

Proponent:



SLOVAK GAS TSO

Joint-Stock Company

INTERCONNECTING GAS PIPELINE POLAND - SLOVAKIA

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(Non-Technical Summary)

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POPRAD

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1. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY AND ITS GOALS

1.1 Basic data on the Proponent

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1.2 Title of the Construction

Interconnecting Gas Pipeline Poland - Slovakia

1.3 Description of the Proposed Activity and its Goals

The proposed activity of the high-pressure interconnecting gas pipeline DN 1000 Poland – Slovakia construction will provide the interconnection of the high-pressure gas pipeline system transmitting natural gas exported mostly from the Russian Federation across the Ukrainian territory to the European countries through the Slovak territory with the gas pipeline system in the Republic of Poland. The connection of the gas pipeline DN 1000 in the Polish territory will be made at the underground reservoir and natural gas pipeline node Strachocina, in the Slovak territory it will be connect to the compressor station structure in Veľké Kapušany. Crossing of the PL/SK state border has been agreed through the Lupkov pass.

Building of the interconnecting gas pipeline will create another key element of the north-south interconnection of the gas systems enabling gas transmission from the Baltic Sea (LNG terminal in Świnoujście) up to the terminal in Croatia on the coast of the Adriatic Sea on the Krk Island (LNG Croatia).

The construction is not a production-type construction, it is a line construction, natural gas will be transmitted only. The route has been designed **in three variants** regarding its location: Variant I - 106.0 km, Variant II – 117.0 km, Variant III 108.5 km. The designed nominal pipe size is DN 1000 with maximum operation pressure 7.4 MPa on the Slovak side.

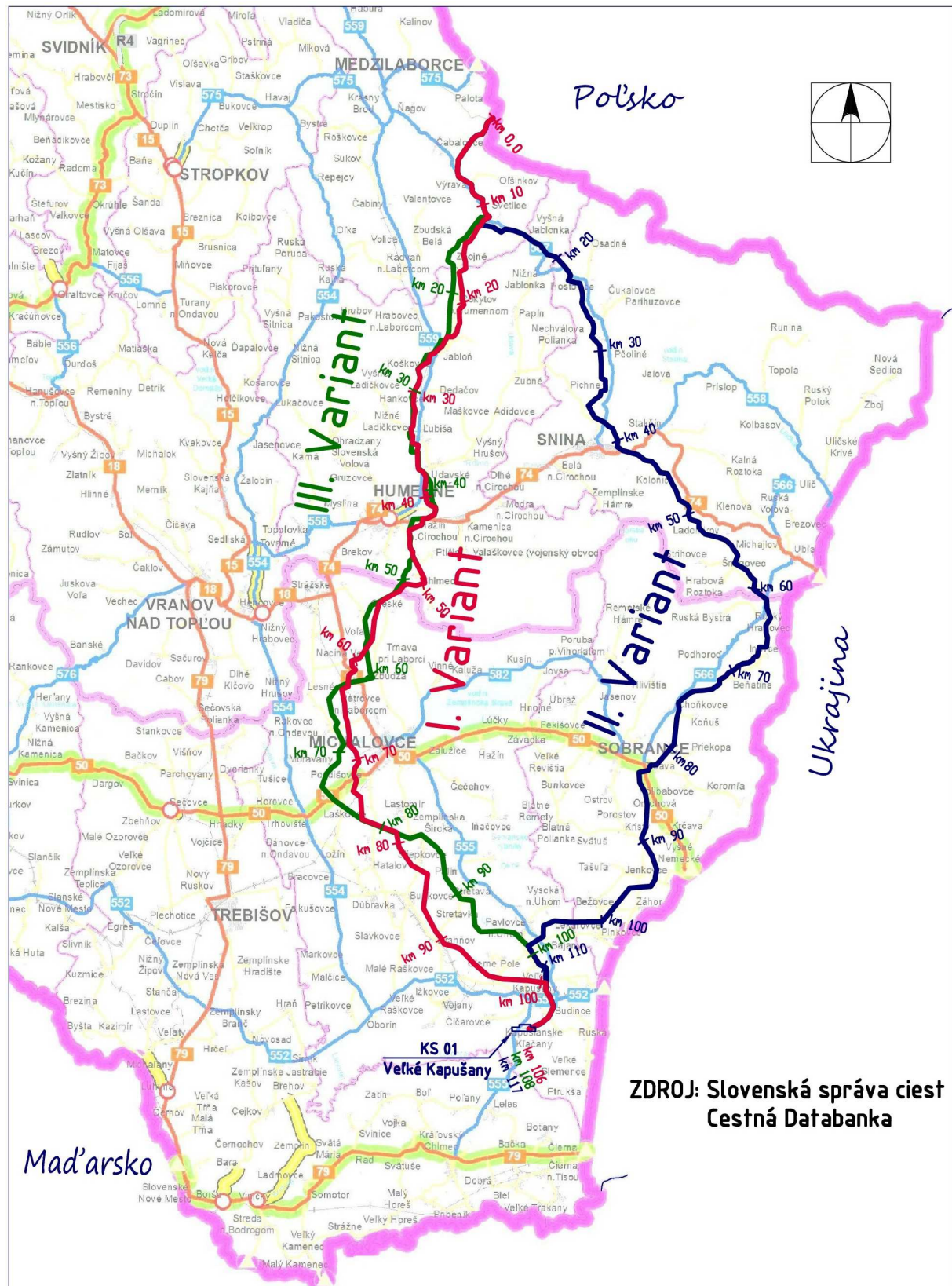
The proposal of the HP gas pipeline location has resulted from two basic requirements to meet the purpose of the construction:

