



YEAR **2018**

Completed. In Tanzania, ESIA study was completed and a report submitted last December to the country's environmental watchdog—National Environment Management Council.

Regulator's call. "The main risk really associated with the pipeline is either bursting or people tampering with it: other than that, there isn't much," **TOM OKURUT, NEMA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



Can Uganda-Tanzania pipeline project

Part III. The proposed Uganda-Tanzania crude oil pipeline will be one of the world's longest heated pipelines. It is a feasible venture given prospects of more hydrocarbon in the region. However, for the two governments, the tests are quite immense, including balancing several interests as **Frederic Musisi** writes.

Sixteen years ago, long before Uganda's oil deposits were deemed commercially viable, a World Bank-United Nations Development Plan co-funded study reckoned that in the near future, the world will need more cross-border pipelines for oil and gas.

A study titled; 'Cross-Border Oil and Gas Pipelines: Problems' published in 2003, revealed that one of the reasons for the assumption was that oil and gas reserves close to traditional markets are getting depleted and newer ones are in remote and many landlocked territories thus requiring pipeline delivery.

The proposed East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP), running from mid-western Uganda to Tanga in Tanzania, fits into that storyline. If the cards are played well, the pipeline could as well transport crude oil from neighbouring DR Congo and South Sudan to the international market.

When the idea of a pipeline was conceptualised, first in the commercialisation framework signed in February 2014 between government and the oil companies—Tullow, Cnooc and Total E&P, it seemed vague; then came consideration of the route—the options being Kenya, Hoima to Lamu via Teso/Karamoja and northern Kenya, Hoima to Malaba to Mombasa, and from Hoima to Mutukula to either Tanga or Dar-es-Salaam, still, it appeared unclear.

Eventually, it was agreed that the duct would go down south via Mutukula to Tanga—Tanzania's less busy port.

Among the considerations for the Hoima-Tanga route was convenient constructability (flat terrain) and least environmental footprint.

Lately, as the pipeline structure gets clearer, the most frequently asked questions, besides what is in for the two countries, relate to what possibly could the risks be: what if it bursts, where is it passing—in eco sensitive areas—forests, swamps

and rivers, and what are the safeguards, especially in Uganda where regulations face implementation challenges.

During the second Uganda-Tanzania Civil Society summit on EACOP recently, civil society groups led by Oxfam expressed concern that given the project fast-track mode—as declared by Tanzanian president John Mugufuli—it is likely that the timelines would be at odds with the time needed for consultation and meaningful participation on key issues, ranging from environment to communities.

Mr Gerald Byarugaba, the Oxfam-Uganda's extractives industry coordinator, told *Daily Monitor* that one of the critical aspects is the environmental and social impact assessment (ESIA) process to be undertaken with adequate consultation and participation of host communities.

"In our previous engagements with the ESIA consulting team, it appears the community level consultations undertaken during the process were inadequate; they keep saying they talked to the village leaders mainly, yet on one hand, these consultations were undertaken before local council elections, so it is not clear whether those consulted were legitimate community leaders," Mr Byarugaba said.

He added that it is also critical that the ESIA report be "publicly shared in an "accessible and user-friendly manner to enable meaningful input" of all stakeholders, and the National Environment Management Authority (Nema) to ensure that consultations "are not merely box-ticking exercises but rather help the community participate better."

Pipeline dreams lay the test

The ESIA report for Uganda, detailing potential impacts—positive and negative—on the economy, people, and environment, was submitted by the project team to Nema in mid-January.

The report details measures to avoid or reduce negative impacts, and after the measures are applied, the predicted remaining impacts.

Already, Nema's handling of the consultative process on the Tilenga ESIA sparked some jitters—and was slammed by communities and some civil society groups as wanting.

Mr Tom Okurut, the Nema executive director, told *Daily Monitor* they are yet to start studying the pipeline ESIA report owing to limited manpower resources.

"We are still finalising the ESIA reports for Tilenga (Total E&P's oil fields) and Kingfisher (operated by Cnooc) before we can start on EACOP," he said.

Mr Okurut said in the meantime, they are using satellite imagery to monitor specific areas of interest between Hoima and Mutukula.



