi) the employment of local population.

### **Social Assessment, where applicable**

The project will have a very positive social impact taking into account that it will develop telephony where such service has never been available which will enhance of socio-economic activity and have many other social benefits. It is expected that the promoter's E&S management plan to be prepared to the satisfaction of the Bank will define mitigation measures that will be mainly related to presence of the external construction workers, although this impact will happen in each site for less than one month. Utilisation of local workers for basic construction and of security guards for the operation phase is already planned by the promoter.

### **Other Environmental and Social Aspects**

The major EU telecoms group for which AMN will be mobile access service provider adopts environment and social values, principles and policies in line with international standards. Its contract with AMN sets strict E&S conditions, which in case of breach can lead to contract cancellation.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The promoter is a start-up mobile telephony company that will develop its E&S capabilities in compliance with EIB standards, with the help of an experienced consultant. The promoter will have to adhere to the high E&S standards of its partner MNO. Well experienced turn-key contractors have been selected to implement and manage the project. The environmental risks and long term CO2 footprint of the project are greatly reduced by the use of solar power energy that will be the only source for its rural installations. The only project's carbon footprint will result from the equipment interfacing with the partner MNO at the core network premises, from the small AMN Network Operating Centre in the UK and from the offices and technical staff sites in a few locations in Africa.

The positive social benefits of the project largely outweigh its minor negative impacts that are limited to the contact of the project workers with the local populations.

The project, provided that proposed contract signature and disbursement conditions and undertakings and the monitoring requirements will be complied with by the promoter in the defined timetables, will be in Environmental and Social terms, acceptable for EIB funding.