

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Chiren UGS is the only underground gas storage facility on the territory of Bulgaria, established in 1974 on the basis of the depleted Chiren gas-condensate field discovered in 1963. To date, 42 wells have been drilled of which 24 exploitation wells are currently in operation (20 vertical and 4 deviated), 14 observation wells and other wells. The purpose of the UGS facility is to compensate seasonal fluctuations in domestic gas consumption and to store certain quantities of natural gas as an emergency reserve.

The project for Chiren UGS capacity expansion envisages the staged capacity increase of the storage facility to achieve larger volumes of stored gas - up to 1 bcm, including increased gas reservoir pressure and higher daily average withdrawal and injection rates - up to 8 - 10 mcm/day.

On the one hand, the expansion project aims to create conditions to ensure the security of supply to Bulgarian customers and customers from other countries in the region. On the other hand, the gas infrastructure development in the country and the region and the implementation of the concept for a Bulgarian gas distribution centre define the role of Chiren UGS as a commercial storage facility in an interconnected regional and European market as Chiren UGS is an integral part of the regional gas system.

Providing additional storage volume will promote natural gas trade, increase market competition and contribute to liquid gas market functioning. The expansion of Chiren UGS is also in synergy with the project for an LNG terminal near Alexandroupolis and will enable gas traders and customers in the region to take full advantage of the dynamic development and competitive advantages provided by the liquefied natural gas market.

Chiren UGS Expansion project is included in the sixth EU PCI list of projects of common interest (PCIs) in line with Regulation (EU) 347/2013, priority corridor: North-South Gas Interconnections in Central Eastern and South Eastern Europe (NSI East Gas).

From the perspective of the planned new infrastructure, the overall concept for the Expansion of Chiren UGS Capacity project is based on three main areas:

Area 1: Design and construction of new above-ground equipment – a compressor station with all of the auxiliary equipment thereto to ensure the reliable and continuous operation in injection regime, separator, heating, regulating and dehydration installations ensuring the withdrawal processes, as well as a new gas measuring station (GMS). The above-ground facilities in their entirety are designed and dimensioned to ensure the ultimate target capacity capabilities of Chiren UGS.

Area 2: Design and construction of underground facilities - ten new high-productivity exploitation and three observation wells, as well as 10 new gatherings connecting the exploitation wells to the newly built site facilities.

Area 3: Design and construction of a gas pipeline connecting Chiren UGS to the existing gas transmission system of Bulgartransgaz EAD at VA Butan in the land of the village of Butan, Kozloduy Municipality, to ensure the necessary connectivity and transmission capacity to/from the storage facility in connection with the targeted expansion.

Each of the three areas is directly related to the general concept for expanding the capacity of Chiren UGS, and regardless of the achieved installation autonomy, they are technologically interconnected and should be considered together in terms of the future availability of an aggregated capacity product for storage-withdrawal-injection.

The construction of the new above-ground facilities - a compressor station with all its associated technical facilities - ensures the provision of the necessary new highly reliable compressor equipment, enabling the achievement of the parameters set in the technological design and significantly increasing the operational safety and capacity capabilities of Chiren UGS. The newly built technological site (above-ground part) was commissioned in early 2025.

The construction of the new gas pipeline to Chiren UGS is directly related to the possibilities for a storage capacity expansion of the storage facility itself in terms of available capacity for natural gas transmission to and from Chiren UGS. After the commissioning of the new pipeline network infrastructure at the end of 2024, in addition to ensuring the necessary transmission capacity in connection with the expansion of the gas storage facility in Chiren, the levels of flexibility and redundancy of the system have also increased significantly, thanks to the implemented concept for connectivity of the newly constructed facilities to the existing gas transmission system.

In connection with the implementation of the underground facilities, Bulgartransgaz EAD, in the period 2021 – to date, had conducted public procurements for the investment design, procurement of the necessary materials and equipment, drilling of exploitation wells at Chiren UGS, construction of their adjacent gatherings to a new Chiren CS and their commissioning on the basis of which the necessary activities for the execution of the relevant drillings have not been implemented. All information about the procedures conducted by the company in this regard is public and available on the Buyer's profile in the Centralised Electronic Public Procurement Automated Information System (CAIS EPP): <https://app.eop.bg/buyer/11715>; information about the last public procurement can be found at the following link: <https://app.eop.bg/today/561074>.

Regarding the preparation of a comprehensive financial and technical analysis, including the potential and acceptable options for performance of the activities required for implementation of Chiren UGS Expansion - wells project, Bulgartransgaz EAD invites all interested parties possessing the necessary professional qualifications and competence to express their interest in providing an expert opinion **by November 6, 2026**, on the following matter:

Taking into account the available geological predictions and the specific characteristics of the productive horizons (gas-bearing formations) at Chiren UGS, please provide your expert opinion on determining the type of the new exploitation wells planned for drilling as assessed from the perspective of the technical and economic feasibility for optimal future operation, namely: vertical or deviated wells, by applying the same structure/design.