Planned route. The farmland separated by River Katonga in Sembabule District where the oil pipeline will pass. PHOTO BY ERIC DOMINIC BUKENYA

COMMUNITY SAFETY

A 2017 study titled; 'Safeguarding People and Nature in the East Africa Crude Oil Pipeline project' by a coalition of civil society organisations led by World Wide Fund (WWF) for Nature raised, among others, risk of oil spill and blowouts from the pipeline, which constitutes a major health hazard; worse still, Uganda lacks an oil spill contingency plan. Mr Ivan

Amaniga Ruhanga, the WWF's extractives manager, indicated that nearly 2,000 square kilometre of the protected wildlife habitats are under threat. "In environmentally protected areas, we cannot treat it as a Sunday; so many things can go wrong," he said. Mr Ernest Rubondo, the executive director of the Petroleum Authority of Uganda, however,

said the oil spill contingency plan is "under preparation but noted that the ESIA helps to develop management plans for the different aspects, for the environment and social aspects. "The ESIA is not a one-time document; what might be done now could change later, so the ESIA is a living documents, they are monitored and updated," he said.

He added that as a regulator, they would be most interested in the mitigation measures offered by the project developers.

"The main risks really associated with the pipeline is either bursting or people tampering with it: other than that, there isn't much. In this case, the first party to be responsible are the oil companies and Petroleum Authority of Uganda (PAU), the regulator and maybe us," Mr Okurut said.

Uganda's section of the pipeline—from Hoima to Mutukula is 296km. The 24-inch-diameter duct will be buried for security reasons and safety.

Other proposed accompaniments to the pipeline include six pump stations to keep the oil moving through from north to south, a marine export terminal at Chongoleani, near Tanga

Port, a fibre optic cable to allow communication between Hoima and Tanga, pressure reduction stations and a high voltage line to supply power to the various trace heating stations.

The ESIA report notes that a partially aboveground pipeline was considered, but the option was not taken further because of security and safety concerns, the risk of interference by people, and its effects on views and the movement of large animals, hence a buried pipeline was selected.

Uganda's (Brent) crude oil has low sulphur content—making it heavy, waxy and solidifies at room temperature, requiring the heating of the pipeline (to keep at above 50 degrees Celsius) for it to flow through. EACOP will thus be the longest electri-

cally heated pipeline in the world.

Mr Maxim Marchenko, the EACOP project director, said the Hoima-Tanga route was selected because it avoids the most environmentally sensitive areas like national parks and high population density areas.

Even for planned installations, he said they will be carefully designed, located and operated to reduce any potential physical and ecological impacts.

"We have developed a biodiversity charter with guiding principles to the way we work. According to this charter, we carry out all activities while avoiding unnecessary impact to the ecosystem, the biodiversity and the local communities: minimising any unavoidable impact to the ecosystem, the biodiversity and the local communities, and restoring-



project

"We have developed a biodiversity charter with guiding principles to the way we work. According to this charter, we carry out all activities while avoiding unnecessary impact to the ecosystem," Maxim Marchenko, EACOP director

Consultations. "...It appears the community level consultations undertaken during the process were inadequate; they keep saying they talked to the village leaders mainly, yet on one hand, these consultations were undertaken before LC I elections," **GERALD BYARUGABA, OXFAM-UGANDA'S EXTRACTIVES INDUSTRY COORDINATOR**

pass environment test?



rehabilitating impacted areas," Mr Marchenko said.

In Uganda, other accompaniments include 6.8km of new and tarmacked roads, 8.3km of new and temporary roads for getting to construction facilities, and four main camps and pipe yards where pipe and equipment will be stored and construction workers housed.

According to the ESIA report, the

potential impacts when the project has normal operations assessed included those that could happen anywhere on the pipeline route and those that could happen at a specific location.

"The significance of the impacts was determined without, and then with, mitigation measures applied. Measures to reduce the impacts were developed continually until, as much

as possible, an impact was no longer ranked as significant. Any effects left after mitigation are called residual impacts," the study indicates.

For example, on bio-diversity, the ESIA details that the pipeline's area of "influence is mostly in habitats which have been changed by humans, but with some natural habitats inside and outside areas protected by law."

