

Public Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name: GRAZ STRASSENBAHN 2023PLUS
Project Number: 2020-0904
Country: Austria
Project Description: Purchase of new trams and zero emission buses for the City of Graz, charging and refuelling points, modernisation of the existing bus depot as well as construction of new bicycle paths.

EIA required: no

Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise¹: no

(details for projects included are provided in section: "EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise")

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

The project investments implement two key transport strategies of the city of Graz, i) the Masterplan ÖV (Masterplan Public Transport, 2015) and ii) the masterplan for bicycling "RADMOBIL Graz 2030", both do not fall under the scope of the SEA directive, as transposed into national law.

Environmental compliance

The manufacturing of trams and buses will take place in the manufacturers' plants and does not fall within the scope of the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU. Also the construction of cycling tracks does not fall within the scope of the EIA Directive unless it is part of a larger project such as a complete renewal of an existing urban road. In this case, the Promoter confirmed that the project includes only the construction of the bicycle tracks and that any renovation of adjacent road pavements falls outside the scope of the project. The modification of the bus depot by construction of covered stabling area for 25 buses and adding charging and H2-fuelling points within the existing footprint of the depot also falls outside the scope of the EIA directive, amongst other because there is no on-site hydrogen production.

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.

Luxembourg, 25 June 2021

The hydrogen refuelling station (HRS) is expected to be small (well below the 5 ton threshold mentioned in the SEVESO directive) and located inside the existing bus depot. The project scope only includes a pilot with 7 hydrogen buses, and the pilot is executed by not only the Promoter but a wide range of institutions, including the competent authority, ie the Federal Environment Agency (Umweltbundesamt). Environmental and safety permits for the fuelling points are similar to conventional fuelling installations and will be obtained by the Promoter in due time. The project will comply with Directive 2014/94/EU on Alternative Fuel Infrastructure which sets out common technical specifications for such recharging and refuelling point.

The project is located fully inside the urban area and within existing road corridors and does not come close to any Natura 2000 area, which are at minimum 10 km away.

Environmental impacts

Adverse environmental or social impacts due to the project are expected to be minor given the type of works included in the project.

The renewal of the bus fleet will maintain the competitiveness of the public transport services delivered by the Promoter, and thus contribute to maintaining and improving public transport share, and potentially reducing the use of private car in Graz, with the subsequent reduction of air, noise and CO₂ emissions. In addition, the deployment of electric battery and hydrogen technology will also reduce CO₂ emissions of the bus services, in particular because since the Promoter is planning to purchase solely energy drawn from renewable sources for its electric bus operations. It will also reduce local and noise pollution and increase energy efficiency. The Promoter undertakes to use solely green hydrogen from an electrolysis plant in Gabersdorf, where hydrogen is produced from renewable energies.

The trams being replaced will either be scrapped or dismantled. The buses being replaced will also be scrapped if they have reached the end of their life, or sold or given up in the second hand market. In the case of scrapping/dismantling, in the absence of an end of life regulatory framework, the Bank will require the Promoter to inform the Bank how the trams and buses being replaced will be disposed of. In the case of selling buses on the second hand market, the Bank will require the Promoter to inform the Bank on to whom the buses have been sold. A positive environmental impact is expected since the buses will replace even older assets of other public transport operators.

The construction of bicycle paths is expected to promote cycling for all kinds of purposes. There are significant direct health benefits of bicycling, while at the same time cycling contributes to improving the urban air quality and reducing GHG and noise levels due to the expected modal shift. The possible residual adverse impacts during construction are expected to be minor and temporary.

The project investments all contribute to climate mitigation and make the transport system in Graz more resilient to future climate change. Hence, the project is considered Paris aligned and eligible following EIBs Climate Bank Roadmap guidelines.

Environmental capacity of the Project Promoter

The Promoter is an experienced transport operator and its institutional capacity to manage environmental impacts is deemed good. In particular for the deployment of zero emission buses, the Promoter set up a wide consortium with various public and private parties to monitor the environmental performance of the pilot closely. A comprehensive ecological design and life cycle assessment will be carried out.

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Other

Targeted monitoring, data analysis and mathematical modelling will take place to determine on basis of this pilot what mix of electric battery buses and H2 buses suit the requirements of Graz bus operations best, as it is the intention of the city to transition the full bus fleet of Graz in a second phase.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The project will have positive net effects both from a social and an environmental point of view and is thus acceptable for EIB financing from an Environmental and Social standpoint. The Promoter undertakes to scrapped or dismantle buses or trams that become obsolete due to this project in accordance with national and European environmental regulations and will inform the Bank on how this was done.

Under the conditions above, the project complies with relevant EU and national environmental legislation and is acceptable to the Bank from an environmental perspective