

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	PL-SK GAS INTERCONNECTOR
Project Number:	2017-0317
Country:	Slovakia
Project Description:	The project consists of the construction and operation of the Slovak section of the Poland-Slovakia bi-directional gas interconnector and modification of the existing compressor station Veľké Kapušany.
EIA required:	yes
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise ¹ :	no

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

The interconnector project consists of a 164 km high pressure gas transmission pipeline with the related above ground installations from Strachocina (PL) to Veľké Kapušany (SK). The Project is an EU Project of Common Interest (PCI 6.2.1) contributing to the implementation of the strategic energy infrastructure priority corridors. Enhancement of the interconnection capacity of the Slovak transmission system includes the Slovak section of the Poland-Slovakia bi-directional gas interconnector and modification of the existing compressor station Veľké Kapušany. The EIB has been requested to finance the section in Slovakia comprising 103 km of pipeline and the Veľké Kapušany compressor station modification.

In Slovakia a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was prepared for the energy industry programme, which includes the Poland-Slovakia interconnector.

For the Poland - Slovakia Gas Interconnector, in response to the Ministry of Environment SK letter, dated November 2014 relating to the Notice in accordance with the Espoo Convention, the Directorate General of the Environmental Protection Office PL expressed the requirement to participate in the cross-border assessment of the environmental impacts of the proposed activity "Poland - Slovakia Gas Interconnector" and in particular for the selection of the connection points of the pipeline route from both sides of the border. Cross-border liaison was maintained through meetings attended by the project teams (from Eustream and Gaz-System), representatives of each state nature protection agency, and EIA professionals preparing the EIAs for both the Polish and Slovak parts. Field surveys took place in Q1 and Q2 of 2015 using the same methodology applied on each side of the border. Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) were prepared for both the Polish and Slovak sections of the project.

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.

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For the Slovak section of the gas interconnector, the EIA report, including Appropriate Assessment (AA) study, was prepared by local certified consultants taking into consideration the requirements of the local legislation, which transposes the related EU Directives. The EIA report and the AA study were submitted to the Competent Authority (CA) and a Final Statement of Opinion, addressing stakeholder comments, was issued under Act No. 24/2006 in January 2016. No objections were presented to the Project during the statutory period for public consultation, and the CA provided a Final Decision of approval in September 2017. The assessment included consideration of potential cross-border impacts and the involvement of the Polish competent authority in response to the notification of the project (in November 2014) under the Espoo Convention. For the Polish section, the report on the environmental impact was published in October 2016, public consultation took place from 27 January 2017 to 16 February 2017, and the environmental decision was published by the regional environmental authority on 28 April 2017. However, due to an appeal to the environmental decision in Poland, the documents are currently under review by the national environmental authority.

Impacts that can be typically expected are mainly temporary by their nature and relate to the period of construction works (clearing of rights of way, 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 mitigation measures 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 linear section will be affected for the entire duration of the construction period, which significantly reduces the negative impacts of this phase. The compressor station is to be constructed at an existing installation and requires a small expansion of the site for the new facilities.

A large portion of the project's area is cultivated agricultural land. Permanent and temporary losses of land and crops are expected from the project. Vegetation with short roots, like vegetables, cereals and pastures will be replanted after the construction works are finished. Forest trees and orchards cannot be replanted on the pipeline. For loss of trees and vegetation, the project is to apply compensation according to the applicable Act.

In Slovakia, the pipeline route intersects six Natura 2000 areas and passes in vicinity of three other Natura 2000 sites. The Appropriate Assessment evaluated six route alternatives to identify the option that would minimise potential environmental impacts. For the above ground installations, two block valve stations and the metering station will be located in two Special Protection Areas. Having assessed the floristic and faunistic data of the project route, the proposed monitoring of nature protection interests is to be undertaken during the construction period and no less than 5 years after its completion, including the environmental supervision during the construction of the gas pipeline. In Poland, the pipeline intersects 3 special areas of conservation and special protection areas. The Appropriate Assessment evaluated route alternatives to identify the option that would minimise potential environmental impacts. The route was selected in order to minimize the impacts on these areas.

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Social Assessment, where applicable

The main social impacts relate to the losses incurred by the set easements and protection area of the pipeline, including loss of crops and cut forest. All land owners affected by the project will be identified and compensated according to the national law and the international requirements.

No involuntary resettlement is expected due to the project.

The Promoter is responsible for the implementation of environmental, social and safety management for the project and ensuring that these aspects are compliant with relevant Slovakian legislation and liaison with the competent authority.

The project is expected to provide short term positive socio-economic impacts in the form of temporary employment opportunities. In the longer term, improved access to gas, security of supply and improved competition in the gas market are positive impacts.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

The EIA and Appropriate Assessment process involved stakeholder engagement and included comprehensive public consultations. In accordance with Section 34 of the EIA Act, four public consultation meetings were held in September 2015. All relevant EIA documents regarding the Interconnector Poland-Slovakia were made available for public consultation.

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

The Promoter implements policies for Quality, Environment and Health and Safety and is accredited to meet the standards of ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and OSHAS 18001 which are to be implemented with the project. The site visit to a Promoter facility demonstrated the appropriate implementation of health, safety, security and environmental standards.

Conclusions and Recommendations

EIAs were prepared separately for the Polish and Slovak sections of the interconnector with potential cross-border impacts included in the EIA for the Slovak section.

With regard to the Slovak section of the interconnector, for which EIB has been requested to finance, the EIA and the Appropriate Assessment conclude that the Project will have limited or no impact, including Natura 2000 sites crossed by or located in the vicinity of the pipeline. If the proposed mitigation and reinstatement measures are fully implemented no residual impacts are expected.

The following environmental related conditions have to be fulfilled.

- The Promoter undertakes that the mitigation measures outlined in the EIA, appropriate assessment, Form A/B, environmental and construction permits will be fulfilled and complied with in all respects as per conditions. The compliance with those requirements should be confirmed in both the Project Progress Reports and the Project Completion Report according to the reporting criteria defined in finance contract;
- The EIA process and permitting should be completed to the satisfaction of the Bank for the full length of the interconnector.



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Based on the information provided by the Promoter, and in case of fulfilling the defined environmental conditions, the project is expected to be acceptable to the Bank in environmental terms.