

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	OEBB MARCHEGGER OSTBAHN
Project Number:	20170519
Country:	Austria
Project Description:	Upgrade of the railway line Wien Stadlau to Marchegg, connecting the Vienna to the Slovakian border.
EIA required:	yes
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise:	no

Environmental and Social Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

A strategic environmental assessment of the corridor Vienna-Bratislava was performed in Austria in 2010.

Environmental Assessment

The project concerns the upgrade of about 37km of railway line, from Wien Stadlau to Marchegg (close to the border between Austria and Slovakia), on the Vienna-Bratislava route. This line is located on the Baltic-Adriatic TEN-T Corridor. The upgrade includes the doubling (excluding the Wien Erzherzog-Wien Aspern and Schonfeld-Marchegg sections, which might be doubled at a later stage) and electrification of the existing single and non-electrified line. A new signalling system, including ERTMS and electronic interlocking in stations, will be installed. The current traffic on the line is about 120 trains/day – including passenger and freight trains, and it is due to become about 200 trains/day with the project scenario. The maximum capacity of the line will be about 250 trains/day.

The project falls under Annex I of the EIA Directive, therefore requiring an environmental impact assessment (EIA). An EIA procedure was undertaken by the State of Lower Austria, Department for Environmental and Energy Law and was approved on 22/04/2014 (BMVIT-820.341/0011-IV/SCH2/2014).

The EIA analysed the main impacts connected to the project implementation as well as to railway operations, including impacts on animals, plants, habitats, water and soil, air and climate, landscape and cultural heritage. Construction activities will cause some disruptions that are monitored and, in any case, limited in time. The main impact factors during construction concern noise, air pollutants, vibrations, electromagnetic fields and lighting. Mitigation measures for these impacts include careful identification of site locations and access routes to sites; time limitation of construction activities in residential areas; information to the wider community; close monitoring and use of protective devices for construction activities generating vibrations and electromagnetic fields; appropriate use of lighting. During the operational phase, noise levels may increase because of higher levels of traffic. The impact of traffic increase will be higher in urbanised areas, mainly due to higher noise levels, and this impact is mitigated with the installation of noise barriers where appropriate.

Overall, the project will contribute to reduction of journey times, railway capacity increase and improvement of quality and reliability of railway services for both passengers and freight. This

Luxembourg, 19.11.2018

railway upgrade will result to some modal shift from road to rail with reduction of congestion on the road network as well as reduction of emissions of pollutants and CO₂. The “with project scenario”, despite some local negative impacts, will bring an overall improvement to the environment if compared with the “without project scenario”.

Social Assessment

The implementation of the project included some land acquisition for substations, underpasses, overpasses and for modifying some curves requiring a larger radius. This land acquisition process included the resettlement of one household.

Procedures for land acquisition are ongoing in compliance with national legislation.

Nature protection areas

The competent authority for the Lower Austria area, the Office of the Lower Austrian State Government, declared that there will be no significant effects on Natura 2000 sites, which border with or are crossed by the project (the bird protection site AT1213V00, the Flora Fauna Habitat protected site AT1213000 and the bird protection/Flora Fauna Habitat sites AT130200 and AT1203V00). Their decision is based on the results of the EIA and assuming that the requested mitigation measures are implemented (such as mitigation of aforementioned impacts of construction activities and installation of noise barriers as mitigation measure during the operation phase).

Furthermore, the competent authority for the Vienna area stated (in the Annex C-1 of the CEF funding application) that the project is not expected to have any negative impact on the protection and preservation of the closest Natura 2000 site, i.e. the National Park Danube Wetlands, which is 3.6 km away from the railway alignment.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

The general public was regularly informed about the planning stages related to this project through community forums and advertising material.

In the context of the EIA process, the selected project alignment was presented to a public consultation on 13/03/2013, 03/04/2013 and 23/06/2017.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The project is part of a plan, which was subject to SEA.

The upgrade project of the railway line Wien Stadlau to Marchegg, part of the Baltic-Adriatic TEN-T Corridor, was subject to an EIA, including public consultation. The competent authority issued an environmental permit which identifies appropriate mitigation measures for environmental impacts during construction and operations.

The competent authorities declared, in a Natura 2000 declaration, that the project does not have significant impacts on any Natura 2000 sites.

The project’s residual negative impacts during construction and operation are limited. Moreover, the impacts during the operation phase are partly offset by the expected modal shift facilitated by the investment. Overall, the project is acceptable from an environmental and social perspective.