- From the point of SK/PL state border crossing, which was agreed by the Polish and Slovak party across the Lupkov pass – coordinates of the crossing **49°14'49.25"N; 22° 2'14.24"E**
- From the point of connection to the HP gas pipeline system in the Slovak territory – the compressor station structure KS 01 Veľké Kapušany.

The metering station structure, for all variants considered in the cadastre area of the municipality Výrava, will form a part of the construction too.

Connection to the HP gas pipeline system in the Slovak territory is in the compressor station structure KS 01 Veľké Kapušany for all variants.

General layout of the location of the proposed activity 1:500 000



2. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED VARIANTS

The variant design has been proposed only regarding the route location. The location of particular variants and the metering station structure is shown in the layouts - Annexes 1a, 1b, 1c and continuation to the Republic of Poland – in Annex 2.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE COMPONENTS AND ELEMENTS OF THE ENVIRONMENT, WHICH MAY PROBABLY BE AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSED ACTIVITY SIGNIFICANTLY

The proposed activity will have a significant impact on the protected areas of the European System Natura 2000, conservation areas of the national network and biota in other territories in all variants.

3.1 Flora

According to the phytogeographic classification of the SR the flora of the affected area belongs to:

- a) the area of the western Carpathian flora (*Carpaticum occidentale*),
the region of the Eastern Beskids flora (*Beschidicum orientale*),
the district of the Eastern Beskids,
the sub-district of the Low Beskids (Ondavská vrchovina).
- b) The area of the western Carpathian flora (*Carpaticum occidentale*),
the region of the pre-Carpathian flora (*Praecarpaticum*),
the district of the Vihorlat Mountains
- c) the area of the eastern Carpathian flora (*Carpaticum orientale*),
the district of the Bukovec Mountains
- d) the area of the Pannonian flora (*Pannonicum*),
the region of the Eupannonian xerothermic flora (*Eupannonicum*),
the district of the Eastern Slovak Lowland.

Real vegetation in the assessed territory contains less forest formations and more areas used in agriculture – plough land and permanent grassland. Non-forest wood vegetation is bound particularly to water courses (accompanying formations of water courses); it is also in the country used for agriculture (communities of wood species out of forests– groves, balks, gullies).

A part of permanent grasslands has had a changed species composition since the intensification, some of them are covered by tree and bush formations today and they are used as hay meadows and pastures or for cattle grazing. There are fewer meadow communities with original, unchanged species composition with valuable habitats with the European and national importance.

