

## Environmental and Social Data Sheet

### Overview

Project Name:	<i>Ungheni-Chisinau Gas Pipeline</i>
Project Number:	<i>2013-0294</i>
Country:	<i>Republic of Moldova</i>
Project Description:	Construction of a 120 km natural gas pipeline from Ungheni on the Moldova-Romania border to Chisinau.
EIA required:	yes
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise <sup>1</sup> :	no

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

### Environmental and Social Assessment

#### Environmental Assessment

The project consists of 120 km of high pressure pipelines and the related above ground installations, namely five Block Valve Stations, two Gas Pressure Regulation Stations, and six Pigging Stations. An ESIA was carried out by an international consultant taking into consideration the requirements of the local legislation and the international financial institutions involved in the project.

Impacts caused by the project that can be typically expected are mainly temporary by their nature and relate to construction works (clearing of rights of way, possible increase of erosion of the soil, losses of productivity and pollution of the soil, noise, dust, increased traffic, temporary access restrictions, construction camps and lay-down areas, waste disposal, crossing of highways, rails and water ways). These impacts can usually be effectively managed by appropriate measures during construction in order to avoid unacceptable nuisance to other parties and the public.

Since the construction of a pipeline is a linear work, the project area will be affected only locally and temporarily in its different sections (a few weeks per section). For this reason, no section will be affected for the entire duration of the construction period, which significantly reduces the negative impacts of this phase.

The ESIA studied four different routing alternatives for the pipeline project to determine which of them would bring less negative impacts on the environment, and also on the socio-economic conditions of the citizens. The conclusion of the ESIA concerning the preferred route option was confirmed by the environmental authority. This route implies that less private land will be affected. The preferred route option does not cross any natural reserve. However, it crosses the protective buffer of the Plaiul Fagului Reserve in Nisporeni. During the detailed design phase, the exact routing of the pipeline will be determined and several pre-construction surveys shall be made.

A large portion of the project's area is cultivated agricultural land. Besides ephemeral crops like vegetables and cereals, perennial agricultural plants are cultivated in the area, namely orchards and vineyards. Permanent and temporary losses of land and crops are expected

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<sup>1</sup> 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 CO<sub>2</sub>e/year absolute (gross) or 20,000 tons CO<sub>2</sub>e/year relative (net) – both increases and savings.

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from the project. Vegetation with short roots, like vegetables, cereals and pastures will be replanted after the construction works are finished. Forest trees, orchards and vineyards will not be replanted.

The project does not serve incremental gas demand; it only provides diversification of gas supply routes and sources. Therefore no changes in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are associated with the project.

### **Social Assessment, where applicable**

No buildings will be impacted by the project and no involuntary resettlement is expected. All land owners affected by project will be identified and compensated according to the national law and the international requirements. Local population may be involved in construction works as workforce, which is a positive social impact of the project. Also, there will be a potential market for the local agricultural producers and other small businesses like local shops. The improved access to gas, the security of supply and the improved competition in the gas market are long term positive socio-economic impacts expected from the project.

### **Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement**

The ESIA process involved stakeholder engagement and included comprehensive public consultations. The Ministry of Environment in order to ensure public access to the request prior assessment of the planned activity published the ESIA documentation on its website and published ads in newspapers about the possibility of the public to get acquainted with the ESIA documents, ways for the presentation of comments, suggestions on the topic and participation in public debates. The ESIA documentation was also published for consultation on the websites of the public administration stakeholders (Ministries, Project Implementation Unit, district councils and village councils).

Five public debates were carried out in different district and village councils as well as in Chisinau City Hall. No requests, additions/revisions of documentation on environmental impact assessment to be taken into consideration have been received from the public.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Comprehensive studies within the ESIA to evaluate the environmental and biodiversity aspects of the project have been undertaken and measures to prevent or minimize potential impacts have been identified.

The competent authority approved the ESIA and issued the environmental permit in July 2016. The approval contains certain requirements for construction works, and the Promoter is aware of the need to meet these requirements and to monitor the project's impacts.

The mitigation measures proposed in the ESIA and environmental permit shall be considered within a comprehensive Health, Safety and Environment Plan (HSE Plan) to be developed by the contractor before the construction phase begins.

The promoter undertakes to ensure that the construction contracts, which will be signed with contractors will contain:

- the provisions and conditions set out in ESIA, Environmental Management Plan, environmental and construction permits, in order to appropriately implement required environmental and social mitigation measures;
- the provisions that require contractors to comply with Moldovan labor standards as well as with occupational health and safety standards.



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The promoter undertakes to actively monitor the implementation of the mitigation measures and compliance with labor standards and occupational health and safety standards.

With the conditions in place, the project is acceptable for Bank financing from an environmental standpoint.

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