



Luxembourg, 18 July 2023

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	Polish Earth Observation Satellite Constellation
Project Number:	2022-0990
Country:	Poland
Project Description:	The project concerns the design, the assembly, the testing, and the launch of two earth observation satellites designed for capturing high-resolution satellite imagery. The project also includes two redundant ground stations for the control of the satellites and the image download. The satellite images will be jointly used by the Polish Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Interior and also civil governmental agencies such as the Polish Space Agency. The current planning foresees the operational readiness of the two satellites by 2028.
EIA required:	No
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise ¹ :	No
(details for projects included are provided in section: "EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise")	

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

Many Polish agencies are using satellite imagery since a long time and gradually the number of use cases is growing through the help of the European Copernicus programme. With this first own high resolution satellite constellation, the country will have much better capabilities to profit from such improved imagery for crisis management, forest / crop monitoring, climate change monitoring and also defence purposes.

Once in place, the Polish state will become the operator and the user of the two satellites. The design, manufacturing and the launch will be done by a well-known and reputable European supplier. For the operation, a combination of existing and new built office type of facilities will be required. These facilities will be placed within existing military areas.

Such project activities are not listed under the Annexes of the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU amended by the EU Directive 2014/52/EU. The construction works will be carried out inside military areas in Poland and are subject to the normal permitting procedures. In addition antenna dishes will be erected on top or beside of the two ground station facilities. Their potential negative effect is considered non-significant.

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 residual environmental risk is non-significant and it relates mostly to the satellite launch and the decommissioning after their end-of-life. While the launch will be handled by a very experienced European service provider, the satellite decommissioning is governed by international law, which foresees for Low Earth Orbit satellites a destruction through a re-entry into the atmosphere and its burning.

EIB Paris Alignment for Counterparties (PATH) Framework

The borrower, BGK, is a National Promotional Institution. Pursuant to the PATH framework, EIB will seek to exchange on Paris alignment practices, including on disclosures.

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

Using satellites to scan the Earth's surface reveals plenty of information that is difficult or impossible to see from the ground. From their high point above the earth, satellites can collect data on the land, ocean and ice caps to monitor the changing environment and support responses to natural disasters. As such images are acquired continuously, they help to better understand the environment and to protect it for the future. In addition, Earth Observation satellites remain in place for long periods of time, they can highlight environmental changes occurring gradually.

Many different Polish agencies are currently making use of satellite imagery, however such high resolution data is not easily available. While low resolution data is widely and free of charge available, the cost of high resolution data is enormous and beyond the budgetary means of many agencies. Therefore, the purchase of such own satellites will give a boost to the Polish capabilities and help the different agencies to better understand climate change with a focus on the Polish territory.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The project is composed of Earth Observation satellites complemented by related ground-station installations. Its residual environmental impact will be non-significant as the ground segment facilities represent office type of facilities within military areas. Furthermore, the satellite decommissioning at the end of the lifetime will be done in accordance with international space law through the burning in the atmosphere.

In case an EIA will be requested for facilities included in the project, the Promoter shall make available to the Bank the supporting documents of the EIA procedure requested according to the case. The Bank will also request a copy of the construction permit for the new site.

Considering the above, the project is acceptable for the Bank's financing in environmental and social terms.