

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	POLAND SOLAR POWER PROJECTS PROGRAMME
Project Number:	(2018-0211)
Country:	POLAND
Project Description:	<i>The operation proposed for programme loan approval consists in the financing of small to medium-sized solar photovoltaic farms in Poland having been awarded support under the new auction support system, and to be implemented over 2018-2022.</i>
EIA required:	no
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise ¹ :	yes

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

This project concerns a Programme Loan (PL) dedicated to support small-scale (<1MW), geographically dispersed, land-based photovoltaic (PV) plants in Poland for a total expected capacity of 250 MW. The PL will focus on PV-projects enjoying feed-in premiums awarded under the renewable energy auctions held in Poland from 2016 onwards up until 2020 including. It is expected that 6-7 different clustered investments, composed of a multitude of separate PV plants would be financed under the PL. Each investment cluster will be subject to individual appraisal and approval.

Small-scale PV plants are according to their technical characteristics exempted from undertaking a mandatory EIA (Annex I). National regulations require an environmental screening by the competent authority as part of a construction permit approval for PV installations, which cover an area larger than 1 ha (equivalent to Annex II EIA Directive). This is equally needed for PV installations covering an area larger than 0.5 ha and which are situated within a site of nature conservation. Such screening should include the assessment of cumulated impacts of adjacent projects.

Most PV installations to be funded under this PL are likely to be screened out by the competent authorities due to their size and expected negligible impact on environment. The Bank will request from promoters the competent authority's decisions in this matter as well as the authority's decision concerning the need for an appropriate assessment of potential impacts on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites.

Only projects with a valid construction permit and an achievable schedule of construction process are admitted to an auction for a renewable feed-in premium. Environmental screening decision form part of the construction permit. The regulator granting the feed-in premium verifies the validity of the construction permit.

Impacts on the environment will include noise, dust and increased traffic during the construction phase and to visual and land use impacts during operation. These impacts are unlikely to cause any significant negative residual effects to the environment.

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, 20/09/2018

EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise

Assuming that the PL will contribute to deployment of 250 MW electric capacity the total estimated electricity generation amounts to 240 GWh/year. The associated emission savings are estimated on that basis at 184.5 kt CO₂e/year over the projects' life following the Bank's Carbon Footprint methodology (75% operating margin and 25% of build margin).

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 of actually financed PV installations.

Social Assessment

PV installations are expected to be built on leased agricultural land based on mutually agreed leasing arrangements between promoters and owners. Thus expropriation or resettlement is very unlikely to occur for this project.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

In the event that a programme component to be financed with the Bank's funds requires an Environmental Impact Assessment, the Bank will require the promoter to undertake to refrain from allocating the Bank's funds to such component until the EIA with the associated biodiversity assessment has been finalised, approved by the competent authority and reviewed by the Bank to its satisfaction. In such cases, the promoter undertakes to send an electronic copy of the Environmental Impact Statement to the Bank for publication on its website.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Subject to the following (and other, specific to particular projects) conditions, the Programme is expected to be acceptable for EIB financing in E&S terms.

Each investment cluster will be subject to individual appraisal and approval by the Bank.

The EIB will require the promoter to undertake:

- If project of a cluster is subject to an EIA,
 - to refrain from allocating the Bank's funds to such component until the EIA with the associated biodiversity assessment has been finalised, approved by the competent authority and reviewed by the Bank to its satisfaction
 - to send an electronic copy of the Environmental Impact Statement to the Bank for publication on its website.
- to send to the EIB copies of all EIA screening decisions and permits concerning the programme components issued by the competent authority for nature and environment as soon as they are available.
- to take into account and implement conditions expressed in any screening-out decision or EIA consent granted by the competent authority for nature and environment.
- to store and keep updated any documents as may be relevant for the project supporting the compliance with the provisions under the EU Habitats and Birds Directives and shall upon request promptly deliver such documents to the EIB.
- to provide to the EIB the opinions of the competent authority with respect to the requirement for an Appropriate Assessment as per the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.

A separate ESDS will be published for each Cluster.