

Tobago Pipeline Project - Update

NGC is building a 12” diameter natural gas pipeline from BHP Billiton Gas Export Platform (GEP) currently under construction off the East coast of Trinidad to Cove Estate, Tobago. NGC is responsible for constructing the pipeline and a gas receiving facility at Cove. BHP Billiton is responsible for constructing the platform (GEP) and its related infrastructure including the part of the pipeline that originates on the platform.

The marine part of the line will be 54 km long. The line will then travel on land for 800m before arriving at Cove Estate. The gas supply will service the T&TEC power generation plant as well as small industries to be established at Cove Estate and eventually will supply gas to wider Tobago. The power plant is using diesel fuel at the moment, but will switch to cheaper natural gas once the pipeline and associated gas receiving facilities are commissioned and natural gas becomes available.

The project takes place at the same time as the North Eastern Offshore (NEO) line, which will leave the same BHP Gas Export Platform and extend southwards to Mayaro, Trinidad.

Works at Cove Estate

The contractor, Carillon, is performing Civil and Structural works, which involve laying the foundation and underground infrastructure, including cables and pipes. These works should be substantially finished by the end of 2009. Phase 2 which involves the installation of equipment, Piping and Electrical and Instrumentation works will commence in January 2010. The project is expected to be completed and first gas supplied in January, 2011.

Pipe ready for use

NGC imported 4,603 lengths of fusion bonded epoxy coated pipe for the project from Mexico. Those which will be used underwater are concrete weight-coated to provide stability of the pipeline on the seabed and protection from third party damage. The main marine pipe-laying work will run from May to August 2010.

HDD in progress

NGC is currently performing a Horizontal Direct Drilling (HDD) operation at the approach to Cove Estate. This complex technique allows NGC to lay segments of the pipeline underground in sensitive areas, in this case coral reefs, to avoid damaging the environment. To do this, a hole is bored horizontally under the area and the pipeline is drawn through it like thread through a needle. The HDD will be conducted on a 24-hour basis and will be finished by mid-January 2010 and will follow the initial laying of pipe for the HDD along the sea bed. This laying of pipe on the sea bed in preparation for the pipe pull into to the drilled hole is currently underway.