

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	NATIONAL BROADBAND PLAN (IRELAND)
Project Number:	2016-0287
Country:	IRELAND
Project Description:	The project relates to the roll-out of a high-speed telecommunications network to cover up to 542 000 homes located in areas without network coverage (the so-called white areas) throughout Ireland under the National Broadband plan for Connecting Communities. The promoter, the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment will provide public gap-funding to private operators to perform the network roll-out.
EIA required:	To be defined at completion of the SEA
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise ¹ :	No
(details for projects included are provided in section: "EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise")	

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

The project concerns fixed telecommunications systems that have limited environmental effects, apart from disturbances during civil work constructions, which will be mitigated by appropriate measures. The reuse of existing infrastructures will help to reduce the potential impact of the implementation of the project even further.

The European Directive (2001/42/EC) on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment (the SEA Directive), was transposed into national legislation in Ireland by the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 435/2004) and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 436/2004), as amended. Based on this legislation, the Environmental Authorities screened the project on the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and an Appropriate Assessment (AA).

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.

Luxembourg, 12 April 2018

The determinations concluded that both a Strategic Environmental Assessment as well as an Appropriate Assessment of the proposed National Broadband Intervention Strategy is required. This activity is currently ongoing supported by external consultants.

Although the final geographical scope of the project will be only known at the completion of the procurement process, the estimates made by the promoter already foresee that a few parts of the network will cross environmentally protected areas.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

In 2016, the Department ran a public consultation on the National Broadband Plan - Intervention Strategy: Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report. The Department has announced that a new public consultation will shortly be launched on the results of the SEA.

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

All bidders will be required to comply with relevant laws and regulations relating to access to existing infrastructure that they own or control in the Intervention Area.

High speed broadband networks allow the implementation of innovative services such as videoconferencing, telemedicine in those less densely populated areas. They can therefore have a positive environmental contribution.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The delivery to the Bank of the SEA and the AA reports and any further Assessment requirements resulting from the SEA will be a condition for the disbursement of the loan.

With the above measures in place, the project is deemed to be acceptable for EIB financing in environmental and social terms.