

Luxembourg, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024

## Environmental and Social Data Sheet<sup>1</sup>

### Overview

Project Name:	<i>BALTYK II &amp; BALTYK III OFFSHORE</i>
Project Number:	2024-0325
Country:	<i>Poland</i>
Project Description:	<i>Design, implementation and operation of two large-scale, fixed-bottom offshore windfarms (Baltyk II and Baltyk III) with a capacity of 720 MW each, located off the Ustka-Leba coast of Northern Poland</i>
EIA required:	yes
Invest EU sustainability proofing required	yes
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise:	yes

### Environmental and Social Assessment

The project is part of the national ambition to develop significant offshore wind capacity to be located in the Polish Exclusive Economic Zone of the Baltic Sea. Such capacity is deemed to be a key element in the national energy transition, contributing to the strengthening of the country's energy security, and helping to tackle air pollution.

The project concerns two large-scale, fixed-bottom offshore wind farms – Baltyk II and Baltyk III - with an installed capacity of 720 MW each, for a total of 1,440 MW. Both offshore wind farms will be located in the Polish Economic Exclusive Zone of the Baltic Sea, at a distance between 22 and 36 km from the shore and between 27 and 40 km from the port of Łeba. It will comprise the development, construction and operation of both wind farms. The project's scope will include electrical equipment and associated maritime and civil works to facilitate grid interconnection to the onshore high voltage network. The Projects' grid connection infrastructure will comprise 66 kV array cables connecting the turbines to two offshore 66/220 kV substations (one for each project), 220 kV export cables from the offshore to the onshore 220/400 kV substation in the area of Pęplino, and high voltage ("HV") cables to the power transmission system operator's 400kV station located in Słupsk-Wierzbięcino. The total length of offshore export cables will be 60.5 km offshore for Baltyk II and 67.5 km offshore for Baltyk III, while the length of the onshore cables (which are partly underground and partly overhead) will be 8 km for both Projects.

#### Environmental Assessment

Wind farms adhere to the national legislation having transposed Annex II of Directive 2014/52/EU amending Directive 2011/92/EU, thereby leaving it to the competent authority to determine if an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is mandatory. Given the project size, the competent authority required an EIA to be conducted. Three separate EIAs were carried out, one for each wind farm and one for the common cable route to shore and onshore part of the grid connection infrastructure (the latter also adhering to Annex II of Directive 2014/52/EU amending Directive 2011/92/EU). The cumulative impact of the wind farms, the connection

<sup>1</sup> The information contained in the document reflects the requirement related to the environmental, social and climate information to be provided to Investment Committee as required by the Invest EU Regulation and it represents the equivalent of the information required in the template of the InvestEU sustainability proofing summary



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infrastructure, as well as the nearby existing and planned offshore wind projects was also analysed.

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was carried out as part of the latest Polish Maritime Spatial Planning that was concluded in 2019; this informed the decision of considering the project area as suitable for potential offshore wind development. The initial environmental decisions were issued by the competent authority for the offshore wind farms in March 2017 and July 2016 respectively for Bałtyk II and Bałtyk III. Amended applications were subsequently submitted, reflecting changed project configurations with larger rotors (up to 250m), but reduced number of turbines. The new environmental decisions were issued by the competent authority in Oct 2021 and Nov 2022 respectively for Bałtyk II and Bałtyk III. The separate environmental decision covering the common cable route to shore and onshore part of the grid connection infrastructure were issued in Nov 2023, with supplementary decision documents (due to the need of adding some details to the environmental decision from Nov 2023) issued in Dec 2023. Each submission of initial and amended applications for environmental decisions was subject to an EIA process supported by an EIA report which included a comprehensive set of environmental studies. As part of the procedure, the required approvals and opinions were obtained from consulting authorities. Public participation was ensured including the possibility of reviewing the EIA documentation and submitting comments within the statutory timeline (both for original and amended decision).

Both offshore wind farms will be located outside of any protected area, including Natura 2000 sites. The offshore grid connection will cross two Natura 2000 sites, namely Ławica Słupska (PLC990001) for a total length of approx. 32 km, and Przybrzeżne wody Bałtyku (PLB990002) for a total length of approx. 19 km. Additionally, over 6 km away from the grid connection infrastructure there is a marine part of the Natura 2000 site Ostoja Słowińska (PLH220023) and the Słowiński National Park. The onshore part of the grid connection and substation are located predominantly within agricultural and forested areas, with the underground cable crossing the Protected Landscape Area of the Coastal Belt west of Ustka, where forested areas dominate.