Habitats

The following valuable habitats are located in the affected territory:

Lowland and submountain hay meadows; mesophile pastures and grazing meadows; eutrophic humid grasslands; large carex beds; alder, willow, oak, aspen swamp woods; semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates. Asperulo-Fagetum beech forests; oak-hornbeam forests; riparian mixed forests of *Quercus robur*, *Ulmus laevis* and *Ulmus minor*, *Fraxinus excelsior* or *Fraxinus angustifolia*; lowland alluvial forests; alluvial forests; *Tilio-Acerion* forests on slopes, scree and ravines; alpine rivers and the herbaceous vegetation along their banks are also precious.

In the border area of the cadastre of the municipality Výrava there is a *gene pool area Veľká Výrava* in the altitude approx. 415 m above sea level, in the terrain depression near the water course Veľká Výrava. In the tree and scrub stage there is especially common alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), grey alder (*Alnus incana*), almond willow (*Salix triandra*) and bay willow (*Salix pentandra*). In the herbal underwood there are classic hydrophilic species such as cabbage thistle (*Cirsium oleraceum*), wild mint (*Mentha longifolia*), hemp agrimony (*Eupatorium cannabinum*), which is used as a nectar source for several species of day-active butterflies. During the flight stage jersey tiger (*Callimorpha quadripunctaria*), large copper (*Lycaena dispar*), purple-shot copper (*Lycaena alciphron*) may be observed on hems. In the gene pool area there is a lot of marsh marigold (*Caltha palustris*), and there is also occasional presence of alpine grass (*Carex brizoides*).

3.2 Fauna

Regarding zoomorphology the affected area is classified as a palearctic zone, Eurosiberian subzone, province of deciduous forests. It is situated on the border of the Western and Eastern Carpathians, which is reflected also in the composition of animal species and their communities. The state of the vegetation cover (riparian vegetation, forests, pastures) affects biodiversity of animal communities, which correspond with the Carpathian character of fauna. By its fauna character the area belongs to a midmountain zone of deciduous forests. Animal species of almost all important systematic groups of invertebrates, especially from the insect class, and a big number of vertebrates of all classes (fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals), the species composition of which depends on the type of a habitat, are bound to the habitats. Although fauna is represented almost by all most important systematic groups in the designed area, the group of invertebrates has not been surveyed satisfactorily yet, especially a subtribe of insect rich in species (the odonata, grasshoppers, the heteroptera, beetles, the hymenoptera, butterflies etc.). Current species composition of fauna is a result of the geographic location, geological composition, climate and vegetation conditions, which have formed the development and composition of particular zoocenosis. Depending on the current structure of the country the cenosis of fields, meadows and pastures, the cenosis of water and riparian zones, the zoocenosis of built-up areas bound to human residences in different ways and their near surrounding, and the areas with occurrence of important animal species can be identified in the affected territory.

3.3 Areas Protected according to Special Regulations and their Protection Zones

3.3.1 Protected Areas of a National Network

The most important one regarding the size and extent:

The Eastern Carpathians Conservation Area (CA)

The area of the Eastern Carpathians CA is situated in the northern border part of Slovakia and minimum protection level 2 applies there. The entire area of the Eastern Carpathians CA is rich in forests. The communities of typical beech groves are the most spread forest formation in the Eastern Carpathians CA. Meadow habitats with interspersed spring fen and mire communities and moor lands are represented in open country, although on a smaller area, but even more precious. In the botanic aspect there is an interesting phenomenon of dissolving of the border or Western Carpathian and Eastern Carpathian flora, which enables occurrence of many precious and endangered flora species. Original forest formations are also a suitable environment for many protected and endangered animals, including e.g. the gray wolf, the Eurasian lynx, the brown bear or the European otter. Deer, roe deer and boar animals are also well represented.

