

Connecting Europe Facility - ENERGY

Route identification study including conceptual design and preparatory activities for the permitting process for a gas pipeline connection between Malta and Sicily

5.19-0011-MTIT-S-M-15

Part of Project of Common Interest no 5.19

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Action was related to the Project of Common Interest PCI 5.19 "Connection of Malta to the European gas network (gas pipeline with Italy at Gela and Floating LNG Storage and Regasification Unit (FSRU))", which aims to enable gas flows from Italy to Malta, thus ending Malta's isolation from the European gas network. The Action started on 01/07/2015 and was successfully completed on 30/06/2017.

As part of the Action, four activities were carried out and included the Route Identification Study and preparatory activities for the Maltese and Italian permitting process. As a result, the Action identified the optimal 1.2 km wide offshore and onshore route corridor, landfall areas, connection points and sites of terminal stations in both Delimara (Malta) and Gela (Sicily) with the lowest environmental and socioeconomic impacts. This was based on known existing restrictions and a high-level risk assessment of environmental impacts from available datasets and information. The identified route corridor shall enable a preliminary marine route survey to be conducted in the next phase of the project.

The basic design of the pipeline and all related land-based infrastructure confirmed a 22" diameter pipeline with a slight increase in total length to 159 km; which comprises of 151 km of offshore route, 7 km onshore route in Gela (Sicily) and 1km onshore route in Delimara.

The scoping reports and documentation required to initiate the permitting granting process were drafted by the contractor as part of the study. These main conclusions were first presented informally to the Italian and Maltese Competent Authorities. This ensured that all stakeholders had the opportunity to provide an informal yet robust opinion on the proposed offshore/onshore route and location of interconnection points and terminal stations in Gela-Sicily and Delimara (Malta) in order to identify any issues vis-a-vis the permitting procedure from an early stage. In May 2017, a formal letter of intent was signed between the Maltese Government and the Sicilian Energy Directorate for enhanced collaboration in this regard.

The CEF co-funded study has contributed directly to the development and implementation of the first phase of the PCI 5.19. As a result of the study, the project implementation plan was updated with an earlier overall completion date, which indicates that commissioning can realistically be achieved already by late 2024. As a result of the Action the project has progressed to the next phases, including the pre-application permitting procedures (formally started in November 2017) and the preparation of tender specifications for conducting future studies.

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