The environmental studies of the EIA reports have in view of the competent authorities satisfactorily assessed potential impacts by the projects on the sea floor (sediment), water quality, fish populations, marine mammals and benthos organisms. Similarly, residual impacts on human environment and landscape caused by visual obstruction from installing vertical structures in an otherwise horizontally undisturbed environment were part of such assessment.

Further, there were surveys related to the quantity and type of birds using the project area at different times of the year. The impact assessment for birds is comprehensive, detailing the potential barrier impacts and collision risk assessment. Overall, taking all potential impacts into account, moderate impacts on seabirds from noise, vessel activity and a barrier effect are identified during both the construction and operation phases. However, given the vicinity of the site of nature conservation Słupsk Bank (Ławica Słupska, PLC990001) located only 5 km from the edge of the wind farms, which is the overwintering, resting and breeding ground for birds, a 5 km wide migration corridor will be created in the direction of migration of most species of seabirds (northeast - southwest), facilitating their access to these areas. With that mitigation the studies concluded that the projects will not lead to the displacement of bird species habitats within the sites of nature conservation.

Considering underwater noise may cause a significant negative impact on protected marine organisms (fish and mammals), a noise reduction system will be implemented during the execution of the works. The fundamental condition determining the selection of specific noise reduction solutions will be not to exceed the temporary threshold values for fish and marine mammals at the boundary of the nearest protected areas. Further, the permits require to respect a yearly "banned period" for piling works, which are the noisiest. Other offshore installation activities such as topside offshore substation, export cables, turbine installation are allowed to continue throughout the period.

The studies investigated potential significant impacts on marine protected areas in the coastal zone and nature conservation sites onshore, including Ławica Słupska (PLC990001),

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Przybrzeżne wody Bałtyku (PLB990002), Ostoja Słowińska (PLH220023), Przymorskie Błota (PLH220024), Jezioro Wicho I Modelskie Wydmy (PLH320068), Dolina Słupi (PLH220052). It was concluded by the competent authorities that the integrity of Natura 2000 sites and other protected areas will not be significantly impacted by the project.

During the construction phase, the project will have impacts on the landscape, including the cultural landscape, due to traffic of vessels, for the construction, transport of structural components, surveys, and supervision. The impacts on the landscape will be short-term, temporary, and will depend on how long an observer can see the construction and the transported components. Hence, the impact is assessed as negligible, although it varies depending on the distance of an observer from the wind farm and the type of the landscape affected. The impact is also negligible during the operational phase, due to the distance of the wind farms from shore.

### **Climate Assessment**

The project contributes to climate change mitigation objectives. The project has been assessed for Paris alignment and is considered to be aligned for both low carbon and resilience goals of the Bank's relevant policies. With appropriate mitigation measures to be introduced by the promoter, residual risks from physical climate hazards are deemed low.

### **EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise**

The direct CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from an offshore wind farm are deemed negligible. In accordance with the Bank's current Carbon Footprint methodology, it is calculated that based on the avoidance of electricity generation from a combination of existing and new power plants in Poland, the total relative effect of the project is a net reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions by approximately 3718 kt/year.

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**

No vulnerable groups are present in the area of influence of the project. There are no instances of physical displacement within the project area, and only some instances of expropriation of agricultural land that is being dealt with in accordance with Polish legislation.

### **Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement**

Public consultations have been conducted by the relevant authorities in the context of the EIA processes. The competent authorities have involved the public by sharing the information on submission of the EIA reports together with the information on the possibility to review the EIA reports and on the right to submit comments and requests.

Substantial public consultation and stakeholders' engagement activities were also carried out by the promoters throughout the long development phase of the project.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The EIA studies describe the potential environmental impacts of the project in a comprehensive and exhaustive manner. They indicate that the project does not cause significant negative impacts on the environment, neither on its own nor considering the cumulative impact of all nearby existing and planned projects. This also applies to the impact on the nearby Natura 2000 Ecological Network sites. The studies conclude that the planned project is in line with the expectations of national and regional policies and strategies, in particular regarding environmental protection (reduction of pollution emissions), sustainable development (the use of renewable energy sources) and energy security (independence from external energy sources) and is in line with the environmental objectives of the binding strategic and planning documents analysed.



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Considering that the EIA processes are concluded and that the project is expected to have minor environmental residual impacts, no further sustainability proofing is needed for the environmental dimension. For the climate dimension, considering the aforementioned climate assessment and the outcome of the carbon footprint exercise, the sustainability proofing is completed with no further actions required. The social impacts of the project are expected to be low, requiring no further proofing for the social dimension..

Based on the information made available by the promoter, and with appropriate mitigations as indicated within the EIAs and permits, it is concluded that the project is acceptable in environmental and social terms for Bank financing.