The most preserved natural forest and non-forest communities and precious species of plants and animals are protected through so called small-scale conservation areas in the

Eastern Carpathians CA (national nature reserves NNR and nature reserves NR) with a higher level of protection. There are two NNRs here (Palotská and Komárnická jedlina) and 5 NR (Beskyd, Dranec, Haburské rašelinisko, Čertižníanské lúky and meadows Hostovické). Protection Areas with the European Importance (Natura 2000) form a part of the Eastern Carpathians CA. It overlaps the Bird Protection Area Highlands Laborecká vrchovina almost completely and more than 53 % of the area is occupied by the Areas with the European Importance Svetlica, Lázky, Košariská, Dukla, Daňová, Pliškov, Hostovické lúky, Beskyd, Vydranka and Beskyd.

Vihorlat Conservation Area (CA)

Forest lands in the area of 16,647.69 ha form the core of the area. It is important from the water-management and forest-management point of view as it is one of the main resources and regulators of water supply. The sites Morské oko and Sninský kameň belong to the best known and most visited sites. Vihorlat is a typical forest area, thermophilic elements are represented by the flora of rocks and rockeries on the highest ridges (Vihorlat, Sninský kameň). The vegetation of northern slopes has a completely different character with prevailing beech tree groves, maple and beech tree groves, and on mires (Hypkania, Postávka and Ďurova mláka) the whole scale of precious spring fen and mire communities has developed. The most precious parts are declared as small-scale conservation areas – 5 national nature reserves, 8 nature reserves and 3 nature monuments. In 2007 the ridge part of the Vihorlat CA was registered as a part of the site Carpathian Beech Forests and Old German forests in the UNESCO list.

Besides that the proposed variants of the route cross the following areas of the national network:

- National Nature Reserve Humenský Sokol
- National Nature Reserve Humenská
- Nature Reserve Meadows Hostovické
- Nature Reserve Lysá
- Nature Monument Beňatinský Travertine

3.3.2 Areas of the Natura 2000 European Protected Sites

Bird Protection Areas

The areas of the European Protected Sites Natura 2000 have been declared through national legislation as Bird Protection Areas (decrees of MoE SR) and Areas with the European Importance (Ordinance of MoE SR 3/2004-5.1 dated 14/07/2004, by which the list of the Areas with the European Importance has been issued, amended by the Ordinance of MoE SR 1/2012).

Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (Birds Directive) and the Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (Habitats directive) were followed; they are intended to preserve natural heritage for a particular member country and especially for the EU as a whole, regardless the ownership relations or current economic use.

The proposed variants cross the following areas of the European Protected Sites Natura 2000:

Bird Protection Area Laborecká vrchovina - SKCHVU011

It was declared by the Decree of MoE SR 438/2009 Coll. in order to provide safe conditions of the habitats of bird species with the European importance and habitats of migrating bird species of the Ural owl, the lesser spotted eagle, the black stork, the red kite, the collared flycatcher, the red-breasted flycatcher, the red-backed shrike, the barred warbler, the hazel

grouse, the corn crake, the black woodpecker, the white-backed woodpecker, the grey-headed woodpecker, the European nightjar, the woodlark, the common kingfisher, the middle spotted woodpecker, the white stork, the European honey buzzard, the European stonechat, the Eurasian wryneck, the spotted flycatcher, the common redstart, the European turtle dove, the common quail, the great grey shrike and the sand martin and to provide the conditions for their survival and reproduction.

Bird Protection Area Vihorlatské vrchy- SKCHVU 035

It was declared by the Decree of MoE SR 195/2010 Coll. in order to provide favourable conditions of the habitats of bird species with the European importance and habitats of migrating bird species of the short-toed snake eagle, the Ural owl, the European scops owl, the lesser spotted eagle, the hazel grouse, the Eurasian eagle-owl, the European nightjar, the black stork, the corn crake, the white-backed woodpecker, the middle spotted woodpecker, the black woodpecker, the collared flycatcher, the red-breasted flycatcher, the Eurasian wryneck, the red-backed shrike, the woodlark, the European honey buzzard, the grey-headed woodpecker, the barred warbler, the common quail, the collared flycatcher, the common redstart, the African stonechat, the European turtle dove and to provide the conditions for their survival and reproduction.

