

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	SOZIALES & NACHHALTIGES WOHNEN NIEDERSACHSEN	
Project Number:	2015 0599	
Country:	Germany	
Project Description:	The loan will finance social housing projects (including asylum seekers and refugee homes) in the German federal state of Lower Saxony.	
EIA required:	This is a multi-scheme Framework Loan operation. Some of the schemes may fall under Annex II of the EIA Directive and have to be screened by the Competent Authority.	
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise ¹ :	no	

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

The proposed Framework Loan (FL) concerns the financing of Lower Saxony's social housing programme, intermediated by NBank, the regional state development bank. The FL comprises the construction of new units and the comprehensive retrofitting of designated units in the years 2015-2019. A significant share of the units will be used to provide temporary accommodation to asylum seekers/refugees recently arrived in the region as a short-term accommodation measure, before being reverted to its long-term use as social housing for the wider population.

Schemes will be located in urbanized areas and included in the local spatial and development plans for which the relevant Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) have been performed in line with the SEA Directive 2001/42/EC.

Relevant environment EU Directives were transposed into national and federal state legislation (SEA Directive, EIA Directive, Birds and Habitats Directive, Energy Performance of Buildings Directive). Individual schemes have to obtain building permission which already takes into account the national environmental legislation. Building permits are issued by the relevant local building authorities.

The environmental impact of the project is expected to be minimal. Moreover, the investments are expected to bring a number of positive effects, including energy savings in buildings as a result of insulation of walls and roofs, changing of windows and other energy efficiency measures.

Given the scope of this operation and sector included (housing), it is likely that most of the schemes will not be subject to full EIA. It is expected that most of them will fall under the Annex II of the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU, requiring the Competent Authority to screen them. In addition, most of the schemes will be located outside protected areas, including Natura 2000.

Social Assessment

The project supports the construction of social housing, which will be partly used as units for temporary accommodation for asylum seekers/refugees in the short-term. The technical standards must adhere to the building standards of German and Lower Saxony social housing legislation and regulation² as to comply with the project's long-term use plan. In addition, social housing is regulated and monitored by local housing authorities (*Wohnraumförderstellen*) in each municipality contributing to guaranteeing adequate technical standards for the accommodation units included in this operation.

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.

² Wohnflächenverordnung (WoFlV - BGBl. I S. 2346) and Niedersächsisches Wohnraumförderungsgesetz (NWofG)

German regulations for asylum seekers and refugees include the legal acts AsylVfG and BVfG³ respectively, regulated by the Federal Bureau for Migration and Refugees in line with the Directive 2003/9/EC laying down minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers⁴. This legal framework guarantees that asylum seekers and refugees have access to accommodation and provision packs, as well as to medical care, education and training during their asylum application. The identification and care of vulnerable groups and persons⁵ with special reception needs (e.g. medical) is taken in to account in the provision of housing.

The affected municipalities employ qualified professional staff (e.g. social workers) providing support to integrate asylum seekers and refugees in the local social context (e.g. schooling for children, administrative, social, medical support, etc.). Additional workforce is expected to be hired, as needed.

The project is expected to contribute to alleviating the situation of the need for affordable housing in Lower Saxony for its low income population as well as contribute to the accommodation of populations of federally allocated refugees and asylum seekers in the state of Lower Saxony.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

Meetings with project-affected people and civil society organisations as well as public administrations, including local authorities will be held as needed to promote harmonious relationships between local communities and asylum seekers/refugees accommodated.

Moreover, with reference to the social housing component, the need for and suitability of social housing (in a given area), will be assessed by the local housing authority and will require approval from the Promoter and the State Ministries before proceeding with the final application process for funds, guaranteeing stakeholder's engagement.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The project's environmental impact at the construction stage will be short-lived and reversible, at a level which is deemed acceptable. The project should bring about environmental benefits and it should contribute to climate change mitigation by reducing the energy consumption through energy efficiency measures implemented in new and retrofitted buildings (e.g. insulation of structures, new heating systems, etc.). The project has no particular residual impacts apart from those expected from construction and retrofitting of buildings.

It is expected that the project will result in a significant number of positive social externalities (e.g. provision of affordable accommodation for low income households, better integration of asylum seekers and refugees in the local social context, etc.), justifying the Bank's involvement.

The Promoter will be required to act according to the provisions of the relevant EU Directives, including SEA (2001/42/EC), EIA (2011/92/EU) and subsequent amendments (e.g.: 2014/52/EU), Habitats (92/43/EEC) and Birds (2009/147/EC) Directives as transposed into national law. The Promoter will be requested to deliver the NTS of EIAs (if applicable) to the Bank before the Bank funds are allocated. In addition, the Promoter has to provide evidence of the compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives (if applicable) before the Bank funds are allocated.

The institutional capacity of the NBank to manage the environmental and social issues is deemed good and therefore, subject to the conditions described above, the project is acceptable for the Bank in environmental and social terms.

³ (BGBl. I S. 1126) and (BGBl. I S. 1902) respectively

⁴ Germany is in the process of incorporating the Directive 2013/32/EU on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection (recast) and the Directive 2013/33/EU laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (recast) into German federal legislation (German national law for the improvement of accommodation, care and assistance for migrant children and young people (BT-Drs. 18/5921)).

⁵ Vulnerable groups and persons such as minors, unaccompanied minors, disabled people, elderly people, pregnant women, single parents with minor children, victims of human trafficking, persons with serious illnesses, persons with mental disorders and persons who have been subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence, such as victims of female genital mutilation.