



Luxembourg, 22 December 2023

Environmental and Social Completion Sheet (ESCS)¹

Overview

Project Name: BEH IGB INTERCONNECTOR
 Project Number: 2014-0376
 Country: Bulgaria
 Project Description: Financing of the Greece-Bulgaria gas interconnector (IGB Interconnector) to provide another direct link between the national natural gas systems of Greece and Bulgaria.

Summary of Environmental and Social Assessment at Completion

EIB notes the following Environmental and Social performance and key outcomes at Project Completion.

The Project consisted of the construction of a 182 km cross-border bidirectional pipeline between the natural gas systems of Greece and Bulgaria, including a connection to the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP). The interconnector Greece-Bulgaria (IGB) is a key contributor to the N-1 security of supply objective² for Bulgaria and it allows diversification of supply routes and sources, market integration and potential price reduction on gas imports.

The Project fell under Annex I of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive 2011/92/EU). An EIA for each of the pipeline sections in the two countries was prepared during 2012, as required by the respective national legislation and EU requirements and the development consents were issued in February 2013 (Bulgaria) and in October 2013 (Greece).

During implementation minor changes were introduced to the original scope of works. During construction it was recognised that for the execution of the trenchless crossing by the method of the horizontal directional drilling, under Studen Kladenets dam the use of additional plots of land outside the right of way terrains became necessary. The change in the size of the areas required for the organization of temporary auxiliary site for the implementation of the trenchless crossing was notified to the competent authority (Ministry of Environment and Waters). Based on the conducted screening procedure the competent authority confirmed that this change did not require an EIA. Later during the project implementation an automatic gas regulation station, a block valve and a DN300 connection pipeline to the Bulgarian gas network have been removed from the scope and a short (260 m) rerouting of the pipeline next to an international road was needed. These changes were also notified to the competent authority, which confirmed that these variations did not affect the environmental impact assessment of the project and did not require any further procedures under the national environmental regulation.

The required E&S management plans and systems were developed by the project promoter and its contractors. The various plans were covering among others E&S compliance assurance, social impact management, land acquisition, stakeholder engagement, reinstatement and biodiversity monitoring, including identification of detailed actions for the bio-restoration of non-critical and critical habitats, health and safety management, water crossing management, waste management, as well as cultural heritage management.

¹ The template is for ILs and FLs

² With Regulation 994/2010, the N-1 rule stipulates that Member States shall ensure the continuity of supply even if any major supply of the country were suddenly interrupted.



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As requested by the EIB an independent international consultant was recruited, to conduct environmental and social monitoring of the Project during construction and operations. The project implementation was monitored against project commitments made in the respective national EIAs, the various management plans as well as against the conditions set out by the EIB for this Project.

During construction and operation of the project an integrated Project Management Structure consisting of experts of the project promoter as well as relevant external and local international experts has been maintained.

The key expected environmental and social impacts from construction and operation of the pipeline have been related to air, water quality, waste and sanitation, noise, erosion and sedimentation, biodiversity, worker and community health and safety as well as economic displacement. These impacts have been managed, avoided, reduced or mitigated through measures identified in the respective EIAs and related management plans, consistent with national legislation, EU requirements, as well as EIB Environmental and Social Standards.

The relevant E&S conditions and undertakings defined during project appraisal have been met and no significant differences have been noted at completion in these aspects.

Summary opinion of Environmental and Social aspects at completion:

EIB is of the opinion based on reports from the promoter and inputs provided by the environmental and social monitoring consultant following their monitoring site visits that the Project has been implemented in line with EIB Environmental and Social Standards, applicable at the time of appraisal.