

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	AFFORDABLE HOUSING HYPO NOE
Project Number:	2018-0426
Country:	Austria
Project Description:	The Project is structured as framework loan to Hypo NOE to finance development of about 1,600 new social and affordable housing investments in the provincial state of Lower Austria. Final beneficiaries of the financing will be non-profit housing development companies, private construction companies or local governments. All sub-projects under the Framework Loan will be located in the federal province of Lower Austria.
EIA required:	This is a multi-scheme Framework Loan operation. Some of the schemes may fall under Annex II of the EIA Directive and have to be screened by the Competent Authority.
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise ¹ :	No

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

The proposed Intermediated Framework Loan (IFL) concerns the financing part of the social housing programme in the provincial state of Lower Austria, intermediated by Hypo NOE Landesbank für Niederösterreich und Wien AG (Hypo NOE), the regional, province-owned commercial bank. The IFL comprises the construction of about 1600 new housing units in the years 2018-2022.

Eligible schemes will be located in urbanized areas and included in the local spatial and development plans for which the relevant Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) have been performed in line with the SEA Directive 2001/42/EC.

Relevant environment EU Directives have been transposed into national and federal state legislation (SEA Directive, EIA Directive, Birds and Habitats Directive, Energy Performance of Buildings Directive). Individual schemes have to obtain building permission, which already takes into account the national environmental legislation. Building permits are issued by the relevant public local building authorities.

The environmental impact of the project is expected to be minimal.

Given the scope of this operation and sector included (housing), it is likely that most of the schemes will not be subject to full EIA. It is expected that most of them will fall under the Annex II of the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU, requiring the Competent Authority to screen them. In addition, most of the schemes will be located outside protected areas, including Natura 2000.

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.

Based on previous transactions six operations the Hypo NOE demonstrated strong capacity in complying with EIB's allocation and reporting requirements.

Social Assessment

The project supports the construction of social housing. The technical standards must adhere to the building standards of Austria and Niederösterreich social housing legislation and regulation. In addition, social housing is regulated and monitored by local housing authorities in each municipality, contributing to guaranteeing adequate technical standards for the accommodation units included in this operation.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

Meetings with project-affected people and civil society organisations as well as public administrations, including local authorities will be held as needed to promote harmonious relationships between local communities, social mix and inclusion as well as sustainable urban development.

Moreover, with reference to the social housing component, the need for and the suitability of social housing (in a given area), will be assessed by the local housing authority and will require approval from the Promoter before proceeding with the final application process for funds, guaranteeing stakeholder's engagement.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The project's environmental impact at the construction stage will be short-lived and reversible, at a level deemed acceptable. The project has no particular residual impacts apart from those expected from construction of buildings.

It is expected that the project will result in a significant number of positive social externalities (e.g. provision of affordable accommodation etc.), justifying the Bank's involvement.

The Promoter will be required to act according to the provisions of the relevant EU Directives, including SEA (2001/42/EC), EIA (2011/92/EU) and subsequent amendments (e.g.: 2014/52/EU), Habitats (92/43/EEC) and Birds (2009/147/EC) Directives as transposed into national law. The Promoter will be requested to deliver the NTS of EIAs (if applicable) to the Bank before the Bank funds are allocated. In addition, the Promoter has to provide evidence of the compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives (if applicable) before the Bank funds are allocated.

The institutional capacity of Hypo Noe to manage the environmental and social issues is deemed good and therefore, subject to the conditions described above, the project is acceptable for the Bank in environmental and social terms.

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