

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	<i>Sofia Municipality Metro Line 3 Stage II</i>
Project Number:	<i>2018-0004</i>
Country:	<i>Bulgaria</i>
Project Description:	<i>An investment loan to Sofia Municipality for the construction of the second stage of Sofia Metro Line 3. The project includes a twin-track metro line approximately 3.8 km in length, 4 metro stations, and a railway stop for connection to the national railway network at the last metro station.</i>
EIA required:	no
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise ¹ :	no

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

Environmental Impact Assessment

The construction of Sofia Metro Line 3 falls under Annex II of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive 2011/92/EU amended by Directive 2014/52/EU. In this case, based on preliminary environmental assessments, the Competent Authorities screened out metro line 3 (Stage 1, 2 and 3) and therefore no full EIA was necessary (Decision No. 10-PR/2013). A second decision (No. 10-PR/2015) was issued to confirm that the changes due to final design in the metro depot and the alignment along Vladimir Vazov boulevard did not have significant impact.

The implementation of the project (Sofia Metro Line 3 Stage II) started at the end of May 2017 and the expected completion date is December 2019.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

The Sofia Metro Line 3 project is strongly linked with the strategic transport plan for Sofia and has been part of the Operational Programme Transport (OPT) under the National Development Plan of the Republic of Bulgaria 2014-2020, for which a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with Directive 2001/42/EC has been completed.

¹ 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 CO₂e/year absolute (gross) or 20,000 tons CO₂e/year relative (net) – both increases and savings.

Luxembourg, 28 September 2018

A SEA was completed for the General Master Plan (GMP) of Sofia in 2009 in line with Directive 2001/42/EC. In 2014 the necessary legal procedures were carried out for a new update of the GMP which included the final adopted alignment of Sofia Metro Line 3. The Ministry of Environment and Waters (MEW), which is the competent authority of the SEA, issued a decision (№ EO-12/201) stating that the modification of the GMP does not require a new environmental assessment.

Impacts

The project is constructed in the urban environment, and stations are mostly built inside existing street corridors. The main impacts identified during construction concern the disposal of waste water, the potential pollution of underground water and of soil and subsoil, emissions of air pollutants and high levels of noise and vibration due to construction activities. These impacts will be mitigated through the use of best construction practices and appropriate technologies. The contractors are also obliged to closely monitor ground settlement, and the buildings above the tunnelling works. Contractors are obliged to take third party insurance to cover any damage caused by the project implementation. There are some listed buildings along the project route and archaeological sites but they are not expected to be adversely impacted by the project. Temporary traffic disruption due to construction in the street right-of-way will be mitigated by a construction and traffic management plan.

There will also be some impacts in the operational phase (noise and vibration). The study (SEA) suggests mitigation measures where necessary and concludes that residual impacts are mostly minor.

Expropriations are limited to approximately one hectare (16 plots) as most of the alignment runs underground and through municipal or state areas.

The project is expected to have an overall positive impact on the environment as a result of the increase in public transport service and quality.

Natura 2000 sites & Biodiversity

The MEW, as Competent Authority issued a Natura 2000 declaration for the entire line 3 which stated that the implementation of the project is not expected to have significant negative effects on Natura 2000 sites (Decision no. SO-35-OS/2010). The screening decisions also confirm that impacts in habitats, populations and habitats of species that are subject to protection are not likely to be impacted.

The distance between the project and the nearest Natura 2000 sites is:

- SPA Vitosha (code BG0000113) – more than 4000 m
- SPA Ribarnitsi Chelopechene (code BG0002114) – more than 4200 m
- SPA Dolni Bogrov - Kazichene (code BG0002004) – more than 3200 m

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

According to the Environmental Protection Act in Bulgaria and pursuant to Article 4(2) of the Bulgarian law, the citizens of Ovcha Kupel, Krasno Selo, Triaditsa, Sredets, Oborishte and Poduene regions were informed by the municipalities about the investment proposal for the construction of metro sections. Various presentations and public debates were conducted in 2011 and the decisions were made public at available places for 14 days. No objections were submitted. Based on these procedures the building permits were issued for the approved projects.

After the last decision issued in 2015 (Decision No. 10-PR/2015), there was again a consultation (June 2016) and no complaints were received.

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Other Environmental and Social Aspects

The project will contribute to environmental sustainability mainly through the decrease of the air pollutants and noise generated by street vehicles as well as through the improvement of inhabitants' safety. The project will also contribute to the reduction of CO₂ and a reduction of approximately 10 kton of CO₂ equivalent per year has been estimated. The project respects the principle of preventive action, this being revealed by the mitigation measures stipulated in the EIA screening out decisions as conditions for project realisation.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Considering the above, and the experience with the promoter in previous operations, the project is acceptable for EIB financing in environmental and social terms.