

Luxembourg, 4 September 2024

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	BREITBAND KAERNTEN
Project Number:	2024-0153
Country:	Austria
Project Description:	Roll-out of public FFTH network in the Southern part of Austria.
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

The objective of the project is to provide the passive infrastructure to cover around 20 k households (HHs) of 40 municipalities (in Carinthia, Austria) located in areas where private operators are not providing Very High Capacity (VHC) services due to lack of commercial interest. The project's scope relates to the construction of the passive network infrastructure comprising the underground fibre network and the points of presence (PoP) to host the active equipment.

Investments in fixed telecommunication projects (including civil works investments for fibre roll-out and transmission systems) are not listed in Annex I or II of the EIA Directive 2014/52/EU, amending EIA Directive 2011/92/EU. Fixed telecommunications systems have minor environmental effects, apart from some disturbances during work execution, which can be mitigated by appropriate measures.

In order to minimize the impact during construction, the promoter will make use of existing infrastructure to the possible extent. The network will be deployed in underground ducts and manholes along existing roads in the project's residential areas, where small street cabinets will be located.

Telecommunication networks are basic components to digitalise the economy. Therefore, they are essential to enable the deployment of low-carbon or decarbonised technologies, leading to significant sustainability benefits across the national economy and fulfil the Paris Alignment criteria so as set out in the EIB CBR (Climate Bank Roadmap).

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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EIB Paris Alignment for Counterparties (PATH) Framework

The counterpart is in scope but it is screened out of the PATH Framework because it is neither a high-emitting nor a highly-vulnerable entity.

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

The expansion of the fibre network will contribute to increase the Fibre to the Home (FTTH) competition and allow for more affordable and better high-speed broadband products. Investments in the FTTH significantly improve the quality of broadband services, with widely reported positive social benefits such as enabling teleworking solutions thereby reducing the need for travel with reduced CO₂ emissions, enabling the use of cloud computing solutions with energy efficiency gains, the delivery of e-health and tele-education services to underserved regions, and supporting regional development through the development of a sufficient ICT network.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Investments in fixed telecommunications projects have limited environmental effects, apart from minor disturbances during work execution, which can be mitigated by implementing appropriate measures.

Investments in FTTH roll-out significantly improve the quality of broadband services, with widely reported positive social benefits.

In light of the above, the project has been found to be acceptable for EIB financing in environmental and social terms.