

## Environmental and Social Data Sheet

### Overview

Project Name:	TELECOM MALTA BROADBAND EVOLUTION
Project Number:	20180541
Country:	Malta
Project Description:	The project concerns the rollout of a converged fixed-mobile very high capacity (VHC) network throughout Malta. The project comprises the investments linked to the rollout of a FTTH network covering over 70,000 households, investments in mobile capacity upgrade as well as upgrades to the core network and the IT systems.
EIA required:	No
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise <sup>1</sup> :	No

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

### Environmental and Social Assessment

#### Environmental Assessment

Investments in the infrastructure of fixed and mobile telecommunications networks, such as optic fibre networks and mobile base stations, do not fall under Annexes of Directive 2014/52/EU amending the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU and are therefore not subject to a mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment.

Mobile telecommunications systems have limited environmental effects, apart from the visual impact of base station towers and Electromagnetic Field (EMF) radiation. The disturbances during civil works related to the construction of fixed telecommunication systems are mitigated by appropriate measures.

Concerning the "Habitats" Directive 92/43/EEC and related Natura 2000 protection sites, the relevant legislation does not include any provision regarding telecoms infrastructures, since individual schemes are small and not expected to have any significant negative impact.

The promoter will make use of existing infrastructure to the extent possible with the aim of reducing the disturbances during construction. For the access part of the Fibre to the Home (FTTH) component of the project, the use of aerial connections will cause some visual disturbances, although the promoter will benefit from the already available aerial infrastructure to reduce the marginal impact of its new network rollout.

---

<sup>1</sup> 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 CO<sub>2</sub>e/year absolute (gross) or 20,000 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e/year relative (net) – both increases and savings.

Luxembourg, 15 October 2019

## **Other Environmental and Social Aspects**

The mobile component of the project is small (less than 10% of the project costs) and relates mainly to increases of the transmission capacity of existing sites. Regarding the limitation of EMF exposure to the general public, the promoter will adhere to the guidelines set out by the International Commission for Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP), which are the basis for the levels mandated by the Maltese Environmental Health Directorate. EMF is under continuous study by international organizations, and in 2011, the WHO/International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has classified EMF radiation as possibly carcinogenic to humans.

The compliance with the ICNIRP levels is regularly monitored by the regulatory body MCA and is publicly available information<sup>2</sup>. Any areas with high radiation that could be accessible to third parties are cordoned off and clearly signposted with hazard warning signage that include the promoter's contact number for powering down the site in case access is required.

With the swap-out of the existing copper network by the FTTH network rolled out as part of the project, the promoter expects to achieve significant energy savings in its operations.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Investments in fixed and mobile telecommunications networks do not fall under Annexes of Directive 2014/52/EU amending the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU and are therefore not subject to a mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment.

The residual project risks are related to the impact of EMF exposure to the general public, a subject that is under continuous study by international organisations. Hence, the project is considered as acceptable for the Bank's financing.

PJ/SQM/ECSO 01.02.2019

---

<sup>2</sup> [https://mca.org.mt/regulatory/emf-results?field\\_locality\\_value=All&=Apply](https://mca.org.mt/regulatory/emf-results?field_locality_value=All&=Apply)