

Luxembourg, 18/07/2017

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	VENTSPILS REGION ONSHORE WIND POWER PROJECT
Project Number:	20170267
Country:	Latvia
Project Description:	A medium-sized onshore wind farm (~50 MW) located 8 to 10 km from the Baltic coast, close to Ventspils, Latvia. It would constitute one of the first large wind farms in the country.
EIA required:	yes
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise ¹ :	yes/(details for projects included are provided in section: "EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise")

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

The project concerns the construction and operation of a medium-size onshore windfarm. The total installed capacity is approximately 50 MW consisting of 24 turbines of two different types. The project has received all necessary consents and approvals: municipal, environmental and construction. The project's site is located near Ventspils, 8-10 km from the Baltic coast in Latvia. The project site is flat agricultural land, accessible from the main road and located at a distance of approximately 2 km from the nearest dwellings. The area in the immediate vicinity is sparsely populated. Another wind farm is situated at approximately 5 km distance.

The promoter's environmental and social assessment capacity is considered as good, whilst the promoter has involved external expertise to study the environmental impacts and prepare associated environmental studies.

By virtue of the technical characteristics the project is classified as an Annex II project according to the Environmental Impact Assessment ("EIA") Directive 2011/92/EU (as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU). Following a case-by-case decision of the competent authority in 2008, the first stage of the project was exempted from undertaking a mandatory EIA. It was however subject to a comprehensive, in-depth planning approval procedure, which requires amongst others to present detailed design data and some environmentally relevant assessments of the project to the competent authority. These data indicated that the project might have some residual negative impacts on the environment, following which the competent authority requested a mandatory EIA of the project's second stage, including the assessment of cumulative environmental impacts and the assessment of impacts on sites of nature conservation and biodiversity. Sites of nature conservation are situated in a radius of some 5-8 km around the project site. The competent authority concluded that there are no residual negative impacts on sites of nature conservation. Both the planning approval procedure and the mandatory EIA involved extensive public consultation. The environmental studies for the EIA process were undertaken in the period 2011 to 2013. Subsequent to public

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.

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consultation the competent authority granted an environmental approval in 2013. The approval contains requirements to mitigate environmental impacts from noise, flickering and requirements for bird migration monitoring. These requirements are issued by the competent authority in a structured procedurally regulated form of so-called “technical regulations”. Bird monitoring campaigns indicated that main migration pathways are west of and outside of the boundaries of the project site. Further, recent studies concluded that the windfarm layout and its location in a very open terrain prevents from endangering migrating bats.

EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise

The direct CO₂ emissions from a wind farm are deemed negligible. In accordance with the Bank's current Carbon Footprint methodology, it is calculated that based on the avoidance of electricity generation from a combination of existing and new power plants in Latvia (75% operating margin and 25% build margin), the total relative effect of the project is a net reduction in CO₂ equivalent emissions by approximately 50 kt/year. For the annual accounting purposes of the EIB Carbon Footprint, the project emissions will be prorated according to the EIB lending amount signed in that year, as a proportion of project cost.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the information made available by the promoter it is concluded that this project has been found environmentally acceptable and compliant with the relevant EU and national environmental legislative framework by the national competent authorities.

Given the envisaged funding structure, the project will be appraised in stages.

Specific disbursement conditions related to compliance of the project with EU environmental policies will be formulated during Stage II of the appraisal. Depending on the outcome of such appraisal, these conditions and/or undertakings might include but will not be limited to the following issues:

- Conditions related to compliance with EU Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to significant impacts of the project on sites of nature conservation.
- Conditions with regard to evidence of permit approvals.