Luxembourg, 1 April 2020

Public

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	AUVERGNE NUMERIQUE TRES HAUT DEBIT (2019-0352)
Project Number:	2019-0352
Country:	FRANCE
Project Description:	The project relates to the rollout of a publicly owned fixed Very High Capacity (VHC) broadband network in the Auvergne region, France. The objective of the project is to deploy Fibre to the Home (FTTH) connectivity to households, and Fibre to the Enterprise (FTTE) connectivity services to public sites and enterprises in areas where private operators do not install very high capacity broadband infrastructures due to lack of commercial interest.
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

Investments in fixed telecommunications projects (mainly civil works for fibre rollout) do not fall under the EIA Directive 2014/52/EU amending Directive 2011/92/EC. The related works have limited environmental effects, apart from disturbances during civil work constructions that in this case will mostly consist of digging trenches to lay ducts and install cables mainly alongside roads and which will be mitigated by appropriate measures.

The Régie Auvergne Numérique, a public entity of the Auvergne region, is the authority in charge of this project that will be implemented under an existing PPP contract. The concessionaire is a subsidiary of a very experienced French firm. The main principles the Régie expects to be applied in the implementation are (i) the reuse of existing infrastructure of deployments, (ii) the integration of new constructions in the landscape, (iii) the use of low impact civil works techniques and (iv) the reutilisation of materials.

It will be in the interest of the concessionaire to reduce as much as possible new civil works necessary to deploy the new Fibre to the Home (FTTH) network because of their high cost and organisational and logistic complexity.

[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.

Ducts from utilities are available for the high tiers of the network but new ducts will be necessary for the access to the final user, although cables hung on poles will also be used. Therefore, the main project impact will be the digging for construction of telecom ducts for access network in most cases on the berms of existing roads and streets.

At the time of appraisal, there were no plans to deploy fibre in any Natura 2000 site. Some works would occur however in natural parks alongside roads and under imposed constraints such as landscape integration with the help of hedgerow, painting and wooden siding.

With regard to climate change adaptation, a few optical aggregation nodes also called NRO's (Noeud de Raccordement Optique) that are installed in exposed shelters will be fitted with a heat extractor.

Social Assessment, where applicable

The lack of availability of telecommunications infrastructure in low-density areas is one of the main challenges faced by telecommunication operators willing to deploy their services in such areas. The project relates to the construction of an open access VHC telecommunications infrastructure in areas where private operators are not providing very high-speed broadband services and will therefore support the closing of the digital-divide within the Auvergne region, which is a cohesion region.

The project is expected to have positive environmental and social contributions because highly sophisticated telecommunications networks enable e.g. videoconferencing, telemedicine, e-administration and telework services, all contributing to the reduction of personal transportation needs and therefore of road traffic and pollution. Telecoms networks may also lead to a better management of energy consumption of the public infrastructure in towns, of the businesses and of the households through the connection on-line of powered devices enabling a more intelligent and efficient management of their operations.

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

The concessionaire is a subsidiary of a very experienced French firm with a strong environmental and social management system in place. The firm is certified ISO 14001 (Environmental Management) and ISO 50001 (Energy Management) and has developed an internal strategic plan called "Essentiels 2020" in order to decrease its environmental footprint and make digital an essential lever for the ecological transition. At the social level, the firm undertakes to contribute to the integration of the most vulnerable and to favour youth employment, in collaboration with the Régie Auvergne Numérique.

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Conclusions and Recommendations

Investments in fixed telecommunications projects (mainly civil works for fibre rollout) do not fall under the EIA Directive 2014/52/EU amending Directive 2011/92/EC. The related works have limited environmental effects, apart from disturbances during civil work constructions that in this case will mostly consist of digging trenches to lay ducts and install cables mainly alongside roads and which will be mitigated by appropriate measures.

The project will use as much as possible existing infrastructure to lay the cables and to install the equipment. Respect of environmental legislation was one of the conditions of the tender for the concession and the selected concessionaire have proven its strong capabilities in this domain.

The project is assessed as having positive or neutral residual impacts and it is therefore considered acceptable for the Bank's financing from the environmental and social point of view.

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