

Public

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name: PGE Green Facility I
Project Number: 2017-0880
Country: Poland
Project Description: The Project consists of a portfolio of three wind farms, Starza (44 MW), Rybice (22 MW) and Karnice II (22 MW), located 3-13 km from the Baltic coast in Poland, clustered and connected to the national grid.

EIA required: yes

Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise¹: yes

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

The project consists of three individual wind farms with 22, 11 and 10 turbines. Turbine hub height is 110 m, respectively 125m, resulting in a total height of 160 resp. 175 m. The project further includes a new substation, the extension of an existing substation and about 30 km transmission line (110 kV) for power evacuation. All power lines will be realised as underground cable.

The wind farms are located in West Pomerania near the villages Starza, Rybice and Karnice about 10 to 12 km from each other and at a distance to the Baltic Sea coast line between 3 km and 13 km. The landscape of this coastal area is flat and characterised mainly by agricultural land, with patches of forested land, rows of trees and bushes and small settlements. Small water bodies, drainage channels and ditches show that coastal area originally was wetland and had been drained for cultivation in the past. Remaining wetland areas constitute a major habitat for several bird species, and protection areas had been declared. Most important are the two, partly overlapping, Natura 2000 areas Wybrzeże Trzebiatowskie, (PLB320010) and Trzebiatowsko-Kołobrzegi Pas Nadmorski, PLH320017. In addition, there are few small areas classified as natural valuable by the local municipalities.

¹ Only projects that meet the scope of the Carbon Footprint Exercise, as defined in the EIB draft 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.

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The distance to the Natura 2000 sites is about 2.5 to 5 km for Karnice II and Starza, while the Rybice site is in the direct vicinity of PLB320010. The wind farm areas itself do not include any waterbodies, forests or other spots of particular attractiveness to birds.

The wind farms fall under Annex II of the EIA Directive (2011/92/EU) and have been screened in by the competent authorities, requiring full EIAs including public consultations.

Assessments were carried out individually for the three windfarms. Cumulative effects are considered unlikely due to the distance between the individual projects; however, in Karnice II the existing neighbouring wind farm Karnice I was taken into account. The transmission line crosses the Natura 2000 area, but it will be constructed as underground cable, so that the impact is limited to the construction phase. The EIAs include an assessment of the impact on the Natura 2000 site; separate Appropriate Assessments were not performed.

Bird and bat monitoring was carried out between 2006 and 2008 at all three sites including their surroundings, considering spring and autumn migration, wintering and breeding season. According to the EIAs for Karnice and for Starza the wind farms are at sufficient distance from the main migration routes and will not constitute a barrier to migrating birds. They further conclude that the wind farm areas are not very attractive to birds and bats and have very low populations if compared to the neighbouring Natura 2000 areas. Therefore, the EIAs do not expect a significant negative impact on the integrity of the nearby Natura 2000 sites.

“Environmental Decisions” (permit, which is required for all further building and operating permits) were granted in 2010 (validity extended in 2014) for Karnice II and in 2011 (extended in 2015) for Starza Rybice by the Head of County (as designated competent authority), based on the advice provided by Regional Director of Environmental Protection and District Health Inspector. The environmental decisions contain conditions and obligations for implementation and operation to limit potential negative environmental impact, mainly concerning the obligation for further bird and bat monitoring, limitations for construction during the breeding season, ground water protection and noise monitoring.

At Rybice site, a higher bird population was observed including a small number of individual species listed under Annex I of the Bird Directive. Following the EIA conclusion that did not expect a significant negative impact from the wind farm, the Environmental Decision (Permit) was issued in 2012 (and updated in 2018). However, it included the obligation (amongst other) to conduct additional pre-construction bird and bat monitoring as well as detailed monitoring during the first 5 years of operation.

Monitoring took place between 2013 and 2016 during breeding wintering and migratory seasons at the wind farm site including a 2 km buffer zone and confirmed the presence of few species listed in the Annex I and considered vulnerable to collisions, mainly corncrake and red kite. The monitoring reports provide some recommendation for mitigation measures and further research to limit the risk of negative impact on the avifauna.

The promoter is fully aware of the risk and prepared to implement additional mitigation measures if required, including a temporary shutdown of turbines and measures to reduce the attractiveness of the site to foraging birds or to draw them to alternative site. He has successfully carried out similar activities at some of his operating winds farms, which are located close to or in a protected area.

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EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise

The direct CO₂ equivalent emissions of the wind farms are considered 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 (75% operating margin and 25% build margin), the total relative effect of the project is a net reduction in CO₂ equivalent emissions by 210.1 kt CO₂e/yr.

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.

Social Assessment, where applicable

For the construction of the wind farms, land lease agreements were concluded mainly with private owners for 30 years, leasing rates contain a variable component, which depend on the actual revenues of the project. The land required for the construction of electrical infrastructure was partly purchased by the sponsor.

All land, which falls within the overall wind farm area but not directly used foundation, assembly area or access road, will be further available for agricultural purpose.

The project supports CSR measures in the concerned communities (mainly renovation and refurbishment of community buildings and roads).

No significant social impacts were identified through the EIA.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

EIAs were published in accordance to the Polish regulations. Some comments and complaints were received for Rybice, (and very few for Karnice) mainly related to the proximity of the installation to the Natura 2000 area as well as on the distance to residential buildings, which is between 500m and 600m to the closest turbines. For the existing building permits there is no general distance requirement, however the distance to residential buildings is practically limited by the acceptable noise levels. According to the noise modelling, few turbines may have to operate at a noise-reduced mode during night time to meet the requirements. The turbines and their control system will be adequately equipped.

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

n/a

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Conclusions and Recommendations

The project is fully permitted and in line with the local development plans. Construction works at the sites have been started, respecting the conditions as set out in the environmental and construction permits.

Based on EIA conclusions, the environmental permits confirmed that the projects will not have significant negative impact on the integrity of the nearby Natura 2000 areas. Nevertheless, due to the proximity of an important bird habitat in particular for the Rybice site, particular caution is required.

The project is acceptable for EIB financing under the following conditions:

- *Regular ornithological monitoring shall be carried out as per Environmental Decision; a copies of the monitoring reports to the environmental authorities shall be provided to the EIB (for the first two years of operation)*
- *Promoter should ensure that the project sites remain unattractive to birds and bats (i.e. no left-overs after the harvest)*
- *If considered necessary by the environmental authorities, additional protection measures, such as temporary shutdown, shall be implemented, and the EIB shall be informed on such measures.*
- *Noise monitoring at closest receptors shall be carried out*
- *Turbines shall operate at noise-reduced mode if necessary to keep the noise level below the limits specified in the Polish legislation.*
- *Shadow flicker calculation should be provided to EIB and suitable protection measures should be implemented if flicker intensity/frequency exceeds the commonly accepted limits of 30 h/y.*
- *Within 6 months from the adoption of the final Polish National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) until 2030, the promoter undertakes to deliver to the EIB a report on its corporate decarbonisation plan in light of (i) the most recently adopted NECP and (ii) any further developments in EU long term climate and energy targets.*
- *3 years after the submission of the decarbonisation plan, the promoter undertakes to provide a progress report.*