

## Environmental and Social Data Sheet

### Overview

Project Name: *ENERGIEPARK BRUCK WIND POWER*  
 Project Number: *2012-0061*  
 Country: *Austria*  
 Project Description: *Construction and operation of 7 onshore wind parks for a total capacity of 150 MW located in the Austrian Federal State of Lower Austria.*

EIA required: yes

*An EIA is pursued for 6 out of the 7 wind farms. For 4 wind farms the NTS is available. For 2 wind farms receipt of the NTS will be a disbursement condition. All NTS will eventually be published on EIB website.*

Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise<sup>1</sup>: yes

(details for projects included are provided in section: "EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise")

### Summary of Environmental and Social Assessment, including key issues and overall conclusion and recommendation

Generally, wind farms generate electricity with significantly lower environmental impacts than conventional power plants based on the use of fossil or nuclear fuels.

The wind farms under this operation are neither inside nor immediately adjacent to Natura 2000 sites. They are located on agricultural land with minor loss of agricultural area.

Wind farms fall under Annex II of the EIA Directive 84/337/EC (as amended by Directives 97/11/EC and 2003/35/EC). Therefore they can be subject to an EIA on a case by case basis decision or defined criteria set by the competent authority (the provincial government). Six out of the seven proposed wind farms under this operation are (or will be) screened-in and follow an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedure according to the Austrian Federal EIA Act (UVP-Gesetz). Based upon the positive outcomes of site-specific EIAs, including public consultation, four wind farms have already obtained their environmental permits (Bad Deutsch-Altenburg Carnuntum, Haadfeld, Höflein Ost, Rohrau). Three wind farms will still undergo their environmental authorisation process (Hof, Seibersdorf, Au), two of them including an EIA procedure. **It is proposed that an environmental impact assessment including non-technical summary (UVE, if applicable) and environmental permits, satisfactory to the Bank, is made conditional for disbursement related to these latter schemes.**

The four permits received comprise comprehensive sets of mitigation and compensation obligations in order to ensure a socially and environmentally sound construction and operation period for the wind farms. Minimum distances between turbines and residential areas are respected. Negative impacts on soil, ground water, and cultural heritage during construction are mitigated. A residual risk during construction relates to noise emissions. During operation, sound and flicker/shadow effects as well as icing risks are mitigated through appropriate measures with minor residual impacts remaining. Further residual risks during operation relate to collisions of birds and bats with the turbines as well as visual impacts. Potential impacts on birds are considered non-significant after impact assessment as the project sites are neither a sensitive bird habitat nor close to a migration route. Also for bats

<sup>1</sup> Only projects that meet the scope of the Pilot Exercise, as defined in the EIB draft Carbon Footprint Methodologies, are included, provided estimated emissions exceed the methodology thresholds: above 100,000 tons CO<sub>2</sub>e/year absolute (gross) or 20,000 tons CO<sub>2</sub>e/year relative (net) – both increases and savings.

the impacts are concluded to be non-significant. At two sites (Haadfeld, Rohrau), however, further monitoring of a specific bat type (Abendsegler) is necessary during operation including – if necessary – a plan to reduce turbine operation during sensitive periods in autumn. For three sites (Haadfeld, Höflein Ost, Rohrau) the competent authorities have requested the conversion of 3-4 ha of farmland into fallow land, based on an expert plan, in order to compensate for “non-quantifiable collision risks” with birds and bats. This measure is considered a compensation for residual impacts which are nevertheless at a low level.

Local support for the wind farms appears high. Few appeals have been raised against the schemes and they were all considered in the authorisation process. Private people from the project areas participate in the financing of the wind farm projects as limited partners.

In summary, this operation is considered acceptable for Bank financing under environmental and social aspects with conditions.

## **Environmental and Social Assessment**

### **Environmental Assessment**

The wind farms are located in two wind farm development areas (site I and site II). The schemes Bad Deutsch-Altenburg Carnuntum, Höflein Ost, Rohau and Haadfeld are located in site I which comprises around 100 wind turbines in total. The wind farms Hof, Seibersdorf and Au are located in site II which only consists of these three wind farms (17 turbines).

All sites underwent (or will undergo) a rezoning process, including public consultation, in order to allow for the wind farm projects to proceed.

Screening-decisions are made on federal-state level. The Austrian UVP Act defines criteria for screening decisions. Wind farm development below 20 MW of installed capacity and with less than 20 turbines are screened out unless they are located in an area of conservation interest. The Hof scheme is the first one to be implemented on site II and it was screened out in line with this regulation. All other wind farms under this operation, due to their individual size or under consideration of adjacent wind farms, are screened in.

Environmental Impact Studies (EIS) are prepared by an experienced technical planner. Ornithological and nature conservation impact analyses are carried out by external specialist.. The EIS are passed to the competent authority on federal state level. The promoter has to pursue public consultation (like polls etc.). The Competent authority analyses the documentation and requests further information if necessary.

After operation, the wind farms must be decommissioned. This is requested by both, permits and land lease contracts. Corresponding provisions are made.

### **EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise**

The direct CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of the 7 schemes under this investment programme are negligible.

In accordance with the Bank’s Carbon Footprint methodology it is calculated that the total relative effect of the seven wind farms is a net reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions by 261 kt CO<sub>2</sub>e/yr. This calculation assumes that 75% of generated electricity substitute power generation in existing fossil fuel based power plants whilst 25% substitute power generation in new gas-fired combined cycle power plants.

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.

## **Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement, where required**

A first public consultation takes place for each scheme during re-zoning. This process is based on a consultation of directly affected and neighbouring municipalities, the public, and the competent authority on federal state level.

The environmental approval process of the projects themselves comprises a second period of broad inter-service and public consultation. For those schemes screened-in, project descriptions and EIS are published for about 6 weeks. During this period everyone can in principle launch an appeal. During a public event appeals are discussed with experts. In the absence of an EIA process (Hof scheme), public consultation is reduced to two weeks.

During the approval process of the Bad Deutsch Altenburg scheme, one private person appealed due to visual impacts. The appeal was withdrawn after a settlement with the promoter was concluded.

During the approval process of two schemes ("Höflein Ost" and "Haadfeld"), an NGO had launched an appeal but it was rejected, as extensively justified, in both cases by the competent authority.

The promoter has already carried out polls at site II. It states that 80% of local public voted in favour of the projected wind farm development.

## **Other Environmental and Social Aspects**

The promoter's business and its shareholders are all based in the project region. They have a natural interest in sound social and environmental project management.

Wind farm operation and maintenance will be carried out by reputable turbine manufacturers for at least 15 years. The pre-selected two manufacturers have a high environmental capacity.