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A new phase in GIPL project – launch of preparatory work for connection of the pipeline to the transmission system

After completing the directional drilling in September and laying the gas pipes for the Gas Interconnection Poland-Lithuania (GIPL) under the country's widest rivers on schedule, Amber Grid has begun preparations for the next significant stage of this project – connecting the installed part of the pipeline to the gas transmission system.

According to Amber Grid CEO Nemunas Biknius, the constructed section of the GIPL will be connected to the gas transmission system in Širvintos District, next to the Jauniūnai gas compressor station.

'The team has the goal of connecting the part of the new gas pipeline to the system – a job which requires careful preparation – by the end of this year. The most difficult moment is the temporary diversion of high-pressure, high-flow gas through a backup line, ensuring uninterrupted gas transmission throughout the system. Once we connect a section of the GIPL to the existing gas transmission system, we will have taken a major step towards the second part of project implementation. We are trying to speed up the work so that if the situation with COVID-19 changes, the project deadline will not be affected by circumstances beyond our control,' says Amber Grid CEO Nemunas Biknius.

During the eight months of project implementation, more than 100 of the 165 kilometres of GIPL pipeline have been welded, and 2 kilometres of pipeline have been laid under the Neris and the Nemunas. In the Neris, the 711-mm steel pipes were laid 20 metres beneath the riverbed, and 30 metres below in the Nemunas.

From June to early September, more than 60 professional specialists from Germany and Lithuania worked on the construction of the gas pipeline under the Nemunas and Neris rivers. The horizontal directional drilling (HDD) method was used for the work in order to ensure preservation of the environment. The biggest obstacle in laying the pipeline under the Nemunas were the boulders that were found, and the pipeline had to be installed in a special case on the bank of the Nemunas due to the loose soil. This week, the German engineering company sent 23 lorries back to Germany carrying the special HDD equipment that spent the entire summer on the banks of the Neris and Nemunas.

Other rivers also had to be crossed during construction of the international Lithuanian-Polish gas pipeline. The pipeline was laid in four smaller Lithuanian rivers – the Strėva, Lapainia, Verknė and Musė – and in small streams using the open-cut method. All works were supervised by the Lithuanian Fund for Nature, which is carrying out environmental monitoring during construction of the gas pipeline.

Two-thirds of the GIPL project is planned to be implemented by the end of 2020. In 2021, the remaining sections of the gas pipeline from Alytus District to Lazdijai will be installed, gas distribution points will be equipped, and a gas metering station will be built on the Lithuanian-Polish border.

The GIPL, which will start operating at the end of 2021, will connect the Lithuanian, Baltic and Finnish gas markets with the European Union. The gas pipeline will allow gas to be obtained from various sources, and will also allow for more efficient use of the Lithuanian gas transmission system and the Klaipėda LNG terminal.



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