

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	DIVAČA-KOPER SECOND RAIL TRACK
Project Number:	2017-0183
Country:	Slovenia
Project Description:	The project consists of construction of 27 km of single line rail track on a new alignment to increase rail capacity between the port of Koper and the rail junction in Divača.
EIA required:	yes
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise ¹ :	yes

(details for projects included are provided in section: "EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise")

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

The project consists of construction of a new single-track electrified railway line between the Port of Koper and the junction in Divača. Due to a mountainous terrain, the project will mostly be in tunnel (20.3 km) or on long viaduct (1.1 km). For the longest three tunnels (6.7 km, 6 km and 3.8 km), the Promoter intends to build parallel service tunnels for maintenance and evacuation purposes.

The project forms part of the Transport Development Strategy of the Republic of Slovenia Until 2030, which has been subject of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as set out in Directive 2001/42/EC.

The project falls under Annex I of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU). The EIA procedure was undertaken over the period 2012 – 2014.

The project lies in the immediate vicinity of the Slovenian/Italian state border. Therefore, in 2012 – 2013, transboundary consultations were held with the Competent Italian Authorities; and their comments were taken into account in the environmental consents.

In February 2014, the Competent Authority (the Environmental Agency of the Republic of Slovenia) issued a partial environmental consent, which did not include a section in the Beka Landscape Park; this section runs on a viaduct between two tunnels. In October 2014, the Competent Authority issued a supplementary decision giving consent for the Beka Landscape Park section.

The project is a major civil engineering scheme. It will be implemented on new alignment, mostly in tunnel or on viaducts, and there are a number of associated potential impacts and risks. These risks include: geotechnical and geological risks (such as disturbances of surfaces, landslides, rockslides and erosion); contamination of soil by hazardous or harmful substances; pollution or alteration of groundwater and surface water courses; destruction of

¹ Only projects that meet the scope of the Carbon Footprint Exercise, as defined in the EIB draft Carbon Footprint Methodologies, are included, provided estimated emissions exceed the methodology thresholds: 20,000 tonnes CO₂e/year absolute (gross) or 20,000 tonnes CO₂e/year relative (net) – both increases and savings.

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or damage to caves; destruction of or damage to wildlife habitats (including those of protected species); visual impact; noise and vibration during construction; and burden of the environment by significant surplus of excavated material (4.2 million m³, including the enlarged service tunnels as described below). The main cross-border risks are related to potential impacts on groundwater and surface watercourses, noise during construction and operation.

These risks and impacts have been analysed during the EIA procedure; and EIA report and the environmental consent define an extensive program of corresponding mitigation measures.

These measures include: stabilisation of the terrain for preventing rock or land slides; sedimentation tanks; specific design of the drainage system and water-tightness of the tunnels for preventing water pollution; a detailed protocol for actions to take in the case of encountering caves, including notification to the Competent Authority; limitation of the construction time and of the size of construction bases; and screens for reducing environmental noise during operation.

The alignment has been defined taking into account the best available knowledge of the karst phenomena in the area and all known caves have been mapped. In particular, the alignment has been modified so that the Ocizeljjska Jama cave system will be avoided.

Three possible sites have been identified for the surplus excavated material: Šmarska cesta, Ankaranska bonifika and Bekovec. With the addition of the excavated material, the former will be returned to its original condition and the latter two will be improved for the benefit of agriculture.

The EIA report and the environmental consent define further detailed studies to be undertaken prior to the commencement of the works, such as a study for the prevention and reduction of particle emissions, as well as monitoring during construction and operation.

In August 2018, the Competent Authority screened out a change in the project design consisting of enlargement of the cross-section of the service tunnels. The Promoter currently intends to build these service tunnels with the same cross-section as the main tunnels with a view to possible future use of the service tunnels for installing an additional railway track. The analysis carried out for the screening out decision is, however, limited to the mere impact of enlarging the cross-section and does not consider the potential construction of an additional track. If such additional track is ever to be considered for implementation, it will need to be the subject of a separate regulatory procedure.

