

Public

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name: *PANNONIA ONSHORE WIND*
Project Number: *2018-0827*
Country: *Austria*
Project Description: *Construction and operation of two wind farms in Burgenland totalling 165MW of installed capacity. The project partially replaces old wind turbines and partially extends existing wind farms.*

EIA required: yes
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise¹: yes
(details for projects included are provided in section: “EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise”)

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

The project comprises the implementation and operation of two wind farms in Burgenland (Austria), with a total installed capacity of 165 MW²:

- Windpark Pannonia Gols – 26 new turbines of 5.5 MW of installed capacity each;
- Windpark Mönchhof – 4 new turbines of 5.5 MW of installed capacity each.

The project is located inside a wind power development zone that comprises more than 100 wind turbines. It consists of the construction of two new wind farms with 30 wind turbines of 5.5 MW each. It extends four existing neighbouring wind farms by 30 new wind turbines whilst replacing 25 old wind turbines of 2 MW each (repowering) which will be decommissioned prior to the start of the project.

The project makes partly use of existing infrastructure, such as access roads to the project site and grid connections for 50 MW of capacity.

The project is compliant with relevant spatial development plans (as amended) and with regional wind power development plans, notably “Regionales Rahmenkonzept für

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.

² The project's output capacity will be curtailed to 157 MW due to grid restrictions.

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Windkraftanlagen im Nordburgenland (2010)” and “Windparks im Nordburgenland – Masterplan für Repowering (2016)”. The former plan is based upon a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) which is publicly available. The latter plan is the outcome of a consultation process between the federal administration of Burgenland and directly affected municipalities. It takes into consideration aspects of spatial planning, landscape planning, and nature conservation. Results of ornithological monitoring studies have been accounted for. The objective of the Masterplan Repowering is to replace 106 old, existing wind turbines in the project area by 83 modern and new turbine models in a sound manner. In this context, the Masterplan Repowering also aims to widen a local flight corridor for migratory birds by up to 700m.

Wind farms fall under Annex II of Directive 2014/52/EU amending the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU. It is therefore up to the Member State’s competent authority to judge whether an individual wind farm requires an EIA or not, based on criteria defined in Annex III of the EIA Directive. In line with national legislation (UVP Act, 2000), wind farm Pannonia-Gols was screened-in. Following an EIA process including public consultation, a permit was issued in December 2015 by the federal administration of Burgenland. Wind farm Mönchhof was screened-out. Its permit under the Electricity Act of Burgenland (2005) was issued in February 2016 by the municipal administration of Neusiedl am See.

The two permits cover the decommissioning of 25 old wind turbines and the installation of 28 new turbines of the 3 MW class. In February 2019, the promoter requested formally the amendments of both permits, aiming to get consent for the use of 30 turbines of the 5 MW class instead. This amendment process is now ongoing, following § 3a UVP-G 2000, and comprising a full EIA for the entire project scope.

The promoter in collaboration with external experts has produced a comprehensive environmental impact study for both wind farms. The study benefits from high availability of monitoring data in the project area, addresses all relevant risks, accounts for cumulated impacts, and confirms that the project has no significant negative impacts post mitigation.

Industry-practice mitigation measures are proposed to minimise sector-typical risks. The following mitigation measures are proposed to mitigate biodiversity risks in particular:

- **Birds:** It is proposed to establish 15 ha of fallow land and grassland with specific features at a reasonable distance to the project area. The objective is to attract birds of prey (imperial eagles in particular) away from the wind farms and to reduce collision risks as a consequence. In addition, the promoter (after consultation of a relevant NGO) and nature conservation authorities pre-agreed on a strengthened bird monitoring concept. It comprises 5 years of birds collision monitoring relating to the large size turbines of the project plus 3-4 years of birds monitoring in adjacent local flight corridors. In addition, 5 years of birds monitoring is proposed to take place inside a neighbouring SPA (see table below).
- **Bats:** It is proposed to put in place structural improvements of bat habitats in the project area: Implementation of 2.4 ha mixed forest/shelter belts to increase connectivity with adjacent bat habitats; Implementation of 3.6 ha of fallow land that is rich in insect population to attract bats away from turbine areas; Taking numerous trees in an area of 6.7 ha of forest land out of management to increase shelter options for bats. In addition, a specific wind turbine operation regime is pre-agreed amongst the promoter (after consultation of a relevant NGO) and nature conservation authorities: All turbines must be shut off during pre-defined periods of high bat activity, combined with detailed impact monitoring. The operating regime after year one shall be adjusted under consideration of monitoring results.

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- *Melica transsilvanica* (Perlgras): It is proposed to mitigate any project-related impact on this species by appropriately replacing permanently deforested land (ca. 2 ha). Afforestation shall cover a three times bigger area than deforestation and take place nearby and in sites with specific soil conditions to support the re-establishment of local *Melica transsilvanica* species.

The project is located predominantly on intensely used agricultural land and in the vicinity of several protected areas (see table below). Expert studies conclude that the project has no significant negative impacts on the integrity of any protected site.

Protected area (name and side code)	Type	Minimum distance to the project in km
Hutweide Mönchhof	Nature protection area	0.8
Parndorfer Platte - Heideboden (AT1125129)	Natura 2000 (Birds)	0.7
Zurndorfer Eichenwald und Hutweide (AT1102112)	Natura 2000 (Habitat)	2.2
Neusiedler See - Seewinkel	National Park, Ramsar	3.3
Neusiedler See - Nordöstliches Leithagebirge (AT1110137)	Natura 2000 (Habitat and Birds),	4.5
Mosoni-sík (HUFH10004)	Natura 2000 (Birds)	5.1

Public consultation as part of the ongoing EIA process is scheduled to take place during Q3 2019. The permit amendment process is expected to last until Q1 2020.

EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise

The direct CO₂ equivalent emissions of the two wind farms under this operation are negligible.

In accordance with the Bank's current Carbon Footprint methodology it is calculated that based on the avoidance of electricity generation from a combination of existing and new power plants in Austria (75% operating margin and 25% build margin), the total relative effect of the project is a net reduction in CO₂ equivalent emissions by 87 kt CO₂e/yr.

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.

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

The promoter is experienced in implementing and operating wind farms in Austria. It is known to the Bank from operation PUESPOEK WIND POWER (2010-0481).

The promoter and its contractors are deemed to have a good environmental and social management capacity.

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Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the information available and subject to the below loan conditions, the project is acceptable for Bank financing.

- An environmental permit, in-line with the final design of the project, shall be in force with no appeal pending, prior to financial close.
- The promoter shall submit to the Bank final EIA studies (if amended post February 2019).
- The promoter to provide copies of (summary) bird and bat impact monitoring reports to the Bank (reports that would be anyways required under the final permit).

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