Interested parties should submit an application for expression of interest **no later than 17:00 on 26 October 2026**, with information and documents verifying their education, professional experience, and competence in accordance with the requirements set out in this call for expression of interest, as well as the terms and conditions under which the opinion would be provided.

Following the deadline for expression of interest, Bulgartransgaz EAD will examine the applications received and the evidence provided to determine compliance with the stated requirements and to assess the professional qualifications and competence of the interested parties in relation to the subject matter and specific nature of the market consultation.

Based on the results of this examination, Bulgartransgaz EAD will determine from which parties to request an expert opinion and will notify the selected experts in due course.

The submission of an application for expression of interest does not create an obligation for Bulgartransgaz EAD to request an opinion from the respective party, nor does it, in itself, confer any right to subsequent award of a procurement for the service. The assessment will be made based on the pre-announced requirements, the evidence submitted, and the relevance of the expertise to the subject matter of the respective issue.

Requirements regarding the education, professional experience and specialization of the interested parties, as well as the methods of verifying their competence:

Criteria for natural persons:

1. Education: Holding of a Bachelor's, Master's degree or a PhD degree in a professional field or area related to drilling technologies, oil and gas engineering, geology, geophysics, engineering geology, geology of oil and gas fields, reservoir engineering, physics of oil and gas reservoirs/formations, or another applicable technical or natural science discipline.

2. Professional experience: At least 10 years of professional experience in one or more of the following areas: design and construction of oil and gas wells; geological and geophysical surveys; geological modelling and geological and geophysical data interpretation; development and operation of oil and gas fields; underground natural gas storage; reservoir modelling and assessment of the characteristics of underground gas storage facilities established within depleted gas or gas-condensate fields, or gas, gas-condensate, or oil fields.

3. Specialized expertise: Provable competence in at least one of the following fields: design, construction and operation of vertical or deviated gas wells; geological and geophysical characterization of oil and gas fields; geological, hydrodynamic or reservoir modelling of the development of gas, gas-condensate, or oil fields, or underground gas storage facilities; assessment of the structure, properties, and behaviour of geological reservoirs; exploration, development, and operation of underground natural gas storage facilities; research or teaching activities in any of the specified fields.

4. Demonstration of compliance: To demonstrate the education, professional experience, and specialized competence, candidates shall submit a curriculum vitae (CV) and information regarding any completed projects, job positions held, scientific publications, participation in research and studies, or other relevant activities, together with documents certifying their expertise.

Preference may be given to persons with proven experience in design, construction, research, or operation of underground natural gas storage facilities or other geological reservoirs with similar characteristics.

5. No conflict of interest: A declaration stating the absence of any interest that could lead to a personal benefit with regard to project implementation or the provision of an expert opinion.

Criteria for legal entities:

1. Legal status: Duly registered as a commercial entity in the Republic of Bulgaria, an EU Member State, or a third country;

2. Professional experience of the company: Successful completion of at least 1 (one) contract/project involving investment design, drilling/wells engineering, reservoir simulation, remodelling, or consulting services within the oil and gas sector or the underground natural gas storage within the last 5 (five) years;

3. Expert staff: Ensuing a key team of at least 2 (two) experts meeting the requirements for physical persons as specified above in this call.

Demonstration of compliance: To demonstrate compliance with the requirements regarding the company's professional experience, information on completed projects/contracts should be submitted. Regarding the team of experts, the information and evidence specified above for physical persons should be provided.

No conflict of interest: A declaration stating the absence of any interest that could lead to a personal benefit with regard to project implementation or the provision of an expert opinion.

Criteria for scientific and research institutes, higher education institutions and academic units:

1. Academic profile: Accreditation and recognized competence in the fields of geological sciences, geophysics, drilling technologies, or mining-geological research and studies;

2. Research team: A designated scientific team of habilitated lecturers/scientists (Associate Professors, Professors) or persons holding a PhD or Doctor of Sciences degree in the relevant fields.

Please be advised that all information exchanged with regard to this call, including the outcome obtained by the Contracting authority, will be published on the Buyer's Profile in CAIS EOP (Centralized Automated Information System for Public Procurement) and on Bulgartransgaz EAD website within 5 days of conclusion of market consultations, in accordance with Article 44, para 3, item 1 of the Public Procurement Act.

Expressions of interest together with any information and documents verifying education, professional experience and competence in line with the requirements set out in this call, as well as the terms and conditions under which the expert opinion will be provided, must be submitted no later than **17:00 on October 26, 2026** to the following e-mails: info@bulgartransgaz.bg and/or to konstantin.bonev@bulgartransgaz.bg. Alternatively, these may be submitted at the Registry Office of Bulgartransgaz EAD at: Sofia, 66 Pancho Vladigerov Blvd., Bulgartransgaz EAD Headquarters.