Sites with the European Importance

The intervention in the SKUEV0387 Beskyd is particularly significant due to potential spatial connection with the protected areas in the Republic of Poland:

SKUEV0387 Beskyd

Occurrence of the following habitats with the European importance is the subject of protection: Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (6210), Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels (6430), Alkaline fens (7230), Medio-European subalpine beech woods with *Acer* and *Rumex arifolius* (9140), Tilio-Acerion forests of slopes, screes and ravines (9180*), Asperulo-Fagetum beech forests (9130), Luzulo-Fagetum beech forests (9110), Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (91E0*), Extensively managed hay meadows of the planar to submontane zones (6510), as well as the species with the European importance: the *Carabus zawadzskii* (*Carabus zawadzskii*), *Boros schneideri*, the Large Copper (*Lycaena dispar*), the brown bear (**Ursus arctos*), the Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*), the European bison (**Bison bonasus*), the Stys's bush-cricket (*Isophya stysi*), the Rosalia longicorn (*Rosalia alpina*), the Jersey Tiger (*Callimorpha quadripunctaria*), the yellow-bellied toad (*Bombina variegata*), the Carpathian newt (*Triturus montandoni*), the barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*), the greater mouse-eared bat (*Myotis myotis*), the gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) and the European otter (*Lutra lutra*).

The proposed variants of the route intervene also in other Sites with the European Importance in the territory of the Slovak Republic:

- SKUEV0763 Horný tok Výravý
- SKUEV0205 Hubková
- SKUEV0050 Humenský Sokol
- SKUEV0250 Krivoštianka
- SKUEV 0206- Humenská
- SKUEV0049 Alúvium Rieky
- SKUEV Hostovické lúky
- SKUEV 0209 Morské oko
- SKUEV 0235 Stretavka

4. DESCRIPTION OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTIVITY AND ITS VARIANTS, ESTIMATION OF THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

4.1 Impact on Fauna and Flora

The construction of the gas pipeline itself, which will take approx. 1 year, will have the biggest impacts on fauna and flora as for the extent and significance:

- Destroying the vegetation cover in the operation zone (forest and non-forest habitats)
- Fragmentation of habitats;
- Destroying non-moving or hardly moving animals and their development stages and also the habitats of species in the operation zone (e.g. butterfly family *Phengaris*, intervention into reproduction and migration of amphibians);
- Disturbing the animals (surrounding habitats of species) caused by the effects of noise, vibration, air pollutants, dust formation on the surrounding habitats of species;
- Pollution of the surrounding habitats caused by air pollutants, dust formation;
- Probability of settling of the disturbed areas by invasive plant species is very high after finishing of the construction or during it;
- Disturbing nesting birds by the construction during nesting season;
- Removal of aerochoric woods and subsequent maintenance of the handling zone with no wood species may have a positive impact on certain habitats (e.g.. extensively managed hay meadows of the planar to submontane zones);
- Gaps will be made in continuous wood riparian formations in the points of water courses crossing;
- Shock deterioration of the conditions for water animals (mudding of water in particular) by crossing the water courses by machines and by excavation works;

The operation of the gas pipeline will not have almost any impact on the fauna and flora due to its nature – the pipeline embedded in the ground, with no emissions to the air, with no noise, almost with no waste formation. In case of bringing the invasive plant species it is highly probable they will remain there also after finishing of the construction and they will go on spreading.

Fauna, flora and protected areas are not damaged by emissions from industrial production or traffic in the affected territory regarding the extent of the total environmental load more significantly. However, it can be stated that disappearing of original vegetation and subsequently also of animals bound to the original communities may be noticed especially on lands used in agriculture due to long-term changes in the use of the country (disappearance of traditional farming, successive changes, spreading of invasive and non-original plant and wood species).