Concerning nature conservation areas, the project runs through or close to the following Natura 2000 sites:

Natura 2000 site		Comments
SI3000276	SAC Kras	Crossed by the project along 13.1 km
SI5000023	SPA Kras	Crossed by the project along 15.4 km
IT3340006	SCI Carso Triestino e Goriziano	This site is the continuation of SI3000276 in Italy.
IT3341002	SPA Aree Carsiche della Venezia Giulia	This site is the continuation of SI5000023 in Italy.
SI3000060	SAC Rižana	Distance to the project: 350 m
SI3000252	SAC Škocjanski zatok	Distance to the project: 1.2 km
SI5000008	SPA Škocjanski zatok	Distance to the project: 1.2 km

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As part of the EIA, an appropriate assessment of the potential impacts of the project on these sites was carried out in accordance with Article 6(3) of Directive 92/43/EEC (the Habitats Directive). The EIA report and environmental consent establish some specific mitigation measures for avoiding or minimising impacts on these sites, such as: forbidding works or transport of material in particular areas; limiting the period during which trees and bushes may be cut, and limiting the period during which watercourses may be regulated.

The Bank requested a specific declaration issued by the authorities competent for nature conservation sites confirming absence of significant impacts of the project on the Natura 2000 sites.

Overall, the project will contribute to the improvement of the quality and reliability of railway services for both goods and passengers, and thus to the modal shift from road to rail with the consequent reduction of energy consumption, noise, and emissions of pollutants and CO₂. All this should result in an improvement in the environmental situation in comparison to the “without project case”.

The main residual impacts of the project are: conversion of about 106 ha of land (mostly forest, but also 29 ha of agricultural land); visual intrusion; use of finite resources; and nuisance during the construction phase, for both wildlife and trackside dwellers.

Despite the geological surveys carried out and other mitigation measures, there remains some residual risk related to the karst phenomena and the corresponding potential contamination of groundwater or change of hydrological regime. This risk cannot be fully mitigated.

EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise

The project is included on the following basis:

Estimated annual third party greenhouse gas emissions (vehicular use, from existing and induced demand) from the use of the project in a typical year of operation over a 26 operating assessment period:

- Forecast absolute (gross) emissions are about 13,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent; and
- Forecast emissions savings are about 49,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent.

The project assessment boundaries are:

- In the absolute case:
 - the new railway track between Divača and Koper, of approximately 27 km of new infrastructure, used primarily for the uphill traffic from Koper to Divača;
 - the existing railway track between Divača and Koper, of approximately 45 km, used primarily for downhill traffic from Divača to Koper;
- For the savings, the project is expected to result in a shift of 3 million tonnes of freight from:
 - the existing road infrastructure between Koper and Maribor of approximately 249 km to
 - the new and existing railway tracks between Koper and Šentilj of approximately 280 km.

The forecasts in the baseline and absolute cases are based on project specific assumptions about modal share, the workload of rail services (goods and passenger trains) and fuel efficiency of rail operations. For relative emissions, a portion of emissions from trucks is included using project specific emission factors, equivalent to those goods expected to shift from road to rail (and/or remain on rail and not shift to road) in the “with project” case.

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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.

These forecasts may differ from those of the Promoter due to different assumptions, boundaries and baselines.

Social Assessment

The land acquisition process follows the applicable legislation. No resettlement is necessary because of the project.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

During the EIA procedure, prior to the issuance of the consent, in October – November 2012, information on the EIA and the possibility to submit comments was made available to the public. Comments and requests from the public were received by the Competent Authorities and taken into account when defining the conditions specified in the environmental consent.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The project falls within the scope of the EIA Directive, Annex I. The EIA procedure is complete and the Promoter has obtained the environmental consent.

Prior to the first disbursement of the loan, the Promoter will provide to the Bank a specific confirmation from the Competent Authority that the project will have no significant impact on nature conservation sites.

The project's residual negative impacts during construction and operation are limited and partly offset by the expected modal shift facilitated by the investment.

Under the conditions indicated above, the project is acceptable for EIB financing in environmental and social terms.