

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name: Vilnius Water and Wastewater
Project Number: 2020-0517
Country: Lithuania
Project Description: multi-annual investment program in water and sanitation in the City of Vilnius.

EIA required: This is an investment programme made up of multiple schemes. Some of them might require an EIA under Annex II of the EIA Directive 2014/52/EC amending Directive 2011/92/EC

Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise¹: yes

Environmental and Social Assessment

The proposed investment will focus on the upgrade of the 1970s Vilnius wastewater treatment plant (WWTP), Svencionys WWTP and rehabilitation of key sections of the water and wastewater networks. Once the upgrade works are completed, the plant will be capable of treating 514,000 p.e. and will comply with the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC) and HELCOM² recommendations for WWTP's effluent (recommendation 28E/5, HELCOM).

The Promoter of this project is Vilniaus Vandenyys (VV).

Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) procedure

The investment is geared toward improving the treatment performance of the existing wastewater treatment plant, and its ancillary structures, bringing about positive environmental impacts. Compliance with the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC), the EIA

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.

² HELCOM – Helsinki Convention, which regulates the protection of the Baltic Sea from all sources of pollution, specifically for Phosphorous (0.5 mg/l) and Nitrogen Removal (10 mg/l)

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Directive (2014/52/EC) amending the EIA Directive 2011/92/EC, and the Habitats (92/43/EEC) and Birds (2009/147/EC) Directives are required.

The sub-project of the rehabilitation of Vilnius WWTP was part of the Modification of the General Plan of the Territory of the Vilnius City Municipality which was subjected to a Strategic Environmental Assessment study conducted by Vilnius Municipality in 2017.

At national level, the Ministry of Environment is the authority responsible for environmental issues, such as knowledge and information management, policy development and compliance monitoring of the national legislation.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedure

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the competent authority for analysing, approving and monitoring of EIAs and its conditions.

The final EIA approval decision (number 1454420778841 on 02/02/2016) for the rehabilitation of Vilnius WWTP was provided to the Bank. The environmental permit was renewed on 2nd October 2020.

Regarding the rehabilitation of Sencionys WWTP, the Promoter has consulted the Competent Authority regarding the requirement for an EIA, who concluded on 26th July 2018 that no EIA is required for the proposed works, because the rehabilitation will occur within the boundaries of the existing site, annual emissions will not exceed statutory limits, the site is not located in the vicinity of Natura 2000 nor protected areas, odour and noise emissions will remain the same as before and will not exceed current limits; there are no protected species in the area, microbial pollution will be minimised as a result of the rehabilitation of the WWTP.

All other project components did not require EIAs.

Appropriate Assessment (AA)

The institution responsible for the organisation of the protection and management of protected areas, the State Protected Areas Service under the Ministry of the Environment, has indicated that the project component of the Vilnius WWTP upgrade does not affect any Natura 2000 areas.

In compliance with the Lithuanian national legislation (Regulations on Determination of Significance of the Effects of Implementation of Plans, Programs and Proposed Economic Activity on the Established or Potential „Natura 2000” Territories (in Lithuanian), the Appropriate Assessment (AA) procedure is integrated in the EIA. According to the AA for the project component of the Vilnius WWTP upgrade, its negative impact on the Natura 2000 sites was assessed to be insignificant, and the authority responsible for the management of these sites (State Protected Areas Service under the Ministry of Environment) gave a favourable opinion.

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Environmental impacts

The project will have significant long-term positive environmental impact on surface waters, by reducing pollution of the receiving waters by outdated sewage treatment facilities, in the Vilnius area.

In addition, the project contributes significantly to continued compliance with the Drinking Water Directive 98/83/EC by rehabilitating the existing water supply system and ensuring safe provision of safe drinking water to the population.

The biogas produced during digestion process will be utilised to produce fuel for vehicles.

Negative impacts to the environment are assessed only as temporary. During construction, temporary impacts to the environment such as noise and dust may occur. In view of preventing and mitigating any impacts associated with the construction phase, the Environmental Permit imposed a number of mitigation measures that will have to be included and followed by the Contractors in the Environmental Management Plans.

Climate Change

The Project is expected to positively contribute towards climate change mitigation. This will be achieved by increase in performance of the current operations including efficient use of resources, reduction of water losses, energy efficiency punctual interventions, sectorisation of networks, improved sludge digestion which in term should contribute towards the reduction of energy requirements on the system, as well as reduction of GHG emissions.

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 Climate Bank Roadmap (CBR).

EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise

Estimated annual emissions of the project in a standard year of operation: – 52 kT CO₂/year absolute (gross) and -21 kT CO₂/year relative (net). These emissions consider the operation of the WWTP and the baseline adopted is considered to be the existing plant and any requirements for wastewater treatment considering improvements.

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

The project is comprised of the rehabilitation of Vilnius WWTP and Svencionys WWTP, as well as some punctual improvements in the water and wastewater networks.

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Overall, the proposed investments in improving access to safe drinking water as well as the investments in the WWTP such as improved quality of treatment, biogas production and improved sludge management will have lasting positive social benefits, including improving the living conditions of the inhabitants of Vilnius and neighbouring areas and thus they will be beneficial for the public health. The works will also contribute to employment creation during construction. No permanent employment is envisaged after project completion.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

In the course of the project preparation, all the screening decisions and the required EIA for the Vilnius WWTP, were made public as required by the applicable Environmental Impact Assessment legislation in Lithuania.

Under the EIA process, on 17, 18 and 21st April 2015, the Promoter informed all stakeholders and the public about the proposed rehabilitation works for the Vilnius WWTP. The general public was informed about the public hearing regarding the presentation of the EIA report, which took place on the 21st September 2015.

Finally on 5th January 2016, the EPA published the EIA information. During the consultation period, no comments were received with respect to the project component.

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

The Promoter currently has ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 accreditation and apply the principles of ISO 31000 regarding Risk Management.

Conclusions and Recommendations

By reducing pollution of the receiving waters by outdated sewage treatment facilities, and improvement in performance of existing network drinking water supply and wastewater collection systems, the project is expected to generate a positive impact on the environment and will contribute to the improvement of living conditions of the inhabitants of the broader area of Vilnius.

All project components covered by the programme will be subject to the Promoter complying with the following requirements:

- The Promoter will be required to act according to the provisions of the relevant EU Directives, including the EIA (2014/52/EC) amending the EIA Directive 2011/92/EC, Habitats (92/43/EEC) and Birds (2009/147/EC) Directives and Drinking Water Directive.
- The promoter will be required to undertake not to allocate Bank funds to project components that require a full EIA until the EIA and/or the necessary nature assessment have been finalised and approved by the relevant



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competent authority. Once any EIA is available, the promoter will provide the Bank with an electronic copy of the EIA, for publication on the EIB website.

- The Promoter undertakes to provide to the Bank, if requested, any decisions issued by the competent authority that screen out project components and the main reasons for not requiring EIA with the reference to the relevant criteria listed in Annex III of the EIA Directive.

Considered the above, the Project is acceptable for EIB financing from an environmental and social point of view.