

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	<i>S61 EXPRESSWAY VIA BALTICA</i>
Project Number:	<i>20170166</i>
Country:	<i>Poland</i>
Project Description:	The S61 expressway, starting in Ostrow Mazowiecka, will provide a connection in the north-south direction from Warsaw to the Lithuanian border and further to other Baltic countries. The project concerns the new construction of an approximately 200 km long 2 x 2 lane expressway mostly along a new alignment.
EIA required:	yes
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise ¹ :	yes

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

The new alignment of S61 Expressway follows the route of the existing Regional Road DW 677 and National Roads DK 61, DK 16 and DK 8 from Ostrow Mazowiecka through Lomza, Elk and Suwalki towards the Lithuanian border in Budzisko. All towns on the new route will have a bypass.

Most of the scope is a new construction, except sections of Stawiski and Szczuczyn bypasses which will be widened by constructing a second carriageway to currently existing 2 lane bypass alignment. Approximately 25 km of connecting roads will also be constructed as part of the project – mainly near Lomza and Elk, to ensure interoperability with the existing road network, which, after completing the S61, will serve local traffic needs.

The EIA procedures, including analysis of variant solutions, public consultation, impacts along with mitigating measures and environmental monitoring, have been examined and procedures are carried out in accordance with the EU Directive requirements. Negative impacts are varied and these include agriculture and forest land conversion, noise and vibration, visual intrusion and severance of communities and habitats. The environmental Decisions specify a range of mitigating measures.

In line with regulatory requirements, public consultation took place during the EIA proceedings prior to granting the environmental consents. Information on the project was published in the local press. It was also made available to the public on the notice boards for official notices and on the websites of the municipalities impacted by the project.

The project falls under Annex I of EIA Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended, requiring a full EIA. During the preparatory phase which started with a Strategic Impact Assessment of VIA BALTICA route back in 2008, the project components were prepared and studies were carried out section by section, resulting in 7 Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) and 7 Environmental decisions issued at different times. Cumulative effects have been properly considered and coordination with Lithuanian competent authorities regarding the cross-border effects for the section Suwalki – Budzisko was done during the EIA process.

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.

The project is included in the National Road Construction Program 2014-2023 and the EU co-financed Operational Programme Infrastructure & Environment 2014 – 2020, both of which were subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment in 2015.

The EIA permitting process for the entire project, section by section, was as follows:

S61 Expressway	Environmental Decision	Environmental reports	
		EIA	Supplemental EIA
Ostrów Mazowiecka -Szczuczyn	03.02.2014	2011	
Łomża bypass	22.09.2014	2014	
Stawiski bypass (II carriageway)	I carriageway 31.03.2010 II carriageway 9.10.2015	2009	I carriageway 2011
Szczuczyn bypass (II carriageway)	I carriageway: 15.03.2010 II carriageway: 8. 10.2015	2009	I carriageway 2011
Szczuczyn - Raczek	15.10.2015	2014	
Suwałki bypass	17.10.2011	2011	2016
Suwałki - Budzisko	17.04.2015	2014	

Supplemental EIA has been prepared and construction permit has been issued for Suwałki bypass section only, but will be required at the issuing of building permit stage also for other components. Therefore a condition will be included in the Financing Agreement regarding the requirement for obtaining a Supplemental EIA decision for other components and submitting it (or an evidence that no such Supplemental EIA is required) in a form and content acceptable to the Bank prior to the disbursement for the respective section.

Along its entire 200 km stretch, the S61 alignment has been chosen with an objective to avoid collision with Natura 2000 sites to an extent possible. Only on limited number of locations, like Narew bridge in Łomża, it has not been possible, and, therefore, the project route crosses some NATURA 2000 sites, in particular, "Ostoja Narwińska" (PLH200024) and "Dolina Dolnej Narwi" (PLB140014) on Łomża bypass and Puszcza Augustowska (PLB200002) and Ostoja Augustowska (PLH200005) along the route of Suwałki bypass connecting road. Several other Natura 2000 sites are located close to the project along other sections of the S61, like for example:

- "Czerwony Bor"(PLH200018) – closest distance approximately 300m;
- "Puszcza Biała" (PLB140007) – closest distance approximately 250m;
- "Jeleniewo"(PLH200001) – closest point approximately 670m;
- "Torfowisko Zocie" (PLH280037) – approximately 760m to the left from the road;
- "Jezioro Woszczelskie" (PLH280034) - 7 km to the left from the road;
- "Ostoja Wigierska"(PLH200004) – 3.7 km from the road;

The project impact on Natura 2000 areas was analysed in detail by the competent bodies during the procedure related to the environmental impact assessment, and the conclusion was that the project shall have no significant adverse impacts. The competent Authorities responsible for nature protection have confirmed it by issuing opinions regarding all sections of the project (Form A or similar).