Habitats of conservation importance within the pipeline's corridor include semi-evergreen forest and riverine and swamp forest (wetland forests), which are categorised as "highly threatened and unique ecosystems" as defined as the International Finance Corporation.

"Connected forest habitat within and between Budongo, Bugoma and Wambabya forest reserves is also of conservation importance for the habitat itself and owing to the presence of threatened plants and animals such as chimpanzees," the report notes.

Likewise, 10 plants of conservation importance were studied within the areas affected by the pipeline.

"Most of these plants were re-

296km

Distance. Uganda's section of the pipeline—from Hoima to Mutukula. The 24-inch-diameter duct will be buried for security reasons and safety.

2,000sqkm

At risk. Mr Ivan Amaniga Ruhanga, the WWF's extractives manager, indicated that nearly 2,000 square kilometre of the protected wildlife habitats are under threat.

corded in swamp and riverine forests and semi-evergreen forest. One of the plants of conservation importance is listed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature as vulnerable, six are on the Ugandan Red list (with threat categories from vulnerable to critically endangered, and two are classed as Gold Star endemic (native) plants, as defined by the Rapid Botanical Survey," the report adds.

Baseline surveys, the ESIA further indicates, identified presence or likely use of the habitat of 13 animals of conservation importance within the area of influence which are nationally and or globally rare and threatened. These include Bohor reedbuck, African golden cat, hippopotamus and spot-necked otter.

"Chimpanzees inhabit Wambabya and Bugoma forest reserves and use connecting habitats in the surrounding landscape. As chimpanzees are classed as endangered nationally and by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, they have a very high sensitivity to change."

Other biodiversity studied detailed in the ESIA are "birds of conservation importance" which use habitats within the Wambabya Forest Reserve, papyrus swamps and other wetlands, such as the grey-crowned crane and hooded vulture, the Kafu, Nabakazi, Katonga and Kibale Rivers which are sensitive habitats for fish and aquatic macro-invertebrates (small animals without a backbone, but large enough to see with the naked eye).

Total E&P officials referred this newspaper for further comments on the ESIA report, to Nema.

Preparing for the unknown

The report also indicates that the pipeline area of influence includes permanent and seasonal water-courses and wetlands belonging to Lake Albert, Victoria Nile and Lake Victoria basins, which are subject to regional political interactions and

thus require thoughtful management.

Mr Ernest Rubondo, the executive director of the Petroleum Authority of Uganda, the oil sector regulator, said government institutions would look at the ESIA to determine whether the project developers' proposals are "appropriate or not; if not, we will get back to them to do reassessment."

"It is also worth noting that this is not going to be the first swamp crossed by the pipeline all over the world; what is important is to ask, what happens when pipelines go through swamps, and that is what we are studying," Mr Rubondo said.

"The ESIA was given to Nema: PAU was given a copy, and we are going through it. We shall give our comments to Nema. It is a large project, even when Nema has developed an opinion on it, we will go back to the public through the public hearings and they will have an opportunity to respond," he added.

In Tanzania, ESIA study was completed and a report submitted last December to the country's environmental watchdog— National Environment Management Council (NEMC).

Mr Stan McBride, the Total East Africa B.V's environmental manager, indicated that as part of the ESIA, they are required to do certain types of monitoring on wildlife, water extraction, land, among others, and even after the project takes off, they are required to submit bi-monthly reports to NEMC.

Mr McBride acknowledged that the project being located in East Africa, renowned for its biodiversity, makes it complicated, but notwithstanding they will comply with available—local and international—standards.

Mr Marchenko said they have risk management plans in place.

In our last part tomorrow, we explore the prospects for employment and lucrative tenders on the pipeline.

WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS?



Mr Charles Odoobo Bichachi
Public Editor, NMG - Uganda

- * Does our journalism live up to your expectation?
- * Is our editorial content on TV, Radio and Newspaper balanced, fair and truthful?
- * Do you have feedback to share on how we have covered you or those you know?

Talk to the public editor who is your link to the newsrooms.

He can be reached on;
Email: public-editor@ug.nationmedia.com
Tel: +256 776 500725

Nation Media Group
Media of Africa for Africa

