

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	SLOVAKIA RDP 2014-2020 CO-FINANCING
Project Number:	2015-0520
Country:	Slovakia
Project Description:	Co-financing of selected measures of the Slovakian Rural Development Programme (RDP) for the 2014-2020 programming period.
EIA required:	The project is a multi-scheme Framework Loan, and individual investments may require EIA.
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise ¹ :	no

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

The project is structured as a framework loan from the EIB to the Government of Slovakia, in support of the national public contribution to the financing of the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme (RDP). The project will support nine of the RDP's sixteen measures which deliver support to SMEs, climate action, environmental protection and improved resource efficiency. In addition, measures delivering horizontal support to those measures through the provision of training, advisory services and related activities are also included.

The project is expected to deliver multiple environmental benefits, including reduced risk of flood and forest fire damage, and increased resource and energy efficiency in agricultural, forest and food production. The programme is also expected to contribute to EU environmental policy objectives in the field of soil and water management, biodiversity and climate change.

The Slovakia Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020 aims to invest in and strengthen the country's rural economy, thus improving social and economic prospects for rural communities and reducing rural depopulation.

Slovakia has identified restoration, preservation and enhancement of ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry as the main priority for its 2014-2020 RDP. In addition, (1) promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors; and (2) promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas, are also significant programme priorities.

In the Slovakia – EU Partnership Agreement for the 2014-2020 programming period, the RDP was aligned with Slovakian commitments in the sphere of the environment, primarily its Operational Programme (OP) Quality of Environment, financed by the European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund.

Together, the RDP and Quality of Environment OP share three thematic objectives covering low carbon economy, climate change and resource efficiency and the coordination of the managing authorities in programme implementation will be facilitated by the direct involvement of the Ministry of Environment and National Nature Protection agency on the Monitoring Committee for the RDP.

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.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

During the preparation of the 2014-2020 RDP public consultation and stakeholder engagement were conducted in line with the requirements of Regulation (EU) No 240/2014 on the European code of conduct on partnership in the framework of the European Structural and Investment Funds, meaning engaging relevant public, private and NGO partners at each stage of the planning process, from needs identification through allocation of funding to determining the composition of the monitoring committee for the programme. The process is documented in the text of the RDP itself, as well as in supporting documentation, including the Strategic Environmental Assessment, conducted as part of the RDP preparation.

Stakeholder engagement is an important principle of rural development programming and as such National Rural Networks (NRN) are supported under RDPs to act as interlocutors, increasing awareness among potential final beneficiary groups and providing feedback to managing authorities as part of the RDP monitoring and evaluation process. In Slovakia the NRN is comprised of the representatives of rural communities, local action groups and sector associations, as well as agriculture, food and forestry research and development practitioners.

Public consultation during RDP implementation (i.e. on individual sub-projects) will be required by the promoters of such sub-projects, in conjunction with public authorities, in accordance with EU regulation, as transposed into national legislation.

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

All investments envisaged under the RDP are subject to applicable EU environmental and social regulations. As such, certain activities may require an EIA, subject to the determination of the competent authority, in accordance with the EIA Directive (2011/92/EU, as amended). Furthermore, where an action may affect a Natura 2000 site, as designated according to Habitats or Birds Directives (1992/43/EEC and 2009/147/EC respectively), the Bank would require that the promoter follow the directives' procedures, as transposed into national law.

The Promoter will undertake not to commit any EIB funds to Sub-projects that require an EIA, biodiversity assessment, River Basin Management Plan amendment, Flood Risk Management Plan, biomass sustainability and air quality impact assessment, according to EU and national law without, prior to commitment, receiving consent from the competent authority and having the relevant documentation made available to the public.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Taking into account the disbursement conditions and undertakings associated with the project as well as the capacity of the promoter and the systems in place to manage environmental and social impacts and issues, the project is acceptable for the Bank's financing in environmental and social terms.