4.2 Impact on the Landscape

The structure of the country in the affected area is quite various nowadays, there are the areas of the forest and non-forest vegetation, built-up areas, line constructions etc. here. The changes in the current landscape structure will be caused by occupation of the land – a change in the ratio of non-forest lands will occur.

During the construction the landscape will be negatively affected by building works during construction of particular proposed structures connected with movement of building machines, transportation of material and parts of the machinery. The building activity will have an unfavourable impact on the country by temporarily changed functional utilisation of the affected area, by making a non-attractive building area, which will have a disturbing effect on the landscape.

4.3 Impact on the Territorial System of Ecological Stability

The route of the designed gas pipeline intervenes in several elements of the territorial system of the ecological stability to supra-regional and regional bio-corridors, supra-regional and regional bio-centres and hydric bio-corridors with regional importance.

Table 1 : Summary of the assessment of expected impact regarding their significance

CONSTRUCTION				OPERATION	
significance of the impact				significance of the impact	
Component of the Environment	Kind of impact	negative	positive	negative	positive
air	emissions – mob. sources				
	air pollutants - dust				
ground water	intervention in protection zones of sources				
	pollution of sources				
	intervention in protection zones of mineral waters				
surface water	pollution				
	barrier effect				
rock environment	geodynamic effects				
	pollution				
relief	change of the relief				
land fund	permanent occupation				
	temporary occupation				
	pollution				
biota	intervention in Natura sites				
	intervention in protected areas of the national network				
	impact on fauna – birds, water animals				
infrastructure	traffic				
	cultural and historical values				
inhabitants	impacts on health				
	operational risks				
	socio-economic activities				
	other impacts - noise				

Negative impacts:

	- insignificant impact, no impact
	- slightly significant impact
	- medium significant impact
	- significant impact
	- highly significant impact

Positive impacts :

	- insignificant impact
	- slightly significant impact
	- significant impact

All information stated in Chapters 3 and 4 are provided in map annexes 1a, 1b,1c in scale 1:50 000 and in Annex 2 in scale 1:100 000.

5. DESCRIPTION OF MEASURES MITIGATING THE SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Measures for mitigation of the impacts on flora, fauna and protected areas

- To perform the works according to particular requirements of the affected habitats and habitats of species (e.g. out of the bird nesting season from 1st August to 1st March, out of the migration period September – November, out of a spawning period of fish from 1st April to 31st August, out of the migration period of amphibians) consulted and approved by the adequate unit of the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic in the areas with nature protection interests.
- To perform felling of wood species in non-forest areas out of the vegetation period (from October to 31st March). The felled wood species should be replaced and valuable wood species should be protected against mechanical damage during the construction.
- To prepare a project for biological revitalization of the territory in the sections of the gas pipeline through valuable habitats or in the vicinity of them and to ensure its implementation.
- To provide environmental supervision during the gas pipeline construction.
- To limit movement of building machinery solely on the areas of permanent and temporary occupation and agreed access routes.
- To exclude moving of material by heavy machines at night.
- In case of settlement of the affected territory by invasive plant species their permanent removal should be provided.
- To monitor spreading of invasive and non-original plants from the beginning of the construction in the entire route no less than once a year, in the best case at the time of late summer aspect, when most of them are easy to be detected in field. In case of a finding to provide removal of them.

Other measures to mitigate negative impacts

- To restore the area with the lands usable for agriculture by technical and biological reclamation after temporary occupation.
- To divide excavated soil, to store the top, humus part of the soil separately and then to lay it back on the surface of the excavation pit
- To exclude storing of assembly material in the protection zones of water courses.
- To follow anti-flood measures.
- To ensure protection of the rock environment and ground water during the construction against leakage of hazardous substances (fuels, machinery lubricants etc.).
- To minimize building of access roads to the route and to use country roads as much as possible.
- To follow construction schedule and organization, technology procedures and emergency plans.

6. THE DATA AND METHODS USED FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF THE AREA

The characteristics of the vegetation are based on the floristic description of the monitored area and its close surrounding.

The analysis of animal component of the nature environment of the affected area is based on the analysis and assessment of the existing faunistic data.

