

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	TISZA FLOOD PLAIN (FL20150006)
Project Number:	2020-0587
Country:	Hungary
Project Description:	The Tisza Flood Plain project affects 62.21 km of embankments on the right bank and 53.25 km on the left bank of the Tisza river and involves a combination of measures of reconstruction of embankments of nature protections, improvements to summer and natural levees as well as river training interventions and improvements of flow within the flood conveyance zone
EIA required:	yes
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise ¹ :	no

Environmental and Social Assessment

The project is one allocation under the Cohesion Fund Framework Loan IV (FL 20050006). This Framework Loan provides co-financing for priority investments in Hungary under the Transport and Energy & Environment Operational Programmes in the EU programming period of 2014-2020. The project is located on the Tisza river between the cities of Szolnok and Kisköre. Its main objective is to improve the conveyance capacity of the Tisza river and thus to enhance flood protection in the affected areas along this section of the river.

The project is part of Hungary's so-called Improved Vásárhelyi Plan (IVP), which is a plan for managing flood risk in the Tisza River valley. The IVP is an integral part of the National Flood Risk Management Plan. The objectives of the IVP are in compliance with the EU Floods Directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risks, in particular by applying the river basin approach and the concept of utilising natural floodplains combined with flood protection measures.

The project is included in the Energy & Environment Operational Programme of the country, and in particular, the project's objectives are consistent with the guidelines under "*Thematic Objective 5: Promoting adaptation to climate change, risk prevention and management*" and under this Objective, with the "*Priority Axis I: Adaptation to the effects of climate change*".

¹ Only projects that meet the scope of the Carbon Footprint Exercise, as defined in the EIB 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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The promoter of the project is the consortium of the National Water Management Directorate (OVF) and its regional office, the Central Tisza Region Directorate of Water Management (KÖTIVIZIG). These entities are both part of the Hungarian Ministry of Interior, and are both responsible for river management including flood protection measures.

Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment

The National River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) 2016-2021 and Flood Risk Management Plan (FRMP), of which this project is part of, have been subject to Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) in 2015. The National RBMP taking into account the conclusions of the SEA has been approved by Government Resolution No. 1155/2016. (III. 31.).

The FRMP and SEA include the concept for improving flood conveyance in the Middle Tisza. The SEA for the FRMP was prepared in 2016. The FRMP taking into account the conclusions of the SEA has been approved by Government Resolution No. 1146/2016. (III.25.)

EIA Directive

In Hungary, the Environmental Impact Assessment Procedure (EIA) falls under the jurisdiction of the Environment and Nature Protection Divisions of the regional (county) or local Government Offices, which are the competent authorities. For this project, the competent authority up to 2010 was Közép-Duna Region Environmental, Nature and Water Inspectorate, and since 2010 it is the Government Office Szolnok District Office Environment and Nature Protection Division.

Screening decision

The project falls under the point 10(f) of Annex II of the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU amended by the 2014/52/EU, transposed in Hungary according to the Government Decree 314/2005. (XII.25.). Therefore, the project was subject to a screening process. As a result according to the screening decision issued by the Competent Authority on 31 July 2008, the project components for the rehabilitation of the flood conveyance routes, which involved mainly forestry interventions, were screened in requiring a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to be performed, while other project components, mainly water-based interventions, were screened out.

Due to the location of the project, transboundary impacts were not considered at the screening stage.

EIA Process

The EIA procedure was initiated on 28 December 2016 and it was completed on 24 November 2017 with the Environmental Permit issued by the Competent Authority (1st Environmental Permit).

Following the issue of the permit, an appeal by World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Hungarian Foundation was submitted. The concerns raised in the appeal by WWF Hungary against the 1st Environmental Permit were addressed by a subsequent review. As a result, the Appeal Authority, the Pest County Government Office, issued a 2nd Environmental Permit on 16 February 2018, modifying the first permit on several points and mainly focusing on stricter

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monitoring requirements for protected species. The second permit is to be read in conjunction with the 1st Environmental Permit and the water construction permit.

No other appeals were raised regarding the issued Environmental Permits.

Natura 2000 sites

The project is located within the Special Protection Area (SPA) Middle Tisza (HUHN10004) and in the Site of Community Importance (SCI) Middle Tisza (HUHN20015) Natura 2000 sites with a total area in excess of 4,000 ha. Out of this area affected by the project, 3179 ha also belong to the Middle Tisza Landscape Protection District.

The Appropriate Assessment (AA) was carried out during the period 2016-2018 and it was fully integrated into the EIA procedure, both for the 1st and 2nd Environmental Permit procedures. The AA was applied to all screened-in components of the proposed project. Based on AA the competent authorities, in line with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, allowed the project to be implemented subject to prevention and mitigation measures and conditions, which were prescribed to ensure that the project was not likely to have adverse impacts on the respective Natura 2000 sites.

Mitigation Measures

The EIA concluded that during the construction and maintenance phase, the expected impacts are not significant and thus accepted as tolerable regarding the following environmental elements: air, surface and subsurface waters, soil and waste management, noise and vibrations. On the other hand, both EIA and AA identified negative impacts on affected forests and nature conservation areas.

Therefore, both 1st and 2nd environmental permits specified a range of environmental prevention and mitigation measures to be applied, including specific measures on forestry interventions and nature conservation. The project scope has been modified by the promoter in order to fully integrate these measures and conditions into the design and implementation. Approximately 15% of the project costs are dedicated to implementation of environmental prevention and mitigation measures, including but not limited to seasonal timing of works where protected species are identified and for protection of nesting birds, limits to reduction in overall tree canopy cover and consideration of soil shadowing, protection of indigenous species when clearing scrub and professional supervision of all plantation works.

Monitoring and supervision of the implementation of the measures are entrusted with the Competent Authority.

Climate Change

The project contributes to the Bank's priority transversal objective of Climate Action Adaptation. The flood protection measures to be implemented by the project (e.g. removal of summer dykes, flood plain landscaping, relocation of dykes) will have a net positive impact in terms of reduced peak flood levels, which leads to increased resilience of the protected assets to floods.

The project has been assessed for Paris alignment and is considered to be aligned both against low carbon and resilience goals against the policies set out in the EIB Climate Bank Roadmap.

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Social Assessment

The project will provide enhanced river flood protection to a population at flood risk of almost 125,000 inhabitants that reside in settlements either directly exposed to river flood risk or in indirectly affected ones. In addition, the project prevents from the adverse impacts to economic development that can be caused by flood events. The flood protection provided by the project can be seen as potential catalyst to further stimulate economic development and could assist in enhancing the capacity of the region to retain its population base.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

Public consultation was carried out at the relevant stages of the EIA procedure. The decisions were published on the respective websites of the competent authorities and the beneficiary. In addition, announcements were placed at the premises of municipalities impacted by the project.

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

The Project will not produce any Transboundary impact.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The project will contribute significantly to implementation of the requirements of the Floods Directive. By attenuating flood peaks, the project will also provide significantly enhanced flood protection to an estimated population of 125,000 inhabitants.

The foreseen mitigation measures, as well as the monitoring regime in place by the competent authorities, are considered to be robust enough to ensure impacts on forests and nature conservation areas to remain minor.

The Promoter will undertake to follow all the prescribed environmental prevention and mitigation measures and conditions. These measures as well as the monitoring regime in place by the competent authorities, appear to be sufficiently robust to ensure that impacts into the environment will be minimal.

In addition to the comprehensive conditions included in the Finance Contract of the parent operation no additional E&S conditions are required.

The project is therefore acceptable for EIB financing in environmental and social terms.