Numerous measures have been put in place in the design to reduce, mitigate or manage the negative impacts. EIA Decisions provide for prohibition of certain construction activities during nesting periods of birds, protection fencing along Natura 2000 sites, installation of acoustic barriers, construction of crossings for fauna, fencing of culverts, groundwater monitoring, extensive drainage and runoff water treatment systems and plantation of greenery. The project is expected to have positive impacts for the environment along the existing route and along the roads from which traffic will divert. Communities adjacent to the old route will benefit by way of improved safety, reduced noise, vibration, local pollution. Although the schemes will have some negative impact, these have been assessed and adequate mitigating and management and monitoring measures have been identified in consultation with relevant stakeholders and will be included in the final designs.

The project complies with applicable EU and national Legislation including SEA and EIA legislation.

EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise

Estimated annual emissions of project in a standard year of operation:

- Forecast absolute (gross) emissions are 336,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per year; and
- Forecast emissions savings is 15,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per year.

The project boundaries are:

- In the “baseline case” - existing road network comprising the sections of the County Road DW 677 and Regional Roads DK 61, DK 16 and DK 8.
- In the “absolute case” (with the project) - the new S61 expressway and the existing roads.

The absolute emissions are expected to be slightly lower than baseline due to less congestion and more fluent traffic of vehicles on the new expressway.

The baseline is the forecast third party emissions, in the absence of the project, from the existing network only within the boundary defined above. The forecast for absolute emissions relates to the corridor including the new expressway section. The forecasts reflect the Services' assumptions on traffic, traffic growth, speed/flow, infrastructure capacity and fuel consumption.

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.

Social Assessment, where applicable

Number of plots and area to be expropriated is a preliminary estimation based on the conceptual design. The exact data are known only in the case of the sections where the construction permit is issued. All sections are procured as Design and Build contracts, so design will be developed and construction permit will be issued approximately one year after contract signature.

Current estimate is that involuntary resettlement of 56 properties, including 27 residential ones, will be necessary. So far all cases have been resolved by an amicable settlement. It has been estimated that for the entire S61 project it will be necessary to expropriate approximately 4800 land plots with total area of 2592 ha. For Suwalki bypass section the process has been completed and 130 ha have been acquired.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

Public consultation and stakeholder engagement for the different SEA's and EIA's related to the project has been executed in compliance with or exceeding the requirement of the applicable legal framework.

Before issuing a decision for the EIA for Ostrow Mazowiecka – Szczuczyn section, the public consultation took place between March 2012 and January 2014. The Notices were published in the Public Information Bulletin and posted on a notice board on the premises of the Regional Directorate for Environmental Protection in Białystok and on the municipal notice boards in Łomża, Piątnica, Stawiski, Czerwin, Mały Płock, Szczuczyn, Gabrovo, Śniadowo, Ostrów Mazowiecka, Stary Lubotyń and Zambrów.

Before issuing a decision for the Stawiski bypass section, between December 2009 and January 2010 the public notice was posted on the notice board at the headquarters of the Regional Environmental Protection Directorate in Białystok and on the notice boards in the following municipalities: Stawiski, Buda Stawiski, Buda Poryckie, Chmielewo, Borzykowo, Kuczyny, Michny, Taflły, Zabiele and Karwowo.

The public hearing for the Szczuczyn – Raczki section took place in February 2015 and the notice was posted in the Regional Directorate for Environmental Protection in Olsztyn, on the website of the Public Information Bulletin of the Regional Directorate for Environmental Protection in Olsztyn and on the notice boards in municipalities and communes in Elk, Szczuczyn, Biała Piska, Prostki and Raczki.

For Suwalki bypass section the public hearing was organized in Suwalki city during August and September of 2011.

For the section Suwalki – Budzisko (state border), the public consultation took place between April 2014 and February of 2015. The notice and EIA dossier posted in the Public Information Bulletin and the Regional Directorate for Environmental Protection in Białystok as well as on a notice board in the premises of City Hall of Suwałki, municipal authorities of Suwałki, Jeleniewo and Szypliszki.

The proposals and recommendations received during the consultations have been dealt with in issuing the environmental decisions and reflected in requirements for the design, which will be checked once more during the supplemental EIA analysis before issuing the construction permits.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The project falls under Annex I of EIA Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended, requiring a full EIA. During the preparatory phase which started with a Strategic Impact Assessment of VIA BALTICA route back in 2008, the project components were prepared and studies were carried out section by section, resulting in 7 Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) and 7 Environmental decisions issued at different times.

The project is included in the National Road Construction Program 2014-2023 and the EU co-financed Operational Programme Infrastructure & Environment 2014 – 2020, both of which were subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment in 2015.

The project complies with applicable EU and national Legislation including SEA and EIA legislation.

Disbursement condition

Prior to disbursement of funds to be used for any of the sections, with exception of Suwalki Bypass, the Promoter shall submit to the Bank a confirmation that the corresponding Supplemental EIA decisions, required for issuing final building permits, have been obtained.

Under these conditions the project is considered acceptable for EIB financing from an environmental and social point of view.