Other relevant information is provided from the environmental impact assessment for the proposed activity (EIA) prepared in terms of the Slovak legislation.

7. PROPOSAL FOR MONITORING AND POST-PROJECT ANALYSIS FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE CONSTRUCTION, DURING THE CONSTRUCTION, DURING OPERATION AND AFTER FINISHING OF OPERATION OF THE PROPOSED ACTIVITY

Having assessed the floristic and faunistic data the proposed monitoring of nature protection interests is during the construction and no less than **5 years** after its completion, including the environmental supervision during the construction of the gas pipeline.

8. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

The Agreement on Cooperation in Implementation of the Project of a Gas Pipeline Connecting the Polish Transmission Network and the Slovak Transmission Network between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Republic of Poland was signed on 22 November 2013. It got into force on 18/04/2014. The wording of the Agreement is in the Collection of Laws SR Annex to Item 35 – Notification of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic 95 /2014 Coll.

The goal of the Agreement according to Art. 1 is to specify:

1. the arrangements for cooperation between the parties to the Agreement in preparation and implementation of the Project consisting of the construction of the gas pipeline connecting the transmission networks of the Slovak Republic and the Republic of Poland by strategic investors (Companies);
2. the arrangements for supervision of preparation and implementation of the Project

Based on the assessment of the environmental data in the affected territory the following may be stated:

- Proposed activity – the construction of the gas pipeline DN 1000 is approx. 64 km long from the starting point at the site Strachocina in the Republic of Poland to the Slovak border with continuation in the territory of the Slovak Republic with the length of approx 105 - 117km (depending on the chosen variant).
- There are the Natura 2000 sites and also the protected areas of the national network in the border zone of the Slovak Republic and the Republic of Poland.
- **On the Slovak side** there is the continuous Bird Protection Site SKCHVU 011 Laborecká vrchovina and the Site with the European Importance SKUEV 0387 Beskyd as well as the area protected by the national legislation –The Eastern Carpathians CA.
- **On the Polish side**, in the area of the Lupkov pass, where crossing of the state border has been agreed, there is an approx. 2.6 – 3 km wide corridor, which continues up to the underground reservoir Strachocina, which is out of the protected areas. This area is used for the gas pipeline route. There are the Natura 2000 sites in the adjacent area - Beskid Nisky PLB10002 (Special Bird Protection Site) and Bieszczady PLC180001 (Special Bird Protection Site) and also a site which belongs to the East Carpathian Biosphere Reserve).

- The protected areas on both sides of the PL/SK state border are spatially interconnected and their continuity regarding habitat protection is provided.
- **Operation** of the gas pipeline will have almost no impact on the fauna and flora due to its nature – the pipeline embedded in the ground, with no emissions, no noise, almost no waste generation.
- The structures of the metering station in the municipality Výrava are the closest structures to the SK/PL border – 6.3 km. Its operation will not bring a source of emissions to the air, it will not produce waste water and it will not be a source of noise and smell. It will be unattended, connected to the centrally controlled gas system of SR and by its activity it will not affect the Polish territory negatively.

The impact on fauna and flora will be the biggest impact regarding the size and significance. That will be caused by the **construction** of the gas pipeline itself, which will be limited by time. Destroying of the vegetation cover in the operation zone will cause damage to forest and non-forest habitats, fragmentation of habitats, destroying of non-moving and hardly moving animals and their development stages, disturbing of animals caused by noise, disturbing of nesting birds during the nesting season, settling the disturbed areas by invasive plant species. Such an impact will occur both on the Slovak and Polish side – they will be mutual. The above mentioned reasons require especially time coordination of the construction between SK and PL and meeting the construction conditions given by state nature conservancy authorities of both affected countries.

9. LIST OF ANNEXES

- ANNEX 1a,1b,1c: Layout of proposed variants of the gas pipeline, protected areas and elements of the territorial system of ecological stability Scale 1: 50 000
- ANNEX 2: General layout of the proposed gas pipeline in the Republic of Poland Scale 1:100 000

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