

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	PROXIMUS FIBER FOR BELGIUM
Project Number:	2017-0832
Country:	Belgium
Project Description:	The project relates to the design, building, operating and commercialisation of a very and ultra-high speed fixed broadband telecommunications network, mainly relying on the Fibre-to-the-Home (FTTH) and Fibre-to-the-Business (FTTB) technology. The goal is to reach additional coverage of 10% of the residential and 38% of the enterprise addressable units in Belgium.
EIA required:	No
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise ¹ :	No

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

Installation works for fixed line broadband deployments mainly located in cities and villages require approval by the local authorities, which assess the details of the proposed work plans and require adequate mitigation measures, if needed.

The roll-out of the FTTH network will take place inside the existing ducts when possible and is not expected to have any major impact, apart from some disturbance to the traffic when cables are blown-in. For the components of the project for which additional civil works are requested, the environmental impact will be limited to the disturbance created by the construction.

The implementation process is managed by the promoter with the chosen subcontractors. They follow strict health and safety rules and their work is closely supervised by the relevant municipal authorities.

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, 27 February 2018

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

The promoter has developed a comprehensive corporate social responsibility policy reinforced by a Sustainability Charter that embodies the promoter's commitment to sustainable development via a sustainable provision of products and services with significant environmental, social and economic benefits; and a determined effort to integrate its business activities with environmental, social, and economic responsibilities — minimizing, where practicable, any negative impact these activities may generate.

Concerning Natura 2000 protection sites, no impact is foreseen by the promoter during the implementation of the project.

The expansion of the fibre network will foster broadband competition that will benefit to the households and businesses covered and allow for more affordable and better high speed broadband products. Investments in the FTTH roll-out have an effect to significantly improve the quality of broadband services, with widely reported positive social benefits such as enabling teleworking solutions thereby reducing the need for travel, enabling the use of cloud computing solutions with energy efficiency gains, the delivery of e-health and tele-education services to underserved regions, and supporting regional development through development of sufficient ICT ecosystem.

The project will require a highly qualified workforce, both for its implementation as well as for the operations. The promoter is planning to hire around 600 additional staff for operations, while the roll-out is estimated at 3 800 person-years.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Investments in fixed telecommunications projects (including civil works investments for fibre roll-out and transmission systems) do not fall under Annexes I or II of the Directive 2014/52/EU amending the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU. Fixed telecommunications systems have limited environmental effects, apart from disturbances during civil work constructions, which can be mitigated by appropriate measures.

During the implementation period, there will be a limited temporary impact caused by installation works of the new underground duct systems and cables, as well as aerial deployments on façade – all authorised by local authorities.

Considering the above, the project is acceptable for Bank financing.